



**Northamptonshire  
County Council**

# **The Council Plan 2019-2021**

## **Conversation Northamptonshire**

## Leader's Foreword

I am very pleased to present our new Council Plan which sets out how we will stabilise the performance and budget of Northamptonshire County Council. Over the next twelve months we will be doing this by building on the progress made to date, whilst transforming as an organisation. The Plan features how we will transform services so they are sustainable, high quality and achieve the desired outcomes for the residents of Northamptonshire. This will be done whilst we prepare for the transition to the proposed reorganisation of local government in the county.



We are reaching the end of a challenging period for the organisation. We are taking significant decisions towards improvement and our progress has been recognised. Personally, I would like to acknowledge publicly the huge input and the contribution of all our employees in making this transformation happen and I am looking forward to further progress together.

At its heart, this Plan is about Northamptonshire and although it may have a limited timeframe, what matters is the vital role Northamptonshire County Council still has to play in providing services for the benefit of its the 740,000 residents. We will also be an advocate for Northamptonshire on the national stage.

As the Leader of your Council, my ambition is clear: only by working together, as residents, Members of Parliament, public sector organisations, businesses and communities, can we create a strong, sustainable and vibrant county of which we can all be proud.

Cllr Matt Golby

Leader of Northamptonshire County Council

## Introduction

This document sets out the direction of travel for the County Council, our priorities for the next two years and the context in which we will be operating. It builds on the progress made over the past few months, and sets out the practical measures we are putting in place to ensure services are sustainable.

## Our Vision for Northamptonshire

Our vision is a county where we all look after each other and take responsibility, where the vulnerable are protected and supported, and where the people who can help themselves receive the assistance they need to stay independent and healthy.

We can only do this in partnership with other public sector organisations (such as the seven District and Borough Councils, the local NHS bodies, Northamptonshire Police), private sector businesses who have a vital role to play in the economic health of the county, the voluntary and community sector and you.



*Brixworth Country Park*

As such, we see the future of public services in the county as being shaped by closer working with partner agencies – our focus will be not only on aligning our priorities

with the seven District and Borough Councils, but also on identifying opportunities to integrate with Health and Northamptonshire Police. By starting to plan, design and deliver in collaboration with colleagues in the two general hospitals, primary and community health, Police and emergency services and others, we can be more responsive to the needs of residents, deliver better value for money and build resilient and reliable public services in the county.

We are also committed to continuing our work with local schools and education providers to support the delivery of high calibre education at all life stages. This will be in line with the growth strategy for the county, so that Northamptonshire is attractive to businesses, its residents can achieve economic prosperity and the economy can thrive.

## Conversation Northamptonshire

Our role as an organisation is to act as promoters of people's best interests, making it easier for everyone to reach their potential, take an active role in shaping the place, and facilitating real positive change in the county.

Northamptonshire's residents are crucial to our common success as a county. We all share pride in the heritage and history of Northamptonshire, belief in the ability of the people to build united and vibrant communities, and a strong desire to improve outcomes for everyone.

This enhanced relationship with residents relies on a new conversation in which we are all partners, with equally important roles to play. This is a collaborative model where the Council's role is to help join the dots between residents and private or public services, and to shape Northamptonshire the place.

We want to set out both sides of the deal, so that the Council is accountable to its residents, and residents share accountability towards each other.

As such, we will

- Continue to improve how we operate so that we deliver value for money and live within our means

- Prioritise the needs of the vulnerable children and adults amongst us
- Make it easier for residents and communities to do all they can to help themselves and each other
- Help create the right environment for businesses to thrive and the economy to grow
- Provide you with the information you need to make the right choices for you and your family
- Listen to your feedback and use it to improve what we do.

In return, we ask that you

- Use the information and advice available to make the right choices for yourself, your family and your community
- Take up every opportunity to help yourselves so that limited resources are available for those people who can't help themselves
- Play an active role in your community
- Take pride in your community and the place you live
- Lead a healthy lifestyle
- Play your role in safeguarding those who are vulnerable in your community
- Support local businesses.

