

NORTH SOMERSET CORPORATE PLAN 2015-19



Foreword by Councillor Nigel Ashton, Leader

This Plan is about making North Somerset an even better place by enabling people, businesses and communities to flourish.

To do that we need to promote growth without compromising the things that we, and our millions of visitors, love about North Somerset: our beautiful countryside, stunning coast and distinctive towns and villages, each with their own unique character. Only a modern, efficient council providing a strong voice for the area can achieve this.

The last few years have been hugely challenging, with year on year reductions in central government funding against a backdrop of rising demand for essential services like care for older people. I am very proud of the way we have risen to these challenges, maintaining satisfaction with services and continuing to perform well, whilst making significant savings. A huge thank you to our staff, partners and contractors for making that happen.

The next few years will be just as a challenging. Government funding continues to reduce while the population of North

Somerset is expected to increase. Technology is changing fast and people want instant access services on their smart phone or tablet.

Future success will depend upon a thriving local economy, both to provide the jobs which are essential to wellbeing, but also to generate the income the council needs to sustain vital services. That requires a highly skilled workforce able to compete in a globalised economy and the right transport and communications

infrastructure. Devolution presents new opportunities but we must get the best deal for the people of North Somerset in any new arrangements for the West of England.

Let's not forget the opportunities. We have a wonderful location, with great connections to the rest of the country, and indeed the world, through Bristol Airport and the Royal Portbury docks.

Banksy's Dismaland showed that North Somerset can host world class cultural events The West of England region is one of the most dynamic in the UK, and the only region outside the South East which makes a net contribution to the Treasury. We have many superb schools and an exciting opportunity, working with Weston College, to bring a university centre to North Somerset.

The Corporate Plan is a tool to help unlock the opportunities and meet the challenges ahead. It does that by focussing on those things which will make the biggest difference. We need to prioritise because we can't afford to do everything we would like to do, and trying to do everything at once is a recipe for failure.

The Plan sets out our vision for the area, and the specific projects and initiatives which will help us to make that vision a reality, and it identifies the type of organisation we need to be to deliver modern, efficient services and a strong voice for North Somerset.

This will only be possible thanks to the passion and commitment of our staff and our public and private sector partners. With your help I am confident that we will deliver for North Somerset.

About this Plan

The Corporate Plan is the Council's overarching strategy, setting out our vision and ambitions for the area and the outcomes we want to achieve for local people.

We can't achieve these ambitions on our own but we do have a unique role as the only organisation with the democratic mandate, breadth of responsibilities and focus on the whole district, to lead 'place shaping'.

Previous Corporate Plans have tended to capture everything of importance that the Council is doing. Given the enormous breadth of responsibilities of a unitary local authority the result can be a long list of commitments which do not genuinely prioritise effort or resources.

This plan aims to focus on a smaller number of priorities where we want to achieve a real shift – in ambition, profile or performance – over the next four years. The plan also aims to be concrete and practical by identifying the specific projects, initiatives and performance measures which will achieve the ambitions. Some of these are focused outwards on the outcomes we want for the area, while others are about the internal changes needed for the Council to be able to deliver these outcomes.

This plan will help us to get the balance right between change projects and 'business as usual'. Change projects tend to get attention but what really matters is the quality of service which we provide to local people every day. Delivering our key projects and

