

The NK Plan 2023-26



Our Plan for North Kesteven
A vision for 2023 & beyond



Employment growth

Development of key strategic employment sites, through partnership and own investment vision

Housing pioneers

A pioneer of council house expansion, with a focus on energy-efficient construction standards

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

Future-proofing

Visionary investment in future-proofing critical services, drawing out long-term efficiencies

Housing choice

Inspired and innovative investment, expanding housing solutions across the District

Carbon cutting

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

Carbon capturing

Focused on re-greening the District, increasing tree cover by 25% by 2032 for climate and wellbeing gain

Leisure facilities

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

Active arts

Acknowledged national leader in enriching communities through arts and cultural outreach

Aviation heritage

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

Historic preservation

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

Outdoor activity

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

OVERVIEW

It is our great pleasure to share with you the NK Plan, our strategic vision for the realisation of our priorities, purpose and services in the coming years, as we seek to develop and enrich our District of Flourishing Communities.

The NK Plan is a confident statement of purpose, vision, values and priorities. It maps out the next steps to be taken in pursuance of the aims and aspirations set out in the Council's new longer-term Community Strategy – shaping life through to 2030.

Together, the NK Plan and the overarching Community Strategy drive forward our priorities for Our Economy, Our Homes, Our Environment, Our Communities and Our Council.

The NK Plan builds on:

- A big ambition and clarity of purpose, supported by inclusive, positive values
- A balanced general fund
- A viable housing revenue account
- A £255m ten-year capital programme, £108m of it within the three-year lifetime of this plan
- A great track record of performance

and it sets out our vision for the shape of our services and strategic commitments for the years ahead, progressing the outcomes desired within the Community Strategy by 2030 and working towards fulfilment of our Climate Emergency Action Plan.

It also responds to dynamic circumstances, challenges and opportunities and the evolving scope for partnership working and sharing excellence.

In its ongoing development, we have received positive engagement from partners, colleagues and Council Members as well as resident input to shape it and make it Your Plan, as much as Our Plan.

It also sets the scene for a broader ten-year vision, where our aspirations are fully-funded and built on an intelligence and needs-based approach, for the realisation of an enlarged £255m capital investment across our priorities over the decade.

A recent Corporate Peer Challenge identified many strengths within North Kesteven District Council, not least its 'complete jigsaw' of corporate plans and strategies and the clarity of purpose, vision and the direction mapped out by them; this NK Plan among them. Additionally there was praise of the priority focus and the momentum of delivery and fulfilment of our projects.

Although bold in scale, the ambition expressed within the NK Plan is costed, entirely within our capacity and capabilities and consistent with our vision to ensure our communities are resilient, safe and flourishing.

This level of investment builds on the recent realisation of:

£100m of capital investment;
300 new council homes built; an arms-length housing company delivering **115** homes to date; a **£7m** investment in leisure infrastructure and **£1.2m** in arts; **£4m** invested into business units; and the re-procurement of leisure services with social enterprise partners to achieve savings in support of wider service provision.

In the execution of our aims, aspirations ambitions and initiatives, we value the strong partnerships we form with residents, businesses, organisations, enterprises and individuals who share our progressive, pragmatic, pioneering and principled approach.

Many of the strengths and successes we enjoy within North Kesteven are founded on such alliances and together we can commit to bringing forward and fulfilling the NK Plan.



Cllr Richard Wright

Leader of the Council



Ian Fytche

Chief Executive
of the Council

NORTH KESTEVEN

A SENSE OF PLACE

Further to the aims and ambitions you would expect to see in a corporate strategic plan – for homes, jobs, communities, open and accountable governance and the like – we are keen to ensure that this Council extends its role as a ‘leader of place’

What North Kesteven District Council aspires to do, in all that it does, is to promote the area as a distinct location; a great place to live, work, visit and invest, with excellent services that meet the needs of its residents and businesses.

Also to advocate on behalf of the District and public service provision generally, which the 2021 Corporate Peer Challenge said we do very well, using our influence for the broader good of North Kesteven, its residents and communities.

Where it has statutory functions to fulfil – to run elections, provide housing, collect waste and recycling, determine planning applications, licence operations and establishments, ensure compliance and enforce against food hygiene, environmental health and living conditions, for example – it does this intelligently and with consideration, in a manner that goes above and beyond.

And in areas subject to local discretion – the provision of arts, culture and sporting facilities, quality of customer engagement, leadership on climate action, level of business advice and support, response to enquiries and provision of information, etc – this too is done in a manner which

develops an exemplary level of service provision and satisfaction.

