



Securing Northampton's Future

**Corporate Plan
2017-2022**



Northampton is a growing Town. It is growing in its attractiveness to businesses, residents, students and visitors. It is one of the more successful towns in England.

This growth is leading to a transformation in the local economy and in the quality of life offered to everyone who lives in the Borough. Northampton has one of the highest employment levels in the country and also creates more businesses than any other town or city outside London (Cities Outlook 2017, published by Centre for Cities, 2017). We have some great businesses here and the positive enterprise climate that is provided in Northampton and the opportunities afforded by Northampton Alive, the Enterprise Zone, and other development in and around the Borough give cause for continued optimism about the town's economic performance.

Northampton is becoming ever more a University town, following the founding of the current University just over 10 years ago. The forthcoming move to a new purpose-built campus near the town centre will give the town some of the best and most modern higher education facilities. Already the University is growing in strength as a key focal point for the future of Northampton and with such massive investment this can only continue.

Supporting this growth and establishing Northampton ever more as a place to come and visit and stay and live, the town's cultural offer is also coming forward in leaps and bounds. The nationally and internationally renowned Royal and Derngate, with its wide cultural offer, sits at the heart of the growing and exciting cultural quarter. The development of a new and expanded Museum and Art Gallery alongside creative and cultural businesses, a new home for the National Leather Collection making it accessible to visitors, and quality hotels and food, is driving a renaissance in the attractiveness of Northampton.

Where people live is also changing in Northampton. Not only are new housing developments happening, but the Council is working hard with its partners to ensure that as much as possible of this housing is affordable whilst also working to improve its own housing stock with our housing partner Northampton Partnership Homes, and working with landlords and others to improve the private rented housing offer in the town. At the same time the health and wellbeing of residents is being promoted through a wide range of initiatives aimed at getting and keeping people healthy and feeling well across the Borough, including through our excellent partner Northampton Leisure Trust.

More people are coming to live in Northampton every year. The population is also becoming older, with more diverse needs and support requirements. New development brings pressures as well as opportunities, not least in addressing the infrastructure needed to support growth. The Council will continue to advocate that growth and infrastructure need to be managed well together if growth is to be successful.

Change also brings a considerable challenge to the doors of the Council and our partners in Northampton and around the county and region. The Council will support positive enhancement of the town and the county. This corporate plan spells out the steps, many of which arise from the manifesto the public voted for nearly two years ago, that the Borough Council will take - working with partners - to deliver this vision of a brighter more attractive place for Northamptonians to live, work and play in. Northampton is alive with enterprise, innovation and opportunity.

This is an inclusive vision for the town. There are exciting opportunities for all here. Public services and their private partners are working together to ensure that the future works for all, whatever their needs or circumstances. Economic, social and community wellbeing go together and should be accessible to all, particularly in tough times. We look to play our role as a Council in ensuring this and we look to our partners and the community at large to equally perform their role. Comparable to our peer towns we want Northampton to be a positive place to be young or old.

All public services face financial constraint over the coming years. For the Borough Council this means that in 2021/22 we have a forecast gap in our net General Fund budget of 18% or about £5m compared to this year. We are not alone in this challenge and the Council is committed to ensuring that we plan ahead to manage this downturn whilst still making progress towards the ever better Northampton that we want and the people need.

Doing this means that in addition to looking to support Northampton as a place, support local people in their lives, and deliver key services and projects, the Council must also look to how it can work more cheaply and efficiently to maintain our proud record of balancing the books for the public. This Corporate Plan therefore also spells out the business development priorities of the Council.

We must continue to drive to gain the benefits of growth to develop and provide public services in the future, meeting ambitious targets set out in the latest national financial settlement for local government.

We must further strengthen partnership with other organisations, building on our record of combining and sharing with other Councils. Whilst maintaining our community leadership role, we will work to combine the delivery of services wherever that makes most sense for the future. We must also look to empower and engage communities to ensure that where finance is not available now or in the future communities have sufficient resilience, ability and strength to support and develop themselves with encouragement and facilitation from the Council and our partners.