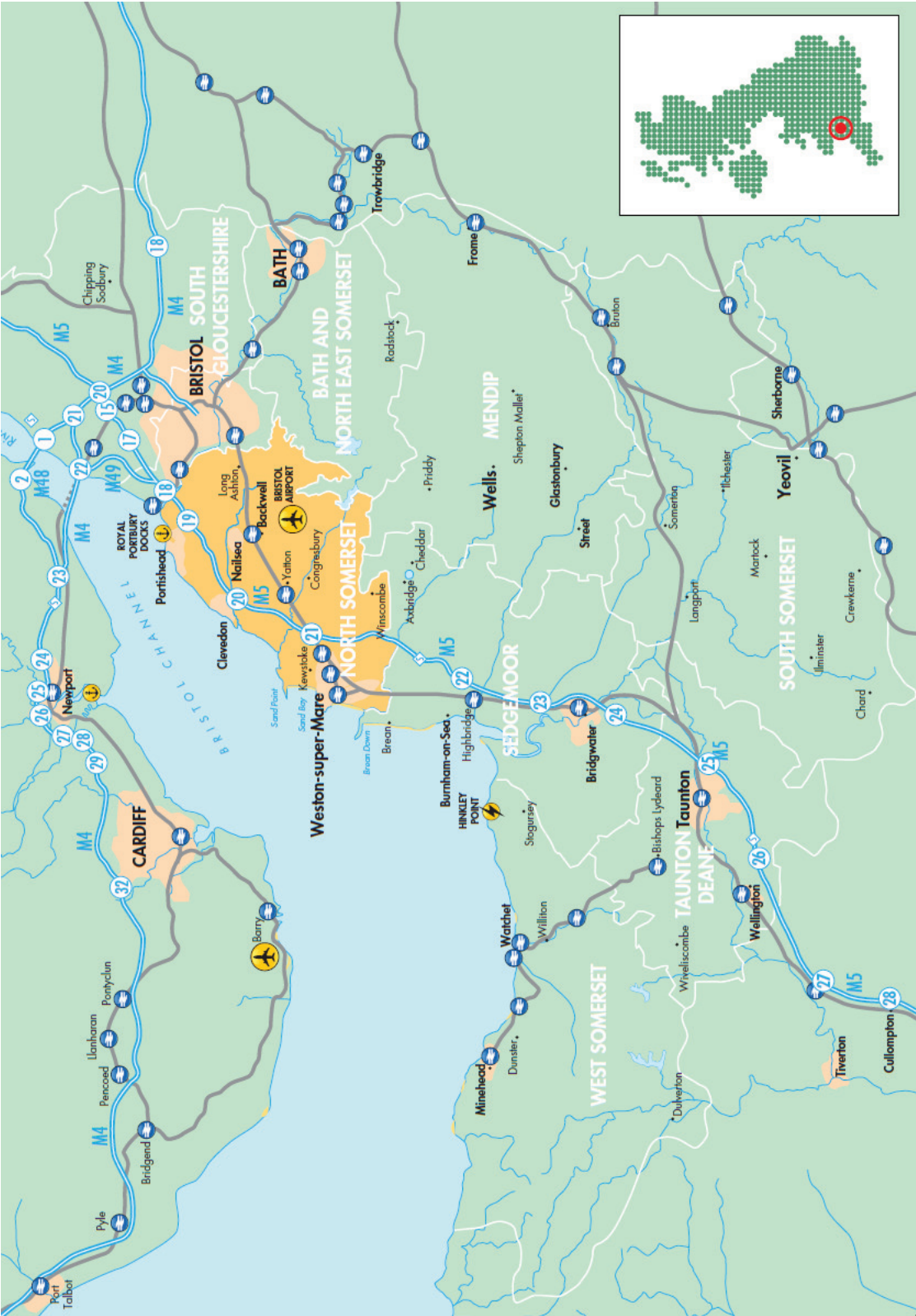
initiatives will help us to do the everyday things better and ensure that we have the resources to do it.

The Corporate Plan is a vital tool to help align effort across the organisation and ensure that we are all pulling in the same direction. It does this by communicating the vision and priorities and providing the framework for service, team and individual planning, and performance management. A 'golden thread' should run through from the Corporate Plan to each member of staff's objectives.

The Plan also helps to inform other key strategies and plans, whether Council documents or those of our partners and partnerships. These documents vary widely in purpose, scope, degree of statutory prescription and time horizon. The Corporate Plan does not replace these other documents but it should shape them whenever they are being updated.

Good strategic planning also means aligning financial and service planning. This plan is therefore being developed alongside the refresh of the Medium Term Financial Plan, and both will be signed off together. The financial implications of all the projects and initiatives – one off costs and ongoing revenue costs or savings – have been estimated to ensure that commitments are realistic, and that projects which maximise the Council's resources are prioritised.

North Somerset – strategically placed



Context and baseline

A sound plan rests on good evidence and insight.

It is essential to understand where we are starting from including: the demographic, economic and social characteristics of the area and how these are changing, the views of local people and their needs, the strengths and weaknesses of the Council as an organisation and the likely challenges and opportunities ahead.

A huge amount of information is available from both local and national sources, and this evidence has been reviewed in developing this Plan.

