

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

JUNE 8 2021

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL: COUNCILLOR JONATHAN NUNN

Report Title	West Northamptonshire Council Corporate Plan 2021-2025
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Contributors/Checkers/Approvers		
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List of Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Corporate Plan

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. As a new Council it is important that West Northants sets out the key priorities and ambitions from the outset so that all residents, businesses and partners are clear on the commitments we are making to them and to the area as a whole.
- 1.2. This report introduces the first WNC plan and seeks endorsement so that it can be adopted as a framework and guide more detailed service and transformation planning that is being progressed and will be subject to wider consultation and engagement in the year ahead.

2. Executive Summary

- 1.3. The Councils Draft Corporate Plan is set out in Appendix 1. The Council Plan outlines the strategic vision for the Council over the next four years. The Constituent parts of the council will be

developing service plans during the next four months in response to the Corporate plan priorities, to align to our vision and based on baselining reviews underway in all services now that we have combined the services from the four predecessor Councils. These service plans will be subject to consultation from partners and members of the public through the annual budget consultation cycle.

- 2.1 The Council requires a Corporate Plan to act as a reference point for all stakeholders on its key commitments and objectives and against which its performance can be measured
- 2.2 The plan will be a living document that we will need to review and adapt based on emerging challenges and opportunities. But this first WNC corporate plan reflects some of the key challenges and aspirations discussed prior to vesting day and set out in the administration's manifesto on which members were elected.
- 2.3 The plan is also an important indicator to our partners and potential investors of how we want to work with partners and collaborate on key areas that matter to our residents and will help our area to prosper and thrive.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 Members are asked to:
 - a) Approve the Corporate Plan subject to further review, consultation and stakeholder engagement on the detailed implementation of the priorities within the services, and
 - b) Delegate to the Chief Executive final approval in Consultation with the Leader

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The recommendation is being made in order that West Northants Council sets a clear foundation for its future planning and direction aligned to its stated vision of making West Northants "a great place to live, work, visit and thrive". It is important that the priorities to achieve the Council's vision provide a clear reference point to link all decision making back to and provide a clear direction to inform all service planning.
- 4.2 It is common and best practice for Councils to publish such plans as a means to communicate their priorities, for stakeholders to be clear on what the future holds and for everyone to understand what future success would look like and how it will be measured.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 During 2020 the Shadow Council published blueprints on how services would be delivered and some of the key principles of how we would work going forward. The blueprint received feedback in terms of its priorities from a range of members, committees and members of the public. The

comments and suggestions made were collated and a commitment was made that these would inform the development of a corporate plan for West Northants Council to be published early in its first term. One of the most dominant and persistent areas of feedback about missing areas of focus and priority was in relation to climate change and this was seen as one of the key themes that would need to be addressed in future service plans and design work.

- 5.2 At the end of 2020 the Vision and Values Task and Finish Group also completed its work to set out a proposed vision for our new Council. This was supported by the values developed with a range of stakeholders and both were approved by the Shadow Executive on 12th February 2021.
- 5.3 The approved vision was that West Northants will be a “great place to live, work, visit and thrive”
- 5.4 Since then, work has been undertaken to agree what the vision means in terms of priority areas and the actions and commitments that would need to help realise that vision.
- 5.5 The Corporate Plan sets out six key priorities areas that new administration has set to guide policy, service planning and budget setting going forward. These are:
 - Green and Clean
 - Improved Life chances
 - Connected communities
 - Thriving villages and Towns
 - Economic Development
 - Robust Resource management
- 5.6 Below each we have set out number of commitments to key areas that will help us achieve these priority outcomes setting out what we will do and how we will measure our success.
- 5.7 Going forward all decisions on investments, programmes and detailed service planning will need to link back to and align to the priorities set out in the plan. This will also flow down to each service area and to staff objectives and priorities. We are determined to improve the life chances for everyone in West Northants. This means closing the gap for the most vulnerable members of our communities and ensuring everyone has the opportunity to realise their potential and includes:
 - Allocating money to the things that matter most to people including building more affordable homes, supporting our care leavers, improving the quality of our roads and improving schools provision.
 - Investing in West Northants regeneration and prosperity, by creating homes and jobs for our residents and attracting more external investment in infrastructure, connectivity and growth as part our role in key regional and national initiatives.

- Continuing to deliver efficiencies and deliver more services jointly with our partners across the public sector and through other organisations where that makes sense.
- Encouraging increased spend with local business and use our contracting power for the benefit of communities where possible.
- Incentivising and investing in a cleaner and greener West Northants.

5.8 We also committed to progress joint discussions and new strategic policies in relation to two key shared priorities agreed by all members in the West Northants Shadow Council Meetings that preceded vesting day; the climate change emergency and poverty. Both commitments are included in the Plan and will be early areas of stakeholder collaboration and joint policy development in coming months.

6. Issues and Choices

6.1 The Council's Draft Corporate Plan is set out in Appendix 1. The Council Plan outlines the strategic vision for West Northants Council over the next four years.

6.2 The Council has been formed from four separate predecessor Councils that each had their own corporate plan and reflected their local priorities and responsibilities. But as a new Council responsible for a wide range of services that previously sat across the two tiers of government in the County and as the fourth largest Unitary Council in the United Kingdom it is important that a new plan is set out that recognises this new construct and remit.

6.3 West Northants Council has significant opportunities to improve following the aggregation of services that allow us to work more collaboratively, with less hand-offs and increasing levels of integration in a way that helps our residents, businesses and partners. For example, by bringing adults, wellbeing, housing and communities together in a way that allows us to look at all aspects of a person's life and link up services in a way that allows us to have a greater focus on prevention and early intervention when a person is in crisis. It also allows us to think about all aspects of a place differently and work with partners, town and parish councils and residents to create safe and thriving communities.

6.4 The plan is therefore required as the first formal statement of the intent and commitment of the new Council and to set out where its focus will be as it moves towards longer term planning, service design and transformation.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

7.1.1 At this stage there are no identified resources or financial implications arising from the plan. But any required service changes, transformation and/or investment plans that result from the plan

will form part of the annual budget setting process and inform the Medium-Term Financial Plan that will be developed during 2021 and approved by full Council in February 2022 following consultation.

7.2 **Legal**

There are no legal implications arising from the proposals.

7.3 **Risk**

There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

7.4 **Consultation**

The Constituent parts of the council will be developing service plans during the next four months in response to the Corporate plan priorities and setting out what this will mean in terms of any changes, enhancements and additions to services and any impacts on residents and businesses. These service plans will be subject to consultation from partners and members of the public through the annual budget consultation cycle.

7.5 **Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

7.5.1 The Plan has not yet been considered by the Committee.

7.6 **Climate Impact**

7.6.1 The plan includes the commitment to hold a Climate Summit and this is planned to take place in the first quarter of 2021 due to its importance. At the Summit the question of the climate emergency will be discussed and policy direction set. This will then be translated into an action plan for services and any implications reported back to the Council so any required decisions can be made.

7.7 **Community Impact**

7.7.1 The Plan sets out a number of priorities to help support connected, protected and thriving communities. The impacts are therefore expected to be beneficial but as part of the detailed service planning cycle any specific impacts and changes will be reviewed and subject to consultation as part of the budget setting process.

8. Background Papers

8.1 None