

NORTHAMPTON
• BOROUGH COUNCIL •

C O R P O R A T E P L A N
2 0 0 6 - 2 0 0 7



working for northampton

This document is Northampton Borough Council's Corporate Plan 2006/2007, and explains the Council's ambitions and priorities. If English is not your first language and you need help in translating this document, contact Simone Wade on 01604 838569

Bengali

এটি শহোর নথি অস্টিন বারা কাউন্সিলের 2006/07 সালের কর্পোরেট প্ল্যান, যা কাউন্সিলের লক্ষ্য ও অগ্রিমারণগুলো বর্ণনা করে। ইংরেজী যদি আপনার মাতৃভাষা না হয় এবং এ কাগজপত্রের অনুবাদের প্রয়োজন হয় তবে শুন সিলভার ফে 01604 838569 এ নাম্বার দ্বারা যোগাযোগ করো।

Chinese

這份文件是諾咸頓市議會提出的 2006/07 年度綜合規劃，內容說明市議會的抱負和優先推展項目。如果英語不是你使用的主要語言而需要翻譯這份文件的幫助，請致電與 Simone Wade 聯絡，電話 01604 838569

Vietnamese

Văn kiện này là Bản Kế Hoạch Tổng Hợp Niên Khóa 2006/07 của Hội Đồng Thành Phố Northampton, nội dung giải thích các hoài bão và việc ưu tiên của Hội Đồng. Nếu tiếng Anh không phải là ngôn ngữ chính của quý vị và quý vị cần giúp đỡ phiên dịch văn kiện này, hãy gọi điện thoại số 01604 838569 liên lạc với Simone Wade.

Gujarati

આ દસ્તાવેજ નોર્થમ્પટન બરો કાઉન્સિલનો 2006/07 માટેનો કોર્પોરેટ પ્લાન છે, અને તે કાઉન્સિલની મહત્વકાર્યાઓ અને અગ્રાત્માઓ સમજાવે છે. જો અગ્રેજ તમારી પઢેલી ભાષા ન હોય અને તમને આ દસ્તાવેજના ભાષાંતરમાં મદદ જોઈતી હોય, તો શૈન સિલ્વર-ફે 01604 838569 ઉપર સંપર્ક કરો.

LARGE PRINT & TAPE

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in large print or as a tape recording
please call

01604 838569

Punjabi

ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਕੌਰਬੈਪਟਨ ਬਰੋ ਕੌਂਸਲ ਦੀ ਸੰਮੱਲਿਤ ਯੋਜਨਾ 2006/07 ਸੰਖੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੌਂਸਲ ਦੇ ਉਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਤਰਜੀਹਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਵੇਖਿਆ ਵੇਖਿਆ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਝੁਹਾਡੀ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਤਰਜੀਹ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸੋਨ ਸਿਲਵਰ ਨਾਲ 01604 838569 ਤੋਂ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

Romanian

Acest document din planul colectiv al Consiliului Northampton pe anul 2006/07 explică ambițiile și prioritățile Consiliului. Dacă engleza nu e limba dv. principală și aveți nevoie de ajutor pentru traducerea acestui document, contactați-l pe Simone Wade la numărul 01604 838569.

Swahili

Dukumentigan ah Northampton Borough Council 's Corporate Plan 2006/07, wuxuuna sharxayaa Koomsalka hiylgsa iyo mudnaantooda. Haddii uu Ingiriisiga luuqadaada koowaad ahayn oo aadna caawimaad uga baahahan tahay in dokumentigan laguu turjumo, lasoo xirir Simone Wade 01604 838569!

Somali

Kanuni hii ni ya Northampton Mpango wa Borough Council's Corporate ya kipindi cha 2006/07 na inaelezea mipango ya maendeleo na kipaumbe. Kama English siyo Lughu yako ya kwanza na unahitaji tafsiri ya kanuni hii,wasiliana na Simone Wade simu namba 01604 838569.

