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Foreword

Welcome to our Council Plan which sets out the strategic direction for Northamptonshire County Council for the next five years. This plan provides the framework for the development of services and the prioritisation of resources from 2015-16 to 2019-20.

In one way this year’s plan restates the priority outcomes and ambitions we articulated in last year’s document. Our commitment to pursuing the outcomes as outlined in the Council Cube remain at our very core and this plan lays out what progress has been made against these and how we will now build on these as we continue to deliver and facilitate Safeguarding and Wellbeing outcomes for Northamptonshire.

From this perspective this is purely a refresh of last year’s plan and a progress report against it. From another perspective the plan outlines a vision for the most fundamental transformation of the structures and delivery methods of the council in a generation.

While the outcomes we want to achieve remain the same, the way we are set up to deliver these needs to be fundamentally re-drawn. The old model of local government no longer works either financially or for the rapidly changing needs and requirements of the people and communities we serve.

The plan outlines how we will evolve into a Next Generation Council seeing a far smaller retained organisation, right-sourcing and commissioning services and outcomes from a new set of accountable organisations and social enterprises which may be owned, managed and run by current council staff.

We explain how at the heart of this change for citizens as both consumers and taxpayers is a new model of accessing services and outcomes through a fully developed and utilised digital presence - whether that is through our own websites or our consortium led e-market place breeze-e, coupled with a Super Customer Service Centre offering. These will work together to make our services truly digital, delivering outcomes in the way people now expect to receive them and giving the people of the county ownership, choice and control over their wellbeing. This plan is divided into two sections:

Part A – Next Generation Council - outlines exactly how we plan to transform the way our services and outcomes are delivered.
Part B – The Council Cube - describes how this new structure will continue to deliver against the outcomes outlined in the Council Cube.
PART A: Next Generation Council

Chapter A 1: Why Do We Need To Become A Next Generation Council?

*The traditional model for the council and local service delivery can no longer work. It is unsustainable and outdated.*

The traditional method of paying for local services through local taxation and government funding no longer works in Northamptonshire.

In the past if, for example, local services cost £10 to deliver, we were able to get £10 to pay for them through council tax and the government’s revenue support grant. Now however demand for services is soaring while income from the government is plummeting. Using the same figures as above the increased local services now cost £15 to deliver while our income is reduced to £7.50. Put another way, the cost of services is now double the income available to us.

*Projected population change in Northamptonshire between 2012 - 2021*

In addition to this, we are now serving citizens as both taxpayers and consumers who have totally different sets of expectations of how they receive goods and services. The boom in digital transactional technology, individual choice and real time public interaction with organisations through ever-thriving social media networks means our traditional methods of delivering services no long match the expectations of those we are here to serve.
Chapter A 2: What Will The Next Generation Council Look Like?

The transformation will be the single biggest change in the structure of Northamptonshire County Council in its 125 year history.

In essence Northamptonshire County Council will see a small retained organisation called ‘NCC Group’ which will rightsource **Safeguarding and Wellbeing outcomes** through a federation of newly formed bodies, be they Mutuals, Community Interest Companies, Social Enterprises, public:public; public:private or private businesses which will have ‘spun out’ from direct council control.

An illustrative diagram of how our Next Generation Council model would work is shown below:
Chapter A 3: NCC Group

The foundation of this model is a next generation council. This would be comprised of eight key functions:

1. **Democratic interface**
   It is critical that the role of democracy and full democratic accountability is maintained and that commissioned and other activities have democratic input.

2. **Market and Commercial Development.**
   This will be dedicated to ensuring a thriving market is available to consumers providing the outcomes they need to make them safe and well.

3. **Commissioning and Contract Management**
   This function will ensure the right providers are commissioned at the right price to deliver the right outcomes, including our core purpose of helping people to help themselves, and providing choice and control. Secondly, that the large contracts that NCC Group manage are done so effectively.

4. **Quality Assurance and Safeguarding**
   This will ensure outcomes are delivered and all safeguarding roles are fulfilled.

5. **Customer Insight and Business Intelligence**
   This would hold the Council’s data and knowledge, and therefore help to understand the demand for services, and the markets that exist to meet that demand in order to shape commissioning decisions and target resources. It would help understanding what current and future consumer trends are likely to be, so we can ensure effective commissioning and meeting of needs.

6. **Communication and Brand Development**
   This would make sure citizens and stakeholders have all the information they require on how to access services, would deliver societal wide messaging to help demand management and act as the guardian of the trusted brand of the council.

7. **Financier, Shareholder and Funder**
   This would allocate state funding, manage the treasury and contracts functions to help stimulate outcomes through investment and manage shareholding in various commissioned or spun-out organisations. It would also ensure full utilisation of assets and act as the shareholder in many of the structures outlined below, just like NCC is for Olympus Care Services Ltd, LGSS or breeze-e already.

8. **Regulatory and Policy lobbying**
   It is critical that NCC continues to actively engage with central policy setters and regulators to ensure that we provide a strong voice for our citizens and the county.
The biggest departure in the Next Generation Council is the future development of all other council services as separate accountable organisations – varying in structure and governance – which will be commissioned to deliver the outcomes demanded and required by citizens both as taxpayers and consumers. These may be as follows:

**Children’s Services Mutual**
This organisation could be set up as a mutual. A mutual is an organisation which is owned by and run for the benefit of its members and its customers. In this case, all staff would own and benefit from the success of the organisation, but most importantly it will be focussed on ensuring every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential. The primary focus will be protecting the physical and emotional wellbeing of our children, continuing the positive journey of improvement of our local safeguarding services. But it will also ensure that the right help and support is available to families at an early stage to reduce the need for more critical interventions later on. The organisation will also hold responsibility for our local strategies for ensuring effective schooling and
learning to maximise young people’s skills and attainment, giving them every opportunity to become successful and attractive prospects for local and regional employers.