To keep this document concise only the headlines are included here. A separate pack of key facts has been produced [inset link in final document]. Those who want to explore the evidence in real depth may want to look at the [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#) and the [Local Economic Profile](#) or explore the enormous range of data about local areas which is now published on national websites which can be searched and analysed by topic or geographical area. These sources include:

[Office for National Statistics Neighbourhood Statistics](#)

[Nomis - Official Labour Market Statistics](#) ; and

[Public Health England Health Profiles](#)

Population

- The population of North Somerset is projected to grow significantly over the next two decades, from 210, 000 in 2015 to 243,000 by 2031.
- North Somerset's population is expected to grow faster than the national or regional average.
- There is growth at both ends of the age spectrum, so there will be both more older people and more children than at present.
- Increasing population puts pressure on infrastructure such as roads and school places and demand for services, such as social care for both older people and children.

Economy

- Overall North Somerset is a prosperous place, with below average unemployment and above average weekly earnings.
- But there are big differences between areas and individuals: North Somerset is unusual in including areas in both the most and least deprived 1% in England, giving it the third widest range in deprivation scores between neighbourhoods in the country.
- There are over 16,000 employers in North Somerset, mostly small businesses, with the vast majority employing less than 10 people.

- The number of visitors has been increasing, with over 8 million visits to the area in 2014 and visitors spending over £350 million. The vast majority of these are day visitors but 2014 also saw the highest number staying in hotels and guest houses for over a decade.
- There are fewer jobs than workers in North Somerset meaning that many people commute to other areas to work.

Housing

- Following a challenge to the Council's Core Strategy, the housing target for North Somerset has been set at 20,985 new homes between 2006 and 2026.
- There are significant environmental constraints on development: the Green Belt covers 40% of our area, the AONB covers 10% and the floodplain covers 12%.
- The average price of a property in August 2015 was £197,528 or almost seven times average full time earnings
- Over a quarter of private rented homes do not meet the decency threshold.
- In the last 12 months 928 households were added to the HomeChoice register for social housing which was more than double the number of lettings in the same period.

Learning & Skills

- 34% of residents have a qualification at NVQ 4 or above (equivalent to a degree or HND) which is below the average for the South West (36.6%) or Great Britain (36%).

- The proportion of people with qualifications varies widely across North Somerset.
- The proportion of early years providers and schools rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted is high at over 85% and has been increasing.
- North Somerset has outstanding providers at every phase from Early Years through to Further Education.
- Overall outcomes in early years and in the Primary phase are good and generally above the national average.
- Outcomes in the secondary phase are broadly in line with national averages but there are differences in attainment between schools.
- Outcomes in the Further Education phase are well in excess of national average.
- The percentage of young people who are neither 'learning nor earning' is low but the figures are much higher for vulnerable groups such as care leavers.

Health & Wellbeing

- Overall health outcomes are good.
- North Somerset is significantly better than the national average for 14 out of 32 public health indicators and only significantly worse for 2 indicators (skin cancer rates and hospital stays for self harm).
- There are however very big differences in health outcomes between areas.

- The gap in male life expectancy between those wards with the highest and lowest life expectancy is 18.6 years.

Resources & National Policy

- Local Authorities have experienced very significant reductions in Government funding over the past 5 years and this is expected to continue following the spending review.
- North Somerset Council has made £55 million in savings since 2010 to cope with reductions in funding and increases in demand or costs.
- Over 80% of funding is now raised locally through Council Tax, Business rates and New Homes Bonus. By 2020/21 government grant is projected to fall to just 6% of funding for North Somerset Council.
- This makes achieving local economic growth even more important.
- The Government is committed to devolving funding to cities and regions provided they establish new governance arrangements. The Leaders of the West of England region (North Somerset, Bristol, Bath & North East Somerset and

South Gloucestershire Councils) have submitted a bid for devolution and initiated a governance review. The four unitary authorities will continue but new arrangements are proposed for some regional functions such as transport and skills.

Residents' views

The 2014 residents' survey found that:

- Overall satisfaction is high and similar to 2012.
- 64% of residents were 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with Council services overall.
- 40% of residents agree that the Council provides value for money (up from 20% in 2008 and 37% in 2012).
- But 64% were 'very' or 'fairly' dissatisfied with the condition of roads.
- Perceived anti-social behaviour reduced except 'rubbish or litter lying around' which is slightly up.