Urdu

یہ اک یونیٹ نارتھپتن براؤنچل کے کار پورٹ پلان 07/06 میں ملکی، اور یونیٹل کی معنوں اور تجھیات کی وضاحت کرتا ہے۔ اگر انگریزی آپ کی اپنی زبان میں، اور آپ کو اس کی یونیٹ کے ترجمے میں مدد کر جاؤ، راہ کرم 01604 838569 پر شائن سلور (Simone Wade) سے رابطہ کریں۔

For further information on council services

- Telephone: 01604 837837
- Or visit: www.northampton.gov.uk

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OUR VISION AND PRIORITIES FOR THE TOWN

The Council's **Vision:**

"We will work with, and for, the people of Northampton to build an increasingly prosperous, healthy, safe and attractive town of which we are proud. We will strive to maximize and sustain opportunities for all."



We believe in a number of principles and ideals by which we work with each other, local people and with our partners in delivering services. They are the **values** by which we conduct ourselves.

We will be:

- Councillor led
- Citizen focused
- Open & accountable

In all that we do, we will:

- Strive for excellence
- Embrace diversity
- Work together
- Lead and empower people
- Plan for a better future
- Deliver sustainable communities



We will achieve our Vision through our **priorities**. These will direct our work and resources for 2006-2007.

Our **priorities** are to:

1. Listen to local people and provide the services they need
2. Improve Northampton's housing by focusing on & improving our weakest services:
 - Revenues & Benefits
 - Decent homes standard
 - Void properties
 - Homelessness
3. Invest in the regeneration of the Town, providing economic development & growth
4. Make Northampton a cleaner, safer & greener place to live
5. Manage the Council's finances effectively
6. Improve our performance to be fit for all our purposes

Our **priorities** are supported by a range of **specific, measurable targets & actions** which allow us to know if we have been successful in meeting our aims and focus on areas for improvement. They are listed in our BVPP and in our Recovery Plan

Our Corporate Plan For This Year (2006 - 2007)

Following a poor Corporate Performance Assessment in 2004 the Audit Commission have revisited the Borough and agreed that we are now making slow but visible progress in our recovery. This is thanks to the great efforts of our councillors and all of our staff.

We are ultimately aiming for excellence but are very aware that we still have some distance to travel and need to raise our game if we are to complete our recovery. We are clear what we are aiming for and are confident we can achieve this. The foundations to achieve sustainable change and improve service delivery are in place and the Council has made dedicated efforts in implementing the community leadership structures, management structure and systems necessary to ensure success. This year we are concentrating on improving our weakest services.

Our priorities are to:

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We vow to make service improvements that benefit all our citizens

We care about vulnerable people and are making things better for them by focusing on:

- Reducing the numbers of homeless people in temporary accommodation
- Working to prevent homelessness

We are putting Citizens first through our new and dedicated work in:

- Engagement, consultation and communications
- Community development initiatives
- Renewed vigilance in community safety
- Working with partners

We are making services better for all local people by improving:

- The way you can access the Council
 - The speed and ease with which you can claim housing benefits which we will process accurately
 - The quality of our housing
 - Our collection of council taxes
 - Our “Streetscene” – the way the town looks
 - Our website and new technology ways of accessing services
 - Access and information about our planning services
 - The quality of leisure services
 - Upgrading the local environment
-and keeping us all safer by increasing the number of neighbourhood wardens on our streets

We know we need to work differently...

We believe you know what will make a difference...

We value your feedback and suggestions as to how we might serve you and your community better!

PRIORITIES

The targets that underpin the delivery of the priorities listed here are set out in the Best Value Performance Plan which you can find on our website.

As a Council, we will continually strive to make the town a great place to live and work. We want to be a Council that is inclusive, focused on our customers and working with local people, partners and employees. We do not underestimate the journey ahead of us to become a high performing Council and we have developed a Recovery Plan that will help us improve over the coming years. This plan can be found on our website and lists the activities we will undertake.

The focus of this Corporate Plan is on how the Council can provide the best possible services to local people this financial year,

Priority 1: Listen to local people and provide the services they need

Northampton Borough Council is at the heart of the town's communities, listening to the needs of local people. We recognise that improvement in service quality is only part of the story. The Council is changing its whole focus, putting local people first in all that we do. This is a fundamental priority for us.

The Council went through major internal change last year. This involved looking closely at how all our services and activities were designed and delivered to meet the needs of all our customers, local people, partners and other stakeholders. We have completed this work and now need to listen to you about the services you want for the future. We recognise and celebrate the diversity of the people and communities that we serve and so will design and deliver services in response to these needs, wants and aspirations within the resources available.

