



Ashfield

DISTRICT COUNCIL

Proactive

People First

Working Together

Enterprising

Trustworthy



Corporate Plan 2016-2019

Refresh 2017-2018

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I FOREWORD

This new Corporate Plan sets out an ambitious programme for the Council over the next three years. The scale of our ambition is a measure of our desire to improve the quality of life for residents. It also reflects the challenges facing the Council with reducing government funding and increasing demand for services.

The Council is clear on its purpose and wishes to maintain its valued services and to help shape a better future for the district by working in partnership with other public agencies, residents and local businesses.

We recognise that we need to breathe life into the Corporate Plan and that as a Council we need a positive and proactive culture that is open and transparent. We have therefore set out our values and will be promoting these amongst officers and Councillors.

Customer feedback and consultation are important to us and we will seek to consult on key issues that affect residents. In some cases we will need to show leadership and take difficult decisions due to financial or other business considerations.

In meeting the financial challenges we will seek to be more enterprising and commercial and endeavour to offset the loss of government grants by increasing income to the Council through commercial activities. This can then be used to support vital frontline services. Alongside this we will regularly review our services to make sure that they are meeting customer needs and being delivered in an efficient and cost effective way.

A key element of this plan is to focus on the many positive characteristics of Ashfield as a place and to support individuals and communities to achieve a better quality of life.

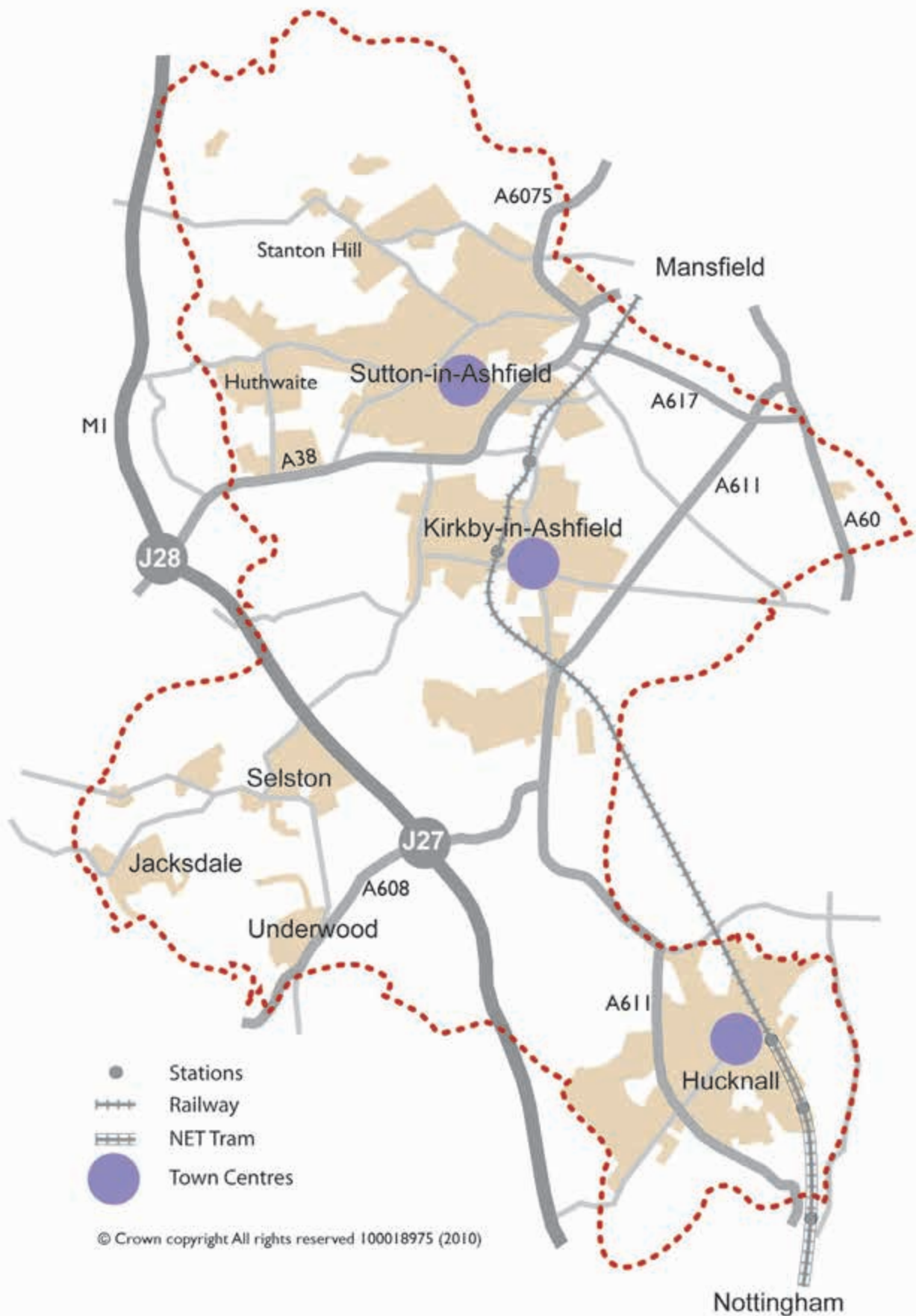


Rob Mitchell
Chief Executive



Cllr Cheryl Butler
Leader





“ Ambitious, innovative,
industrious and inspiring.

”

I THE PLACE

Living in Ashfield

Ashfield is nestled on the edge of beautiful countryside, with three vibrant towns and picturesque rural villages. Renowned for its welcoming, supportive and passionate communities, the area boasts a mix of beautiful countryside, complemented by award winning urban and country parks. There are also some fantastic leisure centres and attractions for visitors. The area has excellent road, rail and transport links and access to a mix of affordable housing, schools, colleges, and shopping centres.

Visiting Ashfield

Rich in natural, cultural and industrial heritage, Ashfield is the home of a number of historical and cultural/literary figures, most notably Lord Byron and his daughter Ada Lovelace, regarded as being the first ever computer programmer. There are miles of traffic free walking and cycling trails to be explored around the district and links into Derbyshire Dales. The area is also rich in sporting heritage, being the home of cricketing legend Harold Larwood.

Working in Ashfield

Ashfield is the ideal business location in the heart of the country, situated on the M1 directly between the cities of Nottingham, Derby and Sheffield. The majority of the country can easily be reached within a three hour drive. There are three rail stations in the district, along the Robin Hood line, connecting with Worksop (to the North) and Nottingham (to the South). The district is also connected by tram services into Nottingham from Hucknall. Phase Two of the high speed rail network (HS2), which will link the West Midlands to Manchester and Leeds, may also bring future rail connection opportunities for the district.