Such an organisation could also benefit from community interest bonds – i.e. financial reward – for achieving certain outcomes which in turn would be jointly owned by all members. This organisation would host the statutory position of the Director of Children Services and would therefore hold accountability for delivery of safeguarding, prevention and education outcomes. Like any separate organisation this mutual would be free to deliver services and therefore gain additional income and funding from any number of organisations.

**Accountable Care Organisation**
This model would see our care management teams evolve into a separate organisation based on a model most commonly used in the US. A recent report (March 2014) by the King’s Fund, illustrates how they may improve quality and costs. These are organisations made up of care providers and care management teams which are accountable for the quality, cost and overall care for consumers of care services. Like the wellbeing community organisation, this model will likely include health partners as the Government seeks to deliver better integration through health and social care with initiatives such as the Better Care Fund.
Like the Children’s Services Mutual, this organisation would fulfil the statutory obligations with regard to adult social services and care.

**Wellbeing Community Organisation**
This organisation would be commissioned by the council to deliver public health and wellbeing outcomes either by itself, in partnership or through a network of right sourced suppliers. The new community based organisation will offer a Wellness Service with a recognisable footprint similar to treatment services across the county. It will build on our successes, brand recognition of the shareholding organisations and will compete favourably in the market to pursue wellbeing goals for all residents be they fee-payers or recipients of mandated public services that do not involve direct payments. Access to these services will be available through breeze-e or professional referral.

Potentially, as a community interest company, this organisation would be free to win business from other organisations and provide services and outcomes for an ever growing customer base while any profit it makes must be invested back into delivering the desired outcomes. Clearly this means the more successful this organisation is the more it can deliver for less council core investment.

**Northamptonshire Place Shaping Partnership**
This partnership would be commissioned to deliver outcomes to improve Northamptonshire as a place, including aspects of planning; environmental and waste disposal and transport and infrastructure delivery and is a natural extension of the High Ability Low Operations (HALO) model that the Environment, Development & Transport Directorate has deployed, including the work with our strategic partners and Northamptonshire Highways.
**Federation of Social Enterprises**

The four organisations outlined above are the major pieces of commissioning which the council will embark upon – in economic and financial terms this will be known as ‘macro-commissioning’.

These organisations will themselves be able to, and often will need to, right source and commission others to deliver the outcomes they are charged to deliver. Also the council may choose to commission from smaller organisations – known as micro-commissioning. This is where a federation of social enterprises comes in. Individual teams may choose to become social enterprises in their own right, winning contracts to deliver outcomes and having the ability to win more business independently from the council.

Examples will include services that already operate as a standalone business, provide those services outside of Northamptonshire and often generate income to keep services going without full reliance on funding from council revenue budgets.

The above organisations will deliver outcomes alongside existing suppliers from the public and third sectors, charities, and private businesses. In some cases they will also be in direct competition with these suppliers who will also be competing for council contracts.
Chapter A 5: A New Front Door and Market Place For Public Service

The central element of the Next Generation Council from a citizen’s perspective is the new ways they will be able to interact with services, purchase them where they are not provided free at the point of use and shape their delivery. This is through a redesigned front door and market place for public services which will be comprised of the following elements:

- **ncc.gov.uk.** Full development and utilisation of the council’s digital estate. This will be achieved through the implementation of the Consumer Relationship and Management Strategy.
- **breeze-e.** Seamless incorporation of the e-marketplace delivered by a consortium including NCC.
- **Super Customer Service Centre Company** – offering specialist call centre assistance where required as part of a wider offer to other organisations, including the help and support for telecare and telehealth products as well as providing the professional customer service centre interface that our customers receive today.

There is complete understanding that not everyone is digitally literate and this will be fully taken into account.
As part of the Next Generation Northamptonshire through the Consumer Relationship and Management Strategy we will aim to fully develop our own digital estate and assist the digitisation of services to become a fully digital council.

We will work as a trusted brand to ensure that citizens as both consumers and taxpayers are able to get the information and advice they need from our own digital platforms and in a way which suits them through the utilisation of the very latest in digital innovation – be they mobile apps, advanced websites or emerging augmented reality technology that can link various real-time datasets together such as GIS location data, opening hours and service booking systems to enhance the consumer experience for those on the move.
breeze-e.com

Our digital footprint will work seamlessly for consumers with our e-marketplace breeze-e. When people identify a need to purchase or source products and services they will be able to fully explore all options and get the best fit for their needs on this marketplace.

Initially this will be focussed on being the place for people to purchase adult care but ultimately the ambition is to have this as the go-to place for people to purchase support they need when they or their loved ones are encountering the new life-stages they face, both within and outside Northamptonshire.

Super Customer Service Centre Company

The final component of the customer facing access points would be a company offering first class telephony support for specialist cases as well as a broader engagement platform for citizens and businesses. This will enable us to have deeper engagement than possible through our digital estate and e-marketplace and building upon our excellent customer services centre (CSC).
PART B: The Council Cube

As outlined in Part A, this section of the council plan remains fundamentally unchanged in that we will still be aiming to achieve the same outcomes for the people of Northamptonshire as articulated in last year’s plan. These outcomes are illustrated on the Council Cube:

The following chapters illustrate the progress made against these and what activities are ongoing.
Chapter B1: Increasing the Wellbeing of Your Communities

What Do We Mean When We Say Wellbeing?

Wellbeing means a lot of different things to different people. When we talk about wellbeing we mean it in its widest possible sense; having a sense of wellbeing in all aspects of life - in your health, in your community, in your home life, in your work life and in your social life.

Increasing wellbeing in all of these areas is central to everything the council does. There is a wealth of research into the concept which gives clear indications of the factors which have the most impact on people’s wellbeing and therefore their lives.

We will consistently track and monitor our performance in those areas most associated with wellbeing and upon which we have an influence, to ensure that what the council is doing is having a positive influence on the wellbeing of the county’s residents.