Customers, local people, partners and other stakeholders will be able to express their needs regularly in a variety of ways, including an annual survey, service specific consultation, community forums, area partnerships, improvement clinics and Council meetings. Information from these will be used to design, develop and improve services.

Communication is at the heart of what we are doing and we will ensure that people are able to express their needs and views to us easily and that we respond to their concerns. We are building an improved customer care culture.

Priority 2: Improve Northampton's housing by focusing on & improving our weakest services:

- **Revenues & Benefits**
- **Void properties**
- **Decent homes standard**
- **Homelessness**

We regret how long it currently takes to process claims for benefits by some of the most vulnerable people in our community. The targets that we have set will bring about an improvement and give those who need help a better deal however they contact us, and that we will provide benefit to as many people as we can who need help.

The Council will represent the views of all local people to make sure that Northampton gets a fair deal from the planned future growth of the town, so that any development lasts and that decent affordable homes are available for all.

Priority 3: Invest in the planning and regeneration of the Town, providing economic development & growth

We are a growing town. Northampton has been identified by the government as a major area for growth. The West Northamptonshire Development Corporation (WNDC) has been established to drive the regeneration and development of the area (Northampton, Daventry & Towcester). WNDC will work with its partners to deliver the best possible solution.

Northampton Borough council is playing a strong and influential role in the renewal agenda, making sure that local peoples' view are represented and the best outcomes delivered for the future of the town.

This year we will make clear information available on planning enforcement services so that local people can contribute easily to creating a well-developed town.

The Council wants economic prosperity for all. We will make sure that new investment delivers the regeneration of Northampton. This will help reduce deprivation across the town.

We recognise that the significant growth of the town will have a major impact on how the Council reshapes its services to meet the future challenges and demands.

Priority 4: Make Northampton a cleaner, safer & greener place to live

We know that local people, our customers and partners want a town that is free from graffiti, gum, litter and abandoned vehicles. We will work in partnership to reduce the levels of these.

We will be tough on those who behave in an anti-social manner, in particular those who vandalise, dump rubbish and drop litter. We will issue a fixed penalty notice in all appropriate cases.

We know that safety and the reduction of crime is important to local people, customers and our partners in making Northampton a place where you want to live, work, shop and visit.

Priority 5: Manage the Council's finances effectively

The level at which we choose to set our council tax and the level of our income from government mean that we can not provide every service that local people would like to see, so we have to prioritise to make sure we provide services people most need. The Council has worked hard to clarify its priorities and to identify those areas that are not a priority for this year. We will be consulting you about this.

Some resources have already been redistributed to priority areas. This has meant a reduction or cessation in some service areas. Once these priority areas improve we will look at better resourcing other areas.

The Council is considering a number of options that will allow it to reap the financial benefits that it would not be able to gain if it continued to run certain services itself. These savings will be re-invested in priority services.

Current work and future development of our approach to procurement will achieve the government's targets for efficiency.

Priority 6: Improve our performance to be fit for all our purposes

We want to be a Council that enables staff to do the best job they can. We do this by providing clear direction, good management and training, then we set targets and measure performance.

We will recruit, retain and develop the necessary skills and competencies in people required to deliver our services and future priorities, and have built the necessary leadership capacity to motivate employees and sustain improved performance.

Services prioritised for rapid improvement

Some of our key performance indicators are currently in the bottom quartile with regards to performance. This means they are doing less well for you than similar services in most other councils. We are working to change this.

Those indicators where we have the lowest levels of performance when compared with other councils are set out below and our priorities are designed to move all out of the bottom quartile as soon as possible.

| Indicator Description | Outturn 2005/06 | Target 2006/07 |
|--|-----------------|------------------|
| Percentage council tax collected in the year. | 95.45% | 98.5% |
| Housing benefit – the number of claimants visited per 1,000 caseload | 53.35 | 195* |
| Housing benefit – average time for processing new claims | 57.6 days | 36* days |
| Housing benefit - average time for processing changes in notification | 24.4 days | 9 days |
| Housing benefit – accuracy of processing | 83% | 98%* |
| Housing – rent collection and arrears – the proportion of rent collected | 96.04% | 97.5% |
| Number of working days lost to sickness absence per employee year | 16.12 days | 11.5 days |
| Percentage of employees retiring early | 2.64% | 0.8% |
| Percentage of invoices for commercial goods paid within 30 days of receipt | 86.89% | 93% |
| Number of vehicle crimes per year per 1,000 population | 21.6 crimes | 18.12 crimes |
| Number of domestic burglaries per 1,000 households | 22.1 burglaries | 17.47 burglaries |
| Cost of household waste collection per household per year | £51.72 | £48.00 |

* Targets to be confirmed in consultation with DWP/GOEM

Our Corporate Plan for the next three years (2007 – 2010)

The Council has already started the process of developing its next Corporate Plan.

