

# Our Position Statement

## Corporate Peer Challenge



**NOVEMBER 2021**

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# WELCOME

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It is our great pleasure to share with you our Position Statement for your forthcoming Peer Review challenge of North Kesteven District Council.

This document presents the high-level background and contextual information about North Kesteven district and its council to help you to prepare for our engagement. It links with our 2030 Community Strategy – setting our longer-term vision; aspirations and desired outcomes; and the 2021-2024 NK Plan – our refreshed medium-term delivery focus for our priorities, purpose and services as we seek to develop and enrich our District of Flourishing Communities.

We are confident that you will find in North Kesteven a council that is focused in its ambitions and actions for North Kesteven's communities and one that is rooted in its place, with a strong understanding of local needs, pressures and opportunities and confident in the position of our Council in meeting those aspirations.

We are clear in our vision, purpose, values and priorities in driving forward Our Communities, Our Economy, Our Environment, Our Homes and Our Council at the start of this decade and as we adapt to delivering services alongside the ongoing implications of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Building on big ambition and clarity of purpose, supported by high levels of stakeholder confidence, we are moving forward with a clear consensus and

commitment for positive action to address the climate emergency; deliver a balanced general fund, a viable housing revenue account and a £221m ten-year capital programme; and build on a strong track record of performance.

Our ambitions are fully costed within our financial strategy, take account of capacity and capabilities and are consistent within our vision to ensure our communities are resilient, safe and flourishing.

This level of investment in our communities builds on recent projects such as:

- 24 new council homes delivered during 2020/21
- The Sleaford Moor Enterprise Park, an ambitious 15-year scheme to create 485,000 square feet of business space across 12 high quality and flexible units. This is a £56 million investment; the largest single economic project the Council has ever undertaken
- A £2.2 million investment in more business workshop units in North Hykeham
- A 1.2m refurbishment of the Hub – a multi-use arts space incorporating the National Centre for Craft and Design – in Sleaford
- The re-procurement of leisure services that achieves contractual savings of £10m for the Council and enhanced provision for the public.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Wright'.

**Cllr Richard Wright**  
Leader of the Council



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Fytche'.

**Ian Fytche**  
Chief Executive of the Council



### Employment growth

Relocated to Teal Park, a regionally important strategic employment park initiated through partnership

### Housing pioneers

A pioneer of council house expansion, starting with innovative straw bale construction

### Honouring heritage

Internationally important memorial consolidates the area's unique aviation heritage offer

### Business expansion

Continued investment in business workshop units to meet demand from growing enterprises

### Outdoor activity

Creating an environment of open spaces and opportunities for better health and wellbeing

### Future proofing

Visionary investment in future proofing critical services and realising long-term efficiencies

### Historic preservation

Heritage Lottery funded partnership to restore, re-open and preserve a unique historic legacy

### Housing choice

Inspired and innovative investment provides ever more housing solutions across the District

### Aviation heritage

Celebrating the District's distinctive characteristics to engage visitors and residents

### Developing potential

Significant investment in 37 acre enterprise park with potential to create 500 new jobs

### Active arts

Acknowledged national leader in enriching communities through arts and cultural outreach

### Leisure facilities

Investing in sports & leisure to encourage more people to be more active more often

### Carbon cutting

Generating investment opportunities, best outcomes, green energy and employment for the District

# NORTH KESTEVEN - AN OVERVIEW

## One of seven districts in Lincolnshire, North Kesteven is geographically at the heart of the county.

Characterised by vast swathes of agricultural landscape with Sleaford its main settlement to the south and significant clusters of population in the north on the fringes of Lincoln city, the District is one of contrasting dynamics.

The presence of RAF Cranwell, RAF Waddington and RAF Digby, plus the many Forces' personnel based at nearby RAF Coningsby is a significant influence on the physical, economic and societal landscapes of the District.

### Summary SWOT

- The District has a strong school offer and performs well in terms of academic results. However, retaining trained and qualified younger people is a challenge.
- Given the rural nature of the District, infrastructure and connectivity – both physical and digital – can be limited. Although gradually improving, it is in the lowest 40% nationally for 4G coverage -signal from all operators (97%) and the lowest 30% for superfast broadband (93.5%). In addition, just over 12% of the adults in the District have never used the internet or are lapsed users. This figure is in the bottom 10% nationally.
- Economic inactivity levels were slightly above the national average during 2020, at 22.1% and in the bottom 40% nationally, however this was caused by the challenges posed by the pandemic. The District remains a relatively lower-wage economy with a lower proportion of knowledge-economy based jobs.
- The electric vehicle infrastructure in the District is developing at a slow pace. The number of electric vehicles in the District is in the bottom 40% nationally (501 vehicles). There are only 11.8 per 100,000 of population publicly available electric vehicle charging devices, which is in the lowest performing 20%.
- With wide open spaces, big skies and low pollution the District scores well on a range of health and wellbeing measures, however at 66.3% the proportion of overweight and obese adults is in the lowest performing 40%.
- The breast cancer screening coverage is the top 20% nationally at 79.9%. The smoking prevalence in adults, which has been decreasing in the past few years, currently stands at only 9.3%.
- Housing remains relatively affordable – median price to income ratio of 6.57, reflecting the 8th best decile.
- The District has seen significant housing expansion linked to the rapid population growth over the past two decades. Provision of the community infrastructure required to keep pace with housing levels remains a key concern for residents.
- Just under 118,200 residents within an area of 922 sq km.
- The 80th largest of the 181 English Non-metropolitan local authorities by population and 37th of all 309 English councils by area.
- 25.2% population growth since 2001 - the 30th highest increase of any English local authority. Mostly driven by migration from within the UK.
- Median age of residents is 46.3 years, compared to 41.1 years in 2001.
- Low crime. Ranked 6th safest place currently out of 263 local authorities in England, based on recorded crime rates.
- Low deprivation. Ranked 270th least deprived of all 317 English local authorities in 2019; no LSOAs within the 10% most deprived nationally.



# LOCAL PRIORITIES AND OUTCOMES

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## Vision- Insight - Priorities - Values

The Council has a vision for North Kesteven of **"A District of Flourishing Communities"**

The Council uses its STEEPLED analysis – drawing on c.150 national Social, Technological, Economic, Environmental, Political, Legislative, Ethical and Demographic measures – and resultant District SWOT as the foundation for its understanding of place.

The STEEPLED data set is updated on an ongoing basis, with snapshots via the NK in Numbers report provided to the Executive Board quarterly. Originally developed with a wide range of partners in 2015, the SWOT is reviewed annually using both the STEEPLED updates and cross-referencing with consultation feedback.

The key issues from the District SWOT link with the aspirations for our five Priorities as set out in the 2030 Community Strategy and the medium-term direction provided by the NK Plan. The Council's Priorities are structured around this insight, recognising and addressing the challenges:

- Climate change, to ensure a sustainable future for the District – **Our Environment; - "A future"**
- Economic development, to cultivate conditions for jobs growth consistent with a net zero future and business resilience – **Our Economy; - "A job"**
- Housing provision, delivering carbon neutrality whilst raising up quality and quantity in response to need – **Our Homes; - "A home"**
- Community strength, resilience and cohesion – **Our Communities; - "A life"**
- Maintaining a focus on improving services, achieving value-for-money and prudent financial management – **Our Council; - "A champion"**

The NK Plan is our rolling three year Corporate Plan, developing the shorter- and medium-term focus for each of our Priorities which also recognise more immediate and significant external influences – for example Covid-19. The current NK Plan's Purpose is set as:

**A prosperous, sustainable District delivered through effective & efficient public services that meet local priorities, the challenges of climate change and the recovery from the economic and social impacts of Covid-19.**

It then sets the focus for each Priority as:

**"Our Communities"** - To enhance the wellbeing, safety and health of all our communities; inspiring and supporting a sustainable and flourishing future.