Ashfield has seen significant growth in commercial development activity over the past few years, making it one of the region's leading business locations.

The area's economy is growing successfully, with unemployment in the district reducing significantly faster than county and national averages, from 14.3% in 2013 down to 4.6% in 2016 when the national average was 4.9%. Economic activity is, however, higher than the national average due to the very high proportion of people with long term sickness. The average weekly wage for a full time worker has increase faster than the national average, by 13% since 2010 compared with the national average increase of 7.7%.

Although Ashfield has the highest number of working age benefit claimants, compared with our neighbouring authorities, the numbers are reducing rapidly, from 14,060 in February 2012 to 11,480 in August 2016. Along with Mansfield, the fall in benefit claimants is the greatest amongst our neighbouring authorities (Office of National Statistics).

According to the latest data (2015), the job density for Ashfield has risen to 0.73 per working aged resident. Ashfield also has the greatest number of large enterprises in the area (20) that employs in excess of 250 people and 80 medium sized businesses with between 50 and 250 employees (Office of National Statistics).



I THE ORGANISATION

Ashfield District Council is an ambitious and enterprising council committed to maintaining and improving services in challenging financial times. Focused on our residents' needs and a desire to help shape a positive future for our District, we are improving our performance to ensure we provide value for money. The Council is on a positive journey and over the past five years the Council has successfully improved performance year on year.

The Council has faced an unprecedented reduction in its external funding since 2010 and has made budget reductions equivalent to 50% of its current budget, reducing net costs by £8 million.

This has been achieved by becoming more efficient and increasing income, undertaking service reviews, implementing shared services, generating income, making our management leaner and achieving better value for money through procurement. Cumulatively the result is a more modern and less expensive organisation that has prevented reductions in front line services.

The Council's external auditor has praised the quality of our annual accounts, our financial robustness and is satisfied that we have good arrangements for achieving value for money.

Improving the quality of life of Ashfield residents offers a significant challenge for us all and is not one that can be met by the Council on its own and we will be working closely with other agencies to achieve our objectives. Internally we also recognise the need for join up our thinking. For this reason, we have, adopted a robust project management methodology which will underpin the delivery of this Corporate Plan, translating our priorities into a suite of programmes and projects.

Looking to the future the Council will adopt a more enterprising and commercial approach to support additional income generation from a range of sources.

The Council wants to work more closely with public, private and community groups to secure improvements for our residents.

I OUR PURPOSE

1. The Council exists to serve the communities and residents of Ashfield.
2. We will provide good quality, value for money services.
3. We will act strategically and plan for the future, working with others to bring about sustainable improvements in people's lives.

I OUR VALUES

Enterprising, Ambitious and Innovative

We will be ambitious about Ashfield's future and improve the district and the services we offer, by being more creative, open minded, innovative and commercially focussed. We will plan for the longer term, acting as custodian for future generations.

Community and Customer Focused, Putting People First

We will place residents at the heart of our services and treat everyone fairly, involving people in decisions and asking them to shape their own futures. We will listen and learn, whilst recognising individual needs and designing services around those rather than simply standardising, particularly targeting resources at areas of most need

Positive, Proactive and Successful

We will maximise the use of our resources, working with our partners, integrating services where appropriate, and ensuring effective and efficient delivery of services through prioritisation, project and performance management.

Collaborative

We will work effectively together within the Council as 'One Team', enabling individuals and teams to work across organisational functions, nurturing a culture of mutual trust and respect, accountability and ownership, supported by recognition of such. We will work with other agencies in the public, private and community sectors to deliver services across organisational boundaries in the interests of our residents.

Transparent and Accountable

We will be open and transparent in our decision making. We will be trustworthy, honest and respectful in dealing with our residents and be accountable to them for our actions

Commitment to Residents

- The Council will treat customers with courtesy and respect
- The Council will recognise the needs of different customers and make reasonable adjustments
- The Council will engage with customers and seek their views
- The Council will be transparent and open in its decision making
- The Council will make it easier for customers to contact and access Council services

Commitment to employees

- We value our employees and will recognise their effort and commitment
- The Council commits to treating employees fairly and respectfully
- The Council will engage with and consult with employees and Trade Unions on key issues affecting our organisation
- The Council will maintain its commitment to workforce development and support staff through challenging changes
- The Council will maintain its commitment to workplace health and wellbeing support for all employees

Commitment to Councillors

- We value the democratic role that Councillors have in representing the people of Ashfield.
- The Council recognises that the role of a Councillor is challenging and will support Councillors with training to help them deliver their roles
- The Council will ensure that there is good governance in our democratic processes
- The Council will keep Councillors of all political parties updated on key issues



“ Healthy, happy, vibrant. ”



OUR PRIORITIES

Health and Wellbeing

We recognise that health and wellbeing of our residents is a major contributing factor to ensuring:-

- That Ashfield is a vibrant place to live
- That the local workforce is skilled, productive and employable
- That our residents are healthy and happy

As people live longer and have increasing expectations upon public services, there is a recognised increase in demand for health and social care related provision.

Ashfield has some of the poorest health profiles within Nottinghamshire including life expectancy, mortality caused by cancer and cardiovascular diseases, child poverty and smoking related deaths

We also recognise that the health of people in Ashfield is generally worse than the England average. Deprivation is higher than average and about 27.8% children live in poverty after housing costs are removed (2015). 20.3% of our Year 6 children are classified as obese (2012/13 – 2014/15), above the national average. Life expectancy for both men and women is lower than the England average.

Much as the comparative picture of the health of Ashfield is not positive, trends for life expectancy, adult obesity, and smoking prevalence have improved over recent years.

What have we been doing to support our health and wellbeing aspirations?

Through its strategic leadership role and as a core member of the County Health & Wellbeing Board the Council has been actively working with public services across the district to bring about improvement in identified health needs and priorities for Ashfield. For example, the development of the Ashfield Health & Wellbeing Centre.

We aim to close the health inequalities gap by working with our partners to identify how best to allocate reducing public resources to maximise impact in a targeted way addressing areas of highest need.

The Active Ashfield Healthy Lifestyles Strategy 2013-2017 focuses on the strength of partnership working to deliver known local priorities for increasing the number of people living healthy lifestyles. Particular focus has been on increasing levels of regular physical activity for those who do little or nothing at all, because of their link to obesity, poor nutrition, smoking and cardio-vascular conditions. The health costs of inactivity in Ashfield are at least £1.7 million per year (Sport England). Inactivity is the third biggest killer in the UK, responsible for six percent of total deaths. The Ashfield Healthy Lifestyles Strategy will be refreshed in 2017 for the next five years.