## The context

After a couple of difficult years, in which residents of the county and staff of the Council have seen a lot of change, we now have a new leadership and executive team in place. We are now in a period of stabilisation and want to build a strong foundation upon which to transform vital services, live within our financial means and prepare positively for the future. We know the extent of the challenge and we know how important it will be for everyone to play their role, grasp the opportunity and make a difference. The next two years offer a number of significant challenges, but also huge opportunities to turn things around.

With a stable organisation and a sustainable cost base we will work alongside our partners to move positively towards the creation of two unitary organisations in the county, as proposed to the Government. We welcome the opportunity to create

unitary structures in the county, as other areas of the country have already moved out of the two tier structure to the benefit of public services, and now Northamptonshire has the chance to do the same.



*Activities in our Libraries*

By removing the barriers so inherent in the two tier structure, there is real opportunity for us to further improve services so that they are relevant and cost effective for our residents. For example, in a single tier authority it is easier to align housing and social care services so that the beneficiaries of these services benefit from a joined-up offer. The collection and disposal of household waste is delivered through a number of contracts and by County and District and Borough Councils, who all play a role in a part of the process. Joining up these services provides the opportunity for control over the end to end process which can have recycling benefits and cost efficiencies, delivering better value for money. As such, we are awaiting with interest the decision of Central Government in relation to the future of Local Government in the county.

Of course this is likely to be a significant change - we must not lose sight of the fact that vital public services are what really matters to our residents and not necessarily

which organisation provides them. To design them starting from a clean slate is a wonderful opportunity to maximise the benefits of integrated front line services.

The pillars on which we will structure our work over the next two years are

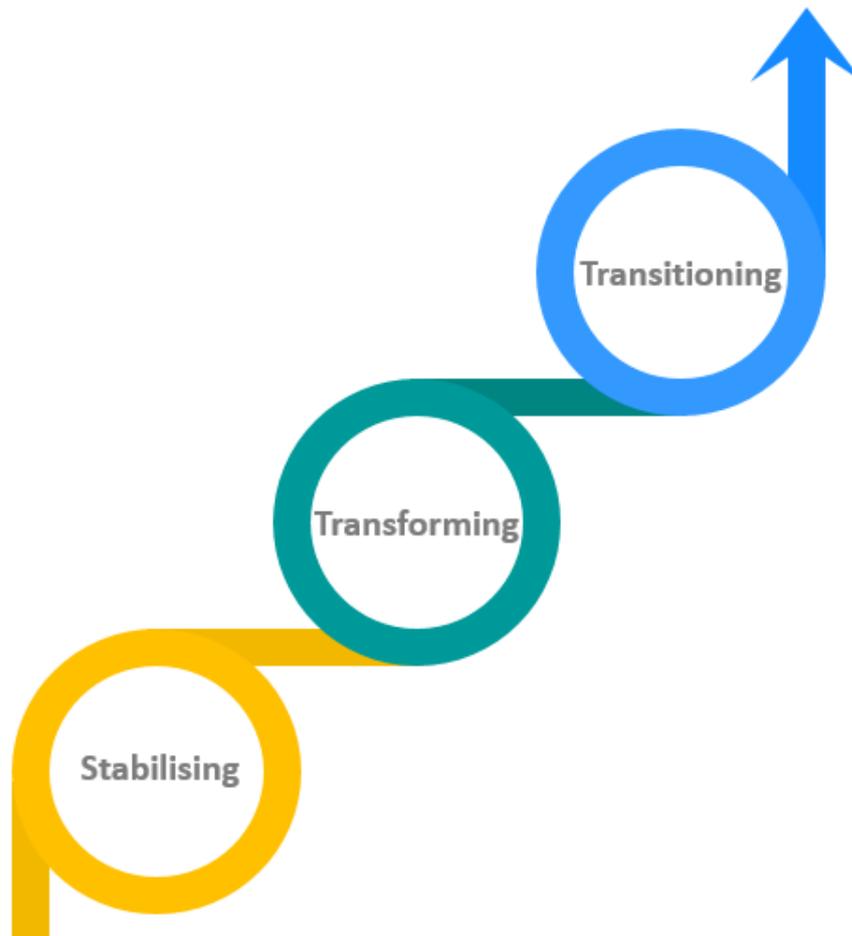
- The future of public services in the county, which means our lifespan as an organisation is potentially limited and we need to focus on those statutory services which are important to residents
- The financial constraints in which we operate, and the need to live within our financial means
- The imperative to make services sustainable, so that, regardless of the shape organisations in the county take, vital services for our residents are affordable.

