

# Council Plan 2016-2020

## February 2017 Update

This document provides an update on progress made over the past year against the priorities set out in our four-year plan, and gives an overview of our main areas of activity.

Throughout 2016, notable progress has been made in improving outcomes for the people of Northamptonshire. Some examples are outlined below:

- The release of results from the annual Adult Social Care Survey this autumn has highlighted good levels of performance across a range of indicators when compared to regional and national averages. The social care-related quality of life indicator shows that Northamptonshire has achieved the highest score across the region, and above national average.
- In February, our Children's Services were re-inspected by Ofsted, and significant improvement against all areas was identified. It is important to note that services for children at risk were considered to be safer than at the previous inspection point, and improvements in service delivery and governance and management were noted. This will now allow the service to continue its improvement journey to move to Good.
- England's Economic Heartland strategic alliance represents the key growth corridor from Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire through Milton Keynes and across to Cambridgeshire, a gateway from London and the South East to the Midlands and beyond. This initiative has expanded significantly over the last year, as described in this document.
- Milton Keynes Council has joined NCC and Cambridgeshire County Council to become a full shareholder of LGSS, in order to realise significant reduction in duplication and efficiencies by providing services to other public bodies from Norwich City Council to NHS Community Foundation Trusts. This innovative way of working has allowed us to reduce our back office operating costs to less than 3% of our revenue budget.

- The Sustainability and Transformation Plan developed by Health with the County Council will help to deliver a health and social care system that meets the needs of the county and is resilient to changes in demand for both health and social care services. This has now been submitted and published. Success is critical, given that in Northamptonshire we are all very much aware that we have one of the most pressurised health economies in the country.
- In September we held our third 20 Million Steps campaign, with the ambitious target of reaching 40 million steps this year. Helping people to become more active is a key part of our health prevention work. This year we have exceeded our target with record levels of participation, reaching over 57 million steps, a truly tremendous achievement.
- Earlier this year we have also hosted an even more successful Women's Tour. Spectator numbers were up 20,000 to 80,000 and £1.6 million is estimated to have been generated in the local economy, up from £1m the previous year.
- Northamptonshire's rollout of Superfast Broadband has been continuing at pace throughout the year. We were one of the first councils to accelerate rural broadband connectivity and this is now paying dividends. We are one of the few areas with a successful bid to the government's Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) Rural Programme, securing an additional £2m on top of the £20 million for Superfast Broadband.
- Through its key strategy document, the Northamptonshire Arc, the County Council has outlined a policy to make the A43 a dual carriageway all the way between the A45 and the A14. Due to the scale of the scheme this will be achieved in phases, the first of which has been started to improve links and reduce congestion and journey times.

This document also provides an update on our strategic direction of travel, and outlines next steps.

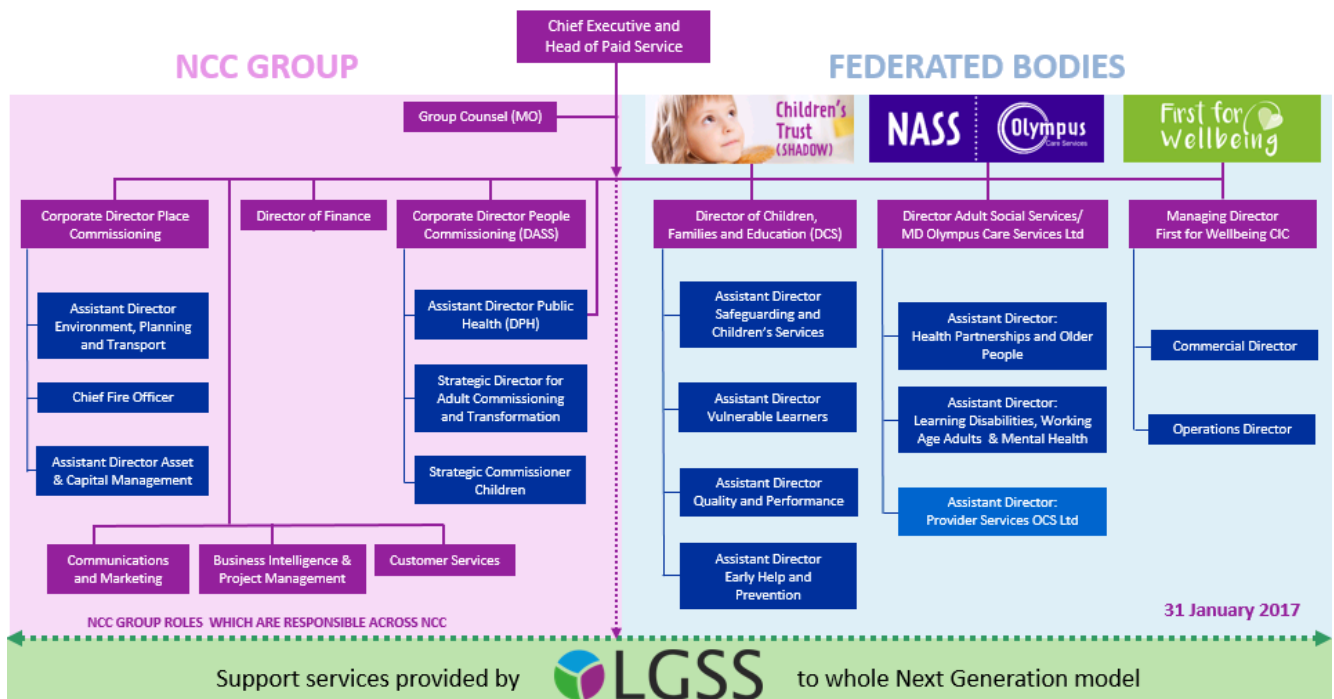
We have organised our improvement and transformation activities into the following five areas:

- Organisational transformation
- New and alternative funding streams
- Service transformation
- Workforce transformation
- Asset utilisation.

# 1: Organisational transformation

Through the continuing work on delivering the **Next Generation Council (NGC)** and finessing the details of our proposition, we have been moving closer to our strategic model for sustainable local services in Northamptonshire.

The first step in establishing the NGC was the creation of the NCC Group. We have used existing resources to create a new unit encompassing business intelligence and programme management, customer services, corporate business management and communications and marketing. The People and Place Commissioners have been in place since April 2016 and the integrated commissioning and contract teams will work ever closer with NHS commissioners to ensure the successful delivery of the local Sustainability and Transformation Plan.



Also in April 2016, our new social enterprise **First for Wellbeing** was officially launched in Northamptonshire as a Community Interest Company (CIC) founded by NCC, Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHFT) and the University of Northampton. This is the first of the delivery vehicles which will support the creation of the NGC and is designed to deliver integrated wellbeing services to help people live a happy and healthy life, by focusing on prevention services.

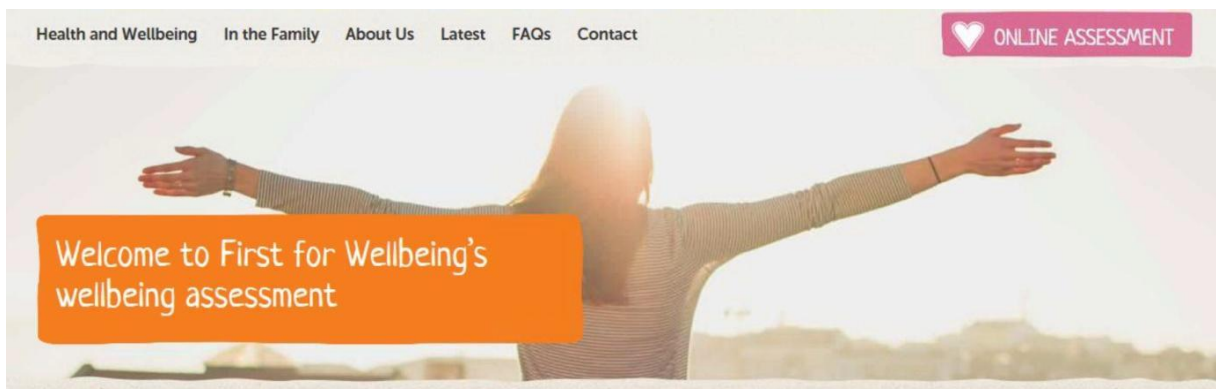
First for Wellbeing offers eight core wellbeing services:



It also includes a number of iconic NCC services and facilities including:



First for Wellbeing has also developed an innovative assessment tool. OCTIGO – the system behind First for Wellbeing’s wellbeing assessment – was specifically created for First for Wellbeing by a team of digital specialists, with input and backing from Public Health England, NHFT and the University of Northampton’s School of Innovation.



Designed after the eight areas of wellbeing, OCTIGO is a simple, easy-to-use online assessment tool that involves a series of questions to holistically assess someone’s health and wellbeing needs and goals. This is an effective way to identify need at an early stage, providing people with the information and support needed to take control of their wellbeing, including signposting to services. It is also used as a source of intelligence which can inform the organisation of the need in our communities, helping us to design and introduce the most appropriate services.

During 2016, we have been identifying how to transfer the Adult Social Care Services and Children, Families and Education directorates into delivery vehicles wholly owned by NCC but with the ability to trade and attract additional funding. Preliminary business cases have been approved by Cabinet and work continues at pace to ensure arrangements are in place for a smooth transition.

Throughout the year, these service areas have operated in shadow form, under the strategic commissioner arrangements at the heart of the NGC model, and will continue to do so until fully transferred into the new entities.

The **Sustainability and Transformation Plan**, developed in collaboration with our Health partners, has been published and is helping to ensure that our delivery model across the health and care economy is fit for purpose, future-proof and allows for structural transformation in line with demand and need. One significant aspect of this will be the creation of a joint commissioning unit, to pool health and care budgets and deploy them across the appropriate services available in the county, and also to develop the markets for prevention, long-term care, emergency care, etc.