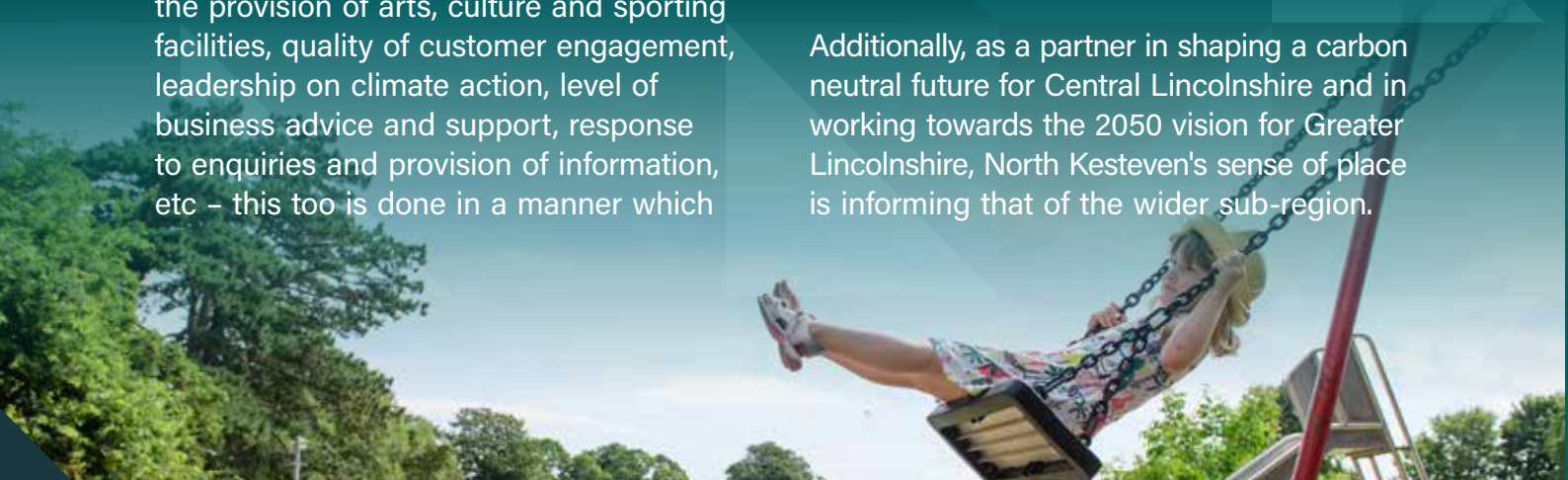
The Council's vision is focused on A District of Flourishing Communities, where communities are healthier, more productive, entrepreneurial, creative and engaged. And now through its enhanced commitment to climate action, where communities are carbon-net-zero by 2030.

This vision provides the framework through which services are shaped and delivered in pursuit of a happier, more vibrant District where people are actively engaged in their communities.

All of this contributes towards the sense of place which makes North Kesteven distinct and gives people the confidence to say the Council provides good quality services, offers value for money and that they are satisfied with the way we run things.

In championing North Kesteven as a great place to live, work, visit and invest, recent Council decisions to invest in Passivhauses and carbon neutral homes, Sleaford Moor Enterprise Park, more business units, the Hub arts centre and a more environmentally-resilient future, really build on this theme.

Additionally, as a partner in shaping a carbon neutral future for Central Lincolnshire and in working towards the 2050 vision for Greater Lincolnshire, North Kesteven's sense of place is informing that of the wider sub-region.



OUR GREEN THREAD



VISION

- ▶ A District of Flourishing Communities

PURPOSE

- ▶ A prosperous, sustainable District, supported by effective & efficient public services that deliver local priorities and meet the challenges of both climate change and economic uncertainty.

PRIORITIES

Our COMMUNITIES

- ▶ To enhance the health and wellbeing, safety and resilience of all our communities; inspiring and supporting a sustainable and flourishing future

Our COUNCIL

- ▶ To be a high performing, value-for-money, Council that is agile, resilient and actively embraces the challenges and opportunities of the future

Our ECONOMY

- ▶ To support local economic growth and resilience, and build on 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

- ▶ Through the Local Plan, deliver sustainable housing growth and pursue energy-efficient development to meet the current and emerging needs of all our communities

AMBITIONS

- ▶ The strategic sense underlying our ambitions and the desired outcomes they point towards are outlined in the 2030 Community Strategy. In response to the challenges we face, our ambitions seek to achieve our aspirations within each priority – as detailed here in the NK Plan.

VALUES

- ▶ The manner in which we work to deliver our services:
High performing, honesty, people-focused, professionalism, teamwork

TEAM PLAN

INDIVIDUAL PLANS

The Green Thread is the link that connects a colleague's individual actions, at any level throughout the organisation, directly to our overarching vision and purpose and illustrates too how they contribute to fulfilment of our climate aspirations. Strong and apparent, this link is inherent within our culture and values, helping everyone to remain focused on their purpose and potential for delivering excellence – and meaningful climate action.

OUR COMMUNITIES

To enhance the health, wellbeing, safety and resilience of all our communities; inspiring and supporting a sustainable and flourishing future

KEY AMBITION

- **Promote participation and engagement within our communities, to deliver a clean, safe and inclusive District**

Responsive delivery of quality services which are relevant and can be relied upon by residents runs to the heart of the Council's function.