Active Ashfield is a network of local partners working together to provide opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to get involved in sport and physical activity and to lead a healthy lifestyle. The Council play the lead role in the strategic direction of Active Ashfield. The network has a reputation of being the strongest in Nottinghamshire and has been very successful in obtaining funding to deliver events and activities in Ashfield.

The Council recognises that it can directly support the improvement of the health and wellbeing of its residents through its own services and support such as, workplace health, homelessness, quality of housing, affordable warmth, provision of quality parks and leisure facilities, healthy eating advice, inspection of food premises and community safety. Also, working with health providers to understand the type of health facilities that are likely to be required and helping them to achieve their long term plans.

In the New Cross area of Sutton we have been piloting a new approach, working with individuals in the area to understand their need(s) and shape services to meet those needs. Better health and wellbeing conditions help communities to thrive. The Council is also supporting the Clinical Commissioning Group's 'Connecting Communities (C2)' pilot project in the Broomhill area of Hucknall, which aims to support community led improvements through local problem solving and empowering community action proven to result in improved health and wellbeing.

The Council is a pilot authority within a Sport England sponsored initiative to review, develop and integrate the role of district council provided services, especially leisure and culture, in the commissioning of public health initiatives within Ashfield.





Health and Wellbeing

We Will

- Improve our understanding of health and wellbeing issues.
- Secure a district-wide network of quality, affordable, accessible and sustainable Leisure Centres and services for the benefit of all residents of Ashfield
- Influence key health agencies to ensure appropriate health and social care services and infrastructure for Ashfield.
- Encourage Health Impact Assessments for major planning applications
- Align Council services to support activity aimed at reducing health inequalities.
- Increase access to leisure for non-participants
- Improve workplace health.
- Take a targeted approach to improving health and well-being in areas of greatest need.

Outcomes We Want to Achieve (in partnership)

To narrow the gap between Ashfield and our comparator groups (Nottinghamshire and CIPFA Family Group) for the following health measures:

- Increase participation in sport and physical activity.
- Reduce Adult obesity.
- Reduce Child obesity.
- Reduce Children in poverty.
- Reduce Smoking prevalence.
- Healthy Life Expectancy

Key Projects, Programmes and Initiatives

Identify key targeted partnership health interventions for partner agencies and the Council's direct services aligned to the geographical areas of greatest health inequalities and needs.

Health Equalities Programme:

- Review, target and deliver free swimming and activities for children.
- Implement agreed outcomes from the review of Leisure facilities by exploring and implementing options for the future of Huthwaite and Edgewood Leisure centres
- To complete the feasibility work for a replacement of Festival Hall Leisure Centre
- Support the implementation of the Sustainable Transformation Plan through the development of multi-agency action plans involving Council services to address leading causes of health inequalities
- Seek greater engagement of mental health services within the Integrated Services hub, recognising the association of mental health issues with crime and vulnerability.
- Delivery of Housing and Health key projects including those within the Better Care Fund Programme.
- Delivery of the Ashfield Smokefree Action Plan.
- Explore/review the use of Health Impact Assessments for major Planning Developments
- Delivery of HOT Awards for Takeaway Establishments and Food Hygiene Awards.
- Develop and implement an updated Air Quality Strategy with other Nottinghamshire Authorities.
- Deliver the Workplace Health Award scheme and work towards Gold Accreditation by working in partnership with workplaces across the district
- Deliver Sport England Pilot-Commissioning of Public Health services.

Strategic Policy Context

- Fair Society, Healthy Lives-Marmot Review.
- County HWB Strategy.
- ADC-Housing Strategy.
- Sustainable Transformation Plan
- Better Care Fund Programme
- Nottinghamshire Framework for Action on Health Inequalities.
- ADC - Maximisint Impact Across 5 Areas Policy.
- Nottinghamshire Declaration on Tobacco Control.
- Active Lifestyle Strategy for Ashfield.
- Joint Strategic Needs Assessments.
- Public Open Space and Playing Pitch Strategy.



“ An accessible, safe and warm home at an affordable cost creates a good base on which to build a successful life and that is why housing is a priority for us.

”



OUR PRIORITIES

Housing

Affordable, warm, safe housing contributes to making Ashfield a great place to live. It is relatively affordable to rent or buy in the district, with house prices half of the national average levels and the affordability ratio currently standing at 4.8 (median house price to income ratio) compared to 6.2 across the County and 8.9 nationally. Housing standards are good within the social rented sector and the Council are working with many landlords to improve homes within the private rented sector. The majority of homes in the district are owner occupied and although many are in good condition, some require additional repair and improvement works to bring them up to standard. The Council's private sector Enforcement team has brought over 1100 empty and derelict homes back into use across the district over the last 5 years and will continue to work with owners and landlords to bring the remaining 750 empty homes back into use.

The Council is in the process of delivering its 4 year Housing Strategy for Ashfield 2016 – 20. The strategy, which has a strong focus on improving health through housing, was produced with input from elected Members, key stakeholders and partner agencies and was subject to an eight week consultation period where stakeholders and residents were asked their views on housing issues and the priorities that had been identified for the next 4 years.

What have we been doing to support these aspirations?

Since the Housing Strategy was published in October 2016, many of the tasks within the initial 2016-2018 action plan have been completed including;

- Commissioning and production of a stock modelling survey for the Ashfield District.
- Worked with Registered Providers, the Homes and Communities Agency and the Council's own contractors to deliver 147 new affordable rented homes across the district during 2016-17.
- Relocated 68 households under the Relocation Plus scheme where existing tenants free up family homes and move into smaller homes to make better use of housing stock.
- Ensured that Local Letting plans are in place on all new developments to ensure sustainability in new communities.
- Delivering the Freedom Programme throughout 2017 open to all women wanting to break the cycle of domestic abuse.
- Recruited an additional officer within the Private Sector Enforcement Team to raise standards in the Private rented sector
- Introduced Selective Licencing in two areas of the district to improve safety, and have a positive effect on the wider community.
- Utilised commuted sums payments to enable the development of 8 new affordable homes in Jacksdale.