**"Our Economy"** - To enable all of our communities to flourish as part of the economic recovery from Covid-19 as well as opportunities from the Green Economy

**"Our Environment"** - To meet the challenge of climate change, ensuring integration and delivery of the Climate Action Plan across all NK Plan priorities

**"Our Homes"** - To deliver sustainable housing growth, and pursue energy efficient development to meet the current and emerging needs of all our communities

**"Our Council"** - To aspire to be a high-performing, value-for-money Council that is agile and embraces the challenges and opportunities of the future



Under each Priority within the NK Plan a series of ambitions have been established to provide more focus to the issues being targeted. These run throughout the Council's operations, connecting vision to objectives and on through to activities. The NK Plan is reviewed each year to ensure it remains current and relevant; with updates to Purpose and Priority wordings and changes to ambitions, with additions / deletion being made as necessary. The current cycle review will recommend that the NK Plan 2022-25 remains almost wholly unchanged in all aspects.

Both our 2030 Community Strategy and rolling three-year NK Plan are aligned with relevant United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Support for both our longer-term Priority aspirations and medium-term delivery focus is clear at Member level with the unanimous approval of both the 2030 Community Strategy and the NK Plan 2021-24 by Full Council in March of this year.

The Council has consulted regularly and seen a significant expansion in the scale and demographic mix of resident respondents. From 2015's 1,100 resident contributions to the NK Plan consultation, responses almost tripled to over 3,100 in 2017. Despite the challenges of Covid-19, the Council engaged with just under 1,000 residents in last cycle's development of the Community Strategy and update of the NK Plan. This level of engagement provides a rich source of local insight and shows strong local agreement with the Council's Priorities.

As part of the last cycle of consultation we sought to build on the respondents' own prioritisation of our five Priorities and the ambitions attached to them through a repeat of the 2016 exercise – asking residents to specifically determine the local issues / services that they deemed most important and most in need of improvement. This approach validated our understanding of stakeholders' satisfaction

that we are prioritising our efforts, budgets and emphasis in the right ways and this is both reflected in the drawing out of a key medium-term ambition for each priority.

A suite of ward profiles, developed in conjunction with Elected Members, provides a valuable ward-level picture providing a detailed layer of understanding and intelligence under-pinning an overall District-level picture.

Whilst "Vision" and "Priorities" relate to what the Council does "Values" give effect to how the Council works – how it goes about delivering its long-term aspirations and the supporting priorities, how its people and teams work together, and how it works with partners and communities. Clear and embedded values therefore remain critical for the Council. Since 2014 the Council has had the following corporate values:

- **High Performing**
- **Honesty**
- **People-focused**
- **Professionalism**
- **Teamwork**

With these now also providing the behavioural framework for our EDI process.





## Council Assets

The Council operates from its main offices in Sleaford. Through contracts with third-party, not-for-profit social enterprises, it runs, leisure centres in Sleaford and North Hykeham and the Natural World Centre close to Lincoln, all of which have been subject to major and award-winning refurbishments in recent years.

The Council has four retained visitor venues, currently subject to a programme of investment and re-visioning; a new £4.2m waste depot; and 126 commercial premises, including the recent addition of a completed £2.2m development of 15 more units.

## Housing Stock

The Council continues as a social landlord with a housing stock of 3,847 properties (as at 1/9/2021) supported by a 30-year business plan for the Housing Revenue Account.

The Council has been at the forefront of council house building and punches above its weight nationally. It has added 231 new council properties over the past 10 years, with a further 81 due for completion in the current financial year. It continues with an ambitious house building programme for the future; with £58m earmarked for 300-plus new homes over the next decade and £44m for investment in existing stock.



**Photos top to bottom:**  
Sleaford Leisure Centre, LN6 Business Units, Whisby Natural World Centre, Ruslington Council Houses, Metheringham Refuse Depot.





# Addressing the Climate Change Emergency

The challenges of climate breakdown are at the forefront of the international agenda. The Council has, for several years, had a strong focus on sustainability – reducing CO<sup>2</sup> from its operations by 67% over a decade up to 2018 – and in 2018 introducing a specific Our Environment priority within the NK Plan. This was supported by 92% of the 3,000-plus residents who responded to consultation.

In July 2019, Full Council unanimously passed a Climate Emergency motion to add further emphasis to this corporate priority. The Council is also a member of UK100.

The introduction of the Council's 2030 Community Strategy has reinforced the Council's long-term commitment to tackling Climate Change – ensuring a "Future" for our residents.

The Council has since built further on its strong initial foundations with the adoption of a Climate Emergency Strategy supported by a detailed Action Plan and an Environment Policy. The Climate Action Plan is structured around nine core themes developed through the learning from the original Our Environment priority working groups. These cover:

- Decision-making & service delivery
- Built environment & planning
- Transport
- Energy, carbon capture & off-setting
- Waste and water
- Health, wellbeing & communities
- The natural environment
- Economy, employment & investment
- Adaptation & resilience

The Council commissioned external expertise to produce both a Land Use Assessment report and an analysis and impact assessment (carbon reduction vs scale of investment) of our Climate Action Plan. This has led to the formation of four high level intervention groups to drive forward the identified critical areas of:

- **Domestic heating and hot water**
- **Energy generation**
- **Land use emissions and natural carbon capture and storage**
- **Adaptation and resilience**

Governance is provided through the Climate Emergency Action Plan Panel providing oversight of delivery against the Action Plan; alongside bi-monthly progress reports to Executive Councillors. The Action Plan is captured in full within our performance management system allowing ease of wider review and reporting; whilst key actions and / or related projects are reflected within relevant service plans.

Success in meeting and adapting to the challenges of climate change require engagement with key stakeholders within the District, particularly our residents. The Council is planning to convene a residents' Climate Assembly to start in early 2022 alongside similar initiatives with businesses and landowners.

Our specific resident consultation on climate change confirmed that a significant majority - 77% - are very concerned or concerned about climate change.

# ORGANISATIONAL AND PLACE LEADERSHIP

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## Organisational Leadership

The Council has in place effective political and managerial leadership, supported, as set out later in the document, by robust governance arrangements.

## Political Structure

The District comprises **26 wards** represented by **43 Elected Members** and operates under a Leader and Cabinet model. At the 2019 local elections, 20 new councillors were elected to the Council.

The LGBCE review of NK will become effective for the 2023 elections with 43 Members remaining but a significant rebalancing of ward boundaries.

The current Council composition (as at 7/10/21) is:

- The NK Administration Group – **27 seats**
- NK Independents (Lincolnshire Independents and Independents) – **11 seats**
- Ungrouped members – **2 seats**
- Vacant – **3 seats**

The 60 parish and town councils within the District and Lincolnshire County Council each deliver or commission services commensurate with their roles and responsibilities and, to some extent, local discretion.

The District is largely represented by the Sleaford and North Hykeham parliamentary constituency (Dr Caroline Johnson MP). With an electorate of just under 91,000 it is the fourth largest of the 650 UK parliamentary constituencies. Three wards within the north of the District are located within the Lincoln parliamentary constituency (Karl McCartney MP). The parliamentary Boundary Commission review, if implemented, would see a reduction in the Sleaford and North Hykeham electorate size.

## Officer Structure

Together Corporate Management Team (CMT) and the Heads of Service comprise the Senior Management Team, which has been reduced in size from 11 officers in 2011 to eight today.

Kim Robertson, Principal Solicitor at Legal Services Lincolnshire, acts as the NKDC Monitoring Officer.

The Council comprises a directly employed workforce of 405 colleagues / 362.2 FTEs (as at 1/9/2021).

Additionally, the Council uses a variety of operating models to ensure high quality and value-for-money service delivery.

This includes:

- A shared service for Revenues and Benefits;
- A shared ICT service with West Lindsey District Council;
- A shared Central Lincolnshire Local Plan with West Lindsey District Council and City of Lincoln Council;
- An outsourced repair service for the Council's housing stock; and,
- Outsourced arrangements for operating Leisure and Cultural Services.





## Officer Structure



**Ian Fytche**

Chief Executive and  
Head of Paid Service



**Phil Roberts**

Deputy Chief Executive



**Andrew  
McDonough**

Director of Place, also oversees  
Development, Economic &  
Cultural Services



**Russell Stone**

Director of Resources  
and Section 151 Officer

Corporate Management Team

Collectively, they make up the Corporate Management Team, CMT, which in turn is supported by four Heads of Service, each responsible for one of the Council's four other divisions.