*The Transformation Strategy* approved by Full Council at the end of 2018 sets out the steps we need to take: stabilise our finances, transform our services, and transition into new organisational structures.

At the heart of our desire to transform are the following considerations:

- We are focusing on **enabling individuals and communities** to achieve better outcomes
- Whenever possible, we **co-design and co-deliver services** with partners and communities
- We **innovate** to find better and more sustainable ways of delivering services
- We focus precious resources where they have the biggest impact, in **preventing need and intervening early**
- The new service models are designed to be **scalable and affordable in the long term**
- We use **technology and digital solutions** to help meet the needs of residents
- We **commission and procure services and goods with partners**, to get the best return for the Northamptonshire pound
- We **use our properties** to maximise occupancy levels, generate income and manage costs
- Those that have a role to play, internally and externally, are **engaged, have a voice and contribute** to the transformation of services

- Changes **take into account equality gaps and mitigate impact**, so that we reduce inequalities and disparity of opportunities.



## Our Values

Our organisational culture is underpinned by the Principles of Public Life. Our people shape the organisation and the services and are best placed to improve and transform the offer to the residents of the county. Management and front line staff will come together to develop solutions and interventions which best meet the needs of people, as part of a transformation programme which touches on every aspect of our work.

We want our staff to live and breathe the County Council values, fostered and modelled at all levels of the organisation:

- Enabling residents to achieve their outcomes at the heart of everything we do

- Good leadership and empowerment demonstrated by all
- Culture of discipline and high professional standards
- Honest, open and transparent dialogue inside and outside of the organisation
- Skilled and competent stable workforce
- Partnerships which work hard to maximise the public pound
- A whole organisation working together as a team and developing cross-system solutions.



*Northampton Town centre*

## Our Activity

The values and principles above are reflected in the vision for each of our main areas of service.

Across our **local economy and infrastructure**, we will work on growing revenue, shaping the place and enabling communities to live well and businesses to thrive and generate prosperity.

Our work with **children and families** will focus on investment in prevention, better outcomes through permanent placements for our children in care and effectively managing risks, to ensure the most vulnerable young people are consistently safeguarded and protected from harm.

In supporting **vulnerable adults**, we will focus on preventing needs and intervening early to provide people with the best possible chance of maintaining an independent life, ensuring they are safeguarded and receive good quality care at the right time through services which demonstrate good value for money.

Across the organisation, we will ensure those **support services** which allow us to run our business and deliver services are fit for purpose and provide good value for money. They exist to support and enable effective front line service delivery and allow our residents to interact with the Council when and wherever they want to.

## Our Budget

In order to deliver our strategy set above, we must make the best use of the assets available to us. We rely on funding from Central Government, Council Tax, Business Rates and various grants in order to fund core services. Whilst some funding streams continue to reduce year on year nationally, we have a number of positive developments we are welcoming in the county.

The Financial Settlement announcement from the Government is offering us the opportunity to maintain provision in statutory services, throughout this period of

stabilisation. We have also welcomed to fact that the Government is allowing us to use money generated by sale of our assets to fund the work needed to transform the way we operate. This is the only way that the residents of the county can continue to benefit from essential services whilst the funding of public services continues to reduce.

We commit to delivering a balanced budget and optimising the use of our assets so they have a positive impact on costs and help to address the pressures we face in social care markets. We will transform our services so they are sustainable into the future and the investments made in delivering change are of benefit to the people of the county.