Plans continue to be developed for how the Council will use these business development priorities to meet the financial challenge ahead and continue to balance the books going forward.

We recognise the importance of good governance in driving to achieve our priorities and in order to achieve improvement in this we have adopted a Governance Action Plan with implementation overseen by the Council through its Audit Committee. Implementation and further development of the Plan will ensure high standards of governance including in decision-making, risk management, financial control and assurance, accountability and ensure compliance with these expected standards throughout the Council.

Nothing in this plan is achievable without the hard work and skills of the Council's workforce. They work constantly to deliver public services in difficult times. They need to be recognised for their efforts and it is our responsibility to work with them to develop a culture which empowers them and enables the Council to continue to improve for the benefit of the public. This culture change programme is a central part of our commitments in this corporate plan.

Northampton is on the right track. Our plans will further develop over the coming years, but we plan with confident expectation that in difficult times both the public of Northampton and your Council can and will rise to the challenges ahead.

Councillor Jonathan Nunn
Leader of the Council

February 2017

Our Priorities

The corporate plan priorities are cascaded through all that we do and deliver:

Northampton Alive

- A vibrant successful town for now and the future

Safer Communities

- Making you feel safe and secure

Housing for Everyone

- Helping those that need it to have a safe and secure home
- Ensuring that a buoyant market provides a wide choice of homes for all ages

Protecting Our Environment

- A clean and attractive town for residents and visitors

Love Northampton

- Enhancing leisure activities for local people and encouraging participation

Working Hard and Spending your Money Wisely

- Delivering quality modern services

Improving Our Governance

- Implementing the Governance Action Plan

Priority: Northampton Alive

A vibrant successful town for now and the future

- Northampton to be an excellent place to do business with a talented workforce that meets the needs and expectations of existing and potential employers in the town and a successful Enterprise Zone
- Working with our partners in local and national government, the health sector, the community and the private sector to lobby for infrastructure that is appropriate for sustainable growth including working with the County Council and other infrastructure providers.
- Projecting Northampton onto a regional and national stage to promote the town as a great place to live, work, shop and do business, working with partners to promote the town, supporting improvements to the Town Centre and supporting the economic development of Northampton
- Promoting economic growth

Northampton Alive commitments

- Support the development plans for the University of Northampton
- Continue to redevelop Northampton Castle railway station
- Continue to develop and grow the Enterprise Zone
- Regularly communicate and meet with market traders and work with them to develop and maintain a vibrant market. Freeze rent for market traders
- Bring forward development plans on the Greyfriars site
- Promote and support the Business Incentive Scheme
- Support Business Improvement Districts in Town Centre and Brackmills
- Promote and enhance the towns key gateways
- Continue to support the local Cycle CoNNect scheme
- Continue to support Delapre Abbey

- Support the delivery of the St James Mill Road link
- Work towards completing the redevelopment of the St Edmund's site
- Have planning policies that include infrastructure first and that oppose inappropriate development on the edge of the borough
- Work to bring full control of Planning Policy back for the West Northamptonshire Joint Strategy Planning Committee back to Northampton
- Ensure that the emerging Local Plan reflects local priorities
- Continue free parking offer in council owned car parks
- Continue to support and promote the economy of the town
- Work with partners and developers to deliver the North West bypass – the much needed infrastructure - at the earliest opportunity

Priority: Safer Communities

Making you feel safe and secure

- Northampton to be a great place to live, feeling safe and secure, and without fear

Safer Communities commitments

- Review the CCTV service with a view of adopting a new and more cost effective approach
- Support the Community Payback scheme
- Use licensing powers to ensure the people of Northampton are kept safe
- Work with the Police and other partners to reduce begging and street drinking and take a hard line on intimidating behavior by 'chuggers' through the Public Spaces Protection Order
- Continue to work in partnership with the police to reduce crime and make the town safer through the Community Safety Partnership
- Support the Women's, Youth, Pensioner's, Disabled, Diverse, LGBT Forums and Parish Councils through their new Forum, for the benefit of communities and to address local priorities
- Promote social inclusion in Partnership with other agencies and the community