**Evonne Rogers**

Corporate & Community  
Services



**David Steels**

Environmental & Public  
Protection



**Jason Jarvis**

Finance & Resources



**Mick Gadd**

Housing & Property Services

Heads of Service



**Kim Robertson**

Principal Solicitor at Legal  
Services Lincolnshire  
/ Monitoring Officer



**Marcella Heath**

Democratic Services Manager  
/ Deputy Monitoring Officer

# Leadership within North Kesteven

The Council's leadership of place starts with our 2030 Community Strategy. Whilst retaining the high-level vision: A District of Flourishing Communities – variants of which have been used by the Council for some two decades – and structured around key United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals it also provides specific longer-term aspirations and desired outcomes for the district. The Vision continues to recognise that North Kesteven comprises a large number of different communities many of which are relatively small and geographically distributed over 922 sq km.

This Vision has stood the test of time and remains ambitious for the Council and its partners. Work in 2018 sought to define the factors which mark out a flourishing community, based around academic research into the meaning of flourishing to individuals and communities. This led to the introduction of the Flourishing Scale and resulted in survey work, receiving over 4,500 responses, to establish the extent to which communities can be considered as flourishing, the areas which may require a level of intervention, whilst further defining the sense of place.



The role of the armed forces is acknowledged and celebrated with three major bases located in NK, all of which contribute significantly to the vibrancy and economy of the District. The role of the military is celebrated each year through Armed Forces Day events part of which involves a veterans' celebration to recognise their contribution to the safety and security of the country. To date more than 500 veterans have been recognised in this way. Additionally, the Head of Corporate and Community Services is a member of the Armed Forces Covenant Board.



The Council also recognises the role that residents and community groups play in supporting the Council's aspirations. Since 2011 the Council has held a Community Champions event which provides a very public way of saying thank you to those people and groups who make an active contribution to making NK a special place to live and work. The event has grown over the years, making awards to more than 100 people and groups and championing around 1,000 in total across categories such as community spirit, good neighbour and contributions to the arts, sport, environment and community safety. A virtual programme kept the awards alive during pandemic restrictions.



Over three years, the Council engaged in a whole systems approach to obesity, mapping a way forward on ways public services can work together better to promote a healthier lifestyle. The sole district council selected to work with Leeds Beckett University, the LGA, Public Health England and others, this expression of leadership not only serves to improve lives within North Kesteven but also provides greater understanding and responses nationally. The resultant guide advocates active lifestyles, healthier food options in schools and high streets and more green space; all of which were initiatives promoted and tested within North Kesteven.



## The importance of strategic partnerships

The vision of A District of Flourishing Communities underpinned the work undertaken through PartnershipNK. Formed from the previous Local Strategic Partnership, it brought together a range of statutory, third sector and business partners to develop initiatives under a Community Plan.

In July 2020 the Council took the opportunity to refresh our partnership working approach with the introduction of the Community Development Partnership (CDP) to replace the original PartnershipNK and provide a strong focus on identifying and overseeing delivery of the next set of practical community-based initiatives. This will build on the Council's past achievements with initiatives such as :

- Get Fit for Life+, building on the success of the Be the Better You initiative.
- Community Lottery, launching in November 2021;
- Wilder Witham, linking with the GLLEP and Doddington Hall to deliver a landscape scale (20,000 ha) nature recovery initiative that will follow the boundary of the Witham Valley Country Park.

Although now complete a support network for voluntary and community groups was established in North Kesteven at the outset of the pandemic.

This provided an invaluable insight into communities, the challenges they were experiencing and subsequently an indication of what added value support the Council could provide to help them overcome these.

One of the areas of partnership working which has seen the most development over the last couple of years concerns links with health services.

The Council has for some time had a Health and Wellbeing Strategy which seeks to bring together those services which make a positive contribution to the wider determinants of health such as housing functions, food safety, leisure activities and more recently the Wellbeing Service. The Wellbeing Lincs service is provided in collaboration with all districts across the county and offers support to people who have reached a trigger point in their lives by developing solutions using services available in the community. Trigger points can include periods of ill health or losing a relative. The service is provided under a funding agreement with the county council.



The Lincolnshire Integrated Care System has been signed off and the new governance structure is taking shape. The Council's Chief Executive has been appointed to one of the two district council places on the Joint Working Executive Group (JWEG) and the Leader of the Council represents districts on the Health and Wellbeing Board.

As a district council we recognise that we make a significant contribution to wider determinants of health. This includes our housing functions, food safety and the provision of leisure and fitness opportunities, both based in traditional leisure facilities but also offered to a wider audience through, for example, the Stepping Out network.

In addition, the Council continues to forge its own positive links with the NHS. Much of this work can be traced back to a Task and Finish Group which reviewed the relationship between the Council and the NHS in the use of Section 106 contributions. Revised systems were approved, and the Council regularly meets with the NHS to discuss further areas of joint working. This has led to a significant initiative to develop new health facilities in Sleaford. An expression of interest has been supported by NHS England for a Cavell Centre which brings together GP practices from the town alongside linked services to provide a comprehensive set of locally joined-up functions based on the disused county council site adjacent to our main offices. Funding is in the region of £30m and an effective partnership has been established chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive to ensure that all relevant interests are represented.

Through the local Community Safety Partnership and wider Safer Lincolnshire Partnership the Council has ensured strong partnership structures around community safety. Although levels of crime in NK have been historically very low – lowest recorded crime in England and Wales for five consecutive years up to 2018; and sixth lowest in England from the most recent figures – the Council and its partners do not take this for granted and work closely and collaboratively to identify and fulfil a proactive response.





**A key component of place leadership is shaping the local economy and the Council has long recognised the importance of its role in this respect**



The Council's place leadership role also recognises the importance of heritage and open spaces. The Council has a programme of reviewing its conservation areas and agreeing management plans and has recently commissioned a Heritage Strategy. Open spaces play a role in defining place and are proactively managed in accordance with an adopted Open Space Strategy. As part of its response to the climate challenge, the Council has also adopted a Trees Policy, which provides a framework for how we plant and utilise our open spaces.

## **The role of planning and the economy**

The local planning process has a vital role to play in place leadership and the delivery of the Vision and Priorities of the Council.

The Council was an earlier adopter of a partnership approach to developing and implementing a joint Local Plan with West Lindsey District Council, City of Lincoln Council and Lincolnshire County Council, overseen by a constituted Joint Strategic Planning Committee.

The partnership is supported by a joint Local Plans Team which is resourced in part by senior specialist policy planners from Peterborough City Council. Adopted in 2017, the joint Central Lincolnshire Local Plan provides the statutory spatial planning framework for the District and Central Lincolnshire as a whole. The adopted Local Plan is currently subject to a formal review, containing ambitious proposals to deal with the challenges of climate change.

A key component of place leadership is shaping the local economy and the Council has long recognised the importance of its role in this respect. Key initiatives and projects contained in the recently adopted NK Economic Recovery Plan include:

- Investing in schemes and initiatives aimed at regenerating Sleaford, including expenditure of £208K Welcome Back Funding, commissioning a review of the Sleaford Masterplan, and promoting a £4m 'Heart of Sleaford' cinema/restaurant redevelopment of the historic Buttermarket.
- A proactive programme of engaging with our local businesses to offer support and advice – our Top 50 Business Engagement.
- Development of a 37-acre strategic employment site in Sleaford (SMEP) in order to promote the growth of the local economy and attract new inward investment. Phase 1 works for the development of the site are due to start in the autumn of 2021.
- An established programme of building and operating a portfolio of commercial workshops, aimed at small scale enterprises and SME's. A total of 126 units across 11 sites, with our latest £2.2m investment scheme completed for 15 units at Discovery Court in North Hykeham included in this total.
- Taking the lead, in partnership with the county council and using £2m of Growth Fund grant, in the delivery of an £8.2m highways improvement programme to deliver two strategic infrastructure projects that will support the full realisation of the SMEP and other economic and housing growth locations.

## Beyond the borders

The Council understands the importance of working within the local government sector both to influence national policy and to develop place-based solutions at a regional level.

The Leader of the Council, also an elected member for Lincolnshire County Council, sits on the executive of East Midlands Councils a role which also includes the Regional Migration Board which enables him to take a leadership role on migration matters across Lincolnshire.

The Chief Executive is a regional representative on the District Council Network (DCN) and takes a lead role in organising events across the region to promote good practice, particularly in the housing and leisure sectors.