So what are those areas we will be concentrating on?

Wellbeing: A Safe County

We have a significant role in ensuring the safety of all people and communities within Northamptonshire. This applies to both the universal safety of everyone in the county (through services like Fire & Rescue or Trading Standards) and to those children and vulnerable adults who need to be safeguarded from neglect or abuse.

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

Protecting Children

Our ambition is that all children are safe within the county; and that each of them has the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

To do this during the last 18 months we have made significant progress in making profound and sustained improvement in the services provided for children and their families. We will continue in this work to ensure we and our partners continue to improve how we identify and tackle early signs of neglect.

To this end, over the lifetime of this plan we will continue to drive forward the Making Children Safer Children’s Services Improvement Plan.
This plan is based around six themed priorities:

- Getting it right for children and their families
- Providing confident leadership and management across Children’s Services
- Strengthening partnerships to make a difference
- Putting in place effective front-line practice
- Delivering a clear children and young person’s workforce strategy
- Managing performance

We have already made substantial progress with the development of a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub to ensure integrated, fast resolution to safeguarding queries; and developed a social work academy to train our able social care workforce.

**Protecting Vulnerable Adults**

We are continuing to develop the work we have been carrying out alongside our partners and commissioned providers to strengthen our inter-agency safeguarding practices and ensure that our vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and neglect.

We are actively engaging all strategic partners in Northamptonshire through our Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults Board to develop the working practices and performance framework which will ensure that members of the public know how to raise concerns, and that cases are investigated in a timely manner whenever necessary, by all relevant agencies.
We will be transparent and open about performance in the county and share best practice and lessons learnt with our partners and providers.

Safeguarding of vulnerable adults runs through our Adult Social Care Plan which will be reviewed on an annual basis.

**The Care Act**

We will work to ensure the full implementation of the the Care Act in the county. This act brings a whole host of previous laws, reviews and reforms and puts them into one act to provide a coherent approach to adult social care in England.

As part of this it sets out new guidance for councils and partners as well as new rights for people who use our services and carers. It aims to achieve:

- Clearer and fairer care and support
- A cap on the amount of money any individual has to pay for their care in their lifetime
- Protecting and improvement the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of both service users and carers
- Improving prevention services to delay the need for care and support
- Putting people in control of their care

The Care Act focuses on the following:

**Wellbeing** - The act puts individual wellbeing on a statutory footing and makes it the driving force behind all care.

**Prevention** – The act makes it clear that all councils and partners must take steps to prevent, reduce or delay the need for care.

**Integration** – The act includes a statutory requirement for councils to collaborate, co-operate and integrate with other public authorities such as health and housing.

**Information, advice and advocacy** – The act places a duty for councils to ensure all their information is available to everyone when they need it.

**Diverse Care Markets** – The act stipulates that there must be diversity and quality in the market of care providers so there is real choice for people.

**Safeguarding** – There is a new statutory framework for protecting adults from neglect and abuse with Safeguarding Adults Boards established in every area.

**Assessment and Eligibility** – The act ensures anybody – including carers – who appears in need of care or support is entitled to an assessment. The council must apply a national
eligibility threshold rather than a local one to determine whether the individual has eligible needs.

**Charging and financial assessment** – All people will have a care account set up which will track the amount they spend on eligible care needs throughout their lifetime. There will be a cap on such spend, and if this is reached the council will then pay for the eligible care.

Anyone with eligible needs will have a financial assessment which will show how much the person and or the council will pay.

**Care and support planning** – Under the act councils must help eligible people decide how their needs are met through the preparation of a care and support plan or support plan for carers.

**Personal budgets and direct payments** – Personal budgets will form part of the care and support plan agreed with people and they would be entitled to direct payment. Those who are not financially supported by the council will still have an independent personal budget to record the cost of meeting their eligible needs.

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**Early Help and Intervention**

Throughout the lifetime of this plan we will particularly focus our activity and commissioning on effective early intervention which we believe is key to creating safer, happier and more prosperous communities. This means we will work to make sure the needs of people and families in potential need of help are identified at the earliest possible stage. This early help prevents the need for more complex, specialist support further down the line which is more expensive and less effective for the people needing help.

Early intervention is based on the concept of four levels of need, as illustrated in this diagram.

In this model the vast majority of people will have their needs met through universal services operated in the county. In most cases this will prevent the needs escalating further.

The key elements of our role in early intervention is to enable and commission effective services by a wide range of organisations at Level 2 while offering effective targeted services at Level 3 to prevent further escalation and to help people return to Level 1 (such as children’s centre services, schools and libraries).
In essence this is about facilitating and commissioning the right support, to the right people at the right time, and working with individuals across a range of issues that enhance the safety, wellbeing and prosperity of all.

**Safety for All**

**Blue-Light Collaboration**

Universally we will continue to work towards greater integration and collaboration between our Fire and Rescue Service and Northamptonshire Police. Through this work we will provide a more seamless, effective and efficient blue-light response.

**Protective Services**

Our Trading Standards team will ensure residents are protected from rogue traders and dangerous practices. We will look to join our Trading Standards team up with other front-office protective services operating either within Northamptonshire or outside the county to help spread best practice and create a more efficient service. At the same time we will continue to introduce new safer working practices, such as leading nationally on the roll out of COBRA fire system for our Fire & Rescue staff.

**Safer Roads**

We will continue our work to make the county’s roads as safe as possible. We and our partners Northamptonshire Highways have a ground-breaking approach to road maintenance through the New Highways Maintenance Initiative which sees more proactive preventative road maintenance work and a more longer-lasting approach to repairing roads. Our Medium Term Financial Plan points to a significant capital investment in the county’s road network underlining our commitment to ensuring road-users are safe.

**Wellbeing: A Healthy County**

We will continue to bring an energetic and innovative approach to our responsibilities around public health, empowering you to make the right lifestyle choices so you can be as healthy as possible.