Priority: Protecting Our Environment

A clean and attractive town for residents and visitors

- Work with local communities to keep Northampton clear, tidy and well maintained

Protecting Our Environment commitments

- Continue to work with the Council's environmental service provider to try to ensure the best service for the people of Northampton
- Continue to raise the standard of cleanliness in the town centre
- Maintain high standards in our parks and green spaces and increase the number of Green Flag awards
- Retain and encourage both existing and new Park Management Committees, to ensure they give the community an active say in the running of our parks and address specific park needs and ensure they address specific park needs
- Work with the Council's environmental service provider to try to ensure the best service for the people of Northampton
- Commit to holding a wide range of events in each park such as the bands in park programme in Abington Park and to view each park has a focal point for community activity and as a 'community centre without a roof'
- Enhance the standard of play equipment in parks and play areas by introducing a specific budget for play equipment and encouraging grant funding for new areas of play equipment
- Support residents wanting a new allotment and to work with existing committees to help improve current allotment sites
- Improve the standard of tree maintenance by implementing the enhanced tree management programme
- Continue to support the Neighbourhood Wardens and Park Ranger Services and to embrace technology to help them better undertake their duties
- Continue with Northampton in Bloom and participation in Britain in Bloom to help promote community involvement in improving the look and feel of the town

- Adopt a zero-tolerance to fly-tipping and dog fouling, supported by third party enforcement
- Commission a new environment services provider, in readiness for when the current contract comes to an end in June 2018
- The Council will develop its low emissions strategy

Priority: Housing for Everyone

Helping those that need it to have a safe and secure home

- All neighbourhoods to be desirable places to live with homes appropriate for people at different points in their lives, attractive and well-kept buildings and open spaces, good roads and public transport and a comprehensive range of community events and facilities.
- Continue to manage the impact of welfare reform and other pressures
- New, affordable and decent housing, in accordance with a new Housing Needs Analysis
- Help people to achieve and maintain independence, including through the Disabled Facility Grant

Housing for Everyone commitments

- Support Northampton Partnership Homes delivering key services to housing tenants on behalf of the Council as landlord
- Protect the role of mobility and older persons' housing
- Transform housing services using the wellbeing model
- Continue to identify new opportunities to build new council homes
- Protect residents against inappropriate Houses of Multiple Occupancy and bring all planning applications to Committee
- Introduce a star rating system for private landlords
- Create a Social Lettings Agency working with private landlords
- Take a tough stance on criminal, rogue and irresponsible landlords
- Taking a proactive and prompt approach to dealing with illegal encampments
- Safeguard Call Care service and further extend Call Care to private users
- Continue to implement the Rough Sleepers Strategy
- Manage the increasing demand for temporary accommodation by seeking new ways to meet housing need, such as the social lettings agency
- Take a tough stance on anti-social and irresponsible tenants who adversely affect the quality of life of their neighbours

Priority: Love Northampton

Enhancing leisure activities for local people and encouraging participation

- Northampton to have a great community spirit, with people actively participating in local democracy, taking pride in Northampton, its environment and its communities
- Encourage high quality cultural and sporting events and attractions for residents and visitors to experience, with a range of places for visitors to stay
- Children and young people should have access to a range of activities to enable them to make a positive contribution to their communities and to realise their potential and talent
- Local people having good health and wellbeing with the Council playing a leading role in tackling the underlying root causes of poor health and the issues that affect wellbeing

Love Northampton commitments

- Work with the cultural quarter partners to provide a vibrant, exciting and welcoming offer for visitors
- Undertake Museum expansion project, consider a Museum Trust for Northampton, and support the National Leathercraft Collection
- Redevelop the Vulcan Works as part of the Cultural Quarter
- Support the towns sports clubs and continue to address match day parking issues
- Promote tourism for Northampton
- Celebrate the town's history, heritage and culture
- Develop and implement a Cultural Strategy and Action Plan
- Ensure Armed Forces Community Covenant continues as a key Council policy