- The production of a Health Impact Assessment report for the district that can be used to model future investment in housing and justify new funding through return on investment.
- Brought back 9 empty homes on Warwick Close back into use following major refurbishment.
- Established a Hospital Discharge Scheme with Adult Social Care that provides respite units to patients who are ready to leave hospital but cannot return home.
- Secured £128k funding from the DCLG to provide an enhanced domestic violence support service for our existing 6 refuge units across the district that now includes the provision of a dedicated children's worker.
- Produced an investment plan for the district where viable council owned sites for future housing development have been identified and mapped out.
- Brought the Council's social housing stock back under the direct management of the Council in order to create efficiencies through eliminating duplication and sharing skills across a broader range of services, as well as forming a tighter focus on key priorities such as working more closely on Anti-Social Behaviour, support for vulnerable customers, Welfare Reform and health.
- The Housing Strategy document and associated Executive Summary can be found on the Council's Website and hard copies can be requested by contacting Strategic Housing on 01623 457211.

Welfare Reform

Levels of disposable income and financial support have a direct impact on the quality of people's lives. They also directly link to the quality of people's housing; whether that be the amount of rent they can afford to pay or whether they can afford to heat their home adequately whilst coping with other financial commitments.

As a direct response to the Welfare Reform Act 2012, a district wide Welfare Reform Board was established, in partnership with the DWP and Citizens Advice, in order to prepare for and deal with the impact of the raft of reforms that continue to be rolled out nationally. In doing so we have been able to gain a better understanding of the level of impact of the reforms, raise awareness, and appoint additional front line staff to assist residents deal with changes to their benefits, whilst also promoting related services that support our residents through the changes – i.e. credit unions, debt advice services, direct debits, food banks, responsible lending, furniture and white good schemes.

The Board is now focusing on the rollout of Universal Credit and its associated implications, our key priorities being;

- Promoting digital inclusion.
- Enabling easier access to financial advice and money management.
- Assisting people to move who are under occupying their current homes.
- Provision of practical support and advice for vulnerable applicants.



Housing

We Will

- Influence housing provision to ensure that there is sufficient housing available in the district of the right size, type and quality, ensuring an adequate supply of affordable housing.
- Bring more empty homes back into use
- Ensure that new housing is sustainable and fuel efficient.
- Support the delivery of energy efficiency in existing homes.
- Deal with disrepair in the private sector by encouraging owners to improve their properties.
- Ensure that we understand the reasons for homelessness and adopt measures to assist those affected and prevent where possible.
- Offer additional tenancy support and money advice to our tenants.
- Ensure that when new housing is built that the right infrastructure is in place to create great places to live.

Outcomes We Want to Achieve

- Increase overall supply of affordable homes in the district.
- Reduce Levels of Fuel Poverty.
- Increase financial capacity and tenancy sustainment
- Minimise homelessness through increased prevention

Key Projects, Programmes and Initiatives

Suitable & Appropriate Housing:

- Develop a long term sustainable business plan to enhance and expand existing Council owned housing stock.
- Align our approach to aids and adaptations (Disabled Facilities Grant) across all tenures and make better use of pre-adapted properties.
- Promote and provide evidential data for the need for affordable housing on larger developments.

Energy and Sustainability

- Assist, identify and implement both local and national schemes which improve the fuel efficiency of existing properties such as Warm Homes on Prescription and Energy Company Obligation funding.
- Review and renew inefficient heating systems in our sheltered housing schemes.

Housing Regeneration

- Review existing Council land and sites for mixed tenure development.
- Progress the regeneration of the properties and land in the Warwick Close area of Kirkby.
- Continue to support and encourage the return of empty homes back in to occupation.

Tackling Disrepair/ poor housing conditions

- Review impact of the Selective Licencing scheme as a way of improving housing standards in the private rented sector.
- Utilise the data from the district wide British Research Establishment (BRE) Health Impact report to prioritise health and housing related initiatives.

Reducing/ Preventing Homelessness and housing support

- Work with partners to plan the introduction of new Government Homelessness legislation to prevent and reduce Homelessness with in the district and surrounding area.
- Seek to sustain the provision of domestic violence Refuge places within the district and offer enhanced support for survivors to break cycle.
- Work with Adult Social Care to provide suitable short term accommodation which enables people to leave hospital at the appropriate time (Hospital Discharge Scheme) Welfare Reform.
- Review welfare reform support and provision in advance of the full roll out of Universal Credit.
- Create a digital zone at Kirkby Council Offices in conjunction with the Department of Work and pensions (DWP).
- Seek to enhance resources dedicated to supporting Council tenants manage their money and rent payments.

Strategic Policy Context

- Housing and Planning White Paper 2017
- Housing Strategy 2016-2020
- Welfare Reform Action Plan
- Allocations Policy
- Domestic Violence Policy
- Strategic Tenancy Strategy
- Tenancy Policy
- Asset Management Policy
- Procurement Policy
- Aids and Adaptations Policy
- DFG Policy
- HECA (Home Energy Conservation Act) Report
- HCA Regulatory Standards
- Homelessness Reduction Bill 2017



“ There are easy to reach shops and public transport in my local area. ”

PLACE AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Ashfield is a place where science and romance come together; a place renowned for its welcoming, supportive and passionate communities; a place with access to green spaces; a place with excellent accessibility to road and rail networks.

The District's three towns and picturesque rural villages each offer unique and diverse characteristics; rich in cultural, natural and industrial heritage. Natural unspoilt countryside is complemented by award winning country parks, with a variety of visitor attractions. Ashfield has an abundance of designated nature sites and way-marked footpaths. Our wealth of industrial and cultural heritage includes textiles, mining and engineering, Lord Byron, Eric Coates, D. H. Lawrence, Ben Caunt and Harold Larwood amongst others.

The Council will work with local communities and other public, private and voluntary organisations to enhance the perception of Ashfield as a great place; cherished by those who live here, desirable to those who visit and enabling to those who bring jobs and investment

Historically Ashfield has enjoyed a proud industrial history; one of the most productive areas of the country, with manufacturing and mining industries providing jobs for a hard working local workforce. However, with the demise of these principal heavy industries and the off shoring of volume manufacturing, Ashfield has over recent years necessarily and successfully adapted to provide a wider range of modern value added business sectors: for example, Transport and Logistics, Construction, Advanced Manufacturing, Health and Business and Professional services. As well as this, because of Ashfield's advantageous geographical location; close to a range of strategic road, rail and airport links, the District has successfully attracted many inward investors, who now play an important part in our local and regional economy and sustain local supply chains and employment.

Despite this economic transition, the legacy of the previous industrial structure has left the remnants of a low skill/low wage economy among the local working age population. Skill levels and, therefore, average earnings are lower than the East Midlands and National averages. The consequence of this is that some Ashfield businesses are already finding it difficult to recruit at higher skill levels, particularly in construction, engineering, professional and financial services sectors.

