



West  
Northamptonshire  
Council

# Fresh Start

# Bright Future

Corporate Plan  
**2021–2025**



# Our Commitment to West Northamptonshire

**Our Commitment is to work with the residents of West Northants and all Partner organisations, public, private and voluntary sectors, and to use our resources wisely to protect our environment, meet residents' needs for homes and jobs, and ensure that everyone can live well and safely together. West Northants must be a place where everyone thrives.**

West Northants is a great place to live, with wonderful countryside, heritage, leisure opportunities, and many strong established businesses, so it is also a place that has many strengths and attractions for investors, new businesses and visitors.

Whilst a place that has had past challenges, and like all areas now facing some uncertainty as we emerge from the recent pandemic, we firmly believe that it has the opportunity to create a bright future, and we will use our combined strengths to improve the lives of people who live and work in West Northants, to help the area and help everyone here to reach their full potential.

To achieve that ambition, we know that the Council must work with partners across and beyond West Northants, and we commit to do that, in order to improve the services and priorities that are most important to our 405,000 residents.

By leveraging the combined advantages of our geographical position in the heart of the country with the presence of world class industries such as engineering, motorsport, logistics and financial services, we aim to encourage more firms and organisations to invest and grow in West Northants, helping to springboard us to greater prosperity.

We want to be an authority that puts the



environment first and considers the carbon cost in all of our own decision-making, but also encourages and supports others to do the same, help us shape a cleaner and greener West Northants.

As a brand new authority we can shape our journey and destination. This plan sets out our immediate priorities for improvement and the focus for our future ambitions.

Our first task must be our COVID recovery; fully restoring all of our services, adapting to new ways of working and helping us to build back better and to drive our economic recovery.

We need to continue making improvements to our children's services and will achieve this by working with the recently established Children's Trust, and with schools to raise educational performance. We'll seize the opportunity to work closely with health and other partners.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Sumner', written over a horizontal line.

# Our Strategy



**priorities**  
**that will make**  
**West Northants**  
**a place to**  
**thrive...**

**This Strategy sets out our collective vision for making West Northants a great place to live, work, visit and thrive.**

It's for everyone in West Northants – our residents, the voluntary sector, our communities and for social enterprise, businesses and partner organisation.

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

As the national effort to fight Covid-19 continues, West Northamptonshire Council must focus on playing our part to create a sustainable recovery. We aim to build back better and harness the strengths of West Northants people, businesses and places, to create an inclusive and productive area where everyone and every place can thrive.

We can only achieve our vision using partnerships and collaboration within our communities and with public and private partners. Our strategy provides the blueprint for the future of our services, setting out how we will work with partners and alongside local people, to unlock our combined potential.

We aim to use all available infrastructure funding that connects people and places across our region. We will bring to life the plans we have for the regeneration of our towns and for building more affordable housing.

By thinking about our whole area and whole population we can set out the best way to bring about change, so that we make a real difference to the lives of real people. We will use this approach in our strategy as we address climate change, education, health & wellbeing, 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.