There is a strong partnership of ten local authorities in Lincolnshire (county council, North and North East Lincolnshire unitary councils and the seven district councils). The partnership works closely with the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership to ensure integrated planning for the local economy. The partnership developed a 'planning for growth' programme with shared ambition and priorities for Lincolnshire, overseen by the joint committee of the ten councils. The Planning for Growth initiative is consistent with the Strategic Economic Plan for Greater Lincolnshire and the Local Industrial Strategy. It created the framework for a Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Plan which identifies the infrastructure projects designed to support economic and place-based objectives. The most recent version of the SIDP was completed in spring 2021 and includes 59 projects. A broader infrastructure prospectus is now being developed (autumn 2021) which will create the strategic framework for the 2022 SIDP process.

The challenges of the Covid pandemic, the departure of the UK from the European Union and the resulting economic uncertainty, together with a new initiative for devolution from the UK Government, have led to a refocusing of the planning for growth agenda. County and district councils have commissioned work on plans for recovery and devolution. The partnership is actively pursuing a devolution agreement to support local ambitions and shared priorities for the environment,

the local economy and the health and wellbeing of communities.

Community Safety is further supported by the Head of Corporate and Community Services as Vice-chair of the Safer Lincolnshire Strategic Partnership Board. She is also on the board that developed and implemented the national Digital Declaration of which NKDC is a co-signatory.

As part of the response and recovery to the Covid-19 pandemic the Council, through its senior officers, and in particular Communications and Business Resilience teams, has taken an active role within the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum.

The Council also provides leadership and supports a wide variety of county-related activities. Among them:

- Leadership of Lincolnshire Refugee Partnership (providing county wide coordination including of Afghan evacuees);
- Representing all districts on Lincolnshire Children's Safeguarding Partnership; and participation in:
  - A countywide Business Rates pooling scheme
  - A District Housing Network (DHN) - vice chairing and providing a support role
  - Countywide Homelessness Strategy - lead across the county and currently introducing a county wide resource
- Rough Sleeping Partnership







## Joint Waste Partnership

The Lincolnshire Waste Partnership (LWP) brings together the Lincolnshire district councils, the county council and the Environment Agency, in respect of their roles as collection, disposal and regulatory bodies. This fulfils a long-held aim of the Council, to develop a county-wide approach to the management of waste.

Dealing with 360,000 tonnes of waste annually - mainly household waste - the LWP's main role is to deliver the objectives of an agreed Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy. Since adoption in early 2019, there has been good progress on the action plan in particular separate "twin stream" collections of paper and card separated from other mixed dry recycling. Following successful trials Full Council in July 2021 unanimously approved the roll-out of twin stream in North Kesteven and first collections started in late September, collecting 419 tonnes of good quality paper and card fit for recycling locally in a single week.

The Leader is the Vice Chairman of the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership (LWP) and has a special interest in recycling and waste on behalf of Greater Lincolnshire Leaders and Chief Executives. The Leader is joined on the LWP by a second NKDC councillor. The Head of Environment and Public Protection is a member of the Strategic Waste Officers Group. The Environmental Protection Manager is the Chair of the Lincolnshire Environmental Crime Partnership. The Waste and Street Scene Manager is a member of the Waste Officers' operations working group and the Lincolnshire Waste Health and Safety Group.

# GOVERNANCE AND CULTURE

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The Council is committed to ensuring good governance throughout its activities and operates a robust governance framework that brings together an underlying set of legislative requirements, governance principles, internal control arrangements and management processes. These arrangements provide a reasonable balance between democratic representation and allowing for greater speed of action where appropriate and are reflected in key documents such as the Annual Audit Letter and Annual Governance Statement (AGS).

The governance framework comprises the duties, values and culture of the Council supported by the systems and processes that are put in place to ensure they are complied with. The Council's Code of Local Governance commits the Council to following the seven principles of good governance in all of its activities, decisions and behaviours, with the work feeding into the AGS based on this framework.

This is further supported by the Head of Internal Audit's annual report and the wider work of the Internal Audit team, provided through Lincolnshire County Council's assurance team. Where the audit process has identified improvements, appropriate and timely action is taken, with the Audit Committee receiving regular reports and ensuring appropriate progress is made. Alongside this, External Audit have provided unqualified opinions on the Statement of Accounts and Value for Money judgement.

The Council acted quickly, collaboratively and decisively from the outset of the pandemic.

Following the passing of legislation to allow remote meetings on 7th April the Council developed a comprehensive set of proposals, with this discussed and approved via a "remote" meeting of Members held 23rd April. This prompt action ensured that from the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic:

- Business continuity maintained within the Council
- Appropriate governance arrangements were in place
- Decisions continued to be made in both a lawful and timely manner and in a Covid-secure way.

The Council is proactive in developing and maintaining relationships between Members and Officers with a range of briefings, engagement sessions, pre-meetings and cross-party working groups being a regular occurrence and considered critical.

The response to the Covid-19 pandemic exemplified this through:

- Great willingness from Members to embrace the challenges faced;
- Rapid expansion, training, direct 1:1 support for Members to best utilise MS Teams;
- A fast and responsive set-up responsible in part for the Council's Democratic Service Teams winning the ADSO Team of the Year accolade.

This collaborative approach extends beyond Covid, one such recent example being the establishment of a cross-member working group to contribute to the Electoral Arrangements Review for North Kesteven by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. The Working Group recommended a number of proposals to locally inform this Review which were unanimously supported by Council and formally submitted as part of the Review. These reflect the interests and identities of local communities, as well as promoting effective local government taking account of local leadership knowledge and understanding.





## Decision Making Structure

### The Executive

In December 2010, the Council voted to adopt the Strong Leader and Executive model.

Councillor Richard Wright has been the Leader of the Council since March 2017.

The Executive Board at NKDC have no individual decision-making powers, but each have areas of specific interest.

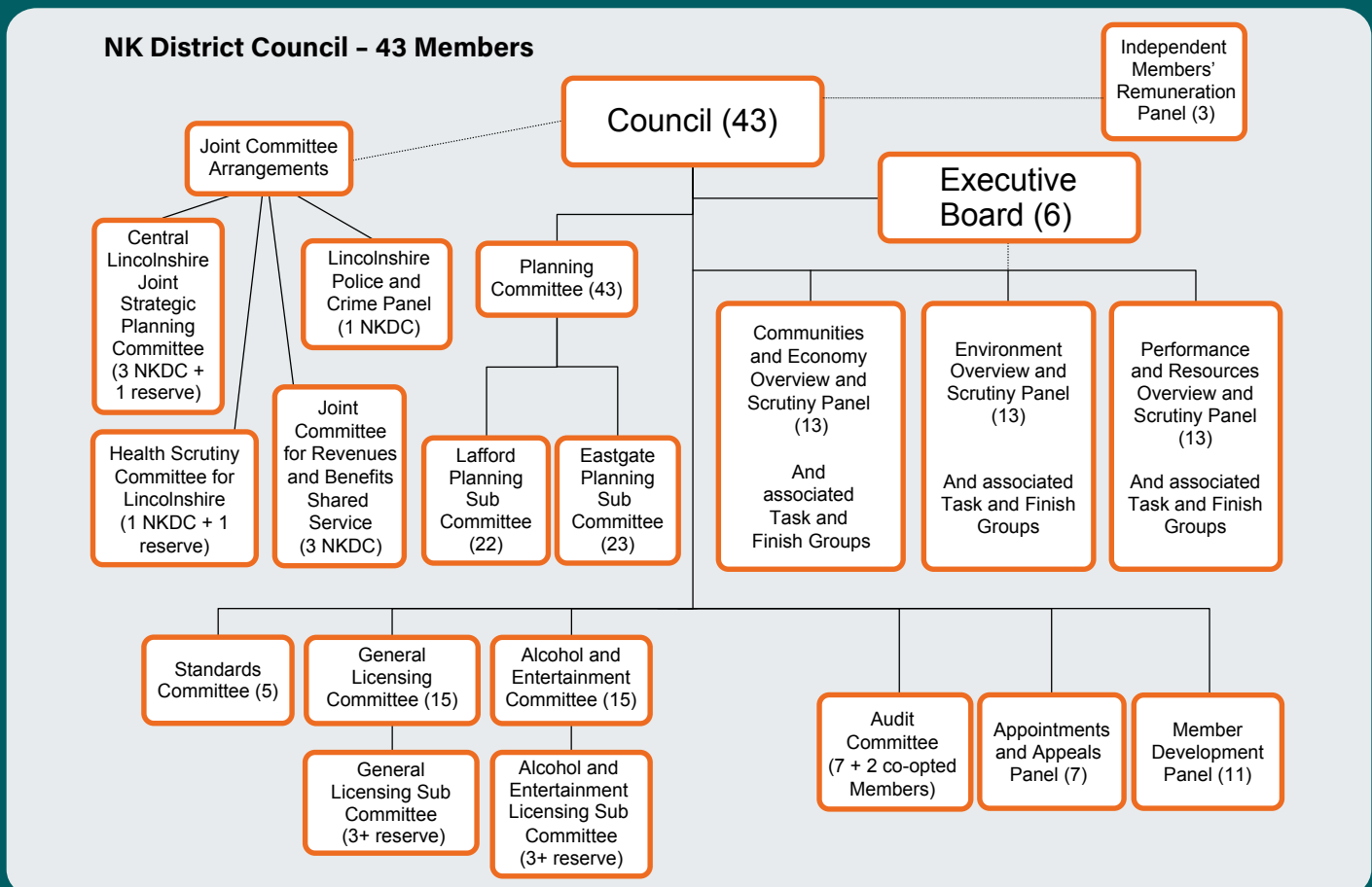
This authority has set the threshold for key decisions as:

- Revenue: More than £50,000 savings or expenditure (outside established revenue budget)
- Capital: More than £100,000 savings or expenditure (outside established capital budget).

A forward plan is published via our Modern.gov committee software monthly, to publicise consultation dates and enable dialogue between the Executive Board and all councillors, the public and other stakeholders. It will also assist the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Panels in planning their contribution to policy development and holding the Executive Board to account.

Planning matters are considered through a Planning Committee and two-sub-committees onto which all members are appointed. Whilst this provides an opportunity for all members to participate in light of the LGA Recovery and Renewal Panel exercise the Council is exploring whether there are alternative solutions.

#### PART 5.1 NORTH KESTIVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE



## Overview and Scrutiny

A key component of the Council's decision-making structure is the overview and scrutiny process. There are three Overview and Scrutiny Panels and currently all members, except the Executive Board, have a seat. The current panels are:

- Communities & Economy
- Environment
- Performance & Resources

Panels meet 5-6 times a year to consider both regular items of business such as performance management and one-off policy initiatives. Panels set up task and finish groups from time to time to investigate issues in more detail and report back to Executive Board on proposals.

Policy initiatives covered over the last 12 months include:

- Gender Pay Gap (P&R OSP)
- Climate Change Strategy (E OSP)
- Local Plan Review (E OSP)
- Empty Homes (C&E OSP)
- Cycling Strategy (C&E OSP)

The development of the scrutiny function continues to be an area of focus for the Council, as further statutory guidance was issued by the Government in 2019 (Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities 2019).

This created more of an emphasis and opportunity for authorities to think about how they would like to structure their overview and scrutiny function for the future.

The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) also advised that to acquire and maintain best practice, the scrutiny function at councils should be periodically reviewed and adapted if required, to ensure that the scrutiny function is working in relation to the council and its members, and the public they serve.

Therefore, various proposals have been reviewed with three options currently proposed, alongside an appraisal of each. An outcome of this review is awaited.







## Officer decision-making structure

The Council has in place a comprehensive constitution which is kept under regular review to ensure it remains fit for purpose and continues to meet requirements for decision-making and oversight of Council operations. The Council undertook a significant review of the officer scheme of delegation in 2016, with regular updates following this, which seek to clarify decision-making processes and the responsibilities of officers. As a result, Article 9 provides additional clarity on where authority rests for different types of decisions, such as financial, human resources or assets.

The officer decision-making structure was subject to an independent review in January 2020. Overall, the outcome was extremely positive with recommendations covering the wider use of the Modern.Gov, streamlining the scheme of delegation, improving communication and reviewing when decisions are published. The response to Covid-19 has delayed full implementation with this now due to resume through autumn and winter 2021/22.



## Political Structure

The Council has 43 Elected Members, with the 2019 local election seeing 20 newly elected.

The Council was in no overall control following the 2019 local election introducing a new model of political collaboration and partnership led by the NK Administration Group. Whilst subsequent changes have led to the NK Administration Group now having a majority collaborative working continues and ensures a highly effective and well-functioning authority

The more visible elements of this approach, beyond the responses to Covid as already set out, also include an unaligned member sitting on the six-member Executive Board, and an unaligned member chairing one of the Council's three scrutiny panels.



## Member Development

The Council has a long-held commitment to Member development, as outlined in our Member Development Strategy. It is recognised that Members must be equipped with the tools, training and support to enable them to provide the strategic direction for the Council and make appropriate and lawful decisions. The commitment to and ability of Members to actively contribute to the rapid development and implementation of different ways of working as the pandemic first struck is testament to the long-term commitment that the Council has made in this area.

The Member Development Strategy is designed to support and structure the Council's work in this area. Our commitment to equipping Members with the skills to contribute to the development of our District is directly reflected in both the Our Council

priority and the values: high-performing, people-focused and professional.

The approach from the strategy is one of being proactive to evolving circumstances and ensuring that learning is captured and built on. A Member has recently been appointed as a Mental Health Champion, with a wider guide for all Members developed in tandem. Whilst formal meetings have now reverted to in-person, the benefits of a hybrid model maintaining remote solutions for a number of informal meetings is being retained. This recognises the ease of access that this can bring, time saved in travelling and associated reduction in emissions; maintaining and building further on the skills that Members have developed in this area over the past 18 months, whilst also building further resilience.





Member development is Member-led and the Member Development Panel play an important role in this, leading the development of several key documents such as:

- **Become a Councillor guide**
- **Member Induction programme 2019**
- **Member Role Guide**
- **Really Useful Guide for Members (RUG)**
- **Rolling Member Development programme**

Currently a Panel sub-group is reviewing the approach for personal development planning with proposals due to be concluded and presented to Council by the end of this year with a re-invigorated process in place from January 2022.

Since 2013 all Members have been issued with ICT equipment and support which facilitates their work as a District Councillor and for specific roles within the Council. This supported the drive for largely paperless meetings and ensures easy access to everything they need via use of Modern.gov.

In terms of business resilience this long-established approach placed Members in a strong and well-prepared position for working within the challenges and constraints of the pandemic.



Members have for some time been provided with a weekly digital Members Link e-briefing to keep them fully updated with internal, local and national issues of interest. As the pandemic took hold the frequency increased to ensure clear messages and relevant detail was available to all Members with minimum delay.

For key developments, issues or areas of general local interest Member briefing sessions are set up. Recent – remote – briefings have covered the Local Plan Review, Environmental Crime, and the roll out across the district of twin stream recycling.

Alongside this, supporting the close relationship Members have with parish and town councils (and often serving on both) a regular Parish newsletter is also in place.



# FINANCIAL PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy sets out the Council's clear commitment to maintaining the quality and range of services, which represent value-for-money through planned efficiencies and income generation where appropriate.

Through the Council's transformation programme, its ExCITe strategy and foresight in taking proactive risk mitigation measures (e.g. by establishing the income volatility reserve), appropriate mechanisms are in place to preserve the Council's status and to drive it forward.

As the Council is still in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, a phased approach has been introduced into the NK Plan and Finance Strategy processes as follows:

- **Phase 1** - An updated Finance Strategy for October 2020;
- **Phase 2** - A transition from response to recovery to enable the generation of savings/ income generation options to ensure budgets remain balanced and an increasing focus on rebuilding financial resilience by March 2023
- **Phase 3** - The delivery of the long term initiatives to meet the 10 year General Fund savings requirements.

Whilst the budgets have been balanced, savings targets remain. These are largely due to be achieved through the Council's developed programmes around cost reduction and income generation plus two additional initiatives, introduced in recent years, the Heads of Service savings programme and the NK25 programme which was designed to identify savings of £1million.