Ashfield District Council and its partners are committed to increasing the number of higher skilled/higher paid jobs in Ashfield. Doing this will benefit the local economy, as people spend their greater disposable income in shops and with other services, and also will assist the reputation of Ashfield as a location of choice for investors, where all of their employment and supply chain needs can be met.

What have we been doing to support these aspirations?

We have been improving the economic health of Ashfield by focussing on several important and interlinked factors:

- Sufficient, suitable and affordable land and/or premises.
- Access to a pool of appropriately skilled people.
- Good connectivity to suppliers and customers.
- High quality support for business, including financial where appropriate.
- Vibrant town centres which provide destinations for a variety of goods and services.
- Work with key strategic partners.
- Underpinned by a "can do" attitude from Council officers in any interaction with business and residents.

Sufficient, suitable and affordable land and/or premises

Through its development of the Local Plan, the Council will ensure that sufficient land – and in the right place - is being made available to allow businesses to invest and grow in the District. Ashfield already has a number of key employment sites; some available and being actively marketed by the Council in partnership with the private sector. Other sites are at the planning stage and again the Council will work with developers and end users to bring appropriate investment to fruition. For example, existing sites at Sherwood and Castlewood Business Parks, Summit Park, County Estate, along with the proposed Rolls Royce employment site, will all have significant impact on the economy and have the capacity to create thousands of new jobs. We forecast that over the next five years, at least 5,000 new jobs will be created in these new modern business parks in a wide range of occupations and skills.

Where opportunities exist, the Council will also use its own borrowing powers to bring forward development to facilitate further business investment, where pump priming will stimulate the market demand from end users.

Access to a pool of appropriately skilled people

Skills funding is a key issue and Ashfield will work with partners to ensure delivery of Skills provision for Ashfield residents. More locally, the Council is currently working with all of Ashfield's secondary schools, to help to better prepare young people for the world of work. The Council will also take further steps to promote the creation of apprenticeships, both within the Authority but particularly within the private sector, to reduce skills gaps and skill shortages. The Council will also work with the DWP, businesses and training providers to address recruitment and skill needs and for these to be linked to jobs for local people. A key strategic activity will be to work with regional partners on joint arrangements which cross District borders.

Good connectivity to suppliers and customers

Ashfield is well situated for road, rail and air transport. Where appropriate, Ashfield District Council will support better linkages that impact positively on the local economy. For example, the Hucknall Inner Relief Road and improvements to Kirkby Town centre. At a more strategic level, we will work with our regional partners to develop HS2 and the Robin Hood Line for the benefit of the Ashfield economy. In particular we are keen to explore opportunities for the establishment of a connection from the district to the HS2 hub at Toton via the re-establishment of the 'Maid Marion Line'. We will also work with Midlands Connect on longer term major investment plans to facilitate greater regional transport connectivity to support the "Midlands Engine"; as well as seeking to address transport infrastructure improvements at key sites e.g. A611/junction 27. Connectivity also includes digital and we will continue to work with our regional partners to provide Super-Fast Broadband for the whole District.



High quality support for business, including financial where appropriate

Ashfield District Council has provided high quality business support through the successful “Ambition for Ashfield and Mansfield” programme. However, in the light of current Government policy, which has moved away from grants to more loan based investment instruments, a more relationship based way of working will be required like having an account manager for our key businesses sectors. This will provide a “one stop shop” approach and a stronger economic intelligence base, which itself will then inform our future plans.

Vibrant town centres, which provide destinations for a variety of goods and services

Ashfield District Council has, and will continue, to prioritise work on its principal town centres to ensure that they can provide high quality goods and services for residents, along with visually attractive destinations that people want to visit. Our priorities will include Hucknall Town Centre relief road, Sutton Town Centre indoor market and the Fox Street development and further work to Kirkby Town Centre. We also intend to work with landlords to bring vacant premises back into use and to continue programmes to help refurbish shop fronts, along with associated business advice.

Work with key strategic partners

We recognise that Ashfield working alone cannot accomplish all of these ambitions. For that reason, we work closely with our regional partners both within the individual Authorities (County and District), with our LEP D2N2 and with new strategic partnerships such as HS2 and Midlands Connect on future transport investment, and Mansfield Ashfield 2020 on supporting inward investment. We continue to look for shared service arrangements or partnership opportunities, where services can be provided at a more economic or effective level.

Underpinned by a “can do” attitude from council officers

We will encourage our staff to be more creative and enterprising to ensure that we deliver a modern and proactive economic development service, which is appropriate to both business and residents’ needs.







Place and Economic Growth

We Will

- Enhance the identity and brand for Ashfield; so it is cherished by those who live here, desirable to those who visit, and attractive to those who bring jobs and investment.
- Raise the profile of Ashfield as a place where people want to visit and spend their time enjoying themselves.
- Understand our economy and create the right strategy and policy base for improvements.
- Engage in the developing partnership arrangements across Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire focusing on the benefits for Ashfield.
- Promote skills and aspiration ensuring local people are equipped with the right skills to access employment.
- Support pre-start, new and existing local businesses helping them to grow and create jobs.
- Work with our partners and seek to lobby and influence to maximise opportunities for improvements to transport, connectivity and digital infrastructure
- Promote the area as a place to invest in particular as a centre for Creative, Business Professional Financial Services, Health, Transport and Logistics, Advanced Manufacturing and Knowledge Based Industries
- Ensure the area offers an attractive and balanced range of good quality office, commercial and industrial premises/ sites.

Outcomes We Want to Achieve

- To narrow the gap between Ashfield and our East Midlands comparator group in respect of:-
 - average workplace earnings levels
 - average earnings by residence
 - employment levels
 - skills levels – NVQ level 3 and above
- Improved resident satisfaction with the area; People enjoy living and working here.
- Increase the number of business start up.
- Increased business survival rates.
- Reduced vacancy rates of shops and commercial units.
- Increase footfall and spend in our town centres.

Key Projects, Programmes and Initiatives

Economy and Regeneration Strategy Programme:-

- To actively engage with the Combined Authority proposals and discussions.
- To submit the Local Plan to the Secretary of State by March 2017. To have an adopted Local Plan in 2017/18.
- To work with partners to assess the impact and opportunities associated with HS2 and to explore proposals to improve and extend the Robin Hood Line both northwards and via the development of the 'Maid Marion line' to Toton.
- Agree key transport priorities with Nottinghamshire County Council.