This next Plan will cover a longer time horizon (the period from 2007 to 2010) and include robust vision, ambitions and priorities for the future of Northampton. We will have absolute clarity in our vision for the future built through consultation with all our communities.

The Corporate Plan for 2007-2010 will be based on the needs and views of local people, businesses, our partners and other stakeholders and will show an integrated approach to priority setting and allocating resources. We will need to set a balanced budget that will deliver our ambitions and priorities.

We have already started work in looking at areas that are not a priority for 2007-2010 and will be consulting you about your views on these. We will tell you the results of the consultation and those non-priority areas in the Corporate Plan for 2007-2010.

In order to focus on our priorities, we need to review those activities we undertake that don't contribute to those priorities.

In order to move on and improve so that we offer you as good, or better, services as other councils we will need to disinvest in non-priority areas to enable us to target resources on those priority areas that have the most profound impact on the lives of local people.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

The Council is led by the Cabinet, which is responsible for day-to-day decision-making. The Cabinet is led by the Leader of the Council. The Cabinet is comprised of six Councillors of the largest political party who form a minority administration in a Council with no overall control. Each member of the Cabinet is responsible for a portfolio of services.

Alongside the Cabinet there is the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. This committee holds the Cabinet to account for their decisions. They also review services, monitor performance, contribute to the development of policies and can investigate anything that affects the people of Northampton, even things the Council is not responsible for. Much of the Committee's work is done through Task and Finish groups. The Committee's meetings are not just open to the public, but actively involve the public in many different ways, including raising issues for investigation.

The Council has implemented a new, innovative way of working, by creating the Improvement Board with cross party representation. The main duties of the Board are to set the priorities for the Council and oversee and manage the implementation of all measures necessary to achieve improvement, meet targets and priorities and satisfy the Audit Commission and the Secretary of State that the Council is performing to an acceptable level.

The Audit Committee is composed of six Councillors two from each political group excluding members of the Cabinet. The main purpose of the committee is to ensure that the Council provides value for money, manages risk effectively and observes financial probity.

Full Council, made up from all the Councillors, is mainly responsible for approving the Council's Policy Framework and Budget.

The public are able to attend and speak at all these meetings. For more information contact Meeting Services on (01604) 837101

There are also a number of regulatory committees that oversee issues such as planning and licensing.

Each committee is supported and advised by a senior member of staff.

The Councillors employ managers and staff to carry out their decisions so that you feel the benefit of them.