Our Vision

We have an ambitious vision for the area and for the organisation. This sums up what we want North Somerset to be like and the type of organisation we will need to be to deliver it:-

A great place to live where people, businesses and communities flourish

Modern, efficient services and a strong voice for North Somerset

Being a great place means ensuring three outcomes for the people of North Somerset:

Prosperity & Opportunity

Health & Wellbeing

Quality Places

Our Ambitions for North Somerset

The three outcomes are broad so we have identified specific ambitions for each outcome:-

Prosperity & Opportunity	Health & Wellbeing	Quality Places
• Drive growth in the North Somerset economy and local jobs • Ensure that all our Town Centres are thriving • Enable young people to fulfil their potential • Ensure that all our communities share in prosperity and employment growth	• Enable residents to make healthy choices and promote active lifestyles which reduce ill health and increase independence • Support families to give their children the best start in life • Commission or provide quality health and care services, which deliver dignity, safety and choice	• Enable sustainable housing growth which protects our natural and built environment and the special character of our villages; • Build and sustain great places to live and visit—vibrant, accessible, and safe • Empower people to contribute to their community and communities to provide their own solutions

We also have four ambitions for the council as an organisation. These are 'enablers' which cut across all aspects of the Council's work and which we will need to have in place to deliver on our vision and ambitions for the area:



Making it a reality

To make these ambitions a reality we need to be clear about what we are trying to achieve and set a deliverable and realistic programme of action. For each ambition or enabler we have agreed specific success criteria and projects/initiatives. The latter have been developed in the context of our financial challenge, with priority given to those projects which can help to improve our position, for example by increasing revenue or helping people to help themselves.

Prosperity and Opportunity

Ambition	• Drive growth in the North Somerset economy and local jobs
	• Ensure that all our Town Centres are thriving

Success would be	• More jobs and more businesses in North Somerset • An increasingly skilled workforce which is attractive to employers and well placed to benefit from economic growth • Improved productivity • Higher incomes
	• Clevedon, Nailsea, Portishead and Weston Town centres are lively with few vacant premises and a good balance between retail, leisure, cultural, business and residential uses • The number of visitors and the average spend per visit increase

Projects & Initiatives	• Junction 21 Enterprise Area, including Food and Drink Innovation centre • Transport improvement programme including major schemes • Enhance skills so that local people can benefit from growth and major developments such as Hinkley Point • Future Technology Centre at Weston College
	• Weston Town Centre regeneration programme • Portishead Rail link • Civil Parking Enforcement • Redevelop Scotch Horn in Nailsea as a multi-use community facility • Clevedon coastal community project

Ambition	
• Enable young people to fulfil their potential	• Ensure that all our communities share in prosperity and employment growth

Success would be	
• Young people have better opportunities to fulfil their ambitions and feel engaged and optimistic about their future • Young people gain the skills and qualifications which employers want • Increased opportunities for young people to volunteer	• Prosperity and employment are improving in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. • Increased number of people who are currently furthest from the labour market helped into jobs • Improved transport links and broadband speeds in rural areas

Projects & Initiatives	
• Make Weston-super-Mare a university town, with a university centre for North Somerset, including law and professional services academy at the Winter Gardens • Public Services Academy apprenticeship scheme • Enhance educational opportunities through <i>learning without limits</i>, <i>children's university</i> and improved post 16 opportunities • Encourage young people to volunteer through Voluntary Action North Somerset brokerage service	• Increase employment for those facing the biggest barriers to work through <i>Team North Somerset</i> • Improved transport links, including programme of major transport schemes and <i>Total Transport</i> project • Better Broadband infrastructure

Health & Wellbeing

Ambition	
• Enable residents to make healthy choices and promote active lifestyles which reduce ill health and increase independence	• Support families to give their children the best start in life

Success would be	
• People are eating more healthily, taking more exercise and using harmful substances like alcohol and tobacco less • Health of the population improves	• Outcomes for all children are improving, and improving fastest for those with the greatest risk of poor outcomes

Projects & Initiatives	
• Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy • Evidence based public health interventions • Sustainable and attractive leisure offer for new and existing communities, including a second pool at Hutton Moor • Sustainable transport fund - projects to promote cycling and public transport • North Somerset Coastal cycling route	• Use the new responsibility for commissioning health visiting to better co-ordinate support for pre-school children and their families • Ensure sufficient good quality school places to meet increasing demand • New intensive family preservation service to reduce the need for children to be in care

Ambition
Commission or provide quality health and care services which deliver dignity, safety and choice

Success would be
- People who use health and care services and their families and carers tell us that they are satisfied with the quality, safety, dignity and choice which services provide; - Independent inspection confirms quality