Through our ongoing 20:20 campaign – which aims to make our county healthier and improve the sense of wellbeing of individuals by the year 2020 – we will work to get more people active and making better, more informed choices about their lifestyle and health.
One of the ways we will do this is to continue with mass-participation events such as the Women’s Tour Cycle Event or our 20 Million Steps mass walking weekend aiming to inspire people to take up such activity.

We want you to feel well-informed and aware of potential risks to your health and be able to make sensible choices around certain health-averse activities. We want you to feel informed and aware of those activities that will benefit you and your family’s, physical and mental health so you can make the best choices you can.

We will shape our commissioning and decisions based on the Five Ways of Wellbeing as outlined by the New Economic Foundation. These are:

1. **Connect** – interact with people around you at home, work, school or in your local community
2. **Be Active** – go for a walk, run, bike ride or do some gardening
3. **Take notice** – be curious, take notice and become more aware of the world around you and what you are feeling
4. **Keep Learning** – try something new or rediscover an old interest
5. **Give** - do something for a friend, volunteer your time or join a community group

In addition we will continue to be central on the Healthier Northamptonshire Programme to deliver Better Health, Better Care, Better Value through the complete transformation of health and social care services in the county. This is a significant piece of work concerning the health of our county which is covered in more detail in the section on Innovation under Ambitious Partnerships.

Our main approach in doing this will be to develop a **whole council approach** to ensuring improved public health and wellbeing. It is not simply the remit of any one team, service or commissioned organisation. Consequently we will seek to better understand how each of our respective services, skills and commissioning activity can be brought together to deliver this outcome.

To help us achieve this we are developing a framework on our emerging understanding on the levels of intervention which we will operate to effect change and improvements.
**Level A: population-wide**

**What is it?**
Population wide policies and initiatives, covering the physical, economic, cultural and social environment. Creating a climate for and shaping the place to improve health and well being. At this level, people will say: “It is easier to... I am more aware of...”.

**Examples**
- Licensing of premises; tobacco control; creating a cycle friendly environment; air pollution in urban areas; local representation on national groups; growing a culture of engagement through volunteering; getting recognition for innovative local practice; gaining population level insight.

**Level B: defined populations**

**What is it?**
Large scale community targeting, eg: by age groups or geographical areas; improving the skills/focus of existing large scale services to make them better at improving health and wellbeing; not a specific ‘client’ relationship so comes before primary care. At this level people will say: “I am particularly aware of this aspect of my health and wellbeing”.

**Examples**
- Adapting services to connect them to ‘defined populations’ to benefit health and wellbeing, eg: Sports Partnership working with primary schools with potential for increased focus on specific areas such as obesity; libraries’ low level debt advice/financial literacy; GP referral schemes for sport and physical activity focusing on over 65s; signposting and/or very brief interventions delivered as part of customer advisor role.
Wellbeing: A Prosperous County

Not only do we want to help keep people well enough to work, we want to continue to support efforts to increase the availability of skilled, well paid jobs and therefore the prosperity of the county and its residents. Northamptonshire’s economic vision is to deliver a secure and prosperous future for the county’s people and its businesses in a viable knowledge economy.
Creating a prosperous county is about providing the right environment, the right support and the right infrastructure for businesses to thrive and for local people to be able to access jobs. It is about working to make the county appealing to more and more businesses to set up here, giving freedom to grow for those already operating here and helping start-ups find their feet.

This is helped by our joint work with Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership and the University of Northampton in the creation of a single **Growth Hub** for business.

It is also about ensuring that everyone in the county can benefit from economic growth, including well-paid employment opportunities right across the county to increase economic prosperity in areas that have higher levels of deprivation. It also means clear progression routes into high-quality and rewarding jobs in ‘sectors of the future’ for all young people.

**Race To The Top**

A key part of creating a prosperous county will be our drive to boost performance in schools and improve outcomes for young people. Our Race To The Top strategy aims to make Northamptonshire one of the highest performing counties for education by 2020.

As part of this we will work with top performing schools to share good practice while grants and bursaries will be offered to schools seeking to improve.

Our Race To The Top work will establish a Northamptonshire model of educational excellence which will include:

- Using the latest research on pupil performance to create a new format for the school day, looking at start times, number of breaks and longer days
- Setting uncompromising targets for all pupils
- Delivering good and outstanding teaching, particularly in science, technology, engineering and maths to improve future employment prospects.
- Working with the voluntary sector and independent organisations to provide after-school clubs based on excellence in sport, culture and work readiness.
Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership

Throughout the life of this council plan we will retain our strong emphasis on prosperity and economic growth. The key way we do this is through our ambitious partnership with Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership (NEP). We will continue to work collaboratively with NEP to help deliver real and tangible benefits to the local economy.

We will continue to invest in those schemes which make a real difference to local businesses. These include:

- **INV-ENT** - Under the Northamptonshire Innovation and Enterprise Fund (INV-ENT), small and medium-sized businesses can apply for a rebate on their business rates of up to £20,000 for re-investment to support growth and development. The principal focus for INV-ENT is businesses in high-growth and advanced technology-led sectors, although applications from other business sectors will also be considered.

- **Locate** – LOCATE offers grants up to £20,000, and a comprehensive package of services and support to existing small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) around the globe wishing to either relocate or expand their business by moving to Northamptonshire. In 2013/14 the council committed £100,000 in 2013/14 to this initiative, which is being delivered jointly with Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership.

- **Enterprise Hubs** - These hubs will continue to operate out of our LibraryPlus. By working with NEP, training library staff and imaginatively adapting library spaces, we offer coaching, advice and access to facilities (meeting rooms, IT, knowledge and information) to people interested in developing a business idea and taking it to market. We also offer workshops and one-to-one advice on legal and tax issues, marketing and financial control to help customers who might not have considered self-employment or entrepreneurship.