Regeneration Delivery and Feasibility Programme:-

- To complete the redevelopment of Idlewells Indoor Market and launch in the autumn of 2017.
- To work with the County Council and complete the implementation of the Hucknall town centre improvement scheme.
- To maximise the occupancy, job creation and social value from the Ada Lovelace House development.
- To explore the feasibility for a town centre mixed use development at Piggins Croft in Hucknall.

- To work with the owner of Annesley Hall to promote the regeneration of the heritage site.
- To proactively work with developers and other private sector partners to bring forward development sites including Sutton's Fox Street development, Summit Park and Annesley Miners Welfare.

Place Leadership programme:-

- Establish a Place Leadership Board and develop the Place Leadership Action Plan.
- To develop closer working relationships with stakeholder groups and businesses within the three main town centres under the umbrella of the Place Leadership Board.
- To establish a vision for each of the three main town centres and to revisit the town centre masterplans.
- To work through the Place Leadership Board and with local businesses to explore the feasibility of a Business Improvement District or a series of BIDs
- To utilise the learning from the place leadership work to realign and reinvigorate inward investment promotion, working closely with local businesses.

Strategic Policy Context

- Town Centre Masterplans and Localities Plans
- Devolution Deal
- Member Policy Commitments
- Industrial Strategy (Green Paper)



“ I feel privileged to raise my children in an area that has lots of local parks/green spaces that are well maintained and hold high quality free events.

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COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT

To support the Council's Place aspirations, we will aim to ensure the ingredients for a good quality of life are in place. This means we will prioritise ensuring cleaner and attractive neighbourhoods ensuring both an effective response to issues but also working on prevention and behavioural change. We will also work with our partners to ensure people feel safe and are safe by reducing levels of crime and disorder. Across all public services we will work with our partners to design services around the needs of individuals and places, rather than institutions; ensuring our financial resources are used in the most effective way.

What have we been doing to support these aspirations?

Targeting resources to reduce crime and disorder

As part of our County-wide approach, the Council and its partners have been focusing on a number of 'high impact' priority areas; a position solidified in July 2016 through a new cross-cutting policy focussing on quality of life. The five areas identified have higher levels of crime and disorder, health inequalities, deprivation and other social inequalities. Colleagues from different agencies have co-ordinated their efforts to tackle crime and disorder, and target additional resources in those areas. The Council meets with the police architectural officer over major and contentious applications through the major projects liaison meeting to design out crime or reduce the opportunity for crime. The geographic focus develops the previous 'Partnership Plus' focus in place since 2010 and moves from a tactical short term focus to more sustainable long-term change. That said, over the past five years the Partnership Plus areas have seen significant reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour.

The Community Safety Partnership recently updated its Annual Strategic Plan and has adopted a number of operating principles as it seeks to further develop the work being undertaken. These principles primarily seek to ensure **greater community involvement** in actions and activity being undertaken by partners; that services are **'local by default'** and tailored to the needs of the community and that the focus is on **prevention and early intervention**, rather than deploying tactics to resolve issues as they occur. Current focuses also include reducing hate crime, and responding to new and emerging communities, particularly following the Brexit vote in 2016.

Helping our residents to reduce waste and recycle more

The revised Waste Framework Directive requires the UK to recycle 50% of its municipal waste by 2020. In 2014/15 Ashfield recycled 33% of the waste collected. Following a bold funding agreement with Nottinghamshire County Council, In 2016 the Council re-configured its waste collection services, reducing the size of the residual waste bin by 25% and providing free garden waste collections for 2 years across the district. Residual waste collected has fallen dramatically and garden waste collected increased by over 100%. Recycling rates for 2016/17 are projected to be 42%, approximately 10% higher than the year before. The Council recently was a runner up in the Keep Britain Tidy Awards.



Introducing new powers to tackle environmental issues

Following the enactment of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, the Council has recently enacted new powers through the introduction of a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO). This is designed to prevent anti-social behaviour in areas such as streets, parks, market places, cemeteries and churchyards. The PSPO incorporates a list of seven prohibited activities that have a negative impact on the cleanliness of our streets and extends existing powers officers have to tackle dog fouling. If a person who is in charge of a dog does not have a receptacle for picking up dog faeces when asked to produce one, for any reason they are liable for a Fixed Penalty Notice. The new powers took effect from 1st October 2015. The Council is in the process of adopting new powers to issue fixed penalty notices for fly-tipping, but already uses a range of legislative tools to tackle this offence.

Improving Environmental Quality

For a number of years the Council has sustained a high level of parks at the nationally recognised Green Flag standard. Six parks across the District currently hold this status and the Council is continuing to develop service quality with those key community assets. The Council continues to critically evaluate how it works and this has resulted in a reduction all types of environmental service requests, especially litter related which have reduced by 34% since 2012. The Council recognises the value in communities taking responsibility for their own environment and has been undertaking a number of programmes to facilitate greater involvement. The development of the Green Buddy scheme and establishment of over 100 Environmental Volunteers recently attracted a Keep Britain Tidy Award.



Placing communities at the heart of decision making

Within two areas of the district, New Cross, in Sutton and Butlers Hill, in Hucknall, the Council has been working with an organisation called Connecting Communities. They help to facilitate residents and local service providers to come together to create the conditions within which a resident-led partnership can flourish. Sponsored by local Clinical Commissioning groups, the approach demonstrates the closer working now taking place with health colleagues. Work is now underway to develop a similar approach in Stanton Hill, another priority area within the district.