Projects & Initiatives
- Make the most of the new contract for community health services to progress integrated working, including rolling out the remaining integrated teams. - Re-align health and social care resources to match the ambition of the Better Care Fund - Jointly re-commission sexual health and Child & Adolescent Mental Health services with partners in the West of England

Quality Places

Ambition
Enable sustainable housing growth which protects our natural heritage and built environment and the special character of our villages

Success would be
Housing delivery in sustainable locations is significantly increased

Projects & Initiatives
Agree and deliver allocations for strategic growth through Core Strategy and West of England Joint Spatial Plan and Joint Local Transport Plan

Ambition	
• Build and sustain great places to live and visit—vibrant, accessible, and safe	• Empower people to contribute to their community and communities to provide their own solutions

Success would be	
• Quality of life is high in both new and established communities • Crime continues to fall • Transport continues to improve • Resident satisfaction continues to be high	• The local community and voluntary sector is flourishing. • There are more volunteers • Local groups attract funding from a variety of sources enabling them to do more • Communities have greater influence over how their area develops

Projects & Initiatives	
• Ensure that new communities, such as Weston Villages have good infrastructure and services • Make town centres safe and attractive places to go out in the evening or at weekends • Leisure Services Review • Deliver highways asset management plan and investment • Ensure sustainable and cost effective waste service through renewal of contracts	• Review of front facing community services and buildings • Expanded Community Resilience project • Continue to support Parish and neighbourhood plans • Community Infrastructure levy • Promote volunteering & prepare for possible legislation introducing volunteer leave

Enablers

Ambition	
A Transformed Council: modern, innovative and accessible	
Skilled and motivated staff, passionate about making North Somerset even better	
Excellence in Managing Resources Excellence in Managing Resources	

Success would be	
- Residents, customers and staff agree that the Council is modern, innovative and accessible - A step change in the range and quality of the Council's online service offer	
- The Council and its partners can secure the skills needed to deliver quality services - Customers confirm that staff are responsive, knowledgeable and highly motivated	
- The Council delivers its medium term financial plan savings and continues to manage within annual budgets; - Locally generated income is increasing - Capital resources and reserves are used strategically to deliver maximum benefit	

Projects & Initiatives	
- Transformation Programme - Driving growth - One council - Digital First - Delivering together	
- Ambitious and deliverable People Strategy - Reduce reliance on agency staff to fill professional roles	
- Commercial strategy to maximise income - Strategic approach to investment - Review assets across local public sector - Cost and volume approach to adults and children's social care pressures	

Ambition
Strong outcomes focused partnerships

Success would be
- More services are delivered together with partners – both other local authorities and public services in North Somerset- with delivery models becoming more integrated - Increased pooling of budgets with health - Building on existing good relationships with Town and Parish Councils - The best possible deal from devolution for North Somerset is secured

Projects & Initiatives
- West of England collaboration, including delivery of existing City Deal and governance review - Local public sector agreement, working towards a shared platform for public services - Develop strong partnership with local Universities - Joint highways contract - Health and Social care integration

Our Values

How we do things is just as important as *what* we do. A new Values and behaviours framework [insert hyperlink] has therefore been developed alongside this Plan setting out the expectations on all staff about how we treat both our residents and colleagues, and how we go about our work. There are six sets of behaviours covering:

- Being advocates for change
- Working well together
- Putting people first
- Getting things done
- Acting with integrity and behaving responsibly; and
- Demonstrating strong leadership

The behaviours include recognising and valuing diversity in line with the Council's Equality Policy and objectives [insert hyperlink]. As a public body the council has clear responsibilities to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people. Achieving the ambitions in this Plan will help the council to achieve this.

Measuring Progress

Delivering this agenda will not be easy. We will need to monitor progress closely and use this information to focus our resources and address the problems which will inevitably arise. We will measure progress in two ways:

- Monitoring and 'RAG rating' of projects and initiatives, assessing whether they are on budget, on schedule and on track to deliver the expected benefits; and
- A set of performance indicators with targets against which we can quantify progress. These indicators will be the council's new basket of Key Corporate Performance Indicators (replacing the current set).

Work is underway to identify the performance indicators which match best with the ambitions and enablers and to select those which can be reliably measured and easily compared over time and with other organisations and areas. It envisaged that there will be two indicators for each ambition or enabler, giving a basket of 28 indicators. The new list of Key Corporate Performance Indicators will be included in the final draft of this Plan when it goes forward for approval by the Council in February 2016.