- Provide a range of quality events to support the economic vibrancy of the town
- Open One Stop Shop at the Guildhall on Saturday mornings when required
- Retain Councillor Community Fund
- Work with Voluntary Impact Northampton and others to strengthen the local voluntary community sector
- Support and encourage volunteering

Priority: Working Hard and Spending Your Money Wisely

Delivering quality modern services

The Council at all times aims to:

- ensure the Council is economic, efficient and effective
- get the best from the resources available and develop an agile workforce culture
- recognise, support and empower Council employees better through changing the Council's culture to do so

Working Hard and Spending Your Money Wisely commitments

- Implement the culture change mission, vision and values as developed by the employees of the Council and continue to transform the culture of the Council accordingly
- Senior management levels to be proportionate
- Retain Living Wage commitment to directly employed staff and consider its application in future contracts
- Support apprenticeship schemes across the Borough Council
- Retain transparent approach on consultants and limit their use
- Support local businesses who want to work with the council
- Manage, monitor and review the implementation of the Governance Action Plan
- Seek the best possible Unitary Governance solution for Northampton

Our priorities are financially supported by the Councils budget process. Each of the key programmes of work are planned and costed to ensure delivery, value for money and sustainability. The Corporate Plan, Service Plans and projects are monitored and reported regularly to management, to Cabinet and to relevant Committees.

Business Development Priorities

Facing the financial challenge ahead

In accordance with the introduction to this plan, it is outlined that there are three business development priorities that support the corporate plan and contribute to managing the Council's future financial challenge. The Council aims to be able to continue to deliver for the public of Northampton but must do so at a substantially lower net cost.

Empowering Communities

Delivering a better Northampton relies upon the engagement of communities in shaping their own futures with support and community leadership from the Council, its councillors and partners. As resources decline it is essential that communities are empowered to be part of delivering change and services.

We will aim to do this by establishing actively involved communities that have a strong sense of ownership, responsibility and local pride and who are fully empowered, equipped and supported to improve the neighbourhoods where they live to help make everywhere in Northampton a great place to live, visit, work, study and invest.

This priority will build on existing positive work between councillors and Parish Councils, residents groups, interest groups and community organisation. Empowering communities will enhance wellbeing as well as enable future challenges to be addressed.

<p>Economic Growth</p>	<p>Economic growth in Northampton is essential to meet the financial targets set in the national financial settlement for local government and to develop new income to support local public services both in the Borough and the County. Northampton’s track record on delivering growth is excellent and needs to continue to be driven forward.</p> <p>Building on the success of Northampton Alive to date, the Borough Council will continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ lead on the development and delivery of the Northampton Alive programme, which includes key physical projects as part of the overall regeneration programme for the Borough. □ provide a comprehensive business support and growth service for both new and existing enterprises investing into the Borough. This includes available land and property advice, together with other support services such as the Business Incentive scheme □ work with other key stakeholders to meet the towns strategic regeneration aims including the delivery of the Northampton Waterside Enterprise Zone □ provide a corporate asset function which oversees both existing stock whilst advising on strategic opportunities and regeneration projects
<p>Partnership Working</p>	<p>The Council has a record of working in partnership with other local authorities, community organisation and partners to deliver a wide range of services. To meet the financial challenge ahead whilst still delivering a better Northampton, the Council will also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ drive to release the benefits of working and combining together in partnership in order to strive towards increased efficiency, reduce duplication and maximise benefits and opportunities □ work proactively and collaboratively with partners to improve the housing, health and wellbeing of people living and working in the Borough and ensure that Northampton is a great place to live, visit, work, study and invest □ build strong and effective relationships with partners , based on a coherent, consistent and clearly defined approach to partnership working, in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness and provide better outcomes