The activity included in "Phase 2" is intended to cover the period to March 2023 and achieve the following outcomes:

- **Deliver a balanced position through to March 2023;**
- **Transition from response in to recovery;**
- **Understand the likely economic impact;**
- **Understand the financial reform impact;**
- **Generate a range of options for consideration.**





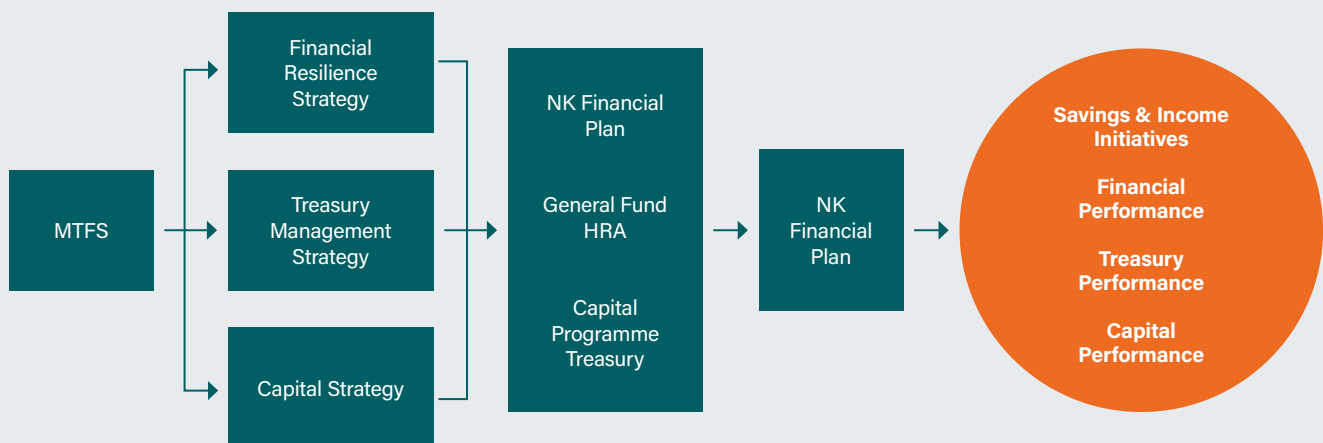
The Council has maintained strongly all the “pillars of resilience” identified by CIPFA and has not shown any of the financial stress warning signs. Furthermore, it has developed its financial planning for the General Fund, Capital Programme and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) over a 10-year period.

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2024/25 has maintained a General Fund balanced budget and sustainable HRA. The MTFS identifies a range of potential scenarios, projecting forward the budget position over the ten year period to 2031/32 along with the initiatives required to maintain a balanced budget.



The following diagram demonstrates how Financial Resilience fits into the financial arrangements of the Council. The Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy provides the framework for establishing its Capital, Treasury Management and Financial Resilience Strategies; the building blocks of the Council's budget setting process, the outcomes of which are contained within the Council's NK Financial Plan.

## Financial Resilience Monitoring



The proactive work already undertaken by the Council, including substantial investment activity, through the Capital Programme, transformation and ExCITe programmes realised the following budget savings/ additional income within the General Fund. (Top table below)

These programmes will now form part of the MTFS Phase 2 budget savings work.

As part of the initial budget saving work under Phase 2, a number of budget savings have been identified within the General Fund. However, some of these items have been recently identified and a process to verify the saving opportunities is underway. A final long list of saving opportunities will be considered for the production of the NK Financial Plan in January 2022. However, sufficient opportunities exist as summarised in the bottom table.



|  | F1<br>2021/22<br>£ | F2<br>2022/23<br>£ | F3<br>2023/24<br>£ | F4<br>2024/25<br>£ |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Savings Target Per 2nd March 2021 Council</b> | 231,000            | 717,000            | 1,102,000          | 2,050,000          |
| <b>Original Savings Items (RAG Rated)</b>        |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| <b>Heads of Service Proposals</b>                |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| Garages  | 114,200            | 114,200            | 114,200            | 342,600            |
| NewsNK   | 16,800             | 16,800             | 16,800             | 50,400             |
| CCAB/Advice Centre                               |                    |                    | 50,000             | 50,000             |
| <b>Workshops</b>                                 |                    | 66,000             | 66,000             | 132,000            |
| <b>Lafford Homes</b>                             |                    | 120,000            | 180,000            | 300,000            |
| <b>Fees &amp; Charges</b>                        |                    | 150,000            | 150,000            | 300,000            |
| <b>Investment In Economic Schemes</b>            |                    |                    | 125,000            | 125,000            |
|  | 131,000            | 467,000            | 702,000            | 1,300,000          |
| <b>NK25/Transformation</b>                       | 100,000            | 250,000            | 400,000            | 750,000            |
| <b>Total Savings Planned</b>                     | <b>231,000</b>     | <b>717,000</b>     | <b>1,102,000</b>   | <b>2,050,000</b>   |

| PHASE 2 INITIAL SAVINGS IDENTIFIED                             | Revised<br>2021/22<br>£ | 2022/23<br>£   | 2023/24<br>£   | 2024/25<br>£   |
|--|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Review of Assests</b>                                       | 39,000                  | 42,600         | 42,600         | 42,600         |
| <b>Review of Support Services</b>                              | 120,000                 | 120,000        | 120,000        | 120,000        |
| <b>Review of Grants, Subscriptions and other contributions</b> | 11,700                  | 11,700         | 11,700         | 11,700         |
| <b>Review of Civic and management arrangements</b>             | 18,100                  | 18,500         | 18,900         | 19,400         |
| <b>Review of Income budgets</b>                                | 175,000                 | 190,000        | 200,000        | 210,000        |
| <b>Review of service expenditure budgets</b>                   | 594,400                 | 240,000        | 251,200        | 263,500        |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>594,400</b>          | <b>622,800</b> | <b>644,400</b> | <b>667,200</b> |



Furthermore, the key drivers for Phase 2 are the identification of more radical approaches to or impacts on service delivery, utilisation of learning from across the public sector and the identification of initiatives utilised elsewhere and applying these to the Council.

As part of this activity the following steps have been identified as the high-level milestones required to deliver Phase 2:

- **Step 1** = (initial) longlist of options
- **Step 2** = High level appraisal, for inclusion of a shortlist in the MTFS
- **Step 3** = Detailed assessment including timescales and resources required to deliver
- **Step 4** = go / no go decision

Where possible and appropriate the results from the activity in steps 1 and 2 have been included in the MTFS, with the delivered or relatively certain elements coming out of steps 3 and 4 being included in the NK Financial Plan for 2022/23 in order to support the budget being in balance.

Step 2 represents a high-level appraisal to determine whether the initiatives meet the initial success criteria identified and at an individual proposal / group level, whether any proposals are not considered appropriate to take forward any further.

Step 3 takes the initiatives supported being subjected to a more detailed review to understand impact, deliverability and acceptability.

Finally Step 4 represents the decision to implement, ensuring all aspects have been met and a resource plan to deliver is in place.



# CAPACITY FOR IMPROVEMENT

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## Looking to the Future: NK25

In the last few years, the Council has advanced a number of initiatives to drive efficiency gains, in support of its financial strategy. These initiatives included a programme called 'NK25', focused on ensuring financial sustainability by 2025, and an 'ExCITe' programme focused on generating revenue from investment in the local economy, construction, investment strategy and trading.

Looking ahead, the Council is developing a single programme for financial sustainability, reflecting the impacts and challenges of the Covid pandemic, the departure of the UK from the European Union, and changes the UK policy framework and in local government finance generally. The new financial strategy (MTFS) has been prepared for consideration by the Executive Board in October 2021, creating a ten-year financial outlook for the council. The strategy is supported by programmes designed to achieve efficiency gains, to invest in Council priorities and generate revenue through investment in economic development and housing.

To build on our vision, ensuring that in 2025 we have the clarity of purpose, ambition and working environment to ensure that NKDC remains a great place to work. Our commitment to invest in people, in their development and to meet their aspirations remains at the heart of what we do.