# 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

# West Northants in Numbers



**£917m**

Budget in 2020-21  
including schools  
**£326.6m Net**



**405,000**

Population



**73,000**

Over 65s

**21%** Increase  
in over 65s over  
next decade



**91,000**

Under 18s

**2%** Increase in  
children aged 0-19  
in next decade



**174,260**

Households



**165** Town &  
Parish Councils



**184**  
Schools



**1707** Council  
buildings & Assets



**2,454km**  
Roads &  
carriageways



**£730.00**  
Median Rent  
for a 2 bed



**£566.30**  
Average Wage

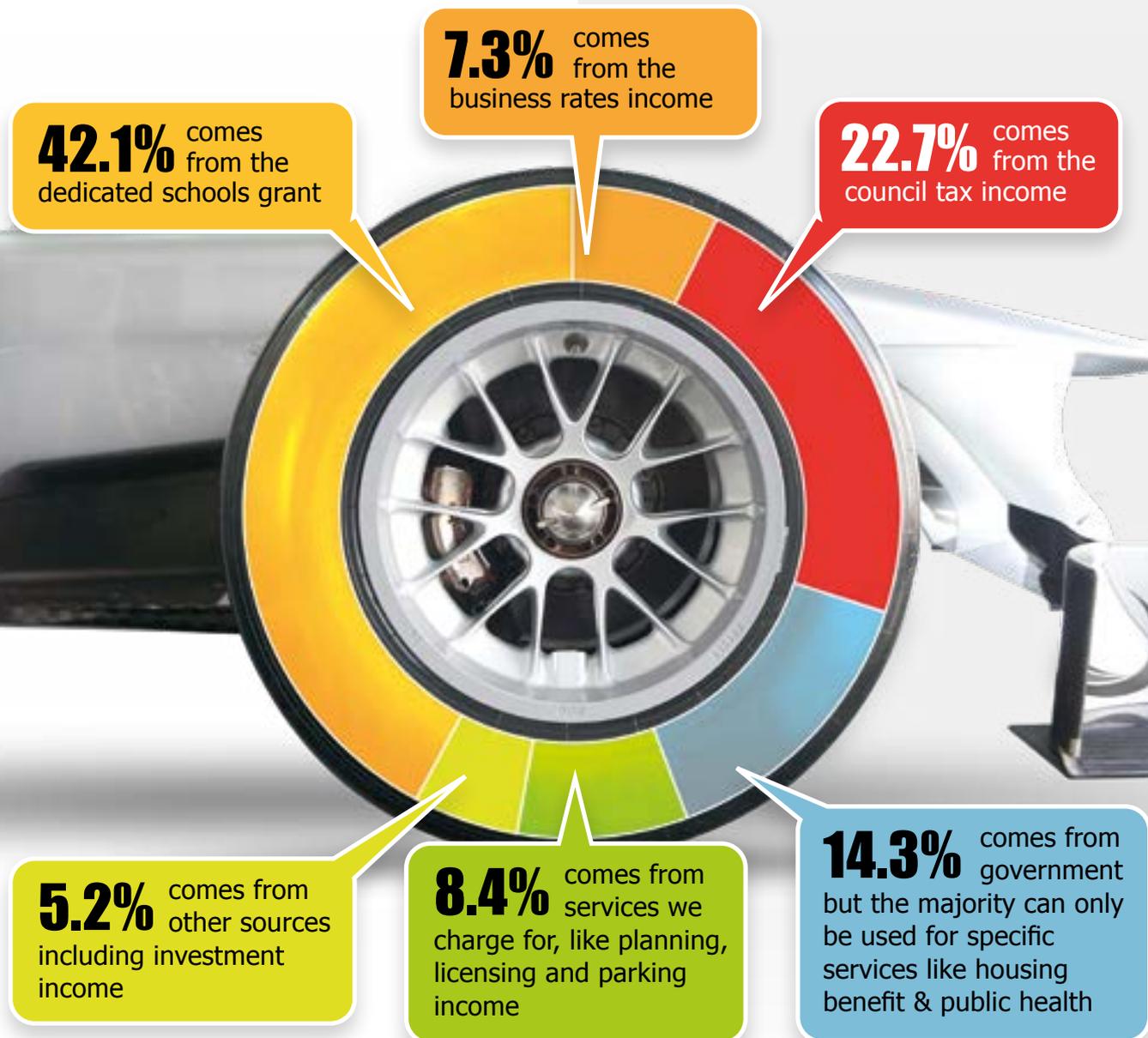
# Using Our Resources Wisely

**We don't  
get all the  
money from  
Council Tax...**

We have an annual gross budget of £917m (including our government school grant) which we use to deliver services to more than 400,000 residents and over 1 million visitors a year.

We manage 1707 buildings and assets and employ almost 3,000 people. We support many more local jobs through our contracts with local business and suppliers.

High performance is one of our core values and that means getting the basics right, using our resources wisely and being efficient.





**Our vision**

**is to make**

**West Northants**

**a great place**

**to live, work,**

**visit and**

**thrive:**

**A place where there is opportunity for all** – where children are given the best start in life and vulnerable children are supported and protected. A place where all young people grow up qualified and inspired to succeed.

**A place where people are proud to live**, with strong sustainable communities, decent homes, a fulfilling job, and stress-free travel through well connected places.

**A place where people are supported to live independent, self-sufficient lives** and where everyone has the best life chances. A place where services are joined up and if you need a helping hand you'll get it.

**A place with a thriving and prosperous economy** that draws in investment, visitors and talent. A place where we have modern towns but where rural character is cherished.

**A place at the forefront of action on climate change** with clean air, sustainable growth and a flourishing natural environment.