Infrastructure and Connectivity

We will continue to invest time and resource in creating the infrastructure that helps businesses to thrive, attracts new businesses into the county, enables people to get to work easily and access job opportunities.

This means good business accommodation, transport infrastructure, accessibility and connectivity within the county and to the rest of the UK and beyond, via roads, rail and broadband. For example, Northamptonshire aims to be the first area in England to have complete superfast broadband.
coverage by 2017, in recognition that digital access is a key enabler of business competitiveness and employment opportunities.

Other priorities for the council include negotiating faster train services from Northampton to London and Birmingham, major road improvements to reduce congestion on major routes such as the A43, A45, A14, M1/M6 interchange, as well as expanding the network of University Technical Colleges across the county.

**Tri-County Alliance**

During the lifetime of this plan we will continue with our ground-breaking work with Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire county councils in the first tri-county alliance of its type in the country focussed on the common economies of innovation, science, technology and creative industries.

Through this alliance we will be asking the government to:

- allow joint new plans to be developed for transport, spatial planning and other key infrastructure
- devolve employment and skills funding so employers’ needs can be properly met locally
- support a devolved approach to the local trunk road network
- give us enhanced powers over bus services and the ability to maximise public transport between key towns and cities
- ensure the best economic benefits are unlocked from projects such as East-West Rail and the connectivity of technology centres like Silverstone to the national road network.

**Wellbeing: A Sense of Place**

In September 2014, a statistically significant survey of Northamptonshire demonstrated that 90% of the people living in the county are satisfied with their local area, and 82% feel they belong to their area. Both these figures are higher than in previous years.

We want the people of Northamptonshire to continue to feel that they belong to the county and to their communities. We want to engender an even greater sense of place in the county as a whole and in people’s communities.

We believe this is key to communities helping each other and helping themselves without needing to rely on traditional public service organisations such as ourselves, which will continue to shrink in size and funding over the foreseeable future. We will work to engender pride in our communities
and help communities realise their potential to help themselves and to be proud of Northamptonshire.

We will continue our work with partners to develop the county as a destination of choice. For example under the Northampton Alive banner, the council is building a new modern office building for 2000 people in the centre of Northampton, we have been a significant funder of the new railway station, bus interchange and the development of the ‘heritage gateway’.

We are not only doing this in Northampton, but throughout the county with the Love Northamptonshire campaign. We are promoting the county, both to residents and businesses, but also to those who have yet to discover what a great county Northamptonshire is for business, leisure and wellbeing.

Chester Farm

We will continue to strive to connect you with the county’s rich cultural heritage and unique identity. One of the ways we will do this is the work we are doing at Chester Farm. This site near Wellingborough has unique historical relevance as it boasts evidence of human activity for 10,000 years and has been home to different communities spanning some 2,000 years. During the lifetime of this plan we will achieve our vision of making this site one that people want to visit and become a place which through education, learning and enjoyment adds value to their lives and helps them to appreciate Northamptonshire’s outstanding heritage.
Chapter B2: Helping You Take Charge of Your Life

What Do We Mean By Helping You Take Charge of Your Life?

Core to individual, family or neighbourhood wellbeing, is the sense that you are in charge of your own life, having choice and freedom rather than being ‘done to’ by the state.

We passionately believe that we need to enable you to help yourself. We are also here to help you when you genuinely cannot help yourself or - because it would not be feasible or practical.

This concept of self service is what more and more people want and expect from organisations, including councils. It is true in almost every part of people’s lives nowadays, from fuelling your car to online banking and internet shopping.

Having these freedoms and choice, and playing a more active role in society, we are essentially talking about the role of Citizenship. This means helping you take a more active role in the services and outcomes provided in the county whether that be through the Get Involved campaign in the running of services through volunteering opportunities, or by taking more control over the services which you receive directly through our Personalisation agenda.

In the round it means giving you the ability to find the information you want about services and outcomes which could benefit you. It is about giving you the Choice over how you wish to receive such support, the ability to use Self-Service in an increasing number of ways; become in sole charge of the way you receive support or services from the council and other public sector agencies.

This is about placing you at the centre of the various services in the county and giving you the opportunity to access them or get involved in them on your terms and to your benefit.

Personalisation

The most fundamental change to public services to help you to take charge of your life is through the Personalisation agenda.

This programme ensures that individuals are placed in charge of the services which best suit them. In a social care setting this means, for example, an individual not just being sent to a Day Centre or support group that we provide for them but rather them being put in charge of their own budget for care and then using this to purchase the services or support which best suits their need. Of course, where required, such a customer would receive support to help them identify the best options available to them.
Throughout the lifetime of this council plan we will not only roll out this approach throughout the social care environment but also look at adopting it across other areas of work and activity, including work with the NHS to create personal wellbeing budgets for people with health and social care needs, or transitioning between the two.

**Access to Information**

We have begun the process of carrying out a complete overhaul and reshape of our website to allow you to easily find the information you need easier and self-serve where possible. We will work to make sure that information is tailored to your specific need rather than relying on you navigating around our website on your own.

We will continue with our transparency agenda, for which we have a strong national reputation, to ensure that you can see all our contracted spending and assess whether any improvements could be made both in terms of the costs and the contractual arrangements we enter into.

We will make sure that you – our customers – can access the information you require whether that be on-line, through social media, on the telephone or in person at our Library Plus service and when you do so, that you receive a consistent, reliable, trusted and receptive level of service.

The need for consistency is ever more important in the current climate where the different ways of working and the range of organisations delivering outcomes on our behalf can be bewildering. Throughout this process we will continue to be the ‘go-to’ place for information around public services and excellent customer service.

For businesses, we will work to develop prospectuses to allow markets to develop, both for services to our customers and for businesses that want to develop in the county.

**Choice and Self-Service**

The key result of increasing access to information is empowering you to make your own choices about services and being able to self-serve.