Changing the way we work and deliver services

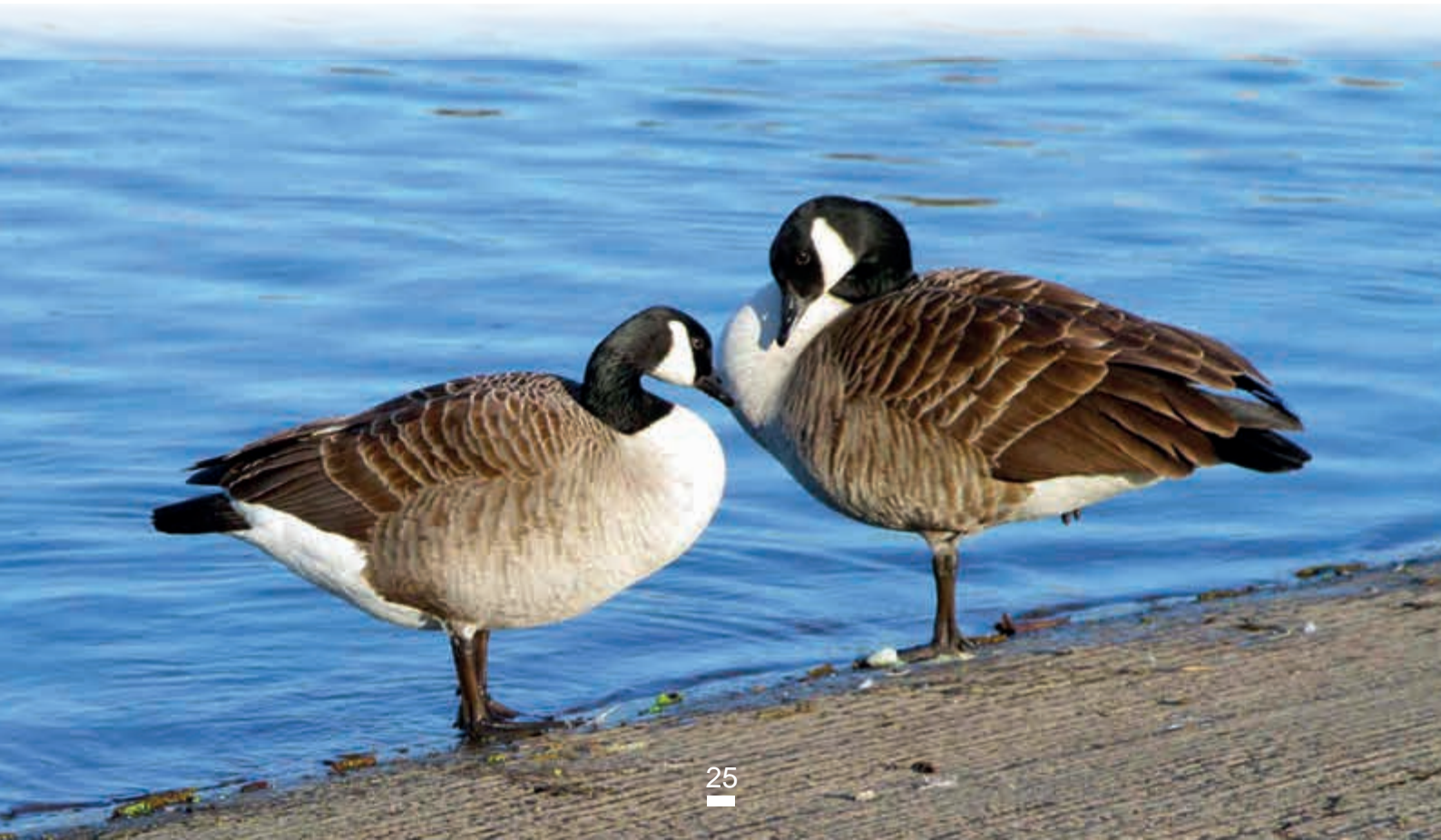
To support the community development work in New Cross, the Council has been leading on a pilot project trialling a new multi-agency service model. Drawing representatives from multiple agencies, the New Cross Team has spent time working with individuals in a different way. Rather than providing more traditional, service-led responses, case workers have spent time building a more holistic understanding of need(s) and have then delivered personally tailored services based on that assessment. Retaining ownership, rather than referring on to other agencies has allowed us to build relationships and trust and, consequently, better match resources and effort. The approach received recognition at the 2016 MJ Awards and was 'Highly Commended'. Further commitments from the Council and its partners have enabled a second team to be created in Broomhill and the establishment of the Integrated Service Hub within the Council building is enabling the learning to be rolled out to a district-wide

level. Nottingham Trent University continues to support an ongoing and extensive evaluation of the project.

Tailoring services to local areas

The Council introduced locality working in 2014 as part of its commitment to support decision making at a local level. A virtual locality team supports each Area Committee, with expertise in capital project delivery, community development, regeneration, community protection and environmental services.

Locality plans have been developed for each of the four areas of the district following consultation with the public and members. Each locality plan has an action plan setting out how the aspirations in the Corporate Plan will be delivered at local level, for example, regenerating town centres, ensuring clean and attractive streets and parks, promoting and improving health and wellbeing. The plans are currently being reviewed to place a greater focus on the 5 priority areas as articulated in the July 2016 policy established.





“ There are so many green spaces. We have some lovely parks that are used really well. ”



Communities and Environment

We Will

- Enable thriving, prosperous and self-sufficient communities where people shape their own futures.
- Create a greener Ashfield, reducing the community and business impact on the environment, minimising waste and recycling more.
- Ensure the foundations for a good quality of life are in place; reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and facilitating cleaner and more attractive neighbourhoods.
- Supporting young people to be optimistic and ambitious about their futures.
- Work with our partners to ensure we deliver services centred on the needs of people and places, rather than existing teams, agencies or institutions.
- Enable stable and balanced communities.

Outcomes We Want to Achieve

- Improved public perception that Ashfield is a cleaner and more attractive place.
- Improved recycling rate.
- More people involved in community/ voluntary work.
- Reduce vulnerability ensuring people feel safe and are safe.

Key Projects, Programmes and Initiatives

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| <p>Even Cleaner Streets Programme:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling dilapidated buildings so they don't blight our neighbourhoods. • Continue to support and increase the number of Environmental Volunteers caring for their environment across the district. • Tackling fly tipping by working to reduce the amount of illegal waste carriers in the district and delivering targeted campaigns to clean up hot spot areas. <p>Recycling and Waste Programme:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue a free garden waste collection until 2018 and thereafter seek to maximise garden waste subscription in order to reduce residual waste. • Improve the efficiency of the glass collection service through implementation of revised collection arrangements. • Review Waste Policies and update the Waste Strategy. • Carry out a programme of education in schools and with local community groups. • Deliver a campaign around householder duty of care, to ensure residents understand their responsibilities when disposing of their waste. | <p>Strengthening Communities Programme:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain and develop our approach to providing 'citizen-shaped' services, which more effectively support vulnerable residents; including a focus on domestic abuse and other causes of vulnerability. • To secure further buy-in from partner agencies to our approach both in the Integrated Service Hub and Support team model, and re-design services together. • Re focuses resources in line with 5 priority areas to make the most impact on reducing crime and ASB, as well as wider issues affecting quality of life. • Investigate the reasons and solutions for the high levels of domestic violence causing homelessness and addressing those issues. • Implement revised arrangements for Domestic Violence refuge provision utilising grant funding received. • Undertake targeted multi-agency activities to address key crime or vulnerability risks in priority areas. |
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Strategic Policy Context

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Term Financial Strategy • Environment Directorate Enforcement Policy • Waste Strategy Statement 2013/14 • Police Accreditation Agreement • ASB & Nuisance Policy • Maximising Impact in 5 Priority Areas Policy • Police and Crime Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hate Crime Policy • Domestic Abuse Policy • Cemetery Strategy • Allotments Strategy • Contaminated Land Strategy • Licensing Policy • Sustainable Transformation Plan |
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“ There is good communication between the council and public. ”

ORGANISATIONAL IMPROVEMENT

It is important that the organisation has the most effective infrastructure and support to enable:-

- The delivery of the other priorities in this Corporate Plan
- Financial sustainability to continue to deliver services
- A productive workforce that delivers services well

We will increase the pace of modernising the Council's development as an innovative, values led, pioneering organisation; one that is people centred and supported by an organisational culture that promotes creativity, quality over quantity, joined up and collaborative working with our key partners and constantly thinks in unique and different ways. We will achieve this through delivery of our People Strategy and comprehensive learning & development programmes.