# What are we going to do?

We are determined to improve the life chances for everyone in West Northamptonshire. This means closing the gap for the most vulnerable members of our communities and ensuring everyone has the opportunity to realise their potential. We will:

- **Allocate 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.
- **Invest 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 we play our role in key regional and national initiatives.
- **Continue to deliver efficiencies and deliver more services jointly** with our partners across the public sector and through other organisations where it makes sense for us to do so.
- **Encourage spending with more local businesses** and use our contracting power for the benefit of communities where possible.
- **Incentivise and invest** in a cleaner and greener West Northants.

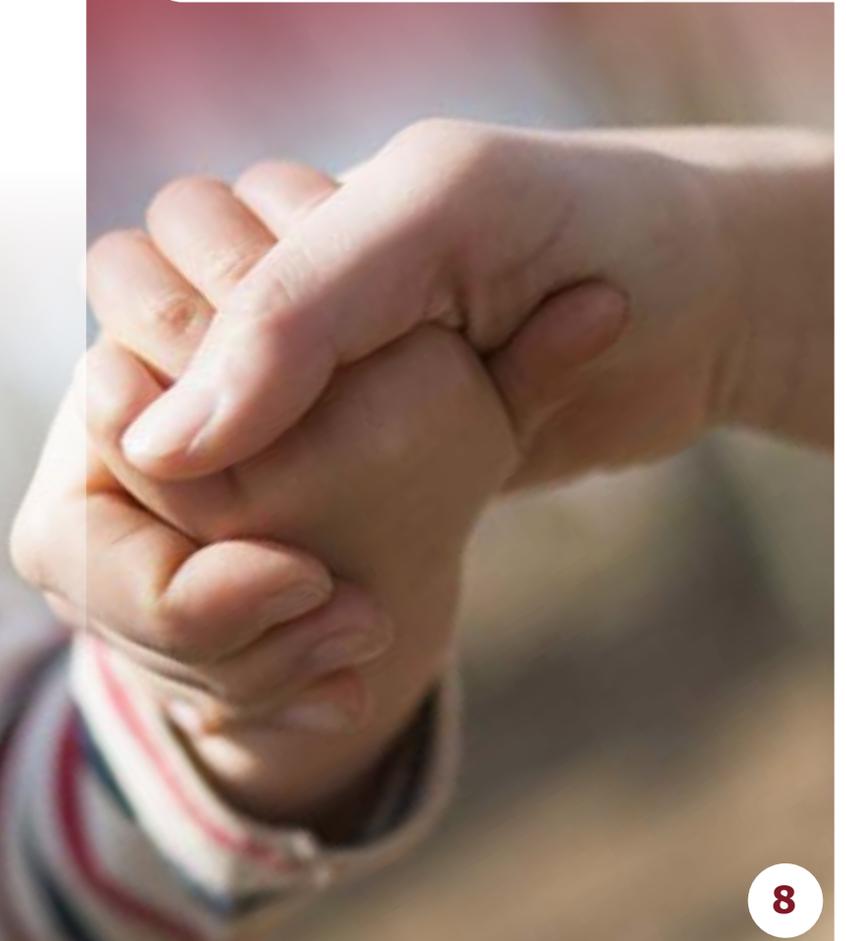
## How will we measure success?

**%** of our residents satisfied with the way that the Council Runs things

**%** of residents who agree that the Council provides value for money.

**%** of Council spend with local businesses

**No** slippage in our plans, investment and savings beyond agreed tolerances.



Our priority:

# Clean and Green

**We will become the most environmentally friendly Council that residents have ever had, with a clear ambition to become carbon neutral.**

We will reduce carbon emissions and pollution to air, land and water. We want to generate more low carbon energy locally, be more energy efficient and smarter in our sustainable use of resources.

We want to create an outstanding natural environment, fit for future generations – places which our people can enjoy and where businesses want to invest. We're investing in our cultural offering to attract visitors and benefit residents. We're also continuing to invest in sport and leisure to promote wellbeing and healthy, active lifestyles.