## Prioritising and Aligning Resources

Capacity to both deliver and improve is a vital component of the Council's approach to delivering against its medium-term corporate priorities and its 2030 aspirations. Our 2030 Community Strategy will be subject to a review in year 5 (2025/26); whilst each year a review is undertaken of the NK Plan alongside the budgetary process; providing the mechanism to ensure resources and budgetary provisions align with the Council's priorities.

As part of the standard budgetary process, officers are asked to identify budget bids both at revenue and capital levels, to ensure one or both of appropriate capacity to deliver priorities and / or further improve the ongoing management and delivery of services. The opportunity to identify budget changes is also extended to Members through consultation prior to the formal budget approval at Full Council. Challenge and improvement are built into the cycle, with for example a full fees and charges review being undertaken as part of current budget preparations.

In sync with the approval timelines for the NK Plan and budget, each Head of Service finalises their Service Delivery Plan. These are structured around:

- **Delivery of Major Programmes and Projects**
- **Creation or refresh of key Strategies or Policies, and,**
- **Delivery of Key Business as Usual activities**

The service planning process provides service managers with the opportunity to consider how and when actions will be delivered. Whilst Service Plans are subject to an annual challenge and "sign-off" they remain "live" documents that can be revised at any point to reflect changing circumstances. As the Council moves forward with its Climate Action Plan the next set of Service Plans will fully integrate these actions.

In turn SDPs are supported through the annual Employee Development Interview (EDI) process which provides an opportunity to review and update objectives and review progress and performance in partnership with each colleague.

This approach represents the sharp end, through the delivery element of the established Golden Thread and emerging Green Thread connecting colleagues and their work to the Vision, Priorities and Climate Action goals.

Capacity to deliver priorities is also reviewed in respect of specific projects and changes made to service capacity as a result. This has included new colleagues recruited to support:

- Delivery of the housing programme – for the HRA and Lafford Homes new build programme with 100 properties currently being built on site.
- ExCITe programme and financial resilience – to deliver the programme and ensure appropriate resources are in place.
- Drafting of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan – a SLA with Peterborough City Council to utilise their planning policy expertise.
- Economic development – procurement of a public sector project management team to lead on the delivery of the SMEP.
- Climate change – with additional resources to support a 'Green Office' and communications resources.
- Refugee Partnership Working – using Home Office funding
- Development of the county wide homelessness strategy – using funding contributions from Lincs districts

The Council's track record of attaching resources to projects remains strong and the processes around developing budgets provide the opportunity to review these issues on an annual basis.

## Dealing with the unexpected: Covid-19

The approach remains highly flexible and responsive to significant and unexpected changes; none more so than Covid-19. The clarity provided by our strategic planning structure allowed a rapid assessment to be made as Covid first struck of our service and project delivery – full, partial, none – and decisions and prioritisation to be made based on this information.

The Council's response to managing the Covid-19 Pandemic has also demonstrated flexibility in the way that services are able to operate quickly and effectively. The immediate working from home requirement in March 2020 was facilitated through Microsoft Teams which had already been introduced into the organisation and enabled meetings to move seamlessly towards an online platform.

Immediately, a plan was established which was known as Agile by Default which prioritised colleagues and safety, limiting the transmission of the virus and ensuring ongoing service delivery.

Service provision was regularly reviewed, and decisions made to change delivery processes based on risk assessments, the changing national picture and customer requirements. Colleagues were supported through the Shape programme and surveys conducted at critical points in the pandemic to establish how colleagues were coping. The information gleaned from this has enabled the ongoing prioritisation of activities away from work to support mental and physical health.

At the time of preparing this statement the Council has moved onto the next phase of development and is in the process of implementing a plan known as Agile by Design. This will allow colleagues to work more flexibly by spending time in the office as well as working in the home environment. Formal consultation is being prepared which will run through the initial part of the winter.

## Developing our People

The Our People Programme provides a range of initiatives supported by the HR function in respect of organisational development and in delivering colleague initiatives to make NKDC an employer of choice. In recognition of its importance to the organisation it has been elevated to a regular review by CMT.

The recently refreshed Our People Strategy 2021-2023 considers actions and recommendations highlighted in our 2020 Investors in People assessment. The supporting Our People Action Plan is split into three distinct themes: Culture and Values, Reward and Recognition (Supporting) and Performance Management. In order to 'make work better' for colleagues at North Kesteven and consequently be issued with Platinum IIP status, efforts are focussed on these areas.







As our people auditor, Investors in People conducted our most recent colleague satisfaction survey in November 2020. Our experience of using an external body to conduct this in-depth colleague survey was that there was a greater degree of trust and anonymity from a third party. Another benefit was that we could directly compare our scores against other organisations. This allowed us to see our value proposition as an employer. Finally, IIP were able to drill down, highlighting areas for further improvement and targeting their follow up work accordingly.

Our EDI structure, previously competency framework-based, has now evolved to a values-based structure; reflecting the five corporate values set out earlier in this document. This continues to be key to the identification of development needs and contributes to the annual training and development programme. EDIs also provide the opportunity to identify colleagues with prospects of career advancement for inclusion in the TalentNK Programme which provides further training opportunities linked to managerial positions.

During the last 18 months, the Council has recognised that colleagues interact with surveys differently and that short, quick surveys had a higher likelihood of completion. During the pandemic, we found that it was specifically important to conduct regular wellbeing surveys. This was much more timely and allowed us to react rapidly during unprecedented and evolving situations.

Over the past six months we have focused on workforce planning. We recognised that due to the pandemic, the number of remote working opportunities have increased meaning that opportunities once ruled out by colleagues who needed to work close to home for personal, travel or family reasons are now feasible. We highlighted that this change in the labour market might therefore lead to an increase in turnover. The aim was therefore to review current structures, highlight talent risks and consider how we continue to provide an effective service over the coming years.

Initially the organisation structure was reviewed. We soon identified that one size does not fit all for a council with such a diverse range of provisions, so we concentrated on reviewing it by division, working closely with the Head of Service to understand the future of the service, the talent risks and potential future skills shortages.

We also considered the demographics of our workforce, such as age profiles. Colleagues identified through our talent processes were reviewed to see how they could be developed in preparation for more senior or sideways positions and a talent programme is now being established alongside Solace.

Our plans for the future include conducting psychometrics for all colleagues to help improve self-awareness, understand personal motivations and to help managers lead in a way that gets the best out of individual team members.

## Measuring Performance

The Council has a strong and robust approach to performance management with a tiered approach running through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) through Service Performance Indicators (SPIs) and low-level Operational Performance Indicators (OPIs). KPIs are formally reviewed each quarter through both Executive Board and Overview and Scrutiny. This identifies both actual quarter and year-to-date performance plus broader direction of travel. Overview and Scrutiny have the opportunity to take a deeper dive into specific performance areas. Second tier indicators are formally reviewed by CMT each quarter, whilst operational indicators are reviewed on a more regular basis again at Divisional Management Team (DMT) level.

The Council has a strong track-record of performance against its Key Performance Indicators with between 74% and 82% of KPIs meeting or exceeding their target in each of the past five years; and between 84% and 89% falling within the acceptable variance set by Elected Members. These figures exclude the impact of Covid-19 on a number of KPIs towards the end of 19/20 and 20/21.

## Five-year KP performance graph



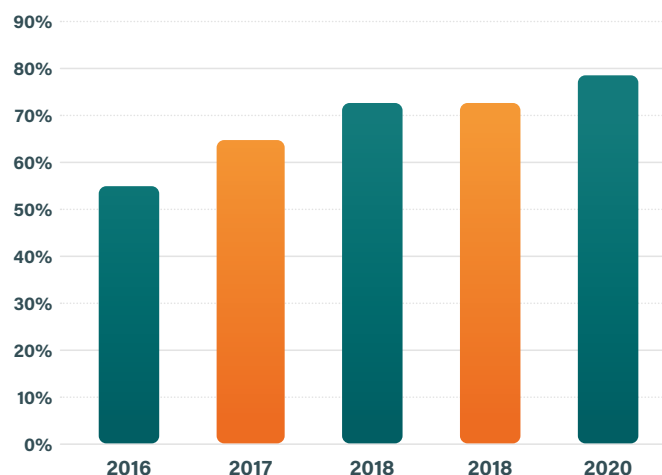
The Council has continued to set itself challenging and ambitious performance targets as part of each annual review and therefore seeks to achieve high levels of performance consistency against increasing expectations.