We will continue with our channel shift work which will be fully outlined in the Consumer Relationship and Management Strategy. This means pushing more content and self-service opportunities onto our website and further digitisation of services.

We will look to replicate the success of Street Doctor, our online service for reporting road conditions, and the appointment booking service for Birth Registrations, both of which now see the majority of customer interactions conducted on-line.
Get Involved

We also want to give as many people as possible the opportunity to get involved in helping to run our services through practical volunteering opportunities.

We have already seen more than 600 members of the community stepping forward to help out at our libraries, our country parks, and will be looking to expand these opportunities across all areas of the council - and indeed, all public services across the county. The library service will be working closely with our voluntary and community sector partners to signpost people to the range of volunteering opportunities that are available within the voluntary sector.

Getting involved is not only a great way for you to help out with public services but can offer valuable experiences and career building opportunities through the new skills and experiences we and others can offer.
Chapter B3: Innovative Public Sector

What Do We Mean By An Innovative Public Sector?

As a council we have built a very strong national reputation for innovation and we want to build on this reputation.

The changes outlined in Section A of this plan underline how central innovation is to our plans. Over the next five years working innovatively with our partners and other agencies and organisations to transform the way the public sector operates will be at the heart of our entire approach to delivering outcomes.

When we talk about being innovative we mean breaking with traditional models of public service delivery to deliver better outcomes for you - and to do so more efficiently as outlined in Part A. It means being Intelligence-Led, learning from the vast information at our fingertips about the county, its services, economy and its people to ensure we are delivering and commissioning the right things in the right place at the right time.

It is about driving forward Ambitious Partnerships. Part of this is exploring the synergies and shared interests with fellow public sector organisations such as the NHS to break down the traditional organisational barriers between us to deliver a more seamless, efficient and effective health and social care system. It is also about exploring synergies and shared interests with private sector organisations, such as British Gas and Schneider Electric with whom we already have ‘memorandums of understanding’, where we look to build strategic alliances with businesses that have shared goals and ambitions.

It is about our ability to Exploit Technology to make sure that we are at the forefront of technological innovation to provide services and deliver outcomes for our customers. This means harnessing the great potential ever-evolving technology provides us with and not missing the opportunities it affords us. This includes tele-care and tele-health, smart place initiatives as well as harnessing modern customer technologies and social media.

Finally, to us innovation also means introducing Next Generation Working to make sure our committed public sector workforce has the right tools and is working in the most effective and efficient way possible – whether out in our communities, within offices or at home. Such a new way of working is about equipping the workforce to work flexibly...
and innovatively. This will be epitomised by our new Angel Street HQ, opening in winter 2016 for use by our new federation of social enterprises and new organisations.

Intelligence-Led

In order to ensure we are commissioning the right services to the right people at the right time, we must put information and intelligence at the heart of our planning and commissioning of services.

Through our Business Intelligence function, we are able to utilise the vast amount of data and information available to us. This enables us to develop a wide range of detailed business insights which help us to understand the requirements of local communities and target delivery accordingly.

We will expand our exploitation of data and intelligence in ways which allow us to better target services and support to those who needed most, in ways which are effective and responsive, to generate growth in the county and to be proactive about how we respond to changes in demography, policy and economy. We will turn our consumer and community insight into in depth forecasting of future changes so that we can turn any challenges into opportunities for growth.

To further enhance the amount of data and intelligence available, we are currently leading on the development of Northamptonshire Analysis (www.northamptonshireanalysis.co.uk), a data hub which allows easy access to a wide range of data and intelligence. Once fully developed, the site will open up this information to the public, providing ‘one version of the truth’ on the county. This will become the strategic planning tool for use by the council, public sector partners and stakeholders across the county, enabling support for the commissioning of services for joint and individual agency requirements.
Next Generation Working

To us innovation also means introducing Next Generation Working to make sure our committed public sector workforce is an agile workforce that has a more flexible approach to how, when and where work gets done, with whom it can work and the tasks it works on.

It is a workforce that is focused, smart and empowered, with more effective processes that make better use of technology, supported by flexible work styles, work places and work practices. This will involve a number of major workstreams, such as provision of a mobile working infrastructure, remote desk top conferencing, revised HR policies, staff training and development and new ways to manage ‘remote’ workers.

Strategic Partnerships

Partnership working has long been the only way of delivering first-class and seamless services and outcomes for communities within the public sector. Here in Northamptonshire we pride ourselves on partnership working. Ambitious partnership is about moving this to the next level. It is about forming partnerships and strategic alliances with organisations from across a variety of sectors to deliver the best possible value for money and harnessing the very latest thinking and technology for the delivery of services.
LGSS

We already have one of the most renowned shared services partnerships in the country with Cambridgeshire County Council. This partnership has already saved taxpayers across the two authorities millions of pounds by combining back office support services such as HR, IT, procurement and property management.

Because of its effectiveness and savings delivery it has now attracted further customers and now also provides services to other authorities in the country including Northampton Borough Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and Norwich City Council.

LGSS will continue attracting new business which in turn helps reduce the cost to this council, driving forward new efficiencies as new customers come on board.

Healthier Northamptonshire

This is one of the most significant and financially imperative partnerships which the council has ever entered into. The Healthier Northamptonshire programme is designed to deliver Better Health, Better Care and Better Value through a wholesale review of health and social care in Northamptonshire.

Year on year demand for care is increasing as a result of our growing and aging populations yet NHS funding only increases marginally and council funding is reducing year-on-year. It is estimated that these combined pressures mean that if no action is taken there would be a £275m shortfall in funding for care and health services in the county. In addition to this, clinicians are telling us that it is not always possible to deliver the best possible services and outcomes within the constraints of our current service configuration and provider landscape.