## Working with partners in 5 years we will:

- Hold a 'Climate Action Now Summit' in 2021 exploring how we incentivise residents and businesses to be energy efficient or self-sufficient and to explore green energy production
- Only contract with partners that are socially responsible
- Increase charging points across West Northants
- Improve our recycling processes
- Increase the development of wildlife species and improve the appearance of our towns and villages
- Maintain our parks and green spaces to a high standard and make them an amenity for all
- Plant more trees, especially on Council land
- Energy efficient homes

## What Success Will Look Like:

- Carbon neutral by 2030
- Increased recycling
- All council vehicles, where possible, are electric.
- Green flag accreditation parks and green spaces

Our priority:

# Improved Life Chances

**We will focus on early help services to ensure our children have the best start in life and parents have the right support and environments in which to raise their families.**

We care for our vulnerable children as a priority and duty. Our Childrens Trust will provide timely and proportionate support to keep our children safe. If we need to intervene we will work with families and children to help them achieve their outcomes and listen to their voice. As corporate parents we are committed to making sure all our looked after children thrive, develop life skills and aspire with our support.

We will invest in good quality local secondary and primary schools and special education facilities that drive higher attainment and help our children work hard towards bright futures. This includes developing strong educational links and forums that help drive attainment and support strong, future job prospects.

We will support adults in West Northamptonshire to live independent and self-sufficient lives for as long as possible. Where, they are vulnerable or lack a support network, we will provide the support they need. We will work with health in more integrated ways ensuring our residents can "chase well, stay well and live well".

We will tackle homelessness through the provision of suitable accommodation and by providing support to help people turn their lives around, into employment and more settled accommodation. We will support our public sector key workers, armed forces veterans and their families to access services and support when resettling post service.



## Working with partners in 5 years we will:

- Support our Children's Trust improvement journey
- Adopt and progress early years' prevention and intervention offers to help children get the best start in life
- Drive an increase fostering and support foster families
- Invest in secondary schools and new primary schools in our urban extensions
- Provide facilities for Special Educational Needs closer to home
- Work closely with health partners to keep people safe and well in their own homes as long as possible, avoid unnecessary and lengthy hospital stays
- Grow our Community Hubs providing public services at the heart of communities
- Support residents to have healthier lifestyles and reduce inequalities
- Develop an anti-poverty strategy

## What Success Will Look Like:

- Our Children's Trust is classed as Good by OFSTED
- Increased number of children achieve good GCSE passes
- Care Leavers Charter in place by 2022
- We are recognised as an age-friendly place with joined up health and care
- Nobody is forced to sleep rough in West Northamptonshire
- We have an anti poverty strategy that considers how we support those facing food poverty and food and financial challenge, to get them back on their feet and avoid crisis.

Our priority:

# Connected Communities

**We will progress our upgrades to major roads and networks to create more hassle-free travel in and through our area, to improve commuting and accessibility, and to reduce traffic and air pollution in key areas.**

We will improve the quality of our roads and the timeliness of pothole assessment and the associated repairs process.

We will progress an integrated transport plan – reviewing the use and coverage of our local bus network including the rural coverage. This review will be aligned to our home to school transport strategy, improving coverage and connectivity. West Northants will encourage green travel across bus and cycle lanes and develop a wider network of charging points that support the increased use of electric vehicles.

We will ensure that locally we benefit from HS2 and improved East - West Rail networks to ensure that Northampton commuters get the best facilities. We will leverage the additional capacity that these new lines bring, while ensuring we mitigate any negative impact on our communities during construction.

We're progressing our digital strategy and digital infrastructure plan. This is to help achieve our ambition for all residents and businesses to have superfast broadband within 5 years and to enable us to develop innovative digital technologies to support first class services and thriving enterprises within our area.



## Working with partners in 5 years we will:

- Improve road quality
- Progress the Farthinghoe By-pass and Northampton Northern Orbital Road
- Aim for 85% of houses to have gigabit connectivity by 2025
- Increase charging points and energy self sufficiency
- Improve rural connectivity
- Complete the North West Relief Road and Towcester Relief Road

## What Success Will Look Like:

- Our roads repair programme will be a beacon of efficiency
- New West Northants Bus and Rail Strategy will be completed within two years
- Increased gigabit connectivity across our communities



Our priority:

# Thriving Villages & Towns

**As the traditional high street setting is rapidly changing we will support small businesses by providing incentives where possible and support for growth and by encouraging the use of locally sourced products that support local jobs.**

We will continue to make improvements to the town centres of Northampton, Towcester, Brackley and Daventry which are critical to our economic recovery and success; so that they become quality places to live and work. Using the recent funding awarded to progress our Northampton Forward masterplan, we will focus on attracting the private investment now needed to make our vision a reality. We will revitalise the town centre to make it a thriving market town and a great place to live, work and visit.

Over the next term we're putting in place plans to build 500 new Council homes, turning empty houses into new homes, working with private and social landlords to improve standards and making our homes more energy efficient. Our planning consent applications will have the highest possible number of social and affordable houses on each site and require developers to deliver commitments for the supporting community infrastructure to support them.

We will work in partnership with communities, the police and voluntary agencies to ensure our communities are safe places to live with less antisocial behaviour – places where people are proud to live and support each other.

We will balance bustling towns with our beautiful villages and rural settings. Being home to some of the finest stately homes and a rich heritage, we will look to grow our visitor economy beyond the 1 million visitors we have today.



## Working with partners in 5 years we will:

- Complete the west strategic infrastructure plan setting out our roadmap for development
- Drive the economic development and recovery from the pandemic as a key priority and we will build back better
- Look at business support grants, flexible accommodation options and start up locations that utilise our empty sites and bring in business rates
- We will take our seat at the heart of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc discussions and ensure we secure local benefit from its ambitions and plans
- Partner with local voluntary, community and social enterprise sector organisations to enable communities to support themselves and co-design the public services they need, to increase inclusiveness and community cohesion, and reduce loneliness and isolation

## What Success Will Look Like:

- Northampton Town will become a hub for visitors and shoppers wanting to enjoy its speciality shoe services and cultural richness
- Together our towns and rural charm will make West Northants a destination to go to, not just a place to drive through
- We have built 500 new Council homes



Our priority:

# Economic Development

**We want West Northants to become a place where everyone can thrive and the Council will help provide the framework and conditions to make this ambition a reality.**

We will work with employers, colleges and agencies to give people the skills and qualifications that businesses really want, to get more people into better-paid jobs.

We will invest in strengthening existing, and creating new, employment locations so that all parts of west Northants are able to contribute to, and benefit from, growth as part of a thriving area.

We host world class industry and service providers in our area including high tech, engineering motorsports, logistics, financial services and have a valuable heritage as the home of shoes. We're investing in growing our leading business sectors and driving improved productivity and pay across the economy. We are making it easier to set up new enterprises and helping existing businesses to develop and grow.

We sit in the middle of the Oxford – Milton Keynes – Cambridge Arc and will use its development as an opportunity to actively drive growth, seek investment and progress infrastructure developments.

Town centres are critical to our economic recovery and success, so we will be working hard to improve them so that they become quality places to live and work. Northampton Town will become a hub for visitors wanting to enjoy its heritage and cultural richness as the largest market town in the UK.



## Working with partners in 5 years we will:

- Drive the economic development and recovery from the pandemic as a key priority
- Look at business support grants, flexible accommodation options and start up locations that utilise our empty sites and bring in business rates
- We will take our seat at the heart of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc discussions and ensure we secure local benefit from its ambitions and plans
- Partner with local voluntary, community and social enterprise sector organisations to enable communities to support themselves and co-design the public services they need, increasing inclusiveness and community cohesion, and reducing loneliness and isolation

## What Success Will Look Like:

- West Northants is recognised as a great place to work
- West Northants investors prospectus published
- We implement the Northampton Forward master plan
- We have secured levelling up funding for our area



Our priority:

# Robust Resource Management

**We will set a council tax rate that is both fair and which allows us to deliver the public services people deserve. Residents Council Tax bills will not rise by more than £99 in any year (for a band D property).**

We will seek to build reserves to create a stable financial set up that protects residents whatever the financial climate. Our financial prudence will make us confident in our long term decision making.

We will ensure that we achieve value for money from every pound we spend of tax payers' money.

We will optimise Council Tax and other debt collection ensuring that everyone contributes at a level that's appropriate for their circumstances. Debt will be managed sympathetically and we will develop an anti-poverty strategy that balances supporting those that cannot support themselves to access advice and help, but makes sure that those that can and should pay, do so.



## Working with partners in 5 years we will:

- Have sustainable finances
- Maintain strong and prudent financial management
- Have a clear and robust process for all investment decisions showing clear rationale, return and funding
- Secure external funding and access all relevant grants to support our growth and plans

## What Success Will Look Like:

- By the end of the first term we will have a reserve that would sustain a Council in an emergency for many months
- Improved collection rates and reduced debt
- We have an anti-poverty strategy in place



# Making it Happen

**This strategy  
sets out a  
bold vision,  
but we have  
to make it  
happen...**

**We believe there are five ingredients that will turn our strategy into reality:**

## **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

## Values and Behaviours

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 local 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.