It is important that the organisation continues to evolve and develop in order that we can effectively facilitate the Council's transformation vision and roadmap including commercial enterprise ethos and different delivery models in the future.

The Council recognises that continued development of technology is an underpinning critical success factor to achieving the corporate priorities. The Council will continue to develop its ability to enable resident's greater choice in accessing the Council and obtaining key information in a method convenient to them including improving the Council's web site and its functionality. The Council will equally support further productivity of its employees through provision of technology that supports agile, mobile and responsive working.

What have we been doing to support these aspirations?

The introduction to this plan describes the Council's achievement in reducing its spending by £8 million as a result of reducing resources. The challenge in future is to continue to reduce the Council's net cost in the face of a further reduction in resources from Central Government, circa 50% in total by 2020. The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy has identified the need for savings of £1m in 2018/19, and a further £2.8m over the period 2019/20 to 2022/23.



We have introduced a commercial team overseeing enhanced trading positions of existing and new commercial services supported by establishment of a trading brand and development of alternative delivery models and methods. A £10 million commercial investment fund has been created to directly support increased income generation through investment in new commercial property.

Significant strides have been made in asset rationalisation through a reduction in overall Council buildings; conversion of Ada Lovelace to business units and integration and co-location of the Police and DWP (Autumn 2017) at Kirkby main offices. A future key priority is to relocate housing staff from Brook Street offices, Sutton to Kirby main offices.

A comprehensive rolling programme of service reviews across all areas of the Council is being implemented through realignment of priorities, service delivery, removal of duplication and digital and technology investments. The priority focus on reintegration of housing services into the Council in 2016 has generated over £600k of savings.

The Council's senior management team has been restructured and reduced delivering significant savings with the focus now on a review of senior manager

Technology and digitalisation developments include the relaunched, refreshed Council website embracing enhanced 24/7 accessibility to key information and functions including the ability to make on-line transactions for all key services

Within this period of significant transformational change our employees continued to be fully supported, under the auspices of the People Strategy, through recognition, personal development and engagement. The 2017 Peer Challenge highlighted the strides been made by the Council in developing a productive, positive, inclusive organisational culture around a clear vision and strong officer and political leadership. The Leadership and Development programme continues to evolve to align to changing priorities and the transformational work; there will be a specific focus on supporting the new corporate leadership team and corporate/service manager structures. There is a commitment to developing an Agile Working' ethos enabling a more flexible and productive workforce.





Organisational Improvement

We Will

- Implement a financial strategy that prioritises income generation balanced with efficiencies to sustain the Council’s finances
- Match priorities with resources to deliver our corporate objectives.
- Become a more enterprising, productive and commercial organisation, exploring and delivering income generation and business development opportunities.
- Ensure best use of our assets, exploring and supporting the development of shared assets across partner agencies and implementation of asset rationalisation.
- Ensure effective community leadership, through good governance, transparency, accountability and appropriate behaviours.
- Put our residents at the heart of what we do and inform, consult and engage with them
- Be an employer of choice and an organisation that people want to work for.
- Modernise services, being innovative and adaptable and making use of technology to help transform service delivery

Outcomes We Want to Achieve

- Increased perception that the Council provides value for money services.
- Increased perception that the Council is seen as a good employer.
- Increased perception of how well residents feel informed and engaged.
- Delivery of more efficient and productive services through digital transformation and agile working.

Key Projects, Programmes and Initiatives

Commercial Enterprise Programme:-

- Improve the trading position of commercial services
- Adopting a commercial enterprise culture and approach through appropriate leadership, training and empowerment.
- Undertake a corporate review of sponsorship opportunities.
- Establish a commercial property investment programme which generates financial returns to support core services.
- Explore the creation of a Holding company to enable other commercial opportunities.
- Explore the development of a private sector lettings agency.

Transformation and Efficiency Programme:-

- Transformation:-
To modernise the way in which the Council takes payments through increased use of Direct Debit and electronic payment methods and implement the Pay Point system for cash payments
Implement a service review programme to deliver budget savings for 2017-20 in alignment with the financial strategy.
Determine the organisations Transformation vision and roadmap.
Review the Councils IT infrastructure and plan for the future.

Effective use of assets:-

- To implement a refurbished modernised reception and digital zone integrating ADC and DWP services
- To consider the most cost effective way to move the majority of Housing Staff from Brook Street to Kirkby.
- To assess the costs to maintain existing Council assets – buildings and community facilities with a view to informing future capital and revenue expenditure and developer negotiations through S106.

Engagement Programme:-

- Undertake a review of community engagement and implement a revised approach which is more effective and efficient than the current Locality Committee structure.
- Update and embed the corporate engagement and consultation strategy and framework.

Key Projects, Programmes and Initiatives

People Strategy refresh and delivery of 3 year rolling action plan; including:

- Agile working – enabling more flexible and productive working.
- Implementation of the Recruitment and Selection Strategy with focus on workforce profile priority areas including maximising use of the new Apprenticeship Levy, integration of competency framework and embedding of values based leadership.
- Implement and embed 100% roll out of e-HR (MyView/Learning Portal) to all employees.
- Leadership, management and skills development programme-with particular focus on supporting new corporate leadership team and corporate/service managers structures.
- Develop and implement Apprenticeship Strategy aligned to new Apprenticeship Levy.

Strategic Policy Context

- Corporate Plan and Service Plans
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- People Strategy
- Workforce Development Plan
- Asset Plan
- Consultation & Engagement Strategy
- Technology Strategy
- Service Review Priority Programme
- Commercial Enterprise Strategy

I GLOSSARY OF IMAGES

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