We have also continued to monitor with interest the national developments around the Government's **devolution agenda** in order to identify the most cost-effective future delivery models for local public services. This will continue to be an area of focus locally and nationally, taking into account Government priorities and emerging evidence. We believe it is in the interest of the people of Northamptonshire and the sustainability of our local services to explore the potential that can be unlocked through the creation of a unitary authority.

## 2: New and alternative funding streams

In the face of ever-decreasing funding from the government, we have continued to explore alternative funding sources and have had conversations with various potential financing partners.

These new and alternative funding streams can take the form of:

- Social Impact Bonds
- Philanthropic investors and foundations
- Ethical investment streams.

Several initiatives have been explored to secure funding, particularly in the Children's Social Care and Public Health arenas, with more work to be done in the coming year. The creation of an Investment Board and the appointment of a new Group Finance Director whose role is to also drive forward the delivery of these initiatives are just two of the mechanisms put in place to ensure we get the best deal for the county.

### 3: Service Transformation

In keeping with our Council values and the 'safe and healthy' principles captured in the Council Cube, we are continuing to deliver to the **prevention**



agenda, ensuring that services are available to those residents with low level needs, to avoid these escalating and requiring more intensive input. First for Wellbeing will be the mechanism by which prevention and early help services are right-sourced. Work across Children and Families, as well as health, will continue, focusing on the development of social prescribing tools (community and voluntary services designed to reduce escalation of needs).

At the same time, we have been accelerating our work on **Digital Northamptonshire**, an organisation-wide programme designed to help our consumers self-serve and give them access to our services in ways which fit their needs and preferences. By analysing customer interactions we are process re-engineering our services, bringing them in line with the expectations of a digital population. We are, wherever possible, encouraging and supporting people to help themselves, so that resources can be deployed to assist those who genuinely cannot do this.

This ethos of self-help and individual agency is also at the heart of the **progression model** we have been rolling out across Adult Social Care. This is designed to support and safeguard people who have eligible needs while increasing their ability to build on their skills, build resilience and return to independence. The approach results in fewer people relying on intensive and high cost services while delivering improved outcomes for service users.

### 4: Workforce transformation

Our **Next Generation Working** programme and vision are both designed around the principle that *“Work is about what you do, not where you do it”*. Modern technology and new approaches to management and teamwork will enable a range of working environments, and allow us to build a more flexible, mobile, IT confident and productive workforce. The principles of Next Generation Working focus our activities on customer satisfaction and outcomes, improve our flexibility and future-proof our services, ensuring that we adopt the most effective approach to our work.

Combined with this is our move to two centralised locations: **One Angel Square** in Northampton and the **William Knibb Centre** in Kettering. This will not only make the best use of our estate and reduce our building running costs, but will also increase efficiency and collaboration amongst staff. Modern work environments which encourage collaboration and co-design will contribute to making our workforce future-proof and more responsive to customer needs.

*Proposed refurbishment of the William Knibb Centre in Kettering*



In Children’s Social Care, the key focus of the **Stable and Able** project is to reduce the number of agency staff in social work roles (currently 45%). As well as reducing the high cost of employing a large number of non-permanent staff, it will also reduce staff turnover, improving consistency and stability for our children and young people. This will be achieved by attracting new permanent staff, converting existing agency staff to permanent staff and retaining our current permanent staff. The project is primarily focused on recruiting experienced social workers and complements the development work carried out in our Social Work Academy.

## 5: Asset utilisation

We have continued to make the best use of our assets, both physical and intellectual. As part of the Next Generation Model we have put in place the **Corporate Landlord** function which delivers our asset management work, as well as maximising capital investment and asset utilisation. The creation of a **Managing Agent**, in collaboration with a private sector partner, will allow us to maximise the value of our investments and procurement.

At the heart of all our work has been a strong focus on **business intelligence**-led decision



making. Thanks to our corporate business intelligence team, we can gather and analyse data on residents and customers, on the performance of our services and we can generate intelligence related to demand, costs, customer satisfaction, future need and the impact of our interventions. This has allowed us to better direct resources and to fully understand the impact of our decisions. The coming year will see an increased focus on understanding the impact of best practice and how this can be implemented into our business as part of the NGC model through business transformation, and also on understanding return on investment, crucial in this climate of continuing budget cuts.

Alongside the work to make our organisation as effective and efficient as possible, we have also focused on improving our capacity and capability to influence factors outside the Council's direct control. We have established a **Public Affairs** function which, in 2016-17, has delivered the following:

- policy engagement with Northamptonshire MPs via a new Westminster Briefing;
- a single point of contact between Northamptonshire MPs and the Council's Cabinet;
- promotion of significant initiatives such as England's Economic Heartland to the LGA and East Midlands Councils;
- provided fully informed corporate responses to the LGA on key bills progressing through Parliament and national policy consultations such as changes to the Business Rate Retention model;
- submitted evidence into national Select Committee inquiries as to the future of Adult Social Care to DCLG Select Committee.



During 2017-18 we will continue to build on this practice by developing an annual engagement plan based on the Cabinet Office forward plan and Bills in Parliament schedule. We will also be helping to support development of plans for local government reorganisation in the county that could be submitted to government in the future.