The Healthier Northamptonshire programme includes a “Care Closer to Home” programme which includes integration projects under the “Better Care Fund”. These will look at how we reduce demand on hospitals through better ‘out of hospital’ collaboration between NCC and NHS bodies in the county.
Partnerships with the private sector

We have forged important alliances with the private sector, including a range of major international organisations such as British Gas, Schneider Electrics and BT, in order to help develop new and innovative ways of policy and service delivery. These Strategic Alliances contribute towards a broad range of council objectives.

For example, we formed an alliance with British Gas in 2013 to work together on a number of initiatives to bring benefits to the county. Both we and British Gas realise that we share similar goals on issues such as fuel poverty, energy efficiency and the environment and can help each other tackle these by sharing expertise, ideas and resources.

To date we have formally agreed to work together on initiatives that seek to reduce carbon emissions in the county under the banner ‘Low Carbon Northamptonshire’.

We have formed a strategic alliance with BT to help to deliver our ambitions for full Next Generation Access coverage (superfast broadband) by 2017, specifically countywide superfast internet access. The partnership with BT is much more than new infrastructure, it is about delivering choice, improving access, health benefits, and helping to support businesses to set up and grow and create new jobs. To date the project has delivered superfast broadband availability to 25,000 premises. Full details of the Superfast Northamptonshire project are available at [www.superfastnorthamptonshire.net](http://www.superfastnorthamptonshire.net)

We have further developed our integrated partnership with KierWSP that covers highways and transport.

The alliance with KierWSP has seen NCC rewarded with additional Government funding for roads maintenance because of our recognized best practice. This helps to ensure significant capacity is available to deliver capital programmes to budget and time.

Partnerships with social enterprises and other partners at the local level

This approach is also providing a blueprint for new public sector partnerships and work with social enterprises and other partners at the local level.

Clearly the Next Generation Model outlined in Part A of this plan points to a step change in our relationship and interaction with social enterprises and other partners to enable us to deliver outcomes as we look to develop new delivery vehicles and work in partnership with existing ones operating in the county.
Exploit Technology

We plan to encourage technical innovation across all service areas. Although we accept that digital technology cannot replace human contact, kindness, empathy and understanding, we do believe that it is a very powerful tool and provides another way of connecting, one that is quicker and easier.

The introduction of the breeze-e e-marketplace within social services will be a major cultural shift. We believe this new technology will shape services around your needs and aspirations rather than using outdated top-down solutions. This should increase market activity, promote variety and contrast, improve performance and drive down costs, while providing you with a better experience.

The portal will be accessible and available to a larger market, including people who use our services, carers, commissioners and care providers as well as those who do not use our services. This new innovative use of technology will facilitate collaboration across social services, health, housing, education and employment, breaking down barriers and encouraging more integrated working.

We will also continue to exploit the opportunities provided by social media to communicate and engage with communities as well as acting as a catalyst to allow communities to help each other and themselves.
Chapter B4: Enterprising Public Sector

What do we mean by Enterprising Public Sector?

When we talk about an Enterprising Public Sector we essentially mean we will continue Stretching the Public Pound. We will continue on our path of becoming more commercial in our approach to delivering outcomes.

Clearly as outlined in Section A a key area of this is Commissioning and Market Development. This means that we will use our intelligence and data to identify the outcomes required within the county and commission the most appropriate organisation, businesses or individuals to deliver these for us. By doing this we will help develop a thriving local market for the provision of services giving you choice and control.

We will forge ahead with our Asset Utilisation Strategy. The Council’s asset portfolio is a decreasing resource. We are now using an innovative approach to how we utilise our existing assets; we have a collective approach including all council directorates to maximise benefits and opportunities and we will encourage joint working with other public sector partners to exploit shared assets.

We will look to ensure that as an organisation we seek Fair Contributions from people who receive or use services so we can help build a more sustainable operating model.

Finally, as we become more enterprising we will move towards being Self-financing. We know that our grants and income from the government are going to continue to be cut so we need to move away from being dependent on it.

Asset Utilisation Strategy

There is an essential need to review the council’s property and land portfolio, as all present various degrees of challenge. Their intended use today differs greatly compared to 20 years ago, and as a result, many are not used to their maximum potential. The Asset Utilisation Strategy is an overarching strategy that will result in a ‘whole area’ approach to public services, leading to better
services at less cost and encouraging partnership working (with both public sector and private land owners) for the benefit of our citizens.

The Asset Utilisation Strategy has three parts:

1. Ensure that the council only retains property essential to its service delivery and uses it to its maximum potential

2. Ensure that non-essential assets are disposed of for the optimum capital or community benefit.

3. Maximise return from our strategic land holdings, including developing those assets to achieve long-term revenue benefits.

**Commissioning and Market Development**

We have already described how we will develop new markets and empower you as our customers to choose the best organisations within these markets to deliver the services and outcomes you need. We will continue to work as commissioners, assessing who the best people are to deliver these services and then commissioning them to do so.

We call this ‘right-sourcing’. This means not being tied to either outsourcing everything or keeping everything in house and delivering services ourselves. This more pragmatic approach ensures we seek the best solution on an outcome by outcome basis to ensure the best possible services for the county.

**Fair Contribution**

We also believe that where we ask you to contribute to services we will ensure this contribution is fair and equitable.

We have been consulting on a transformation of the way we currently assess the finances of those of you requiring social care. We are seeking to move from a model which has an inconsistency of approach with some people offered banded charging whilst others receive a full financial assessment. It is our aim to change this approach to a fairer consistent charging system for all. This means everyone is dealt with equitably by being assessed in the same way.

We are also pursuing a change to charging for those of you who require transport. Currently this is based on a flat-rate charge. We are seeking to change this to make the cost of transport part of people’s personal budgets. Equally we want to ensure that transport is provided based on a needs assessment. We believe this will make the service more responsive to the needs of the most vulnerable people.

We will work to ensure that when charges are made for universal services these are competitive, fair and offer value for money.
**Self-financing**

The reality of the current economic climate is that we can no longer take any form of central government funding for granted. To this end through the lifetime of this plan we will move decisively towards a model of a self-financing council, including local taxation. As already articulated above, our key income streams from the government are rapidly diminishing and we do not see any change in this position in the future.

As a result we will:

- Continue to act more commercially as an organisation.
- Seek to maximise the innovation described in the chapter above to help generate more income.
- Look to ensure our assets are true commodities that give us a clear return on investment.

This will allow such a return to be ploughed straight back into front-line services making them less vulnerable to further reductions in government funding.
Chapter B5: Democratic and Engaging

What do we mean by Democratic and Engaging?

Being a Democratic organisation such as the council means far more than just holding an election every four years. Just because we will be increasing the number of services which are right-sourced this in no way will undermine any sense of the democratic accountability which remains at our very centre. Our accountability remains for the outcomes you charge us to deliver – regardless of the actual organisation delivering them.

To us being democratic and engaging is about an ongoing dialogue between us and you. It is about Engaging with you as part of our ‘business as usual’ to make sure the outcomes we are commissioning are meeting your needs and those of your communities.

This will make sure that we put Local communities and people at the heart of our decision making and our commissioning by being Consultative and remaining fully Transparent so you can track exactly how we’re spending your money.

Transparent

We will continue to forge ahead with our transparency agenda. As a democratic organisation, transparency lies at the heart of everything we do. This will ensure that you all have clear and accessible opportunities to see exactly how we spend your money. We continue to make available details of all our transactions over £500 as well as the salary grades of our council officers and all payments to elected councillors.

We will continue to develop our website to make sure that all the information you require is freely available and easily accessible while of course complying fully with our obligations under the Freedom of Information Act.

Transparency also includes undertaking Equality Impacts on all our budget proposals to seek to minimise impacts where possible upon the most vulnerable groups.

Consultative

We will continue to be committed to being a consultative organisation seeking your views and input on the key decisions we need to take throughout the lifetime of this plan.

We have fully embedded our Consultation and Engagement Policy which means the way we consult with you is consistent across all our services, that we value your feedback and the way we utilise it is methodical.
We will continue to publish all our consultations on our on-line Consultation Register to ensure that anyone can access all current live consultations at a time and place to suit them.

We will continue to establish forums to ensure we are consulting those groups which are often hard to reach or whose views can sometimes be in danger of being overlooked. We will work with the Children and Young People Shadow Board to ensure young people have a strong voice in the decisions we are making. We will be introducing new web-based techniques to connect better with young people and give them further chances to have their say.

We have established an equality challenge board to ensure we have an open and constant dialogue with those of you from minority communities via community champions.

Consulting with those of you with learning or physical difficulties will remain key to the way we develop our services for you. We are moving on from simply consulting you on these matters to developing ways in which you can co-produce these services with us. Current examples of this include the development of our Transitions Programme and our work with the Learning Disabilities Partnership Board.

**Local**

Fundamental to our view of local services is that often the best people to make a decision which has an impact on communities are people in those very communities.

To this end we will work to empower local communities to help themselves and help each other in getting things done at a local level.

We will work with our network of committed parish councils to ensure they are getting the support and advice they need to deliver their outcomes locally. We will pursue opportunities to give communities the ability and support to deliver some services themselves – for example, grass verge clearing, gritting through the provision of gritting bins and minor maintenance work in their area.

**Elected**

Of course as a democratic organisation we will continue to be fully answerable to the elected councillors who represent you.

Your councillors are your community leaders helping you to find solutions and identify the outcomes you need to improve your wellbeing. As they are democratically accountable they are fully committed to helping their communities and getting the best results for you.

We will work on your behalf to offer the very best support to your councillors to ensure they have all the tools, knowledge and training required to do the most effective job for you.
Chapter B6: Trusted Brand

What Do We Mean By A Trusted Brand?

The images on the right are our logo and our brand identity but being a **Trusted Brand** means so much more to us than putting logos on documents.

For us it is firstly about building a strong awareness within our communities of the services and outcomes the council seeks to deliver and ensuring that you know how we are spending taxpayers’ money.

It is about using this awareness to build a relationship of **Trust** between you and us as we work together to improve Northamptonshire. We want to be able to use our brand and this relationship of trust to **Legitimise** other people delivering outcomes on our behalf, thereby giving you confidence when dealing with businesses and other organisations offering you the services you need as we build more flexible local markets.

Finally it is about building a real **Pride** in the county. Making you proud of the county you live in, proud of the way it works on a daily basis and proud to be part of it.

**Trust**

We value the position we have as an organisation which generally is trusted by you. Our latest research has shown us that the majority of residents of the county trust us a ‘great deal’ or a ‘fair amount.’

It is our determination throughout the lifetime of this plan to build this trust even further so we can continue to work together to rise to the challenges facing us.

**Legitimise**

We will work to utilise this growing trust to legitimise the activities of others who are delivering outcomes on our and on your behalf. Often a separate organisation will be commissioned to deliver services and we will work with them to ensure that through our brand, and their approach to areas such as customer service, you will trust them equally and their activities will be legitimised.
One example of where this is already happening is through our Trading Standards Buy With Confidence scheme. Seeing that a local business is legitimised by the council gives consumers confidence when deciding who to deal with.

Value

We will build our brand around the concept of being an organisation which offers you value for money. We will work to ensure that providing this value is at our very core and that when you encounter us you can be assured you are receiving true value.

We will continue to work to give you the lowest possible council tax and as described earlier in this document, when seeking contributions from you, we will make them fair.

Pride

As stated earlier, we want you to feel proud of Northamptonshire as a place to live, as a place to work - a place that has a rich and varied heritage and a strong and promising future.

This is because we believe that this feeling of pride will improve all our wellbeing and help us in our journey to make our county safer and more prosperous.

We will represent Northamptonshire on a national stage to share this pride with others and make sure our voice gets heard.