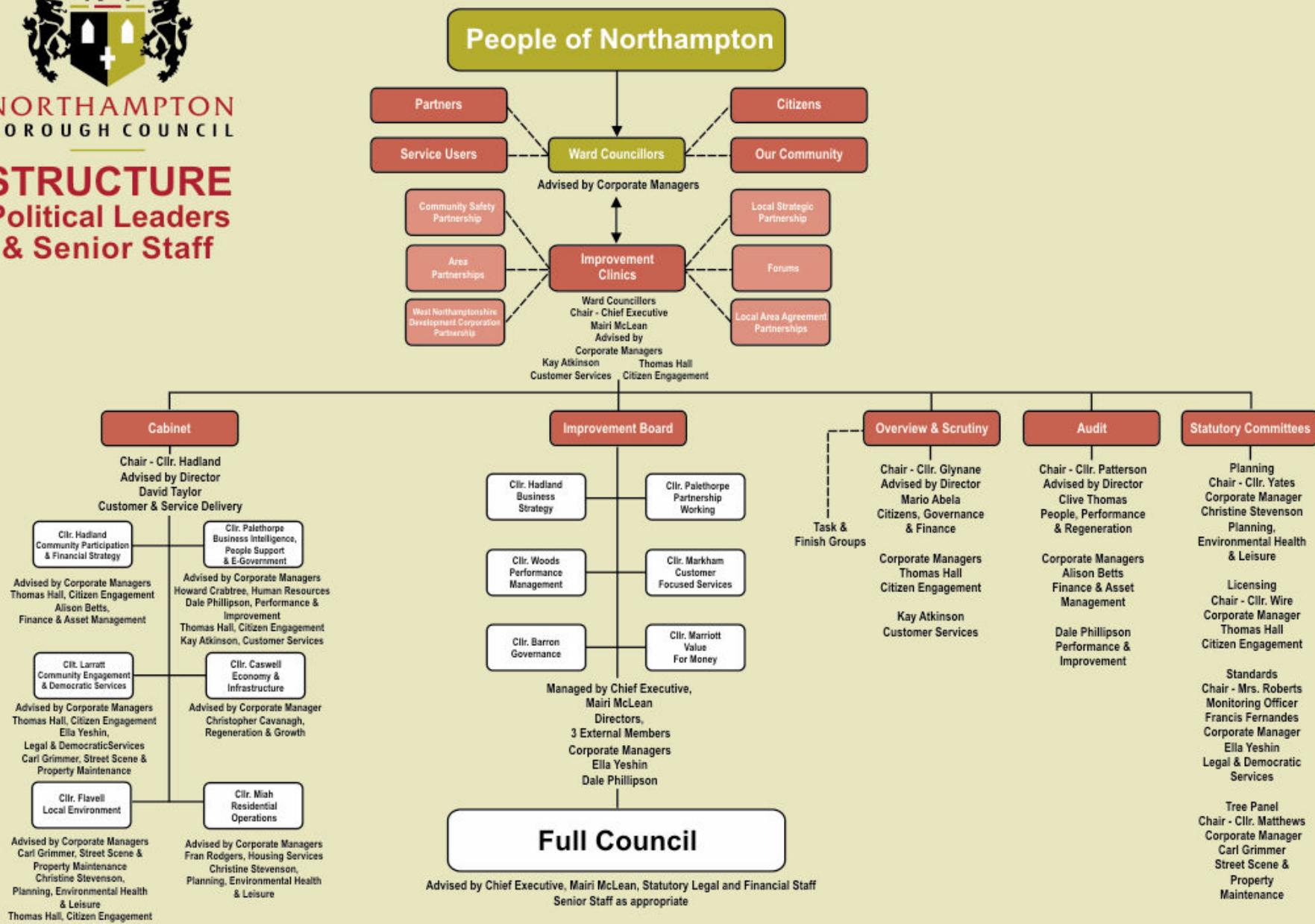
The following diagram shows the governance structure for the Council.....



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRUCTURE

Political Leaders & Senior Staff



How will we deliver our plan

The behaviours below set out how people will act to make our values real, which in turn will help the Council to achieve its vision. The attitudes and activities set a new standard for all our Councillors and employees and show what we expect to see happening every day.

How we will treat our citizens and partners

All local people, customers, partners and other stakeholders of Northampton and Northampton Borough Council will be treated with respect as described below:

Councillors and employees will...

- Be courteous, polite and treat each other with respect
- Treat each other as individuals with individual needs
- Be easy to speak to and be easy to understand
- Be prepared to change our approach to work well together
- Work collaboratively with partners in the best interests of the people of Northampton

Managers' and employees' responsibilities

All employees have an equally valuable part to play in making the Council a success. Employees are accountable and responsible for meeting the Council's standards and providing good, value for money services. Therefore all employees will be given the opportunity to understand what is expected of them.

Managers will....

- Make sure employees are clear about what is expected of them
- Respect employees' individual contribution
- Be approachable, motivating and supportive
- Treat everyone in a fair and even-handed manner
- Act on information and play an active role
- Communicate and feed back

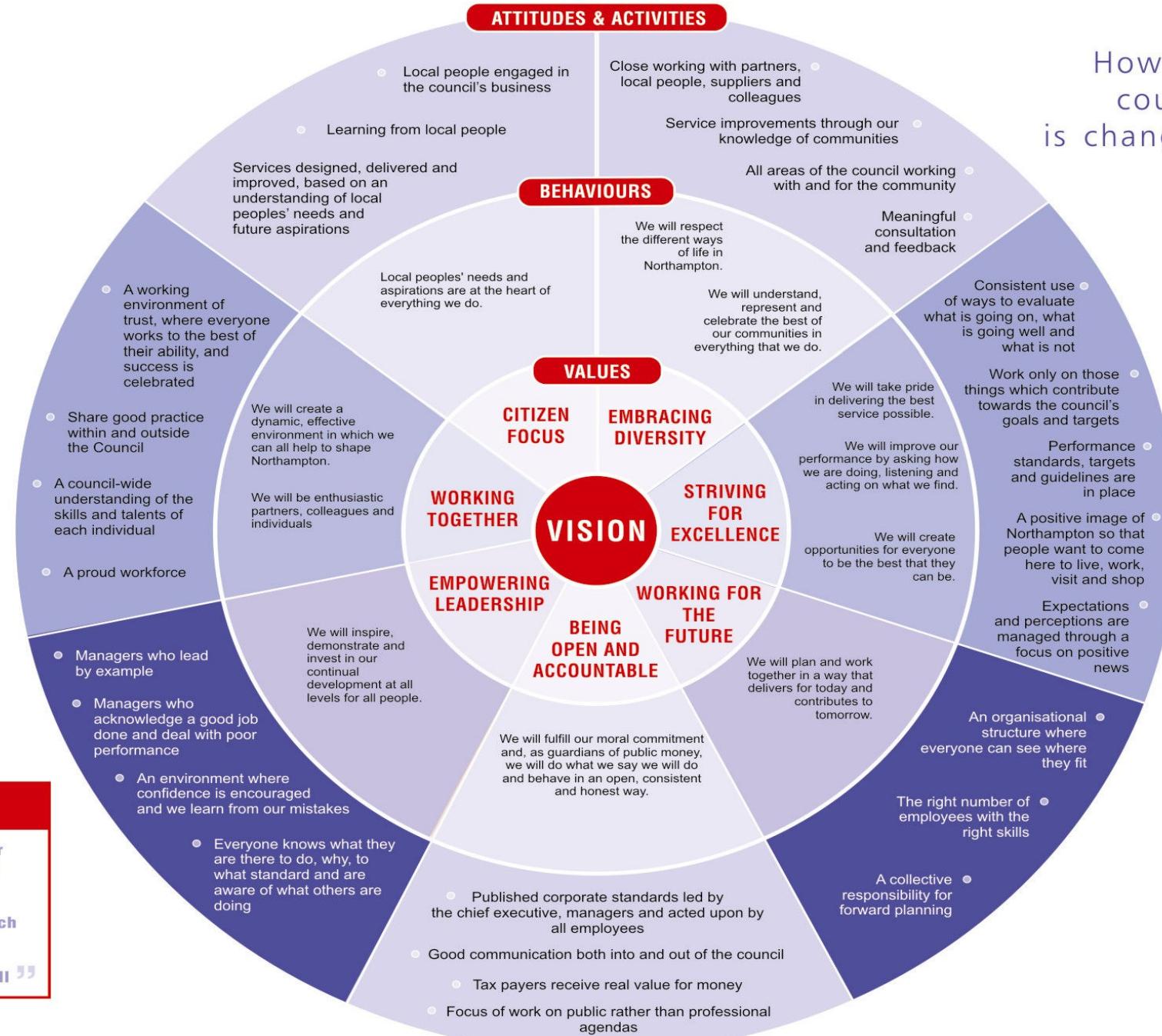
Employees will...

- Show commitment and personal responsibility for what they do
- Understand the need to prioritise and meet deadlines
- Work together and use initiative to solve problems and help improve services
- Work co-operatively as one organisation
- Have performance and development meetings with their manager
- Be invited to and expected to attend regular team meetings
- Be offered training and development to enable them to reach their full potential

These changes will make a difference to the way we treat local people, customers, partners and other stakeholders and to the quality of the service we offer.



How the council is changing



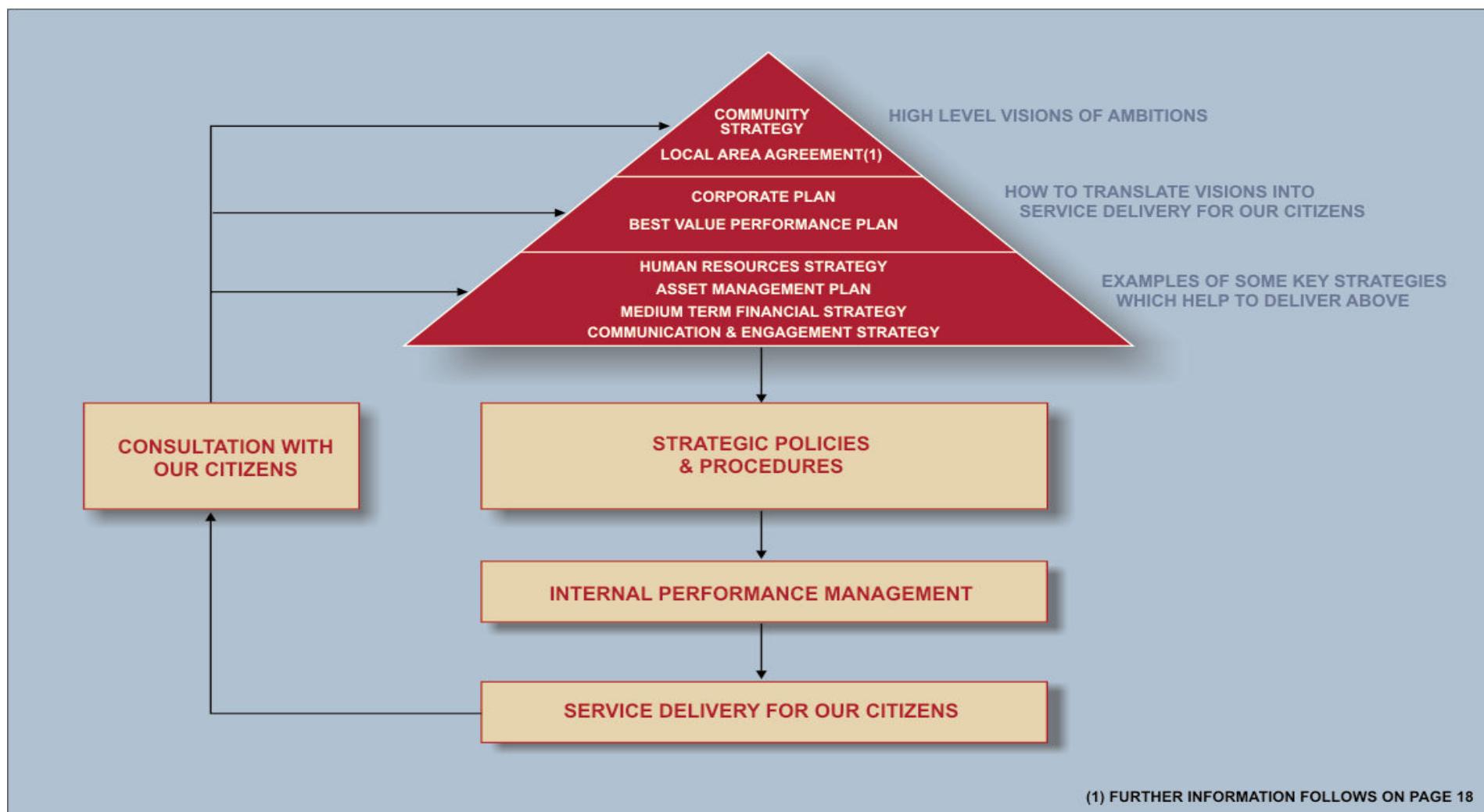
OUR VISION

We will work with, and, for the people of Northampton to build an increasingly prosperous, healthy, safe and attractive town of which we are all proud. We will strive to maximise and sustain opportunities for all

How the Corporate Plan Fits with other Plans

The Corporate Plan does not exist in isolation but is part of a bigger framework, working with other plans to make sure that we all focus our efforts on achieving the vision for the future of the town.

The Corporate Plan is central to our performance management framework, translating our ambitions into priorities, targets and actions, so that we all understand how we contribute to what the Council is trying to achieve.



Our new way of working with others for you is called the Northamptonshire Local Area Agreement

Local Area Agreements (LAAs) are a central government initiative. The agreements are between public and voluntary sector which provide public services in an area. The agreement is about joint working to improve the quality of life for local people.

The Northamptonshire LAA is made up of four ‘blocks’:

- Children & Young People
- Safer & Stronger Communities
- Healthier Communities & Older People
- Economic Development, Growth and Enterprise

For each of the above ‘blocks’ there are a number of outcomes. These are as follows:

Safer and Stronger Communities Block –

- To significantly improve the quality of life for people living in the most disadvantaged (rural and urban) areas by developing and implementing neighbourhood approaches through the neighbourhood renewal strategy target areas
- To reduce crime, increase public confidence and reduce the fear of crime, reduce the harm of drug, substance and alcohol abuse and reduce the impact of anti-social behaviour
- To reduce the number of avoidable injuries
- To strengthen communities by supporting development of the Voluntary and Community Sector, giving people a greater voice and influence over decision making and developing cohesive communities
- To create cleaner, safer and greener communities

Economic Development, Enterprise and Growth Block –

- To increase skill levels in the labour market to ensure that labour supply is inclusive and meets the needs of the county's employers both now and in the future
- To promote growth in the number of enterprises in Northamptonshire, with a specific focus on knowledge economy employers, and maximise the benefits of their growth all, but particularly for excluded communities
- To increase the affordability, supply, quality and condition of housing in Northamptonshire
- To increase the accessibility of communities to meet their needs and maximise their opportunities

Children and Young People Block –

- To ensure children and young people achieve healthy life-styles by avoiding obesity, substance misuse and unplanned teenage pregnancy
- To ensure children and young people enjoy improved mental health through high quality services
- To provide a safe environment for children and young people by better multi- agency services supporting families
- To improve the life-chances for a) children with disabilities b) looked after children
- To improve educational attainment and enjoyment (including increased access to recreation and leisure)
- To improve attendance, raise levels of behaviour and reduce incidences of bullying
- To overcome social, accommodation and economic disadvantage for children and young people through collaborative service approaches
- To increase the proportion of young people accessing education, employment, training or volunteering post-16
- To increase opportunities for children and young people to influence the way services are provided
- To reduce the number of children and young people affected by offending and victimisation

Healthier Communities and Older People Block –

- Supporting independent living for Older People
- Increasing the quality of life and reducing social isolation for Older People
- Reducing health inequalities for the population of Northamptonshire
- Improving the health of the population of Northamptonshire
- Reduce poverty and the effects of poverty in Northamptonshire by supporting people to maximise their income through benefits and debt management

The partners of the LAA include Northampton Borough Council, district and county councils, the police, the health authority and the voluntary sector.

The priorities, activities, outcomes and targets have been set to ensure that we make our contribution towards the above outcomes.

Customer Feedback:

We want to hear from you whether we have got it right or wrong so we can improve services.

If you make a complaint we will take it seriously and investigate the matter quickly and fairly. We will monitor information about the type of complaints we receive and use this to make sure we improve the service. We would also like to hear from you when we get things right. We can use this information to help us get it right in other areas.

Where to go first..... If you want to complain about something that we have or have not done, the first step is to contact the department concerned. You can tell them what the problem is over the phone, or you can fill in one of our complaint forms. The form is called "*Something to tell us?*" and copies are available on the Council's website; www.northampton.gov.uk or from any Council office. Each service area is responsible for investigating your complaint in a fair, thorough and even-handed way. We hope that your complaint will be successfully resolved this stage.

What to do next..... You should hear about your complaint within 10 working days. You can take the matter further until you feel the issue has been resolved. Here is how you can do this:

- You have the right to have your complaint looked at by an independent person. You can do this by writing to one of the Council's Corporate Managers. They will look into the issue and get back to you in writing within 10 working days
- If you are not happy with what the Corporate Manager has to say, you can bring your concerns to the Chief Executive, Mrs Mairi McLean. You can contact her by e-mail on cetc@northampton.gov.uk, or you can write to her at the Guildhall, St Giles Square, Northampton NN1 1DE. You can also contact her by telephone on (01604) 837726.
- If you would like your local Councillor to look into the matter please contact them directly. To find out who your local Councillor is, you can phone (01604) 837100 or look on the Council's website.
- If you are still not satisfied you can contact the Local Government Ombudsman, who is independent of Northampton Borough Council, on:

The Oaks No2
Westwood Way
Westwood Business Park
COVENTRY
CV4 8JB