In scoping our ambitions to enhance the wellbeing, safety and health of all our communities, where we can inspire and support a sustainable and flourishing future for all, we have an insightful understanding of the District, its strengths, limitations and opportunities and challenges faced.

The District performs well in respect of low levels of deprivation, crime and re-offending – having one of the UK's lowest levels of crime per 1,000 population – and on indices measuring life satisfaction, happiness and quality of life.

Although comparatively low in incidence, as the nature and type of crimes changes the Council's response to this evolves too.

An area of key action is in supporting residents and communities through cost of living challenges; promoting and signposting services and the availability of advice and financial assistance.

Community spirit, resilience and support mechanisms are inherently strong, as evidenced by the range, quality and breadth of nominations made to the annual NK Community Champion Awards.

Our growing population is ageing with some health indices causing concern in respect of diabetes, obesity and other measures. With this in mind, we intelligently shape support services and engagement best-suited to our communities and, in partnership, are actively engaged in progressing better health outcomes for the wider county.

As a consequence of the District's geographic and spatial position there are needs to respond to in respect of rurality, social isolation and population ageing. These impact on 'brain-drain', loneliness, health outcomes and digital exclusion.

In response to these pressures and opportunities, the Council has mapped out bold and proactive aims and ambitions which seek to maintain and advance the area's strengths and bring positive change.

SUPPORTING AMBITIONS

- **Recognise and be responsive to the increased cost of living challenges for our communities**
- **Promote healthy lifestyles by providing a range of leisure and cultural opportunities**
- **Support partnership health strategies, as part of our provision of effective and efficient support services for residents**



180+ Ukrainians supported in making District their home

Working in partnership with colleagues from other councils, public, voluntary and charitable agencies, many NKDC's officers have worked tirelessly in ensuring Ukrainian people fleeing war know they 'are welcome' in our communities.

Assisting the 180 people who arrived at the 50-plus homes opened up locally in the first 10 months of the Homes for Ukraine programme, Council officers also supported communities in setting up the best-possible and most-appropriate levels of provision.

Further partnership work now facilitates the transition of guests from hosted accommodation to independent living.





WHAT WE PLAN TO DO

- ▶ Increase cycling infrastructure to support safe, confident and enhanced active travel and sport-riding provision
- ▶ Deliver identified actions and projects to build further on our engagement within the District, promoting equality and diversity and being responsive to cost of living pressures
- ▶ Continue to work successfully with partners to promote better health and wellbeing outcomes and tackle both childhood and adult obesity
- ▶ Work with partners to ensure North Kesteven remains one of the safest local authority areas in England.

WHAT WE'VE DONE RECENTLY

- ▶ Delivered the £1.2m re-invigoration of the Hub in Sleaford, facilitating easier and broader community access to the arts
- ▶ Set up a Community Lottery to support community groups and beneficiaries
- ▶ Fully rolled-out enhanced recycling provision with the separate collection of paper and card to maximise potential for effective, repeated, high-value re-purposing of resources
- ▶ Established a new Community Development Partnership of voluntary and community groups, which has initiated projects to build community resilience, support mental health and promote biodiversity enhancements
- ▶ Championed ever-more community volunteers through our annual NK Community Champion Awards.

OUR LONGER TERM PLANS

- ▶ Inspire everyone to be more active and creative more often
- ▶ Work with partners in advancing the Health & Wellbeing Strategy for Lincolnshire
- ▶ Structure regular engagement with community-focused partners and representatives of community groups in order to develop 'flourishing' initiatives for our communities.



BIG NUMBERS



£28, 158 in new revenue generated directly for 69 good causes signed up for NK Lottery ticket sales



110 community-focused volunteers and businesses awarded over 12 years as NK Community Champions



3,000 juniors participated in new weekly youth social club facilities at ONE NK over six months



834,000 people accessed leisure cultural and arts programmes over nine months to December 2022



£3.36m social value generated by NKDC's leisure facilities over a year's span

OUR ENVIRONMENT

To meet the challenge of climate change; ensuring integration and delivery of the Climate Action Plan across all NK Plan priorities

KEY AMBITION

► **Champion greenhouse gas reduction, both within the Council and across the District**

Environmental awareness and a commitment for clear climate action is driving change, delivering ambitions and creating opportunity across the full breadth of Council priorities – as well as inspiring and informing action towards carbon net-zero for the whole District by 2030.

Leading from the front, the Council secured the Sleaford Renewable Energy Plant as a significant producer of renewable energy – one of many renewable energy generation projects granted planning permission in recent years as the Council takes a far-sighted view on resource demand; and also brokered a pioneering deal for five public buildings to receive free heat and hot water over a 25 year period. This has a significant impact on reduced carbon emissions across the public estate.