The focus on performance and improvement has been reflected in the direction of travel for resident satisfaction with the quality of the Council's services.





## Satisfaction with Quality of Council Services



The delivery of a high levels of customer service are important to the Council. Surveys of customer responses are ongoing but as a snapshot, the annual report 2020/21 recorded the following information:

- **78%** of residents expressing satisfaction with the quality of Council services
- **89%** of tenants who responded to the tenant satisfaction survey are satisfied with the Landlord service provided by the Council
- **85%** of customers who responded to our customer satisfaction surveys were able to contact the Council via their preferred communication method
- **92%** of complaints are responded to within 15 working days
- **100%** of recipients of a disabled adaptation who responded to the customer satisfaction survey were either satisfied or very satisfied with the overall adaptation process
- **93%** residents who responded to the NK Plan Survey rated the kerbside waste collection of recycling and general waste as 'very good' and 'good'
- **96%** of residents who contacted our customer services team and who responded to the customer satisfaction survey, found it either easy or very easy to access the service they required.





## Leverage of external capacity

The Council has had considerable success with leveraging external funding capacity. Some examples are as follows:

- **£3,900,000** allocated by Homes England to support the delivery of new council properties.
- **£2,000,000** Single Local Growth Fund from the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership for infrastructure improvement at two Sleaford junctions in 2020.
- **£1,400,000** Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation funding in respect of the leading arts provision co-ordinated through the National Centre for Craft & Design, ArtsNK and broader cultural outreach programmes, £201,160 for each of seven years up to 2021/22.
- **£740,000** European Regional Development Fund funding to contribute to blue/green infrastructure improvements as part of a joint bid with South Kesteven District Council.
- **£600,000** Rough Sleeper' Funding allocated across a partnership of Lincolnshire councils in 2020.
- **£589,000** of Green Homes grant funding to support energy efficiency improvements to the Council's housing stock in 2021/22;
- **£400,000** National Lottery funding for the repair of the Mrs Smith's Cottage.
- **£256,000** from the National Leisure Recovery Fund (Sport England) to support leisure facilities through Covid.
- **£210,000** of OFGEM funding to support energy efficiency improvements to the Council's housing stock in 2020; to be received over seven years.







## Capacity building in the Community

Councillors at North Kesteven have a close relationship with the communities which they represent. Most councillors regularly attend parish council meetings in a supporting capacity and all Members have been briefed on the ward profile information to ensure that they have a good level of awareness of current needs and demands.

A cross-member working group was established to contribute to the Electoral Arrangements Review for North Kesteven by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. The Working Group recommended a number of proposals to locally inform this review which were unanimously supported by Council and formally submitted as part of the review. These reflect the interests and identities of local communities, as well as promoting effective local government taking account of local leadership knowledge and understanding. The review outcome has now received Parliamentary approval for implementation at the Local Elections taking place May 2023.



# THE JOURNEY CONTIUES

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We are proud of our achievements at North Kesteven District Council; we have worked hard to ensure they are relevant, responsive and resilient to the needs of our residents, businesses and communities.

Our goal is to inspire our district with a vision for flourishing communities, with our resources aligned to deliver five priorities and an investment strategy focused on making a difference for people and places in every community in North Kesteven.

We remain focused on building the capacity and the partnerships central to delivery, leading our places with positive, inclusive public service values at the heart of everything we do.

We are not however complacent. The Covid-19 Pandemic has already brought a number of challenges both at national and local levels. The virus has not gone away and remains a risk factor which influences much of our planning. National changes resulting from the pandemic remain a work in progress particularly in relation to public sector finances, and the shape of local government itself with the developing devolution agenda.

We have made significant strides to reduce our carbon footprint and have moved onto another level in managing the climate change crisis through the Strategy and Action Plan. A huge amount of work has already been delivered on climate change but there remain some incredibly significant challenges to overcome to ensure that the Council, local organisations, and the community at large meet zero carbon aspirations with some urgency.

We have made the big decisions necessary to ensure financial resilience over the medium to long-term; and we know there remains a lot to do to deliver the projects and programmes that drive the revenue and commercial returns built into our plans.

We have delivered significant gains in relation to the local economy, housing and infrastructure delivery; and we know we have a significant programme ahead of us to ensure that we build flourishing communities in every corner of the District.

To this end, we have progressed a new conversation - NK25 - focused on building our vision to the half-way point into the delivery of our plans.

The first part of the conversation – to define how technology enabled, agile and flexible we can become – has already largely completed. The step change in pace to deliver this initial element is something we are already learning and building on for the next stages. How we can take a systems-based approach to create the solutions to the demographic, economic and environmental challenges of the decade ahead; and how we can develop the ethical, inclusive governance required to inspire participation in the decision making of the Council.

**The journey continues and we invite you to join us in exploring opportunities and challenges for North Kesteven.**

We look forward to the challenge and insight that the Corporate Peer Challenge Team will bring to North Kesteven.





# KEY DOCUMENTS

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In pulling together this summary Position Statement we have drawn on the data, information, content and narrative of a number of documents, strategies, policies and plans. These span the five key themes of the Corporate Peer Challenge.

The LGA CPC guidance and associated conversations have informed our identification of the more key amongst them, listed below. Those marked with an \* are included within the LGA guidance.

Along with many others these are made available in advance of the challenge period, as will any others deemed appropriate for oversight at the Peer Team's request.

- Ref Document
- K01a 2030 Community Strategy\*
- K01b 2030 Community Strategy Single Page Summary
- K02 Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan
- K03a 2021-24 NK Plan Full\*
- K03b 2021-24 NK Plan Single Page Summary
- K04a 2022-25 NK Plan Single Page Summary
- K05 NKDC Financial Resilience Strategy 2020-23
- K06 MTFS 2021-24\*
- K07 NKDC Financial Plan 2021-22
- K08 MTFS 2022-25 draft\*
- K09 HRA Business Plan 2016-2046
- K10 HRA New Build Delivery Plan 2021-2025
- K11 Lafford Homes Business Plan
- K12 Annual Governance Statement
- K13 Diagram of democratic decision making arrangements\*
- K14 Mazars Audit Completion Report and Audit Letter\*
- K15 NKDC RRP Progress Assessment
- K16 Annual Report 2020-21\*
- K17 NK Plan Performance Framework 2021-22
- K18 2030 Community Strategy Performance Framework
- K19a Resident Consultation Satisfaction Metrics Dec 2020
- K19b Resident Consultation 2030 Community Strategy and NK Plan Dec 2020
- K20 Our People Strategy 2021-23\*
- K21 Jan 2021 IIP report\*
- K22 IIP Action Plan Progress
- K23 NKDC District SWOT
- K24a Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (web link)
- K24b Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Review 2021 Briefing Summary
- K25 North Kesteven Economic Recovery Plan
- K26 NKDC Management Structure
- K27 ExCITe Programme Summary\*
- K28 ICT Strategy
- K29 NK25 (Transformation) Update Briefing July 2021 \*
- K30 NKDC Agile by Design Report\*
- K31 Waste Strategy for Lincolnshire\*
- K32 Integrated Care System Design Framework\*
- K33 LDCs' DRAFT Health & Wellbeing Strategy\*

# OUR DISTRICT IN NUMBERS



**£221m**

Capital investment plan to 2030



**118,149**

population of North Kesteven



**52,822**

homes in North Kesteven



**680**

houses built in NK (2019/20);  
35% of them affordable



**1.2m**

visits to leisure & cultural  
services annually



**£88m**

to spend on services and  
projects in 2022/23



**4,060**

number of businesses in the  
District



**7 years**

as one of the UK's  
safest place to live



**43.2%**

of household waste recycled or  
composted - the rest is burned for energy



**3,847**

council houses owned by NKDC



**89.2%**

tenant satisfaction



**3,835,520**

bins emptied every year



**78%**

of people positively rate  
quality of services



**7%**

rise in value of tourism to NK -  
£162.5m in total



**332**

jobs created or safeguarded  
through Council actions



**63.1%**

reduction in carbon emissions  
achieved, ahead of target



**64%**

of residents take part in sport and  
physical activity at least twice a month.



**1,015,333**

contacts through Customer  
Services over a year







**North Kesteven**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL