



NHDC SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN 2018/19

APPROVED BY	Status	Date
Senior Management Team (SMT)	Final	17.4.18

Process
<p>27/2/18 – SMT considers draft Service Delivery Plan, service area delivery plan and assurance questionnaire results and agrees relevant content for draft Service Delivery Plan</p> <p>21/3/18 – SMG completes SWOT/PESTLE analysis of the Council corporately</p> <p>27/3/18 – SMT considers service area Action Plans and SWOT/PESTLE results and agrees relevant content for draft Service Delivery Plan</p> <p>17/4/18 – SMT approve final Service Delivery Plan for 2018/19</p> <p>Week commencing 23/4/18 - Service Delivery Plan uploaded to website/intranet and communicated to staff and members</p> <p>The Service Delivery Plan covers a four year period, is updated annually and is reviewed by SMT at least every six months.</p> <p>The Service Delivery Plan will be uploaded onto the NHDC website and the Intranet. A global email will be sent to all staff to let them know where to find it. An MIS note will be sent to all Members.</p> <p>Following this, an article will be published in Insight (the staff newsletter) with a summary of key achievements in 2017/18 and key projects for 2018/19. The relevant service delivery action plans will be used by service managers to set tasks and objectives in teams' Regular Performance Reviews. Key project updates should then form part of regular face to face all staff briefings, which are planned to be put in place this year.</p> <p>When the Service Delivery Plan is uploaded onto the website, social media posts will be sent out to let people know where to find it. Following this, an Annual Review article will be put in Outlook magazine in November 2018. This will include details of the Council's performance in 2017/18 and a look to current projects and priorities.</p> <p>Executive Members and Shadow Executive Members will be briefed on the relevant service delivery action plans by the appropriate Service Director.</p> <p>Next review due: no later than SMT 23/10/18</p>



SECTION 1 – CONTEXT AND OVERVIEW

A. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This is the Service Delivery Plan for NHDC for 2018/19. It has been written taking into account the four year vision for the Council. It describes how objectives will be achieved within a robust monitoring framework and in the context of the Corporate Plan (see <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/council-data-and-performance/corporate-objectives>) and Medium Term Financial Strategy (see <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/council-performance-and-data/budgets-and-spending/medium-term-financial-strategy>)

The Plan is divided into the following sections:

- Section 1: Context, Overview and Vision
- Section 2: Service Assurance Statement
- Section 3: Service Area Action Plans

B. VISION FOR OUR SERVICES

The Senior Management Team will ensure that the Council continues to meet its statutory obligations in supporting the Council's decision-making and governance structures and promote openness and transparency, as well as providing a professional, customer-focused service. It will also continue to respond to and implement any relevant legislative changes and ensure that these are reflected in the authority's Constitution, policies, processes and procedures.

Our vision is to provide high quality customer facing services which directly affect the communities in which we live, work and prosper.

North Hertfordshire is set to grow over the next few years, with the proposed Local Plan for the District creating an additional 16,000 homes and 6,000 jobs. With our responsibilities as the Local Planning Authority we need to guide the future development for the District and increase the economic viability of our area, through planning briefs, town centre strategies and guiding the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans. With this growing population and the continuing needs of our existing community it will be imperative to improve and initiate new methods of Community Engagement using a wider range of approaches and techniques, including identifying and engaging with groups we do not currently reach. In recent years, we have seen a marked shift in how residents communicate and interact with the Council, with visitor numbers to both the website and our social media channels constantly increasing. Against this backdrop the ongoing Channel Shift project remains critical to our future service, enabling customers to self serve where appropriate, releasing resources to deal with more complex enquiries and increased / new demand.

This Channel Shift with our customers is also reflected in how we need to work as an organisation. With the return to the District Council Offices and greater open plan working it is important that services work as paper-light as possible. Additionally our aim is for support services that allow self-service for colleagues where possible, but are backed up by professional solutions focused support where required.



C. FOUR YEAR VIEW – KEY ACTIVIES AND PROJECTS

Each service area is required to produce a Service Area Action Plan identifying their activities and projects for the forthcoming period. These Service Area Action Plans are appended in section 3 of this Service Delivery Plan. Some of the key activities and projects within those Action Plans are set out below:-

2018/19

- Embed new senior management structure and review structures of new service director areas;
- Talent/succession planning and leadership development;
- Consider approaches to staff communication;
- Develop and deliver Gender Pay Gap Action plan;
- Apprentices Scheme changes to align with new regulations;
- Consultation on Main Modifications of the Local Plan 2011-31;
- Local Plan post 2031, including new settlement work (will continue into subsequent years);
- Facilitating neighbourhood planning;
- Representing the best interests of the Council, particularly in relation to strategic planning (will continue into subsequent years);
- Implement Mod.gov to facilitate paperless committee reports and internal management meetings;
- Embed shared waste client team with East Herts District Council, new waste collection contractor and new recycling contractor;
- Implement agreed Green Space Management Strategy and action plan;
- Early closure of accounts (by 31 May);
- Implementation of General Data Protection Regulations;
- Migration to Universal Credit Full Service;
- Production of a new Housing Strategy (including Homelessness Strategy and Tenancy Strategy);
- Delivery of a cost effective and efficient response to the Homelessness Reduction Act;
- Establish whether there is an investment opportunity in the regeneration of the Churchgate Shopping Centre, Hitchin;
- Determine future management of Hitchin Market;
- Establish companies for letting and developing housing;
- Resolve remaining issues with Hitchin Town Hall, complete the fit out and fully open the facility;
- Consider options for Royston Leisure Centre Development;
- Development of Wilbury Hills Crematorium (will continue into subsequent years);
- Explore commercial opportunities associated the growing assistive technology market both locally and regionally;
- Explore opportunities for improved resilience flowing from collaboration with other Hertfordshire councils re environmental health services;
- Review Communications Strategy and develop new 5 year Strategy 2019-23;
- Review approach to community engagement;
- Review major grant contracts with partner agencies and pursue quantifiable arrangements within any future sustainable relationships;



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Improvement Districts Re-Ballot; • Develop funding streams for Active Communities projects and increase number of participants; • Development of channel shift programme including web chat and self scanning options in Customer Services Centre; • Completion of Annual Governance Statement; • Cyber Security / Threats.
2019/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption and implementation of the Local Plan 2011-31, including corporate approach to development and planning applications; • Consideration of Community Infrastructure Levy; • Support Planning in engaging the local communities on the outcomes emerging from the Local Plan and ensure resources and contributions are utilised effectively; • Development of Universal Credit Full Service; • Disposal of surplus assets for best consideration to generate capital receipts (ongoing); • Respond to consultations and determine the impact of any changes in Local Government funding mechanisms; • Ensure Museum Storage requirements addressed; • Whistleblowing policy and procedure review; • Review and update Climate Change Strategy in line with central government 25 year strategy as appropriate; • Review function of Local Strategic Partnership to effectiveness and remit.
2020/21 and 2021/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migration of Working Age Housing Benefit Caseload to DWP; • Implementation of the Local Plan 2011-31; • Review of Councillor Code of Conduct, Guide, complaints handling arrangements and declaration/register of interests; • Prepare to adapt to the consequences of the Parliamentary Boundary Review.

D. DESCRIPTION OF OUR SERVICES

The Senior Management Team strives to manage an effective, efficient, open and transparent workforce, which meets statutory requirements and enables the Council to deliver quality services to its residents.

The Council delivers a wide range of statutory services, for example routine waste collection, recycling, street cleansing, food inspection, collecting Council Tax and Non-domestic (business) rates, finding temporary and permanent homes for residents, emergency planning etc. We provide regulatory services making decisions on matters affecting the community as the Local Planning Authority, Licensing Authority and Housing Authority and seek to protect the community from a range of environmental, occupational and public health risks. In addition the Council delivers a number of discretionary services ie those we choose to do rather than those we have a legal requirement to deliver. Examples include operating our parks, supporting vulnerable people through the use of assistive technology, supporting the voluntary and charitable sector through advice and grant funding, leisure centres and a District Wide Museum.



These front line services are supported by other services such as legal, finance, IT and HR which enable our teams to deliver services to the community. We ensure there is safeguarding support across the organisation to ensure the Council meets its legal obligations to safeguard children and adults at risk. We source, analyse and internally promote information and research to identify economic, equality and environmental needs of North Hertfordshire communities and ensure our policies and strategies are targeted to those needs.

Services may not always be delivered by North Hertfordshire District Council alone, but increasingly in a partnership or alternative delivery models. Key partners include those in partner authorities and other Councils across the country, Urbaser (waste contract), John O'Connor (grounds maintenance contract), North Hertfordshire Homes, Countryside Management Service and Groundwork. We work to support local, County wide and wider partnerships that seek to improve the wellbeing of our local community eg through the North Herts Health and Wellbeing Partnership and Hertfordshire Public Health Board. Other key partners in the operation of the Council include County Councillors, District Councillors, Parish Councillors, local Members of Parliament, the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, the Local Government Association, the East of England Local Government Association, the Local Government Ombudsman, housing associations, North Herts Centre for Voluntary Service, Citizens Advice North Hertfordshire, North Herts Minority Ethnic Forum, Youth Connexion Herts, Business Improvement Districts, Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation, the Police, Herts Young Homeless and the Stevenage Haven.

As part of our service we need to manage a proactive programme of communications activity across a range of channels which ensures the good work of the Council is promoted and improve resident satisfaction with the Council by ensuring they feel well informed about its work.

Effective performance management requires performance information that is robust and accurate. The use of Pentana Performance ensures that the Council applies a corporate approach to the production and use of high quality data. Performance against KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) is reported on a quarterly basis to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

E. FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The Council's budget for 2018/19 was set by Full Council at £14.7 million, which is £1.7 million less than 2017/18. The current forecast is that the budget will need to be £15.1 million by 2021/22. Whilst this is higher than the 2018/19 budget, this needs to absorb inflation and investments over that period. This means that the Council needs to deliver £3.6 million of annual savings/ income generation by 2021/22, of which £400k still has not even been identified. This assumes that there are no significant changes to the level of funding that the Council receives. It seems likely that there will be further reductions in Central Government funding from changes to New Homes Bonus, Fair Funding review and increased Business Rates retention. So overall we need to be in a position to:

- Deliver savings that have already been identified
- Identify and deliver at least a further £400k of savings/ income generation by 2021/22
- Continue to explore new ways of delivering services and commercialisation opportunities, which can be implemented ahead of any forecast changes in funding



- Ensure we remain able to respond to changing financial pressures such as the implementation and adoption costs of the Local Plan

Full Council agreed a capital programme for 2018/22 of £17.1 million. In delivering this the Council will use up the remainder of its set-aside receipts and have to sell a number of surplus land sites for use as housing. This means that any future or additional capital investment will need to be funded by borrowing. This has a significant revenue impact from borrowing costs and a minimum revenue provision. So overall we will need to:

- Keep the existing capital programme under review to ensure that the projects provide value for money
- Develop and assess business cases for all discretionary capital spend, using the assumption that it needs to be funded from borrowing
- Generate new capital receipts

F. STAFFING OVERVIEW

The Senior Management Team structure announced in April 2018 consists of the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and six Service Directors responsible for Resources, Regulatory, Place, Customers, Commercial and Legal and Community.

At the time of writing this Service Delivery Plan the Senior Management restructure is being finalised, with the new structure commencing on 1 June 2018. The Service Directors will be empowered to undertake any subsequent structural changes within their areas to ensure future business resilience.

The Council's staffing structure contains the equivalent of 312 FTE (Full Time Employees). At the time of finalising this Service Delivery Plan the Council employs 320 people, equivalent to 278 FTE meaning there are vacancies totalling 34 FTE.

Further information on the Council's staffing structure can be obtained from the Pay Policy Statement (see <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/council-data-and-performance/duties-and-allowances-senior-managers>)

The analysis conducted by the Senior Management Group identified the Council's staff as one of our key strengths and this should be recognised. The quality of our staff has enabled us to respond to the changing pressures facing local government, whilst continuing to provide quality services to our community. We need to continue to work on delivering our workforce strategy to develop our staff and ensure a resilient and flexible workforce, supported by a strong approach to recruitment and retention of staff, succession planning and supporting the management of absence, health and wellbeing. Our response to the Council's gender pay gap analysis (see <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/council-data-and-performance/policies/workforce-profile>) highlights our commitment to providing opportunities for all staff regardless of gender, age or ethnicity. Where we have a gender pay gap in senior management roles, we have plans in place to implement more leadership development and succession planning to support women considering those roles. The Senior Management Team recognise that the financial pressures on local government has meant that pay in some areas of our work is not competitive with other employers, therefore we will continue to review pay structures.



The Council has successfully operated an apprenticeship scheme for a number of years and is now seeking to expand the scope of that scheme in order to deliver at least eight apprentice starts over a rolling twelve month period, including expanding the scheme to include higher apprentices. In particular higher apprentices will be considered where we have difficulty recruiting or retaining in specialist professional roles, where use of apprenticeships can help the Council in “growing our own” staff with specialist skills.

Our most recent assessment by Investors In People included recommendations on staff communication and leadership development, points which are reflected in the actions set out in this Service Delivery Plan.

G. LOOKING BACK

Achievements for 2017/18 include:

- Successful completion of the refurbishment of the District Council Offices, delivered by contractor on time and on budget;
- Re-letting of waste collection contract with expected significant savings to the Council's budget
- Extension and refurbishment of North Herts Leisure Centre, including new learners' swimming pool;
- Submission and examination of Local Plan;
- First neighbourhood plan to a referendum;
- Establishment of Building Control company with 6 other Hertfordshire Authorities;
- 'Behind the Scenes' tours of the Districtwide Museum since August 2017, with the museum ground floor galleries opened to visitors in October 2017;
- Wide range of events and activities at Hitchin Town Hall;
- Implementation of e-Citizen Benefits;
- Implementation of e-Billing & SMS Texting;
- Successful Volunteer Achievement Awards attracting business sponsorship and promoting both volunteering and NHDC in a positive way;
- Provided physical activity opportunities for people of all ages, exceeding targets set for both individual unique participants and total attendance through the Get Active North Herts programme;
- Delivered five projects tackling social isolation and improving nutritional intake in older people through the Meet and Eat project. The success of this project has resulted in significant expansion opportunities during 2018/19;
- Working with partners, a Home Improvement Agency has been created to assist vulnerable persons to live independently;
- Undertaken 16 successful prosecutions for the Council, including a range of prosecutions of those that endanger the public or cause environmental harm;
- Reviewed the Member Complaints Handling Procedure, produced a Guide to the Code of Conduct, amended the Councillors' Code of Conduct and provided Councillor training.

Areas identified for development, including through scrutiny, audit and assurance processes include:



- We need to consider how we engage with our communities and how we communicate with our communities, including considering different methods to our current approaches;
- We need to continue to ensure that our project management processes remain robust and properly resourced in order to ensure they are successfully delivered. We also need to continue to ensure we set realistic budgets and timelines at the outset of projects, taking into account the capacity of the Council to deliver the project, and clearly communicate any reasons for changes
- We need to continue to develop our commercialisation work, identifying and delivering new sources of income for the Council;
- We must deliver the savings that have already been identified through the budget setting process and identify and deliver at least a further £400k of savings/ income generation by 2021/22;
- We need to continue our Channel Shift project, ensuring our resources are best deployed for maximum effect;
- The action areas identified in the Assurance Statement in section two need to be addressed;
- The matters identified on the Annual Governance Statement Action Plan.

H. OVERVIEW OF KEY RISKS

The Council has a Risk and Opportunities Management Strategy and Policy that ensures it identifies, assesses, manages, reviews and reports its risks.

Each Service Director and/or Service Manager will identify and assess the risks relating to service delivery or the Council's objectives. Officers then record these on the Council's Risk Register on Pentana Performance (the Council's performance and risk management software).

The Council calls its strategic risks 'Corporate Risks' and officers report these on a quarterly basis to the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee. Officers also present an annual report on risk management to Full Council.

The Council's approach to Risk, including the Risk and Opportunities Management Strategy 2017-20, is set out on the Council's website (see <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/council-data-and-performance/performance-and-risk-management>)

The key threats identified by the Senior Management Group's analysis include budget cuts and loss of staff, with an ageing population (and workforce) and the perceived lack of engagement/consultation with the community. Opportunities identified included staff development, joint working, commercialisation, technological improvements to facilitate smarter working and the use of social media.

I. COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION

The latest District Wide Survey, carried out in Autumn 2017, shows that overall the Council is performing well, with 95% of residents satisfied with the area as a place to live and 75% of



residents satisfied with the way the Council runs things. While the latter measure has seen a drop in satisfaction of 7 percentage points since 2015, it is still well above the LGA national Benchmark of 65%. It is acknowledged that maintaining or improving levels of service and mitigating impacts on our community whilst budgets continue to have to be reduced is a challenge, however this should not be used as a reason to accept falling levels of satisfaction and the Council needs to try to address this.

In general, satisfaction with services remains very high, with around 90% of residents satisfied with parks and open spaces, leisure facilities, playgrounds or multi-use games areas and Careline's community alarm service.

There were, however, some common themes that require further consideration. Of particular note were findings that only 41% of people agree that NHDC fully involves / consults residents on important issues, with 32% disagreeing with that statement. Similarly, only 46% agree that NHDC is involved and engages with the community, and only 35% of residents agree that NHDC makes an effort to find out what local people want.

A further theme for consideration is how well informed people are about the Council. Only around four in ten residents feel informed about how to get involved in local decision making (39%), what the Council spends its money on (39%) and how well the Council is performing (41%). All of these indicators have seen significant drops since the 2015 survey. Conversely, over 80% of residents expressed an interest in being informed about what the Council spends its money on and how well the Council is performing.

Following consideration of the survey results by SMT, it was agreed that an action plan would be created which specifically considers the effectiveness of corporate consultation exercises. In particular, consideration will be given to how we might utilise the Council's Citizens Panel more regularly to encourage engagement with consultation exercises. How results of consultation exercises are publicised will also be considered.

The issues of how well informed people feel about the Council are also being addressed by the creation of new channels of communication in 2018/19, including a new e-alerts / e-newsletter system that people can subscribe to and the creation of a digital magazine, which will be promoted on social media. The Council's Communications Strategy is also to be reviewed this year and these issues will be considered as part of that review.

With regards staff engagement, a staff survey will be carried out later this year. It is being timed for the Autumn when the senior management restructure will have been fully implemented and staff will have had chance to adjust to the newly refurbished Council offices. An action plan will be created to address any issues that arise as a result.



SECTION 2 – SMT SERVICE ASSURANCE STATEMENT

The following Service Assurance Statement has been completed for the period 2017-18 and is based on information provided by Heads of Service/Corporate Managers. Retrospective for the past financial year, it represents an assessment of the level of assurance provided by controls within the Council. These controls have been in place / were implemented during the financial year and remain in place at the date of preparation of this statement.

Overall Assessment

We are satisfied that with the exception of those matters detailed in the Action column below, adequate systems of internal control were in place / implemented during the financial year and are on-going. We consider the overall level of assurance for the Council based on the areas covered by this assessment to be:

- Effective

Action Areas

Governance Area	Action	Priority	Due date	Responsible officer
Safeguarding	Ensure staff book onto and attend required safeguarding training	Medium	End October 2018	All Service Directors
	Ensure Job Descriptions and Regular Performance Reviews meet requirements of adult safeguarding audit	Medium	End July 2018	
Staffing	Ensure resilience for roles which are specialist in nature	Medium	31 December 2018	All Service Directors
Project management	Ensure sufficient resources allocated to enable timely and successful delivery of projects	Medium	Project Initiation Document sign-off	Project Executive
Information governance	Ensure Council complies with General Data Protection Regulation requirements	High	25 May 2018	Head of Revenues, Benefits and IT
	Ensure Council complies with Law Enforcement Directive requirements	High	25 May 2018	
Managing and monitoring delivery of partnerships	Ensure robust governance arrangements for any new partnerships and work with existing partners to improve governance arrangements as required, for example Building Control Company, Home Improvement Agency, CCTV partnership, joint waste contract and Herts Waste Partnership.	Medium	31 December 2018	Relevant Service Directors
Business continuity plans	Develop with Herts Waste Partnership and East Herts DC business continuity plans that are robust in the event of waste service failure, in particular with regard to waste depots	Medium	31 December 2018	Head of Leisure and Environmental Services

We have prioritised the actions identified above as follows:

High:	Action requiring implementation as soon as possible
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Medium:	Action requiring implementation within 6 months
Low:	Action requiring implementation within 6 to 12 months

We take responsibility for ensuring that the above outlined actions are implemented and will, if requested, provide progress monitoring information to the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.

APPROVED BY	Status	Date
Senior Management Team	Final	17/4/18

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SECTION 3 – SERVICE AREA ACTION PLANS