Through this and many other initiatives, the Council cut its own carbon outputs by 67.2% over ten years – way ahead of a 40% aim by 2020 – and contributed through direct action and ambassadorial influence to reduced emissions District-wide. Wider public engagement and leadership play a

major role in inspiring others to take action.

The 2021 Corporate Peer Challenge identified the Council's ambitions for tackling climate change' as 'excellent'; the latest being decarbonisation of three leisure facilities which account for 59% of current emissions and the retrofitting of 600 worse-performing council houses for energy use.

Furthermore, the Council has pledged to – and is acting to – arrest biodiversity loss through better management of its open spaces and increased canopy cover from trees; harness technological developments and the development of renewables; consider the place of electric-powered vehicles within its operations and cut carbon emissions through staff travel.

On the built environment, a range of measures seek to enhance and protect heritage assets whilst teasing out greater efficiency of insulation, energy use and life-long carbon implications for buildings.

In this way we seek to inspire others through leadership.

SUPPORTING AMBITIONS

- **Research and promote adaptations needed to increase resilience to climate change**
- **Promote and protect environmental health, including measures to enable living safely with Covid-19**
- **Conserve and enhance North Kesteven's heritage assets**
- **Develop biodiversity across the District and support natural carbon capture**



25% of Council energy needs generated carbon-free on office roof

The installation of 195 more solar panels on the roof of the Council's Sleaford offices will contribute around 25% of total annual energy use and significantly advance the 67% cut in carbon outputs already achieved over a decade.

This new solar array – adding to one in place for around eight years – will produce 80,000 kWhs of electrical energy per year.

It forms a key part of our strategy to move towards becoming net zero as a Council and District by 2030, as does fresh investment to 'decarbonise' leisure centres in Sleaford and North Hykeham and at Whisby Natural World Centre, cutting around 300 tonnes of CO₂ per year across the three schemes.





WHAT WE PLAN TO DO

- ▶ Fulfil, with partners, a review of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan with an aim to it becoming the first of its kind to aim for carbon neutrality
- ▶ Move forward with a £20m programme to retro-fit more than 600 of the least energy-efficient of our council homes, to make them more affordable and comfortable to live in
- ▶ Install more solar PV on the Sleaford offices and progress further opportunities to de-carbonise aspects of Council operations, including leisure assets and waste services
- ▶ Further develop meaningful climate action, and a costed pathway to achieve net-zero by 2030; informed by working groups focused on transport & domestic emissions, land use & carbon capture, adaptation and energy use.

WHAT WE'VE DONE RECENTLY

- ▶ Committed to achieving carbon neutrality for both the Council and the District by 2030; an ambition backed by a refreshed dynamic action plan and strategy
- ▶ Completed a number of habitat and public access initiatives along the River Slea in Sleaford, in partnership and with ERDF grant funding
- ▶ Extended engagement opportunities across our communities to maximise carbon reduction within our District
- ▶ Put three new electric vehicles - the Council's first - on the road; a van and two caged tippers used to empty litter bins. Their effectiveness will inform future small-fleet replacement plans.

OUR LONGER TERM PLANS

- ▶ Deliver on our goal to be net-zero on carbon by 2030
- ▶ Achieve further significant cuts in corporate and District-wide emissions
- ▶ Partnership in a countywide programme to tackle fly-tipping offences.

BIG NUMBERS



6.1% reduction per capita in individual carbon emissions, an increase from a 4.2% cut in 2020/21



36.64% reduction in domestic emissions of climate-damaging gases over 15 years



99% of new homes comply with the highest energy performance ratings A and B



280 tonnes of carbon set to be cut through decarbonisation work at three leisure facilities



98% of District food businesses broadly compliant with food hygiene regulations

OUR ECONOMY

To support local economic growth and resilience, and build on opportunities from the 'green economy'

KEY AMBITION

- **Acknowledge the challenging economic situation; supporting business where possible, alongside the protection of existing jobs and the creation of new jobs**

Central to the Council's vision for flourishing communities is a clear intent to encourage, enable and enhance economic vitality and vibrancy from high quality employment growth.

In current circumstances a major focus is in responding to the ongoing pressures and changes wrought by the coronavirus pandemic and economic situation; supporting businesses large and small in their resilience.

Ever horizon-scanning and with one-foot-ahead, the Council is primed to embrace the potential for growth and the opportunities of the 'green economy'. By actively promoting these and exploring the potential for resident and incoming enterprises, NK can create the environment in which business can prosper.

For many years, North Kesteven has enjoyed a high level of economic activity with significant levels of economic resilience, success across all sectors and very low rates for unemployment and benefit claims. This in itself brings pressures and

challenges in terms of skills and supply.

Concentrated within agri-business, food processing and engineering, a limited business mix does lead to a relatively low wage economy, lower productivity levels and outward migration of younger people for educational and employment opportunities – a so-called Brain Drain – and a sparsity of apprentice opportunities.

The Council seeks to arrest these trends through direct lobbying, investing and promoting the need for enhanced physical and digital infrastructure and promoting the benefits of relocating and remaining to live, work and thrive in North Kesteven.

This position informs investment in 37 acres of employment land in Sleaford with the potential to create 500 jobs, expansion of its provision to develop grow-on opportunities for start-ups and growing new businesses and the targeting of £4m in government grant funds over coming months.

SUPPORTING AMBITIONS

- **Attract investment to improve physical infrastructure, support regeneration and enhance digital connectivity**
- **Create a clear vision of place; celebrating and marketing all that the District has to offer**
- **Promote the economic opportunities from tackling climate change**



£3.2m+ investment plan for Sleaford to show the love

A major transformation of many aspects of Sleaford are poised to take place over coming months following the award of £3.2m from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Engaging proposals – which began with the temporary installation of a heart seat to promote thoughts of what people love about Sleaford – include a dynamic events programme, training workshops for independent traders, fresh signage, interpretation works at Castle Fields and improvements at Handley Monument.

A further £747,556 has been allocated to deliver against the Rural Prosperity Fund's aims for supporting small rural businesses to start up, scale up or expand.





WHAT WE PLAN TO DO

- ▶ Deliver by summer 2023 the first phase of the £70m 37-acre Sleaford Moor Enterprise Park, designed to be as climate-conscious as possible within its ambition to support 500 jobs
- ▶ Support business through latest economic challenges, ensuring they are able to grow and adapt to current market conditions
- ▶ Develop a Tourism Strategy for North Kesteven, working with Destination Lincolnshire and supporting their accretion process for Local Visitor Economy Partnerships
- ▶ Deliver the Sleaford Masterplan Refresh project proposals; the £3.2m package of UK Shared Prosperity Fund actions and £750,000 in grants through the Rural England Prosperity Fund
- ▶ Progress ambitious plans for the Cranwell Aviation Heritage Museum, giving a further boost to the visitor economy.

WHAT WE'VE DONE RECENTLY

- ▶ Swiftly-let 15 new workshops at Discovery Court, Nth Hykeham, the newest of our 96 business grow-on units on 10 sites
- ▶ Administered £38.2m in Government Covid-19 business grants in 7,562 payments across 11 distinct grant schemes up to March 2022; supporting 2,221 unique NK businesses
- ▶ Refreshed the Sleaford Masterplan to ensure the strategic framework for the town's future is reflective, responsive and aligned to local aims and ambitions
- ▶ Completed the National Heritage Lottery Funded restoration of Mrs Smith's Cottage in Navenby.

OUR LONGER TERM PLANS

- ▶ Explore the potential for nurturing an increased presence of knowledge-economy businesses
- ▶ Work up opportunities to develop the Green Economy, through university linkages and agricultural advancements etc
- ▶ Promote the District's advantages to inward investors and support smaller businesses in Sleaford to develop a sense of the town's distinctive nature in particular.

BIG NUMBERS



2,221 District businesses assisted through Covid-19 impact support grants schemes worth £38m



37 acres of employment land bought in Sleaford to open up 500 jobs



£131m contributed to economy in 2021 from tourism and day visits, supporting 1,627 jobs



237 jobs safeguarded and 60 more created as a result of Council input in 2021/22



£1m of Heritage Lottery Fund invested in restoration of Mrs Smith's Cottage

OUR HOMES

Through the Local Plan, deliver sustainable housing growth and pursue energy-efficient development to meet the current and emerging needs of all our communities

KEY AMBITION

► Facilitate the provision of community infrastructure to align with housing growth

Having pioneered a new era of council house building, the Council has maintained an ongoing commitment to increasing quantity and quality in order to support growth and improved housing options.

Recognised 'the speed at which NKDC is building, expanding and improving the sustainable design of its social housing stock', there were 53 completions in spring 2022 alone.

Both the current and emerging needs of all District communities are met through responsive planning and insightful action; with continued foresight in delivering sustainable housing growth and energy-efficient development mapping the way forward. All of these aspects are informed by the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan's holistic cross-council approach to spatial planning.

With high levels of home ownership, relatively low housing costs, a low proportion of single-person households and very little overcrowding, it would seem that North Kesteven has limited housing pressures. But with a rising housing waiting list, sparse private rental availability

and limited market response, the Council is ever proactive in seeking to increase provision, mix and quality – so that even those limited pressures are responded to and eased. And in pioneering increased energy-efficiency and green energy solutions, it promotes the climate credentials of homes locally.

Mindful that there are always enhancements to strive for in living conditions, insulation and energy-efficiency, the Council is focused on future-proofing its own stock and supporting private landlords to deliver improvements too.

As such, the Council actively invests in expanding and enhancing its own provision. It set up the arms-length company Lafford Homes Ltd to respond to inertia and the need to unlock more choice within the private rental market and is focused on a range of strategic solutions which include supporting the owners of empty homes to bring their properties back into use.

Through these measures, inroads are being made on an imbalance in housing mix, a lack of sufficient social and affordable housing, loss of homes through Right to Buy and greater sustainability.



Climate-protection, affordability and comfort are being built into all of North Kesteven's Council homes going forward, with adoption of a new CO₂-sy homes standard driving excellence in energy efficiency and low-cost, low carbon living.

In addition to the eight new – award-winning – Passivhauses built at Potterhanworth, designed from the outset to be highly energy efficient, heat-retentive and draught-proofed, all new Council homes are being built as carbon-neutral. A programme is in place to retro-fit the 600 worse performing of our 8,900 existing homes.

As well as being high quality and comfortable homes to live in, they demonstrate leadership in energy-saving standards and climate action.



SUPPORTING AMBITIONS

- **Provide high quality services for both housing and tackling homelessness; recognising the additional cost of living pressures now faced**
- **Maintain, improve and future-proof housing**
- **Deliver homes that are affordable and meet the full range of needs and the net-zero ambitions of the Local Plan**



WHAT WE PLAN TO DO

- ▶ Work with developers to deliver more homes in the District, including at least 100 more affordable homes, built to higher environmental and energy-conscious specification
- ▶ Continue to invest in line with the Lafford Homes' business plan to deliver more affordable rental choice locally
- ▶ Move forward a £4.2m regeneration of Grinter House in North Hykeham, expanding provision to 32 units for mixed use
- ▶ Work with Greater Lincolnshire partners to increase infrastructure delivery, more housing and progress net zero carbon and modern methods of construction initiatives
- ▶ Work with owners to bring back into use at least 20 more empty homes annually.

WHAT WE'VE DONE RECENTLY

- ▶ Constructed eight Passivhauses at Potterhanworth, part of the new CO₂sy Homes Standard for comfortable, climate-protecting homes and adding to two existing properties at Heckington
- ▶ Continued with the expansion of council housing stock, equipping them to enhanced energy efficiency standards
- ▶ In partnership with three other district councils, launched an initiative to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping
- ▶ Completed a further 42 homes at Waddington for Lafford Homes, bringing forward additional choice to satisfy unmet private rental demand in support of strong communities.

OUR LONGER TERM PLANS

- ▶ Deliver 260 new carbon-neutral Council homes up to 2030 and significantly improve the energy efficiency of existing homes in line with the zero-carbon ambition by then
- ▶ Continued improvement in the quality of homes, built and finished to new standards over and above the demands of national building regulations; not least in contributing massively on the Council's carbon cutting target for 2030
- ▶ With partners move forward the delivery of further Extra Care Housing provision at The Hoplands, Sleaford.

BIG NUMBERS



400+ new council and private rental homes delivered over 12 years of building our own homes



3,904 council houses in our expanding council house stock; 4,002 in Council ownership including Lafford Homes'



105 new affordable homes built in 2021-22 by Council and registered provider partners



20+ private sector empty homes brought back into use in a typical year



£6.8m of capital investment on enhancements to, and expansion of, Council housing stock in 2022/23

OUR COUNCIL

To be a high performing, value-for-money Council that is agile, resilient and actively embraces the challenges and opportunities of the future

KEY AMBITION

► Deliver high quality, value-for-money and sustainable services, underpinned by effective workforce planning

The Council enjoys a high level of confidence among its customers and partners and stakeholders appreciate its insightful and dynamic leadership.

After many years of taking a lead and making significant advancements in respect of climate change and matters of environmental, as well as financial, sustainability, North Kesteven District Council stepped up its response to the climate challenge with ambitions hailed as excellent.

This is reflected in the emphasis to be a high performing, value-for-money, climate-conscious Council that embraces the challenges and opportunities of the future.

Ever customer-focused, open and accountable, with high levels of integrity, quality and value at the heart of everything it does, the Council is responsive and responsible in building its service delivery aspirations on a solid foundation of long-term financial stability and resilience.

Highly-efficient and active in exploring opportunities

for cost savings and income enhancement, North Kesteven continues to move forward with a balanced budget and ambitious capital programme to invest £255m over the coming decade.

Always pragmatic in its approach, with service enhancement, financial resilience, customer responsiveness, foresight and strong governance as key drivers, the Council's 10-year Community Strategy brings clarity and purpose to all it does; and further stability at a time of ongoing uncertainty within the sphere of public finance.

The Council has been assessed as 'strong, stable and financially-secure' with 'robust' governance arrangements', 'positive financial management' and strong strategic direction.

Ever mindful of the dynamic nature of local government finance and policy change, the Council, its officers and Members, aspire to achieve the very best for the District, its residents and businesses within the context of increasing customer expectations, and changing requirements.

SUPPORTING AMBITIONS

- Ensure our Council is financially resilient
- Promote and protect good governance and healthy democracy, with open, accountable and transparent decision-making
- Maintain a strong focus on our customers



Shortlisted twice as Council of the Year in the most prestigious local government awards programmes of 2022, North Kesteven was championed for putting its vision and values into action.

In both the MJ and Local Government Chronicle awards, it was identified as one of the UK's top six authorities and Chief Executive Ian Fytche was also a finalist for his personal leadership and influence at all levels.

The Council is in the top 2% of organisations globally with its Gold Investors In People accreditation.





WHAT WE PLAN TO DO

- ▶ Continue to deliver a bold and ambitious investment programme, currently targeting £255m over 10 years
- ▶ Ensure sound finances and a balanced budget are maintained
- ▶ Deliver the local elections for district and parish councillors on May 4, 2023; taking into account changes in legislation for Voter ID to be presented at polling stations
- ▶ Implement new website technology and content management systems making web pages easier to read and navigate
- ▶ Develop and strengthen strategic partnerships.

WHAT WE'VE DONE RECENTLY

- ▶ Recognised twice in 2022's most prestigious Council of the Year awards as one of the best local authorities in the UK - finalist in LGC and MJ awards programmes.
- ▶ Awarded Investors in People Gold status and awarded twice for workforce wellbeing initiatives.
- ▶ Adopted an ongoing agile working programme to maintain and enhance service delivery whilst promoting employee welfare and maximising climate gain through reduced travel
- ▶ Engaged in the Lincolnshire multi-agency response in ensuring the safe resettlement of families evacuated from Afghanistan and displaced from Ukraine
- ▶ Developed digital hubs to help build customers' confidence in using computers to access services, work and finances
- ▶ Expanded digital channels and opportunities for residents, businesses and wider stakeholders to hear from us.

OUR LONGER TERM PLANS

- ▶ Explore and develop more mechanisms for residents to be able to access services through their preferred approach
- ▶ Implement, in association with other authorities within the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership, new waste management measures in response to emerging new legislation.

BIG NUMBERS



£255m capital investment planned across Council services and functions over next 10 years



2,291,513 times pages were viewed on corporate website over 10 months to late February 2023



78% of people satisfied with the quality of Council services



430 people employed directly in 190 different roles directly delivering service excellence (March '23)



77% of residents say the Council keeps them well-informed of the benefits and services it provides; national average is 56%

FUTURE FOCUS

Climate challenge

Climate concern is front, right and centre in all that North Kesteven sets out to achieve in order to meet its 2030 carbon net-zero aim.

Building on an established culture and focus on sustainability within everything the Council has sought to achieve – going back to signing up to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change in 2006 and endorsement in 2012 of the Local Government Association 'Climate Local' initiative – in July 2019 we were the first Lincolnshire authority to declare a Climate Emergency.

Rather than being a starting point, this declaration was wholly consistent and in line with established practice – climate consideration being an inherent part of the NK Way, subtly encompassed within much of the work we already do.

From there, the Council Leader has now committed to the UK100 Pledge, showing strong leadership and advocacy.



NK PLAN TIMELINE



2023

- ▶ Completion and tenanting of phase one at Sleaford Moor Enterprise Park
- ▶ Initiate first tranche of £20m programme to retro-fit council housing stock for enhanced energy efficiency
- ▶ Start of £8.9m Extra Care Housing scheme for Sleaford
- ▶ Conduct 2023 Local Elections, rolling out new legislation for Voter ID
- ▶ Approval of refreshed Local Plan, shaping a carbon-neutral future for Central Lincolnshire



2024

- ▶ Source funding to relocate Cranwell Aviation Heritage Museum
- ▶ Completion of a £4.2m regeneration of Grinter House, North Hykeham, expanding provision and broadening housing availability
- ▶ Aim for Platinum Investors in People standard; up from current Gold status



Over a decade, we cut by 67.2% our greenhouse gas emissions from Council operations, smashing our target of 40% by 2020 years ahead of schedule.

We are now charting a course for a net-zero carbon position for the Council by 2030, and a similarly bold ambition for the District as a whole...a much bigger challenge but one we are determined to pursue to reality in the best traditions of North Kesteven. We use and champion renewable energy, build-in energy efficiency within all of our properties, promote greater biodiversity; we're reducing plastics, introducing electric fleet vehicles and are driving down consequential carbon outputs.

Following extensive input by working groups across the Council, recommendations on the way forward for the Council are now consolidated into a holistic action plan for making the Climate Emergency declaration a living reality.

Economic challenge

Whilst Sleaford holds its own as a town centre, with one of the lowest rates of empty shop units – around 5% at any time – and a high ratio of independent retailers – around 80%, which is almost double the regional and national averages – shoppers prefer to take their spending elsewhere. Of every £1 spent on non-food retail, around 80p is spent out of the town, which is a substantial sum the town would benefit from recapturing.

The Council's response to this challenge includes a heritage renewal scheme, better traffic and pedestrian zoning, and initiatives to enliven retail vibrancy, develop a distinct 'Sleaford Brand,' facilitate a shift towards more leisure time being spent in the town and promote longer linger time.

Technology challenge

As customers choose to connect with the Council and receive their services and information in an increasingly digital and immediate way, the Council is continually reviewing its options to ensure it remains responsive and reactive.

One response to this is the expansion of digital information and hubs, helping residents to develop online skills and resilience.

As a realistic plan, informed by stakeholder input and intelligence on the dynamics, specifics and emerging pressures faced by the District – and rooted in far-sighted financial resilience – The NK Plan maps out the Council's high level action plan in response to the needs of the area and the furtherance of its goals over a rolling three-year timeframe.



2025

- Completion of £8.9m Extra Care Housing scheme at the Hoplands in Sleaford
- Mid-point review of the Community Strategy targeted on 2030



2026

- Further expand the Lafford Homes stock holding to unlock more housing choice



2030

- Achieve carbon net-zero aims for both the Council and the District
- Deliver against the outcomes of the Community Strategy targeted on 2030

FINANCE

Underpinning the Council's commitment to providing quality services which represent value-for-money and work towards A District of Flourishing Communities is the Finance Strategy.

Focused on achieving a balanced General Fund profile for the one year, three year and ten year horizons, it builds on the achievements of the past and sets out a clear direction for the future in conjunction with the Council's corporate plan – the NK Plan.

Alongside the sustainable Medium Term Financial Strategy, sits an ambitious Housing Revenue Account and, to support investment in the District and the five Priorities, the Capital Programme provides for a ten-year investment strategy.

The Finance Strategy remains in a positive place, broadly balanced and creating the capacity to invest £255million in capital, across priorities, over the next decade to 2033.

Such an ambitious and innovative programme of activity is designed to ensure that the Council maintains its already-robust financial position and proactively meets the challenges the Council faces.

Coupled with a transformation programme, the ExCITe programme of 'invest to save' opportunities and foresight in taking proactive risk mitigation measures, mean that appropriate mechanisms are in place to preserve the Council's status and drive it forward.

Nevertheless, the financial environment for local government remains challenging, with uncertainty over the financial framework over coming years and additional challenges presented by income volatility.

Achieving our finance strategy targets means achieving our targets for income generation and efficiency gain, whilst addressing cost pressures within the system. Despite ever-present challenges, this Council's finances remain in a strong position.

Taking all of this into account, the 2021 Corporate Peer Challenge singled out our 'positive financial management and planning' and 'mature and well-considered' approach to risk, saying that it struck the right balance. It also said the 10-year financial plan was visionary and a rarity in local government that could be shared to inform good practice more widely.

Moving forward into the 2023-26 NK Plan period, the Council remains in a strong financial position through good management, planning and its ambitious approach to tackling the financial challenges it has faced.

Our financial plan for 2023-24 builds on solid foundations over many years, that keeps the Council in a strong financial position and empowers it to drive forward a positive outlook for its communities.

It continues with:

- A **General Fund** which is balanced and sustainable over the next ten years – investing in services as diverse as waste collection, leisure and culture, planning, environmental health and economic development.
- A **Housing Revenue Account** that is viable over the 30 years of the business plan – focused on support for tenants of 3,904 homes and delivery of new council housing.
- A **Capital Programme** which provides over £255m of investment across the next ten years, and
- **Reserves** that both support financial resilience and provide targeted interventions.

It underpins high levels of ambition, investment in priorities and service delivery in bringing the strategic aims of the NK Plan to fruition in our communities' daily lives, driving recovery from Covid, shaping our place and building a sustainable future.

In taking account of the challenges and uncertainties which exist in financial planning – rising cost pressure, the impact of local government finance reform, future consequences etc – we continue to:

- **be proactive in our long-term strategic view,**
- **build on the value we already provide, by being ever more efficient,**
- **transform our services to deliver better outcomes,**
- **drive sustainable growth and generate more income and opportunity in doing this, and**
- **support our communities to flourish.**

With a strong emphasis on climate action and a commitment to build more homes to low energy, zero-carbon standards, and bring forward economic, societal and cultural development, such a robust financial position affords certainty to our communities that we will deliver for our residents and achieve what we set out to do.



North Kesteven
DISTRICT COUNCIL

OUR DISTRICT



£255m

Capital investment plan to 2033



118,100

population of North Kesteven



53,522

homes in North Kesteven



590

houses built in NK (2021/22);
18% of them affordable



£1.2m

invested by Council in
refurbishment of the Hub



87%

of surveyed residents find it easy
to contact Council in preferred way



4,855

number of businesses in the
District



8 years

as one of the UK's
safest place to live



44%

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



3,904

council houses owned by NKDC



100%

tenant satisfaction with new-build
council homes



3,906,490

bins emptied every year



78%

of people positively rate
quality of services



£131m

the value of tourism to NK in 2021,
a year still impacted by Covid-19



298

jobs created or safeguarded
through Council actions



2030

target date for moving the Council
and the District to carbon net-zero



65%

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



81,221

calls answered by Customer
Services in 2022