

Cabinet

Thursday, 21 December 2023 at 10:30

County Hall, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 7QP

AGENDA

- | | | |
|---|--|----------|
| 1 | Minutes of the last meeting of Cabinet held on 9 November 2023 | 3 - 8 |
| 2 | Apologies for Absence | |
| 3 | Declarations of Interests by Members and Officers:- (see note below) | |
| 4 | Key Decision - Nottinghamshire County Council Data Strategy 2023-28 | 9 - 28 |
| 5 | Nottinghamshire Plan - Annual Delivery Plan Assurance Report (Quarter 2) | 29 - 48 |
| 6 | Annual Budget Survey 2023 - Analysis | 49 - 78 |
| 7 | Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production (STEP) Fusion Project Update | 79 - 84 |
| 8 | Response to the Recommendations from the Scrutiny Review of Education, Health and Care Plans | 85 - 108 |

Notes

- (1) Councillors are advised to contact their Research Officer for details of any Group Meetings which are planned for this meeting.

- (2) Members of the public wishing to inspect "Background Papers" referred to in the reports on the agenda or Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act should contact:-

Customer Services Centre 0300 500 80 80

- (3) Persons making a declaration of interest should have regard to the Code of Conduct and the Council's Procedure Rules. Those declaring must indicate the nature of their interest and the reasons for the declaration.

Councillors or Officers requiring clarification on whether to make a declaration of interest are invited to contact Keith Ford (Tel. 0115 977 2590) or a colleague in Democratic Services prior to the meeting.

- (4) Councillors are reminded that Committee and Sub-Committee papers, with the exception of those which contain Exempt or Confidential Information, may be recycled.

- (5) This agenda and its associated reports are available to view online via an online calendar - <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/dms/Meetings.aspx>



Meeting CABINET

Date Thursday 9 November 2023 (commencing at 10.30 am)

membership

COUNCILLORS

Ben Bradley MP (Chairman)
Bruce Laughton (Vice-Chairman)

Chris Barnfather
Matt Barney
Neil Clarke MBE
John Cottee
Keith Girling
Richard Jackson
Tracey Taylor
Gordon Wheeler

OTHER COUNCILLORS IN ATTENDANCE

Deputy Cabinet Members

Reg Adair
Scott Carlton
Tom Smith
Jonathan Wheeler

Other Councillors

Boyd Elliott
Kate Foale
Michelle Welsh
John Wilmott

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Adrian Smith Chief Executive

Marjorie Toward Chief Executive's Department
Nigel Stevenson
Isobel Fleming
Keith Ford
Phil Rostance

Melanie Williams Adult Social Care and Public Health Department

Colin Pettigrew
Irene Kakoullis

Children and Families Department

Derek Higton

Place Department

Peter Ware

External Legal Advisor

1. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the last meeting of Cabinet held on 21 September 2023, having been previously circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

Councillor Neil Clarke MBE declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in agenda Items 9 and 11 – East Midlands Freeport Governance and the Exempt Appendix, as Rushcliffe Borough Council’s representative on the East Midlands Freeport Board, and left the meeting prior to those items being considered.

Councillor Keith Girling subsequently highlighted that he was the County Council’s representative on the East Midlands Freeport Board but that this did not constitute a conflict of interest.

4. **KEY DECISION – MODERN SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING TRANSPARENCY STATEMENT UPDATE**

During discussions, Members commended the previous Members’ training session arranged on this topic and requested that a similar, shorter session (two hours in length) be arranged and offered to all Members.

RESOLVED 2023/033

- 1) That the 2023-24 Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking statement, which demonstrates the Council’s commitment to seek assurance that there are no victims of slavery or human trafficking employed directly by the Council, in its commissioned services or supply chains, be approved.
- 2) That the 2023-24 Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking statement be published on the Council’s intranet and public website.
- 3) That the ongoing partnership work to tackle modern slavery and trafficking across Nottinghamshire be recognised.

- 4) That future annual updates and any proposed changes to the Statement be approved for publication by the Cabinet member – Communities, with Cabinet approval only required when significant changes are proposed.

5. NOTTINGHAMSHIRE ADULT SOCIAL CARE LOCAL ACCOUNT 2024-25

The Leader thanked Dean Thomas and Marion Wardill, Members of Our Voice and Co-Chairs of the Making It Real Forum, for their video message which was relayed to the meeting and for their contributions to the work of the Council through those groups.

RESOLVED 2023/034

That the proposed contents of the Adult Social Care Local Account 2024-25 be approved.

6. IMPLEMENTING THE ROLL OUT OF FAMILY HUB NETWORKS IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

RESOLVED 2023/035

1. That the work progressed and ongoing activity to establish Family Hub design sites in Nottinghamshire, as detailed in the report, be supported.
2. That a further report, following the conclusion of the ongoing consultation, be submitted to a future meeting for approval.

7. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT – PERIOD 5 2023-24

The Leader invited members of Cabinet to debate agenda items 7 and 8 together as they were interrelated (separate votes were taken on each item).

RESOLVED 2023/036

1. That:
 - a. the individual portfolio revenue budgets for 2023-4 be noted;
 - b. the summary of capital expenditure to date, year-end forecasts and variations to the capital programme be noted;
 - c. that the variation to the capital programme be approved;
 - d. that the Council's Balance Sheet transactions be noted.

8. BUDGET UPDATE REPORT

RESOLVED 2023/037

That the significant challenges presented by the current financial landscape and the measures being developed to address these challenges as part of the preparatory work for the 2024-25 budget proposals be noted.

9. EAST MIDLANDS FREEPORT GOVERNANCE

RESOLVED 2023/038

1. That approval be given to the Council becoming a member of the Company on its incorporation and the governance documents as described in the report subject to:
 - a. resolution of any outstanding subsidy control issues through government guidance or by way of acceptable legal advice;
 - b. all other current East Midlands Freeport public sector partners agreeing to incorporate the Company on like terms; and
 - c. the Corporate Director – Place (or his nominee), in consultation with the Cabinet Member – Economic Development and Asset Management, approving and finalising any further minor drafting changes required to the Articles of Association and Members Agreement for the Company and any other documents required to facilitate the Company’s incorporation in light of any other technical, legal or financial advice which may be relevant.
2. That the existing inclusion of the shadow East Midlands Freeport Board within the Council’s Outside Bodies Register be amended to reflect the change to Company status on incorporation and the addition of subgroups and sub-committees, and that the Cabinet Member – Business Management makes the required Member appointments (including the provision for a Member appointment as an alternative Director) and any officer appointments in consultation with the Chief Executive.
3. That the Chief Executive or his nominee be authorised to cast a vote on behalf of the Council, as a member of the Company, in relation to member decisions, or member consent matters whether at a member meeting or otherwise, when necessary, having first taken legal, technical and financial advice as appropriate.
4. That periodic progress reports be brought to Cabinet or the appropriate County Council Cabinet member or committee.

10. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED 2023/039

That the public be excluded for the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that the discussions were likely to involve disclosure of exempt information described in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

11. EAST MIDLANDS FREEPORT GOVERNANCE – EXEMPT APPENDIX

RESOLVED 2023/040

That the contents of the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 11.12 am

CHAIRMAN

**REPORT OF THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR
TRANSFORMATION****NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL DATA STRATEGY 2023-28****Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval of the NCC Data Strategy 2023-28.
2. This is a Key Decision because it will have significant impact on two or more electoral divisions.

Information

3. The Strategy represents a significant and exciting opportunity to inform and drive evidence-based change and service improvement. It will also support a greater understanding of the needs of our places, people and communities, to help make best value use of the Council's resources. How the Council captures, stores and utilises data is a fundamental enabler to driving continuous improvement, transforming what and how is delivered for the people and communities of Nottinghamshire and supports the Council's ambitions.
4. The Data Strategy has been developed in line with the NCC Annual Delivery Plan 2023/24, Ambition 10 – A forward looking and resilient Council, point 10.2 “Publish a Data Strategy, including the review and development of secure, integrated data systems, so that we are able to strengthen our ability to make decisions based on robust data and analysis”.
5. This refreshed Data Strategy outlines the critical importance of data and the significant benefits that innovative, safe and ethical use of data can deliver for Nottinghamshire's people and communities. It describes how the Council will use data to enhance the delivery of our services, supporting the continued delivery of high quality, effective and efficient services and driving innovation and change.
6. Developing our data can also help the Council to realise productivity benefits, helping us to address workforce challenges across the organisation. The [Government Data Quality Hub](#) highlights the risks and costs that poor quality data increases for local authorities, while high quality data facilitates the better spending of public money and increased operational effectiveness. They cite the Data Management Body of Knowledge, that organisations spend between 10-30% of revenue on handling data quality issues.

7. The Strategy can also help us to integrate data and insights with our wider system partners (e.g. District and Borough Councils, health, schools, Police) to drive efficiencies across the partnership, inform the design and delivery of new ways of working together and help improve the experience of the people accessing our services.
8. Ongoing collaboration with stakeholders from all departments has taken place to develop the Data Strategy. Best practice in other local authorities and national government functions was also researched and considered.
9. To implement this Strategy, we will build on the strengths across our organisation and learn together to 'level up' the use of data across the Council. A cross-council Data Working Group will be set up to harness this energy and ensure strong working relationships and oversight, allowing opportunities to be identified to raise data standards across the Council. A data culture will also be embedded within the Council which will include awareness raising of the importance of data and the role everyone has in it, as well as understanding the workforce's data literacy skills and development of training.
10. Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) and Children and Families Service (CFS) already have projects in place to make improvements to the way they collect, analyse and manage data and all of this work supports the overarching Data Strategy aims. Work will be carried out in an agile way with departments to share best practice and ensure deliverables are scalable, allowing roll out across other areas as appropriate, avoiding duplication of effort and maximising improvements.
11. There are many opportunities to be unlocked by the better use of data, and in particular joined up data. A partnership between Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottingham City Council and the NHS won the [Best Outcome Award at the Integrated Care System \(ICS\) Health and Care Awards for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire 2023](#) with 'one version of the truth' data, with NHS England and the Department of Health and Social Care viewing this project as national best practice. This multi-disciplinary project utilised an online system known as 'Nervcentre' to create a shared hospital discharge dataset agreed by all partners. This combined dataset supported collaboration across the wards and the multi-disciplinary Transfer of Care Hubs, facilitating better practice and decision-making and allowing safe and appropriate discharges of older people from hospital. By enabling a return home in a shorter time, 20,000 fewer days a year were spent in a hospital bed by patients at our acute hospitals. Collaboration with our partners like this shows the power of joining up our data to deliver real improvements to how the Council works with people.
12. Within the Children and Families Department, the Supporting Families Data Maturity project is an ongoing organisational improvement initiative. The developments being implemented around data will help develop a 'real-time' holistic view of individuals, families, households, communities and places. With a collaborative infrastructure to maximise the use of automation tools, it is envisaged there will be improved journeys for residents with better ongoing assessment of need, reduced duplication (especially of processes that families experience) and seamless services. The Supporting Families service area receives funding by the Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) based on achieving set targets.
13. Next steps following approval of the Data Strategy will be undertaken as part of the Forward-looking Resilient Council Data project and will include the development of a phased action

plan. It is proposed that the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Transformation receives this action plan, and subsequent updates.

Other Options Considered

14. To not produce a Data Strategy. This would not have been in line with the NCC Annual Delivery Plan 2023/24, Ambition 10 – A forward looking and resilient Council, point 10.2 “Publish a Data Strategy, including the review and development of secure, integrated data systems, so that we are able to strengthen our ability to make decisions based on robust data and analysis” commits us to delivering a Data Strategy within this financial year.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

15. To meet the commitment in our Annual Plan 2023/24 as improving the quality, availability and ease of reporting on our data is important to support the Council in continuing to move forward.

16. To enable the process for both the action plan and any future decisions to be agreed by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Transformation.

Statutory and Policy Implications

17. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

18. Delivering the actions to improve our data will save the Council money in worker time due to improvements in productivity as a result of improved systems and processes requiring less manual manipulation of data. It will also ensure that future decisions about strategy, investment and prioritisation can be informed by robust and reliable data and insights to ensure what and how the Council delivers represents best value. Any further decisions about resourcing or investment required to implement the Data Strategy and Action Plan will be taken in line with the Council's Constitution and Financial Regulations.

Consultation

19. The Data Strategy has been developed in consultation with experts and stakeholders from each of the departments within the Council. Ongoing work to identify and deliver actions to support the Strategy will also involve the same level of consultation through the establishment of a cross-Council Data Working Group and, where necessary, with wider stakeholders and people who access our services.

Crime and Disorder Implications

20. There are no expected crime and disorder implications due to the implementation of the Data Strategy.

Data Protection and Information Governance

21. The Data Strategy acknowledges that a more extensive, structured and innovative use of data to improve Council services and outcomes will need to be underpinned by data protection, data security and data ethics considerations. As specific actions emerge from the Data Strategy, the Council will use its well-established frameworks to identify and address data security and protection risk and will introduce complementary mechanisms to ensure the ethical use of data. These safeguards will reinforce a responsible and transparent use of data which, in turn, will help preserve the trust and confidence of residents, partners and stakeholders.

Human Resources Implications

22. There are no expected human resources implications due to the implementation of the Data Strategy.

Business Support Implications

23. There are no expected business support implications due to the implementation of the Data Strategy. Business Support colleagues have a significant role in the collection, storage and processing of data so carrying out the improvements to data as part of the Data Strategy, will improve their working with data. Business Support will be involved on an ongoing basis.

Human Rights Implications

24. There are no expected human rights implications due to the implementation of the Data Strategy.

Implications in relation to the NHS Constitution

25. There are no expected implications in relation to the NHS Constitution due to the implementation of the Data Strategy. Potential work that will be completed around data integration will help us to support NHS priorities such as health and social care integration.

Public Sector Equality Duty implications

26. Due regard has taken place to ensure that the Data Strategy complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty and does not have a negative impact on people/service users with protected characteristics. Implementation of this Strategy will enable us to collect and analyse data in ways that promote equity and equality.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Cabinet:

- 1) Approve the NCC Data Strategy 2023-28 to commence the work required to improve our data capabilities.
- 2) Agree the approval route for the Data Strategy action plan and future decisions to be taken by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member – Transformation.

Councillor Bruce Laughton
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member - Transformation

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Isobel Fleming, Service Director – Transformation and Change (0115 8546184)

Constitutional Comments (GG 20/11/2023)

7. This key decision falls to the Cabinet to consider under Section 5, Part 2 of the Council's Constitution at page 75 as it constitutes a new policy.

Financial Comments (KRP 08/12/2023)

As set out in the report there are no direct financial implications arising from the approval of the Data Strategy. Any costs associated with the implementation of the Strategy will be subject to appropriate approvals as required.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- Nottinghamshire Plan
- NCC Data Strategy 2023-2028

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All

Data 2023-2028 Strategy

It all begins with data. Data is the driving force of the modern economy, fuelling innovation and has been a lifeline during the pandemic. We need to harness the power of our data to innovate, experiment, boost productivity and improve public services.

From [Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Policy Paper (2020), National Data Strategy]



The scope of this Strategy covers data in a broad sense, from how we capture, manage and govern it, to how it can be used to create actionable insights and inform our decision-making and future plans.

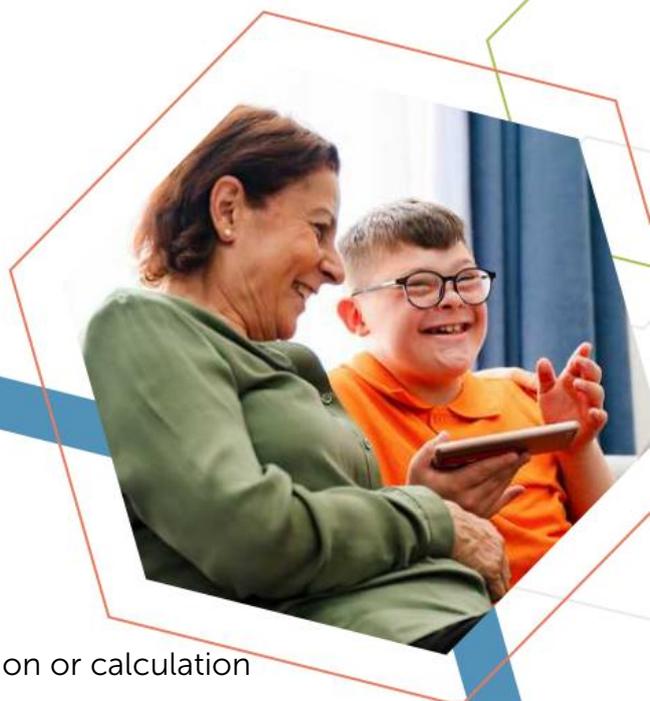
Data is key to delivering our organisational objectives and this five-year Strategy outlines how we will collect, improve and use data to underpin policy, decisions and actions in our effort to improve services and outcomes for the people and communities of Nottinghamshire.

The work to develop this Strategy has been done with key stakeholders in the Council, recognising the importance of continuing engagement at all levels. By doing this, we were able to identify examples of good practice, our current challenges as an organisation, and what is needed to be a truly 'data driven' and data mature council.

This Strategy complements and enables other key strategies, namely our [Nottinghamshire Plan 2021-2031](#), the [Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#), and the [Nottinghamshire County Council Digital Strategy](#).

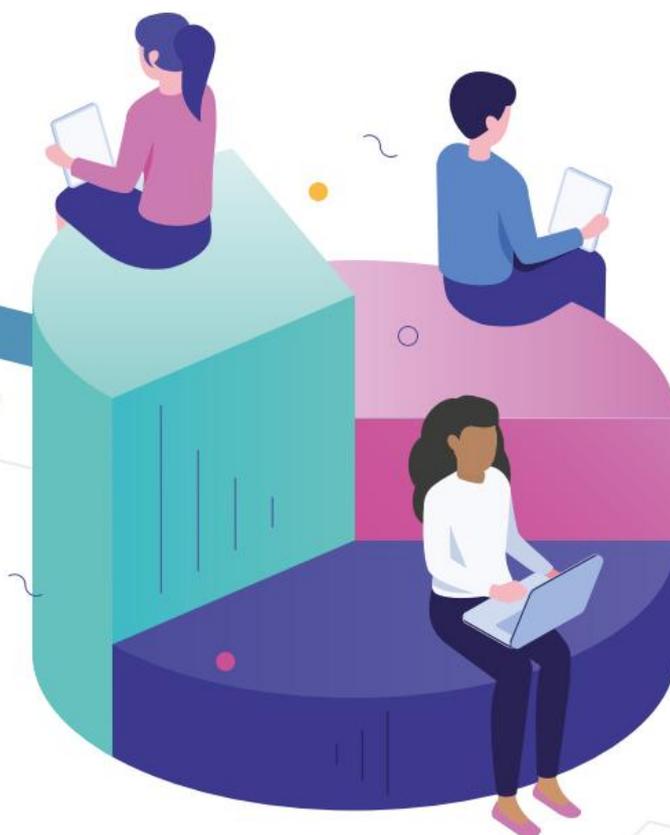
Definition of data:

1. Factual information (such as measurements or statistics) used as a basis for reasoning, discussion or calculation
2. Information in digital form that can be transmitted or processed.



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Our vision



Data will be used proactively across the Council to generate understanding and insight. It will support evidence-informed decisions about what, how and where we deliver services, targeting our resources to the people and places where we will have greatest impact. Our data will be of a high quality and integrated across systems and the wider partnership, to enable us to understand people’s experiences, trends and predict potential future needs.

Our Nottinghamshire Plan recognises that good quality data is critical to achieving our objectives and that effective use of data will enable us to transform our services, maximise efficiencies and deliver better outcomes for the people and communities we serve and the people that work for our Council.

Apart from our people, data is our most important asset and is considered as part of everything we do. Data provides insight into our customers and the people we support, our decision making, business processes and ultimately provides evidence of our impact and how we are performing as a council. We need to focus on using our data to create efficiencies, delivering cost efficient and quality services. We need to govern, manage and control our data as we would do for any other asset.

Becoming a data-enabled council will benefit the people of Nottinghamshire, by allowing us to make our processes and services more efficient and effective

in meeting people’s needs. Data will help us understand existing and emerging needs to help us reduce, reshape or develop our existing services or commission new services and assess our performance in line with statutory duties or best practice.

We will prioritise data developments to improve:

Outcomes for people and places

Data is a powerful tool for improving outcomes for Nottinghamshire’s people and communities. It can also enable transparency, improve engagement and strengthen democracy.

We will use data to understand needs and identify where we can have the most impact and ensure resources are targeted to best help people and places who will benefit most from support.

Data helps us to promote equity, tackle inequality and support vulnerable and disadvantaged communities.

By delivering this Strategy, our workforce will have access to high quality data that helps them to understand the life stories of the people they are working with. This will improve the experience of people accessing our Council services and will mean people do not have to keep repeating their story. It will also enable us to work together with people and partners to create positive and sustainable change that helps people to stay healthy, happy and safe in their homes and communities.

We will keep listening so that people's feedback and other data can inform our plans to improve what and how we deliver, working closely with partners to get the best for people.

Our performance, productivity and potential

Data will help us to understand where and how we can continue to improve how we operate as a council, how we support our workforce and how we deliver services. Data can help us to understand more about people and the services needed across a large geographic footprint to target change and transformation activity effectively for maximum impact.

By using our data effectively, we can make the best use of our resources and encourage a more commercial approach across the Council, adopting creative and innovative ways of working that deliver value for money.

We will ensure our workforce is data literate, with the skills and confidence to leverage our data effectively. Data ownership, and the responsibility this entails, will be embedded across the Council.

We will ensure that our managers have the skills and tools to utilise accessible and effective management information reports to identify and address performance challenges at Council, department, service and team level. This will ensure that we are able to evidence our compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements and the impact that we deliver for the people and communities accessing our services.



Where we are now

We are proud of the county we serve, and the many achievements of our Council. We have lots of strengths to build on. Inevitably, in a big organisation like Nottinghamshire County Council, we have some areas of excellence and some pockets that need improvement. This means that we all have a role to play in learning from what we already do well and continuously improving how we operate. We recognise that data has an important role to play in supporting us to become a forward-looking and resilient Council.

As demand for services increases and local government finances face increased pressure, we need data-led innovation to succeed. Below are some of the data related challenges we face that this Strategy seeks to address:

- Much of our data is held across different systems, which can make it harder to access, integrate and analyse. In addition, some data is captured by our partners, and we are not always able to access relevant partner data because we do not have the right agreements or mechanisms in place to share data effectively and safely. This makes it more difficult to generate insight, understand our customer life stories and monitor inequalities.
- We need to develop our systems to enable us to capture, analyse and interrogate data to understand what life is like for people and the outcomes or experiences of people, places or communities. Developing our ability to do this will mean that we can generate insight for different demographics of people who access the Council's support or services.
- There is more to do to embed consistent data standards and governance for the Council and with our partners. By fully embedding these foundations, we will ensure that terminology and definitions are consistent and that we are able to use data easily when working with partners, for example, Health, Police and other local authorities.
- There are also additional demands brought about due to changes in legislation or government and Council policy. Some of our older systems can struggle to incorporate these changes meaning off system processes are developed increasing the time it takes to understand and use our data.

Our data principles

We have identified four priority areas where action is required which are covered in the next section 'What we will do'. The 12 data principles below cover key areas that will allow us to take advantage of the opportunities that data offers:

- 1.** Our data standards are consistent to ensure data is validated and captured once to use many times.
- 2.** Our systems and processes will prioritise data integrity. This means data validation, and no duplication or off system data.
- 3.** Data is shared safely, lawfully and ethically beyond organisational boundaries, for example the NHS, plus other councils, and partners.
- 4.** Our datasets are defined and understood.
- 5.** Our reporting is flexible across systems.
- 6.** Robust data quality mechanisms ensure the reliability of data.
- 7.** We know who is responsible for data quality and who owns it, recognising that data needs to be shared across business areas to gain greater insights.
- 8.** Communities of practice are created which share skills, best practice, and build capability.
- 9.** The right people have access to the right information at the right time and know how to use it to make informed decisions.
- 10.** We will foster a data-enabled culture.
- 11.** We will build and look to retain the best analytics capabilities available.
- 12.** We will enable ownership and responsibility of data in a lawful, ethical and transparent manner, including decisions about the use of data.



What we will do

In developing this Strategy, we have identified the work that is currently taking place across our Council to improve our data and how we use it. We will support the good work already taking place and test, learn and scale up what works across the Council to improve our data skills, systems and analytical capabilities incrementally and iteratively.

We will seek to establish a whole-Council framework to create consistency and coherence, supporting us to move with pace and agility to achieve our vision and establish strong foundations across all areas of the Council for further innovation and improvement.

Below are the current activities we've identified which are a snapshot of what we need to do now. They may change over time, and we will develop a phased and achievable delivery plan each year, ensuring we prioritise delivery of the ones which will bring the most value at that time:

1. Establish strong organisational data governance

- **Embed a Council-wide data governance framework** - this will improve our data governance to reflect best practice thinking within the organisation and ensure that there is clarity about responsibility and accountability for data.
- **Consolidate data standards** - we will build a set of data standards trusted by our stakeholders and partners, which will allow us to capture consistent and unified data at source. This will support a greater ability to make better long-term use of our data and allow services to put in place solutions to fix data quality issues at source.
- **Review the data we hold and its quality, prioritising key datasets** - this will put in place clear measures and targets for holding data of a high quality that is consistent, well-defined and as up to date as possible, so that we are confident in it being considered a 'single version of the truth'.
- **Start a Council-wide data directory** - we will map out the data we hold so we have a live record of what and where our data is, who owns it and for what purposes it can be shared. This will include a glossary to help us understand the language we use to describe data.

2. Modernise our data architecture

- **Review our current data architecture (including databases, applications, integration, security, workflows, information architecture design and any other associated data processes)** - this will allow us to better meet our analytical needs and identify opportunities to develop and improve our capabilities.
- **Strengthen system requirements and data standards for all new systems whether procured or developed** - this will ensure they support our approach and configuration needs.
- Explore our options to create greater analytical capability (for example expansion of our existing data warehouse/development of a data lake).

3. Hold, use and share data safely, lawfully and ethically

- **Ensure we continue to manage the use of data responsibly** - we will have processes in place that ensure we process, blend, share and use data we need in a secure way to ensure people's data rights are respected and they can trust us with their data.
- **Streamline data sharing across our systems, to develop an approach to data sharing** - this will enable us to use our data to its full potential, whilst also safeguarding the privacy of all stakeholders, including the people of Nottinghamshire.
- **Explore platforms that enable data sharing with partners** - this will be used for the publication of open data and secure sharing between organisations. Using a single platform for collaboration will ensure the consistency of data sharing practices and will make it easier to build automation into the data exchange process, reducing the time from analysis to action, a frustration identified by stakeholders.
- **Ensure we include ethical practice in our use of data, reflecting on the Data Ethics Policy developed by the Office for National Statistics (ONS)** - ensuring our collection and use of data continues to be fair in its representation and treatment of people and meets the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Continue to ensure all legal, ethical data protection and security implications are considered in a consistent, timely and proportionate way.

4. Build a collaborative and positive data culture across the Council

- Understand what would be required to make data and analysis accessible to our workforce. This will set a baseline and identify the steps we need to take to enable our workforce to engage, as required in their varied roles, with data capture, analysis and translating this insight into actions. We will use this information to put in place learning and development opportunities, which enable identified gaps in knowledge and skills to be filled.
- Look to maximise awareness of existing, internal courses and establish distinct training programmes for officers (focussed on data management, using insight tools, basic data analysis skills and data literacy), and analysts (focussed on storytelling and impact measurement) while also making them aware of the legislative and ethical context for data use.
- Build communities of practice. We will create working groups and online networks that allow for the sharing of data best practice and/or to work on specific outcome-driven problems.



Monitoring and review

Ownership of this Strategy rests with the Data Working Group which is responsible for agreeing, monitoring, promoting and reviewing its implementation. Due to the pace of change, the Strategy will be reviewed every year, with the first review being due in September 2024. An action plan will be developed to support this Strategy, the key elements of which will be incorporated into the annual work plans of relevant service areas and teams. Progress will be monitored quarterly. Monitoring will also include reports to our Digital Board and our Corporate Leadership Team, where appropriate.

The next major review of our Data Strategy will take place during 2028/29.



Further reading

[Nottinghamshire Plan 2021-2031](#)

[Nottinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)

[Nottinghamshire County Council ICT Strategy](#)

[Nottinghamshire County Council Digital Strategy](#)

[Nottinghamshire County Council Information Governance Framework](#)

[National Data Strategy](#)

[Local Government Association Data Maturity Model](#)

Glossary

Analytics/ analytical	This term covers the discovery, interpretation and communication of meaningful patterns in data.
Data	Data can be just about anything, from a number inputted into a computer system, to a sentence written in a report or words spoken in a meeting. It can be held within a system, in emails/documents or recordings of meetings. Data is not only things that are recorded in digital format but also anything recorded on paper.
Dataset	A dataset is a collection of data that is stored together.
Data architecture	Data architecture is the conceptual, logical and physical data assets and how they are stored and managed throughout their lifecycle.
Data asset	A data asset is anything that is comprised of data. A data asset may be a system, database, document or web page.
Data catalogue/ data directory	A data catalogue is a detailed inventory of all data assets in an organisation, designed to help data professionals quickly find the most appropriate data for any analytical or business purpose.
Data enabled/ data driven	A data enabled or data driven organisation is one that is able to use data, skills, tools and resources as part of its wider capabilities, to meet the challenges and changes it is faced with.
Data governance	Data governance is a structured approach that provides standards, processes and tools to organise and enhance the value of data.
Data literacy	Data literacy is the knowledge or ability to communicate, read and work with data. It includes the critical thinking skills required to interpret data and communicate the significance to others. Data literacy empowers you to ask questions, make decisions and collaborate with others.
Data maturity	Data maturity is the journey towards improvement and increased capability in using data. Data maturity is a measure of an organisation's ability to use data, along with how well the organisation leverages those capabilities.
Data standards	Data standards are the guidelines by which data is described and recorded, so that the format of the data is the same across different sources and applications. Standards make it easier to create, share, exchange, combine, understand and integrate data and also reduces the time spent cleaning and translating data.

Data lake	A data lake is a system or repository that stores data in its natural or original data form various sources. A data lake allows different types of analytics such as reporting, visualisation, big data processing, real-time analytics and machine learning to be performed on the data.
Data Protection Act 2018	The Data Protection Act 2018 sets out data protection laws in the UK, supplementing the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). It seeks to empower individuals to take control of their personal data and to ensure that organisations are accountable for their lawful use of personal data.
Data warehouse	A data warehouse pulls together data from many different sources into a single central, consistent data store. This system enables an organisation to run sophisticated analytics on huge volumes of historical data to support decision making.
Disadvantaged communities	A community that is experiencing economic, health or environmental burdens.
Information	Like data, information is all around us, but unlike data it has been given meaning and context to tell us something. Information includes things like documents, web pages, leaflets, reports and dashboards.
Insight	Insight is information that has been tailored to the specific needs of what someone wants, and the outcome that we want to achieve. Good insight takes an outcome-first approach rather than a data-first approach which means that insight can lead us to action, whereas information often does not.
Integration	Integration means the design and implementation of services that connect systems with each other to share data. Each integration is designed to manage the specific data elements that are being shared.
Off system	Off system means when data or information is stored away from any main data stores or systems meaning (1) it is fixed data and not live anymore, (2) there may be more than one version of the data stored in different places, (3) it is hard to bring it together with other data to create insights.
Partnerships	Our Council supports the people and communities of Nottinghamshire with the help of a number of other organisations for example NHS (National Health Service), other local authorities, Police, housing providers, education and partner agencies that provide services.



**REPORT OF DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER –
TRANSFORMATION AND CHANGE**

**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE PLAN – ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN ASSURANCE
REPORT (QUARTER 2)**

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Cabinet with an update on progress against the actions outlined in the Annual Delivery Plan 2023/24, covering the period July – September 2023 (Q2).

Information

2. The Nottinghamshire Plan, approved in November 2021, sets out the County Council's 10-year vision for a healthy, prosperous and greener future for everyone. The Plan outlines a focus on:
 - Improving health and wellbeing in all our communities
 - Growing our economy and improving living standards
 - Reducing the County's impact on the environment
 - Helping everyone access the best of Nottinghamshire.
3. The vision and areas of focus are underpinned by ten ambitions outlined in the plan, and are also supported by strategies and plans developed across Departments, including our Annual Delivery Plan, which sets out the actions we will take in year to further our progress towards meeting our targets. The Annual Delivery Plan for 2023/24 was approved by [Cabinet in April 2023](#).
4. The Council has committed to providing progress updates against each Annual Delivery Plan (including updated measures and actions where relevant), which take the form of a quarterly assurance report.
5. The Council's assurance reports are published to update on actions as of the end of Q2 (September), as a mid-year update, and Q4 (March) as a year-end annual report. These reports are published on the Nottinghamshire Plan website – [Our progress | The Nottinghamshire Plan](#).

Annual Delivery Plan 2023-24 (Quarter 2)

6. A Q2 Assurance Report to support the current Annual Delivery Plan has been produced (**Appendix A**), to monitor progress made to date during 2023/24.

7. Of the 99 actions included in the ADP 23/24, 88% (87) are in progress and on track to be delivered on time. Notably, no actions have been designated 'Significant Obstacles to Completion', whilst only 12 (12%) have been highlighted as experiencing some issues. For those actions which are experiencing some issues, further assurance will take place before the end of the financial year, to allow further opportunity for Departments to provide updates and confirm that these actions are being progressed.
8. High-level commentary as to progress has been provided, to make clear the direction of the travel to date for 2023/24. Noticeable highlights include;
 - a. Derbyshire County Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Derby City Council and Nottingham City Council have been working with the Government on devolution plans including a package of local powers and funding worth £1.14 billion, from 2024. As an early investment, £18m of funding has been awarded to projects across Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Derby and Nottingham. The largest of which, with an allocation of £9.9m, will help councils to carry out retrofit work on homes to make them more energy efficient. Homes across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire will benefit from the scheme, specifically targeting homes with poor energy efficiency ratings – the most poorly insulated – and low-income households.
 - b. The Council has agreed proposals to move our civic and democratic base to a new building near Hucknall to bring long-term savings for the taxpayer and environment. These plans are part of a wider buildings' programme which aims to save taxpayers' money by creating more carbon-neutral council buildings, generating income by leasing older buildings with higher running-costs and co-locating with other public organisations.
 - c. Further work is being progressed with the Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production (STEP) Fusion programme project, to help deliver long term investment in clean energy, including the first partnership meeting being held in early September. This has established a work programme which will help to secure the wider economic impact for our residents and businesses.
 - d. Nottinghamshire County Council's award-winning LED Street Lighting Conversion Project has delivered significant carbon and financial savings to the county. The nine-year project involved replacing almost 95,000 conventional sodium streetlights with environmentally friendly LED lighting across the county's seven district and borough council areas. Over 98% of Nottinghamshire's streetlights are now LED, with mainly specialist and decorative lighting remaining as sodium lanterns.
 - e. The latest programme of school infrastructure improvements worth £9.2m has been agreed by Nottinghamshire County Council. Twenty primary and infant schools will benefit from a range of improvements, dependent on the needs for each school. The works will include roof replacements, drainage improvements as well as energy-efficient lighting and boiler upgrades.
 - f. Whilst there is still more to be done, we have made progress to develop a new vision and set of principles to support young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and their families, to prepare for adulthood. This has been developed in co-production with young people, people who have been through transitions, parents, carers, NCC colleagues and Health colleagues.
 - g. In developing the Council's approach to provision of community-based preventative support, a paper has been presented to Cabinet on prevention, naming priority places and outlining core principles for prevention that we will work to as a Council. Partnership engagement events are also taking place in priority places and are generating place-specific partnership action plans. Community projects which include improvements to

sporting facilities, play areas and the local visitor experience are set to share more than £233,500 worth of grants.

- h. Nottinghamshire's All Age Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery service has been commended by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities national and regional teams as we have exceeded our targets for getting more people into treatment for 2023/24.
 - i. The Carers and Young Carers Strategy launched in November 2023 through a workshop. The event showcased how the strategy has been fully co-produced by carers with lived experience, and that the voice of the carers is at the heart of the document with what 'good' looks like for them.
 - j. The Council, working together with Nottingham City, Derbyshire County and Derby City, have secured £1.6 million from the Department for Education fostering Recruitment and Retention programme. This will allow the four local authorities to invest in new services and approaches to will improve the recruitment and retention of foster carers. This will mean more children in our care will be cared for in a family setting, they will experience greater stability in their care and in turn, it will reduce reliance on more expensive external fostering and residential placements.
9. Further details on all of the above can be found in the latest Q2 Report itself, attached as **Appendix A**.

Other Options Considered

10. To not report in year progress publicly. The Council's quarterly reports form part of the monitoring mechanisms by which progress is tracked against The Nottinghamshire Plan. To not report progress on a six-monthly interim basis ahead of the Annual Report would mean Members are not able to take assurance of progress being made in-year.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

11. To allow Cabinet to note the progress made to date against the Annual Delivery Plan 23/24 and to provide in year assurance against the actions, before the production of the Annual Report in 2024.

Statutory and Policy Implications

12. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

13. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Data Protection and Information Governance

14. A summary Data Protection Impact Assessment was completed to ensure clarity on the tools to be used when compiling information. Action was taken where recommended prior to the request for information being sent out across Departments.

Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk Implications

15. A number of actions within the Annual Delivery Plan will enable the Council to better support and safeguard children and adults at risk.

Implications for Residents

16. The Q2 Report provides an update on progress against the actions outlined in the Annual Delivery Plan 2023/24, which show how we will play our part in working towards the healthy, prosperous and greener future that all our communities deserve.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

17. A number of actions within the report will enable the Council to meet its ambitions around sustainability and the environment.

RECOMMENDATION/S

1) To note progress to date against the Annual Delivery Plan 2023/24.

COUNCILLOR BRUCE LAUGHTON, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

**Dr Isobel Fleming, Service Director Transformation and Change –
0115 854 6184, isobel.fleming@nottscc.gov.uk**

Constitutional Comments (LPW 22/11/2023)

The recommendations fall within the remit of the Cabinet by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (PA 17/11/2023)

There are no specific financial implications arising directly from the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- The Nottinghamshire Plan 2021-2031, Full Council, 25 November 2021
- The Nottinghamshire Plan Annual Delivery Plan 2023-24, Cabinet, 20 April 2023
- **Appendix A** – Q2 Assurance Report (Annual Delivery Plan 2023-24)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All

Annual Delivery Plan Quarterly Assurance Report

Quarter **2**

December 2023



Healthy Prosperous Green

Quarterly Assurance Report - Quarter 2 - Published December 2023

The 2023/24 Annual Delivery Plan outlined the actions we intended to take over the coming year, to deliver the ambitions outlined in The Nottinghamshire Plan (<https://plan.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/>), and how we will measure our success. This report provides members and residents with an update on our progress to date (up to end of September 2023) in delivering these actions, alongside a range of success stories from across all departments.

In addition, we will also be publishing an Annual Report in 2024 as part of our year-end review, outlining our progress and achievements during 2023/24 and the impact of these on Nottinghamshire's communities. The current Annual Delivery Plan for 2023/24 is available online, as is last year's Annual Report (<https://plan.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/our-progress/>).

Summary:

In summary, 87 (88%) actions agreed as part of the 23/24 Annual Delivery Plan are currently on track for completion, whilst only 12 (12%) have been highlighted as experiencing some issues. No actions have been highlighted as experiencing significant obstacles to completion. For those actions which are experiencing some issues, further assurance will take place before the end of the financial year, to allow further opportunity for Departments to provide updates and confirm that these actions are being progressed.

Ambition 1 – Helping our people live healthier, more independent lives

Our ambition is that people in every community enjoy healthier, happier lives and remain independent for longer.

The Council committed to delivering 11 actions to achieve this ambition by April 2024. Mid-way through the year, all of those actions are in progress and on track to be delivered on time.

Progress:

- Nottinghamshire’s All Age Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery service has been commended by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities national and regional teams as we have exceeded our targets for getting more people into treatment for 2023/24. Nottinghamshire has already achieved our 3-year target for supporting more young people into treatment (after only 18 months of the national programme to improve drug and alcohol treatment and recovery systems). Nottinghamshire is one of only a few local authorities to have achieved this particular target so quickly.
- A new suicide prevention communications campaign was rolled out through World Suicide Prevention Day with five new filmed stories of hope. Through this campaign, the Suicide Prevention webpage received the highest number of views so far in 2023 (485), and there was also the highest uptake of the Zero Suicide Alliance training in 2023 (206).
- The Carers and Young Carers Strategy launched in November 2023 through a workshop. The event showcased how the strategy has been fully co-produced by carers with lived experience, and that the voice of the carers is at the heart of the document with what ‘good’ looks like for them.
- Whilst there is still more to be done, the Council has developed a new vision and set of principles to support young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and their families, to prepare for adulthood. These have been developed in co-production with young people, people who have been through transitions, parents, carers, NCC colleagues and Health colleagues. To support this, we have also developed a dashboard to enable us to more accurately predict the needs and requirements of young people who will require support in adulthood to help us to ensure young adults get the right help at the right time to help them lead a happy, healthy and independent life.
- A partnership hospital discharge improvement plan is in place, with three key priorities to build on and improve on the success of our Transfer of Care Hubs across all three acute hospitals in the County. This will help people access home and community-based support on discharge from hospital, improving discharges at weekends and access to rehabilitation beds.

Ambition 1 – Helping our people live healthier, more independent lives

Our ambition is that people in every community enjoy healthier, happier lives and remain independent for longer.

Progress (continued):

- Earlier this year, the Council's Adults Social Care teams carried out a series of listening events, meetings and surveys as part of The Big Conversation, a project to hear from the people who draw on adult social care, their families and carers. Over 540 people fed back to us. This gave us the opportunity to hear people's honest views, and we're using the feedback to help develop services and support which meet people's needs and improve their lives based on what they told us.

People's responses from the Big Conversation activities, along with the adult social care priorities, will feed into a new Local Account. The Local Account is being co-produced with people who draw on our services, including members of our Making It Real forum and Our Voice co-production group, who have been instrumental in making sure people's voices were heard and their experiences considered.

During a recent Cabinet meeting, our councillors had the opportunity to watch a video where members of the Making It Real forum explained their role, why they feel the Local Account is so important and what they hope to see as a result of their involvement.

Watch the [video](#) here.

Ambition 2 – Supporting communities and families

Our ambition is to ensure that our services are meeting demand and provide the best possible services for all our communities and families, in the most sustainable way.

The Council committed to delivering 12 actions to achieve this ambition by April 2024. Mid-way through the year, 10 of those actions are on track, with the remaining experiencing some issues which will require further action to ensure delivery by the end of the year.

Progress:

- The Council published a report outlining the principles it will follow as it continues to embed an early intervention and prevention approach, naming five initial ‘priority places’ in which the Council will test new approaches to supporting a more community-based preventative offer. Partnership engagement events are already taking place in the five areas and are generating place-specific partnership action plans.
- Community Health and Wellbeing Champions (CHWCs) have been recruited in three areas of the county and are undergoing training from the Royal Society of Public Health to support their communities. Recruitment is also taking place for five additional Local Area Co-ordinators (LACs) to expand our existing offer across the county. Following an extensive recruitment exercise, LACs will be extended from five to a total of ten localities across Nottinghamshire from late November 2023. The LACs are part of the Early Help and Support Team and walk alongside individuals at their own pace to help them to achieve their best life. The programme supports the ambitions of the Council to provide, promote and support access to services to build capacity and resilience in the community and to reduce the potential for escalation of individual needs to crisis point.
- The Council are developing a Joint Strategy Needs Assessment to outline the national and local evidence of what works in providing community and place-based support. This will ensure that we target our resources on delivering initiatives or approaches that are likely to have the greatest impact.
- The Council continue to improve the accessibility of information, advice and guidance available for people through our Community Directory and the Council’s website. This will include a review of NottsHelpYourself and targeted and iterative improvements to our website.

Ambition 2 – Supporting communities and families

Our ambition is to ensure that our services are meeting demand and provide the best possible services for all our communities and families, in the most sustainable way.

Progress (continued):

- Community projects which include improvements to sporting facilities, play areas and the local visitor experience are set to share more than £233,500 worth of grants. 28 groups and organisations have received capital grants via the latest round of Nottinghamshire County Council's Local Communities Fund (LCF). It means they will be able to use the funding to continue their work to improve the health and well-being of residents and helping make communities an even better place to live. More information on this story is available here: [£233,000 boost to improve community facilities in Nottinghamshire | Nottinghamshire County Council](#). For online financial support and advice, check the council's dedicated cost of living support page www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/business-community/cost-of-living-support.
- Nottinghamshire is on track to exceed its target of supporting 1,426 families in need of Early Help Services to make significant and sustained change through whole family assessment and support. 813 families have already been supported to make sustained progress, so that positive changes in families have been achieved and maintained.



Ambition 3 – Keeping children, vulnerable adults, and communities safe

We're working hard with partners like the police, district and borough councils, the NHS and Government agencies to keep all residents - especially children and vulnerable adults - safe and supported in our communities.

The Council committed to delivering 12 actions to achieve this ambition by April 2024. Mid-way through the year, 10 of those actions are on track, with the remaining experiencing some issues which will require further action to ensure delivery by the end of the year.

Progress:

- The Council continue to invest in new and innovative ways of safeguarding children and supporting families. The Newark Family Support and Safeguarding Team is now providing support to children and families who have a child in need or child protection plan in a multi-disciplinary manner. Plans are in place for this to be replicated in the Gedling District Child Protection Team and then all other District Child Protection Teams within the next 18 months.
- The Council is on track to meet national targets through The Turnaround programme, which offers a whole family assessment and support to young people and their families) where there is a risk of them entering the criminal justice system or of being exploited. These are young people who would otherwise not have met the threshold for support from the Youth Justice Service and it has allowed the service to work in a preventative capacity, diverting young people from crime and exploitation at a very early stage. The programme has engaged with 52 families to date.
- The Council, working together with Nottingham City, Derbyshire County and Derby City, have secured £1.6 million from the Department for Education fostering Recruitment and Retention programme. This will allow the four local authorities to invest in new services and approaches to will improve the recruitment and retention of foster carers. This will mean more children in our care will be cared for in a family setting, they will experience greater stability in their care and in turn, it will reduce reliance on more expensive external fostering and residential placements.
- The Council is making good progress in implementing new ways for working to improve how people can access support or raise concerns about the safety and/or wellbeing of vulnerable children and adults. These approaches have been co-designed with practitioners, partner and people making referrals and will be designed to ensure people can get the right help at the right time.
- Between June and September 2023, Trading Standards have seized approximately £116,700 worth of illegal tobacco products and vapes from various premises across the County, with support from partners, including Nottinghamshire Police.

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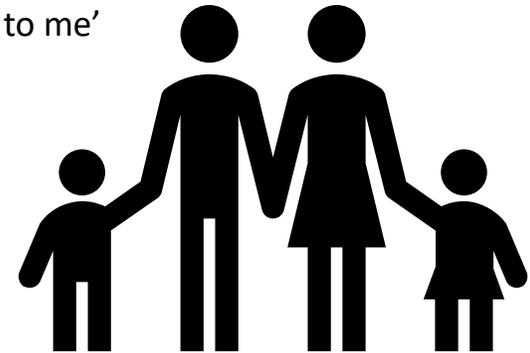
Progress (continued):

- The Kinship Support Service is a team we have established to work with the kinship carers. Kinship care is when a child lives with a relative or friend who isn't their parent, because their parents aren't able to care for them. The team have continued to increase the number of Children Looked After in long-term fostering placements exiting care via Special Guardianship Order, working with partners to provide support to children and their families. Kinship Care Week took place from the 2nd-6th October 2023 and was a week of celebration of kinship families. The Kinship Support Service and Hetty's Charity held their first 'Kinship Youth Group' with children taking part in craft activities and watching movies and carers taking a well-earned tea and biscuit break, taking the time to share their experiences and offer support to one another. The group created some beautiful pieces of artwork about their families and what makes being a kinship young person special. Comments from carers following the group:

'Thank you SO SO much for tonight was amazing'

'A lovely night thank you everyone. My granddaughter had a great time too talked all the way home to me'

'Thank you. We all had a great time. All three of them asked when the next one is'.



Ambition 4 – Building skills that help people get good jobs

Whatever stage people are at in their education, we'll partner with schools, colleges, universities and training providers to ensure that the skills being taught match the needs of local businesses and new investors, while supporting the kinds of work our people want to do.

The Council committed to delivering 7 actions to achieve this ambition by April 2024. Mid-way through the year, 5 of those actions are on track, with the remaining experiencing some issues which will require further action to ensure delivery by the end of the year.



Progress:

- The Council is on track to progress the expansion of Rushcliffe Spencer Academy, West Bridgford and South Wolds in Keyworth and we are also on track to develop a new primary school in Edwinstowe, to open by September 2025.
- The Council has completed the permanent build of Millside Primary School, replacing temporary school provision which, when fully occupied, will provide 315 school places. We have also completed an expansion of Carlton le Willows to deliver an increase of 120 places per year group, totalling 600 new spaces.
- The latest programme of school infrastructure improvements worth £9.2m has been unveiled by Nottinghamshire County Council. Twenty primary and infant schools will benefit from a range of improvements, dependent on the needs for each school. The works will include roof replacements, drainage improvements as well as energy-efficient lighting and boiler upgrades.
- The Council's Economic Growth and Regeneration, HR and Welfare teams collaborated closely and rapidly with Bassetlaw District Council in their efforts to assist affected Wilkos employees. A redundancy support event was held on September 14th at the Bridge Street Skills Hub in Worksop, offering access to employment, skills development options and crisis support programs. Over 60 organisations were present including support agencies, businesses and local authorities, offering potential job opportunities to 300+ jobseekers, primarily those affected by the Wilko closure.

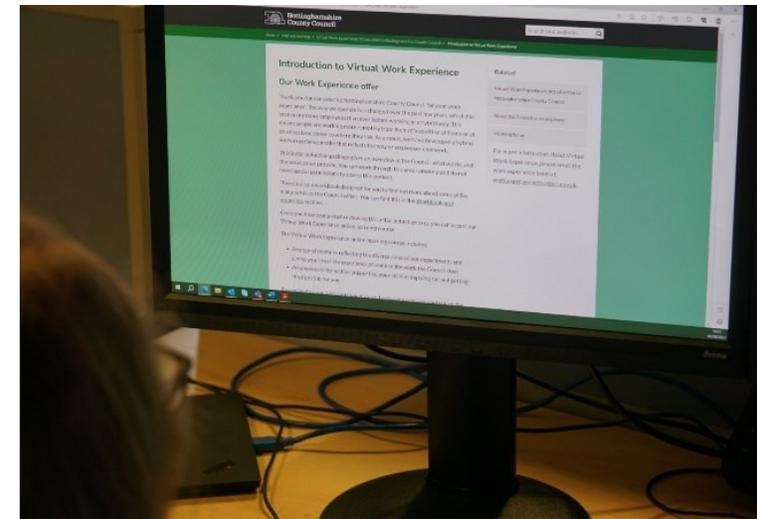
Ambition 5 – Strengthening businesses and creating more good-quality jobs

We are helping businesses grow and be more profitable, but we're shaping them to be more sustainable too.

The Council committed to delivering 6 actions to achieve this ambition by April 2024. Mid-way through the year, all of those actions are in progress and on track to be delivered on time.

Progress:

- Use of the Employment and Skills Platform "Notts Opportunities" is growing, and now has over 26,000 users. The Council has recently agreed to continue our investment in this platform until March 2025.
- A new virtual work experience programme has been launched by Nottinghamshire County Council to give placements an opportunity to explore career opportunities with the authority. The Work Experience Induction Module has been designed to reflect the changes in the way the council operates since it introduced a hybrid workplace model following the Covid-19 pandemic. It primarily gives people on placements an understanding of council life, its structure, democracy, and what services it offers – as well as providing them with access to online learning courses.
- Good progress has been made this quarter, with approval to work with Visit Notts and provide the resources required to prepare a Destination Management Plan to underwrite a Local Visitor Economy partnership bid to Visit England. It is expected that this will be prepared in the next quarter for submission by the end of the financial year. This is a key task in ensuring we support the visitor economy and secure further funding to drive future growth in this sector. Work is also ongoing with partners to drive the other aspects of the approved Visitor Economy Framework.



Ambition 6 – Making Nottinghamshire somewhere people love to live, work and visit

Nottinghamshire has so many strengths, which we want to build on to make an even more attractive place to live, work and visit. We're working towards making more of these assets for residents and visitors, and we are prioritising the places in Nottinghamshire that would benefit the most from regeneration.

The Council committed to delivering 9 actions to achieve this ambition by April 2024. Mid-way through the year, 6 of those actions are on track, with the remaining experiencing some issues which will require further action to ensure delivery by the end of the year.

Progress:

- More than two thousand people are estimated to have attended the Nottinghamshire Day celebrations at Sherwood Forest County Park in August. The free-to-attend event was a celebration of all things Nottinghamshire, led by the County Council working with partners such as RSPB, Notts Outdoors and Inspire, as part of the annual Robin Hood Festival. The event was a follow-up to Nottinghamshire Day itself which is marked every 25 August.
- The 2023 Tour of Britain Cycling Race was successfully delivered on the 6th of September 2023. Starting at the Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre and finishing with a record equalling sprint finish in Newark Upon Trent, the race once again showcased the best places to visit in Nottinghamshire to a global TV audience.
- The Council are working closely with the District and Boroughs to deliver the town deals (totalling £146m), £6.3m of Future High Street, £270k of High Street Heritage Action Zones and Levelling Up Funding round 1 (totalling £20m), £57.6m secured through the second round of Levelling Up Funding, £40m over the two Levelling Up Partnerships in Bassetlaw and Mansfield, all of which have previously been secured across the County. Since July 2022, there has been a further £80m allocated to Kirby, Mansfield, Newark and Worksop as part of the long-term plan for towns and Officers have been working closely with the respective district/borough councils.



Ambition 7 – Attracting investment in infrastructure, the economy and green growth

We are working towards Nottinghamshire growing greener and improving jobs, opportunities, and quality of life for everyone, supporting a bright and prosperous future for Nottinghamshire.

The Council committed to delivering 6 actions to achieve this ambition by April 2024. Mid-way through the year, 5 of those actions are on track, with the remaining experiencing some issues which will require further action to ensure delivery by the end of the year.

Progress:

- Cabinet has recently committed a further year’s funding for the East Midlands (EM) DevCo. The overall ambition of EM DevCo is to supercharge growth for the regional economy. This will be achieved initially on three sites – Toton & Chetwynd Barracks, Ratcliffe-on-Soar Power Station, and the East Midlands Airport Area – that build on the potential of HS2, the region’s status as a major trade and logistics gateway, and its historic strengths in research, development and industrial innovation.
- Derbyshire County Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Derby City Council and Nottingham City Council have been working with the Government on devolution plans including a package of local powers and funding worth £1.14 billion, from 2024. As an early investment, £18m of funding has been awarded to projects across Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Derby and Nottingham. The largest of which, with an allocation of £9.9m, will help councils to carry out retrofit work on homes to make them more energy efficient. Homes across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire will benefit from the scheme, specifically targeting homes with poor energy efficiency ratings – the most poorly insulated – and low-income households.
- Funding hasn’t been the only benefit drawn in via devolution; with the East Midlands securing one of just [12 new Investment Zones](#) being created across the UK.
- Further work is being progressed with the Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production (STEP) Fusion programme project, to help deliver long term investment in clean energy, including the first partnership meeting being held in early September. This has established a work programme which will help to secure the wider economic impact for our residents and businesses.

Ambition 9 – Protecting the environment and reducing our carbon footprint

We pledged to combat climate change and drive greener growth at a local level, to support the UK's 2050 Net Zero national target. We are working on further reducing emissions across our transport fleet, properties, and highways, whilst simultaneously supporting and improving biodiversity, reducing waste and increasing recycling thus improving air quality and promoting greener travel.

The Council committed to delivering 11 actions to achieve this ambition by April 2024. Mid-way through the year, 9 of those actions are on track, with the remaining experiencing some issues which will require further action to ensure delivery by the end of the year.

Progress:

- The Council's Place Select Committee has established a Task and Finish Group to review the recycling centre network and make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment. This work is expected to be complete in late 2023/early 2024.
- Nottinghamshire County Council's award-winning LED Street Lighting Conversion Project, which has delivered significant carbon and financial savings to the county, has been successfully completed in Ranskill, Bassetlaw. The ambitious conversion programme has been delivered by Via East Midlands on behalf of the council. The nine-year project involved replacing almost 95,000 conventional sodium streetlights with environmentally friendly LED lighting across the county's seven district and borough council areas. Over 98% of Nottinghamshire's streetlights are now LED, with mainly specialist and decorative lighting remaining as sodium lanterns. Since the project was first launched in 2014, the county has reduced its annual energy consumption by over 135 million kwh and cut its carbon emissions by over 107,000 tonnes. This has generated over £20 million in savings.
- The County Council continues working with regional and local partners to reduce fuel costs for Nottinghamshire residents and enable delivery where resources are maximised by working together. We recently met with registered social landlords, academics, charities, consultants, and suppliers to discuss properties facing environmental and social challenges, with funding, research and real time technologies to support low-income tenants. Over £3.9 million in energy saving measures has been delivered to fuel poor households, plus 8 fully funded retrofit training qualifications to consortium partners. This year targeted over 200 homes across Nottinghamshire. The scheme is now being extended for 2023-24.

Ambition 10 – A forward looking and resilient Council

We continue to work together to build a resilient council which develops and changes, to meet the needs of Nottinghamshire’s residents. To achieve our ambitions, we will deliver the actions below.

The Council committed to delivering 14 actions to achieve this ambition by April 2024. Mid-way through the year, all of those actions are on track, with the remaining experiencing some issues which will require further action to ensure delivery by the end of the year.

Progress:

- The Council’s new Data Strategy is being presented to Cabinet in December 2023. The delivery of this strategy will help us to identify opportunities to improve our organisational capability, generate high quality data needed to automate processes, enable innovation and create greater efficiency and productivity.
- Nottinghamshire County Council have reviewed how we coordinate all of the changes and improvements we are making across the organisation, to make sure we are using our resources effectively and prioritising the things that will deliver the Council’s priorities and have the biggest impact for Nottinghamshire residents. Our corporate transformation programmes are now focussed on delivering lots of the projects you have seen described throughout this document.
- The Director of Public Health Annual Report 2023 has taken an innovative video approach and has this year been co-produced with people in Nottinghamshire with lived experience of severe multiple disadvantage. This aims to raise awareness and understanding of severe multiple disadvantage and inspire services within the health and care system to enact positive change for our residents.

Ambition 10 – A forward looking and resilient Council

We continue to work together to build a resilient council which develops and changes, to meet the needs of Nottinghamshire's residents. To achieve our ambitions, we will deliver the actions below.

Progress (continued):

- The Council has agreed proposals to move our civic and democratic base to a new building near Hucknall to bring long-term savings for the taxpayer and environment. The Council's new low carbon, all-electric office near Hucknall, which has already had full planning permission, will be the new home of the council's civic, democratic and leadership functions. Construction will start later this year and should be completed by winter 2024/25. The new building will be all-electric and built to standards which will rank the building within the top 10 per cent of new UK (non-domestic) buildings in terms of environmental sustainability. These plans are part of a wider buildings' programme which aims to save taxpayers' money by creating more carbon-neutral council buildings, generating income by leasing older buildings with higher running-costs and co-locating with other public organisations.



**REPORT OF THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR
TRANSFORMATION**

ANNUAL BUDGET SURVEY 2023 – ANALYSIS

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide the results of the 2023 budget survey to Cabinet, for consideration in the development of setting the Council's annual budget in early 2024.

Budget Survey – Rising to the Challenge

2. The Nottinghamshire Plan, approved in November 2021, sets out the County Council's 10-year vision for a healthy, prosperous and greener future for everyone. The Plan places an emphasis on:
 - Improving health and wellbeing in all our communities
 - Growing our economy and improving living standards
 - Reducing the County's impact on the environment
 - Helping everyone access the best of Nottinghamshire.
3. These themes are underpinned by strategies and plans developed across Departments, including our Annual Delivery Plan (available on the Council website), which sets out the actions we will take in year to further our progress towards meeting our targets.
4. We have made positive progress against our Annual Delivery Plan (as evidenced in our latest Annual Report) and continue looking to the future and finding ways we can deliver the best for Nottinghamshire's communities, whilst ensuring value for money. Our budget is built on a foundation of solid financial management over many years.
5. Set against the backdrop of increased inflation and energy costs, additional demands on our services, an increase in complex and specialist health care needs, a national shortage of social care staff and a need for more Government funding, the 2023 annual budget survey set out how the Council spends its allocated budget, and asked Nottinghamshire residents for their views about our services, their priorities, and opportunities to reduce spend or raise additional revenue.
6. Building on the positive response from last year's survey, consideration was given as to how the 2023 budget survey could be further developed, this included a thorough review by Overview Committee. The full report ([29 June 2023](#)) is available on the Council's website, with recommendations having been considered in the design of this year's survey.

7. Further details on the design principles of this year’s survey can be found in the [21 September 2023](#) report presented to Cabinet, which outlined the proposed approach prior to launch.

Outreach and Responses

8. The budget survey launched on 29 September 2023 and closed on 12 November 2023. Building on last year’s budget survey, which at the time saw the highest number of responses received for a budget consultation run by the County Council in recent years; the latest 2023 budget survey has continued this positive uptrend, with this year’s survey having been completed by 3,911 respondents.

9. This is a significant improvement of 59% over the 2,454 responses received last year, and particularly noteworthy against comparable budget consultations conducted in recent years, which had not exceeded 1,400 responses.

10. The below showcases Nottinghamshire County Council’s response rate when compared against other local authorities, who have also recently conducted a budget consultation ¹ - for 2023, this equates to one in every 211 of Nottinghamshire residents having completed the survey.

(Financial) Year of consultation	County Council	No. of responses	Population ²	Response Rate
2023/24	Nottinghamshire	3911	826,257	1 in 211
	Hampshire	2935	1,406,199	1 in 479
	Kent	2620	1,578,519	1 in 602
2022/23	Hertfordshire	2935	1,200,620	1 in 409
	North Yorkshire	2654	618,847	1 in 233
	Suffolk	2617	763,375	1 in 292
	Essex	2434	1,506,345	1 in 619
	Derbyshire	2431	796,847	1 in 328
	Cambridgeshire	1458 ³	680,407	1 in 467
	Norfolk	805 ⁴	918,369	1 in 1141
	Gloucestershire	621	646,627	1 in 1041
	Oxfordshire	559	726,530	1 in 1300
Surrey	358	1,205,616	1 in 3368	

11. To achieve this latest response rate, Nottinghamshire County Council’s survey was publicised through a number of platforms, including:

- a dedicated space on the Council’s website, hosting background information and linking through to an online survey that was open to all Nottinghamshire residents.

¹ the table accounts for the total number of responses as a comparison against a county’s total population, it does not account for the different selection/ sampling methods other authorities may have adopted.

² source: LGInform.

³ combines findings from a door-to-door survey and website survey; potential overlap in respondents.

⁴ respondents could choose to comment on 4 different proposals; please note this number reflects responses rather than individual respondents.

- Emailme bulletin, sent to all 141,931 subscribers to the Council's emailme system. The initial email, sent on 29th September 2023 with a further reminder email, sent on 6th November 2023.
- Targeted communications to encourage completion were also sent to:
 - i. 178 Parish Councils
 - ii. Members of the business community - 14,245 recipients
 - iii. Citizen's Panel - 1714 recipients
- The Council also utilised social media to promote survey completion. 39 posts were published (19 on X, 19 Facebook and 1 LinkedIn) from 5 September 2023 through to 12 November 2023. In total these reached 24,900 residents, with 48,100 impressions and resulted in 21 comments, 40 likes and 54 shares/reposts.
- Polls were run on Instagram and X that were seen by over 900 people.
- Printed posters and survey booklets produced and distributed to 60 Libraries across the county. Completed copies of the survey could either be handed in at the library or posted back to the Council using the provided freepost address. Seven hard copy returns were received.
- Electronic versions of the posters and booklets were emailed to all elected members and children's centres, to promote and encourage survey completion.
- For residents needing support with completing the survey, there was also the option to phone the Council's Customer Service Centre, where the operative would assist and fill the survey out on the resident's behalf.
- A press release and newspaper column were sent countywide on 29 September, with the consultation link included in a number of press releases from across Departments, during October and November.
- The Cabinet Budget report on 9 November 2023 led to a number of interviews on TV, radio and in print with residents being encouraged to fill in the consultation. The Cabinet Member for Finance did a number of 1:1 interviews and discussed the consultation with regards to how it helps with budget planning.
- For examples of the types of digital material used to promote the survey, see **Appendix B**.

12. Although there is little evidence that the budget consultation specifically was a topic of discussion on social media, the issues consulted on i.e. highways, recycling, adult social care, libraries were discussed across all social platforms and there is a direct correlation with our social media posts and chats on community Facebook & X platforms.

Analysis

13. A high-level summary of the survey results can be seen below, with **Appendix A** providing a further overview of the data and information returned.

Living in Nottinghamshire

14. The first few questions were designed to help the Council understand residents' feelings about living in Nottinghamshire and how the Council supports people. When referring to 'local area', this meant anywhere within 15-20 minutes walking distance from the respondent's home.

15. The majority of respondents were positive about their local area as a place to live, with 69% specifically saying that they are 'very or fairly satisfied'. With regard to how satisfied respondents are with the way the Council runs things, 43% were 'very or fairly satisfied'.

16. When asked whether respondents agreed or disagreed that they can influence decisions affecting their local area, 15% had a positive view (strongly agree / agree) in their ability to influence decisions affecting their local area.

Budget Priorities

17. Asking respondents the extent to which they and their family access County Council services (frequently, occasionally, rarely, never, don't know), environmental services (waste and recycling, flooding and climate change) were the most frequently used by people who completed the survey, with 84% of respondents identifying that they make use of this either 'frequently', or 'occasionally'.

18. When ranking the three Nottinghamshire County Council services in order according to the services that benefit respondents the most, community and public transport was the service area most often identified by respondents as benefitting them and their communities, with 57% of respondents identifying this as one of their top three services. The other two services identified were environmental and care and support for vulnerable adults and older people.

19. When respondents were asked to what extent do you agree or disagree that the Council should reduce spend in a range of services to help meet the financial challenge (question 7), the majority of respondents did not agree or strongly agree with reductions to any of the services outlined in the survey document. Most respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with reductions.

Council Tax

20. In line with the maximum permissible Council Tax increase at the time of the survey, we asked respondents if they would support an increase in council tax, either up to the current referendum limit of 2.99%, or by a lower limit. Overall 63% of respondents would support an increase in council tax – 44% up to the current referendum limit and 19% would support an increase by lower than the referendum limit.

Adult Social Care Levy

21. In line with the maximum permissible increase at the time of the survey, respondents were also asked if they would support an increase in the Adult Social Care levy, either by the level currently permitted by Government (2%), or by a lower limit. 70% of people completing the survey would support an increase in the Adult Social Care Levy – 48% by the maximum level currently permitted, whilst 22% would support an increase by a lower level permitted.

Saving money and/or raising revenue

22. Question 9 offered respondents an opportunity to give suggestions about how the Council could save money or raise additional revenue, as a free text box option. The comments received as part of this were broken down as part of our analysis, into 14 specific themes, detail of which can be found in Appendix A.

Other Options Considered

23. Not to consult stakeholders – this would not enable the views of residents and other key stakeholders to be considered when Members make decisions as part of the budget setting process. Therefore, this option has not been pursued.

24. To conduct a different type of survey – this was considered by Members of the Overview Review Group who discussed the potential that, in future years, the questions and their format

could be amended to make them even more accessible, in a more interactive way. Members agreed that whilst there could be some potential benefits of large-scale changes to the format of the survey, making such changes would take considerable time and put significant demands on resources given the Council does not have a dedicated team for the management and delivery of consultation and engagement activity. Therefore, this option has not been pursued.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

25. To allow Cabinet the opportunity to review the results of the 2023 budget survey, when considering and developing the Council's annual budget in early 2024.

Statutory and Policy Implications

26. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

27. In addition to officer time in production of the survey, the approximate cost for the design and distribution of paper items is £922. This has been met from existing budgets.

Data Protection and Information Governance

28. A summary Data Protection Impact Assessment was completed and submitted to the Information Governance Team, detailing the tools that were to be utilised to run the consultation itself. Appropriate advice was taken regarding any impacts identified, prior to the survey launching.

Public Sector Equality Duty implications

29. In coming to a decision, Cabinet must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. Efforts were made to address potential accessibility issues in the design of the survey.

30. A summary Equality Impact Assessment specific to the budget consultation, was also completed.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

31. There was a reduction to the number of paper copies produced for this year's survey. This reflects our commitment to being sustainable and environmentally friendly and that the vast majority of respondents are now completing the survey online. Printed posters and booklets were sent to libraries to ensure the survey was accessible. Electronic versions of the posters and booklets were emailed to all elected members and children's centres, whilst paper copies were also available on request, via our Customer Service Centre.

RECOMMENDATION/S

1) That Cabinet considers the results of the 2023 budget survey in the development of the 2024-25 budget proposals.

COUNCILLOR BRUCE LAUGHTON

DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSFORMATION

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Isobel Fleming, Service Director Transformation and Change –
0115 854 6184, isobel.fleming@nottscc.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments (GR 24/11/23)

Pursuant to the Nottinghamshire County Constitution, the cabinet has the delegate authority to receive this report.

Financial Comments (PA 17/11/23)

There are no specific financial implications arising directly from the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- [The Nottinghamshire Plan, 2021-2031: Our plan for a healthy, prosperous and greener Nottinghamshire](#)
- [The Nottinghamshire Plan Annual Delivery Plan 2023-2024](#)
- [The Nottinghamshire Plan Annual Report 2022-2023](#)
- Outcomes of the Scrutiny Review of Council Consultations and Resident Engagement – Report to Overview Committee ([29 June 2023](#))
- Annual Budget Survey 2023 – Report to Cabinet ([21 September 2023](#))
- High-level survey results – **Appendix A**
- Digital material used to promote the survey – **Appendix B**
- 2023 Budget Survey booklet/ leaflet – **Appendix C**

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All.

ANNUAL BUDGET SURVEY 2023 – FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

For consistency, all percentages included below have been presented as whole numbers, with decimals rounded where appropriate.

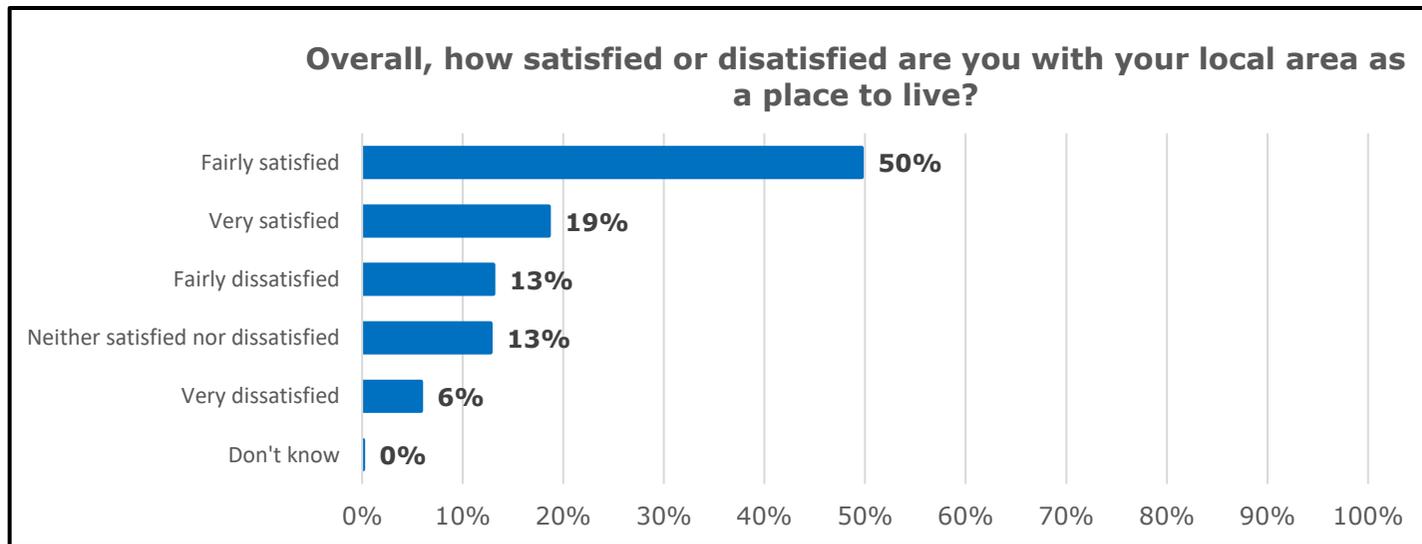
Total number of responses: 3,911

Satisfaction Questions ¹

The first three questions were designed to help the Council understand residents' feelings about living in Nottinghamshire and how the Council supports people. When referring to 'local area', this meant anywhere that is within 15-20minutes walking distance from the respondent's home.

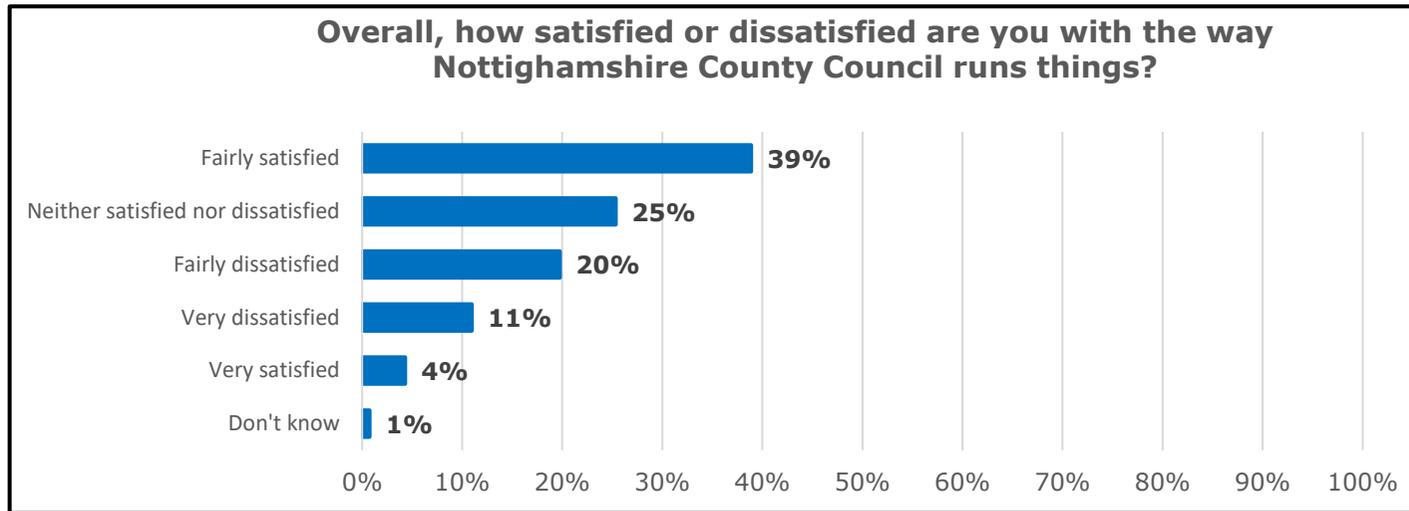
Question 1 – Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?

69% of respondents were positive about their local area as a place to live, 13% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, whilst 19% viewed it negatively.

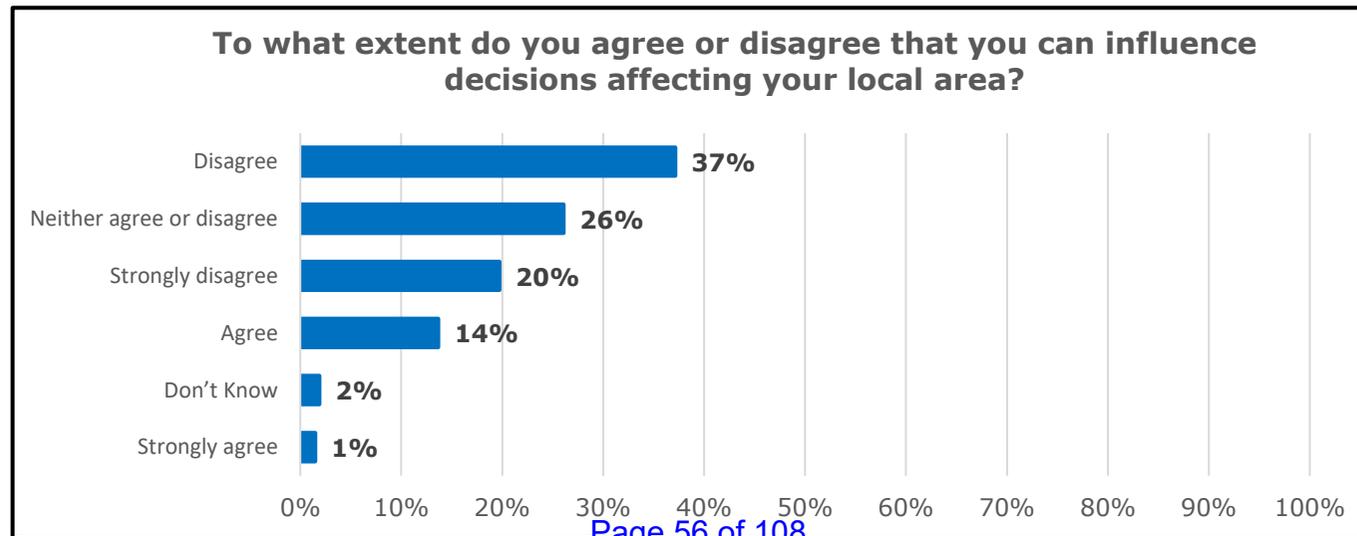


¹ Responses were grouped as positive (when answered as very satisfied or satisfied), neutral (when answered as neither satisfied or dissatisfied) or negative (when answered fairly dissatisfied or very dissatisfied).

Question 2 – Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Nottinghamshire County Council runs things?
43% were positive, 25% were neither satisfied or dissatisfied, 31% gave a negative response and 1% didn't know.



Question 3 – To what extent do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?
15% had a positive view in their ability to influence decisions affecting their local area, 26% were neutral, 57% had a negative response to this question, whilst 2% didn't know.



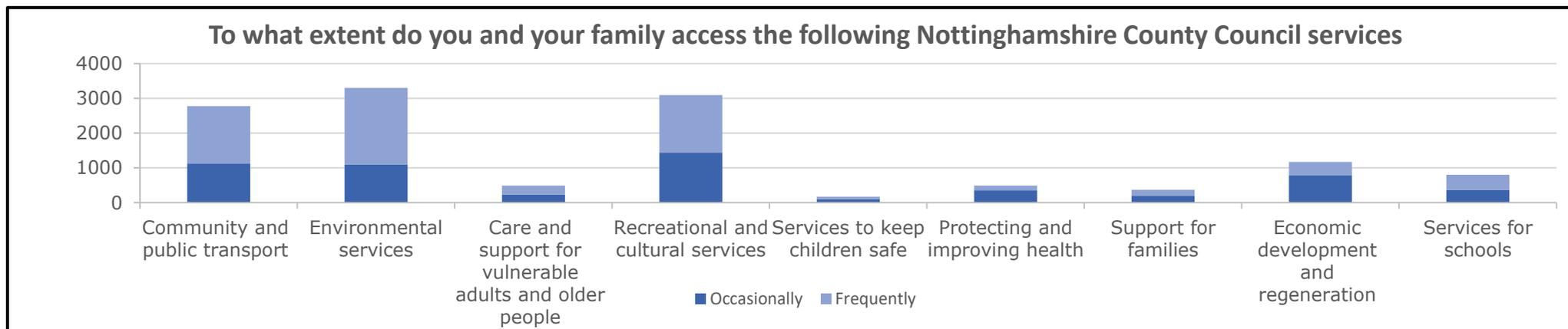
a) Budget Priorities

Question 4 - To what extent do you and your family access the following Nottinghamshire County Council services (frequently, occasionally, rarely, never, don't know). The service options were:

- care and support for vulnerable adults and older people (this includes services such as residential placements, day care, respite care, homecare, supported housing)
- services to keep children safe (including fostering, adoption, safeguarding and child protection, residential care, short breaks)
- support for families (including children centres, youth services, early years and childcare services)
- protecting and improving health (including helping to give children the best start, supporting people wanting to make healthy changes related to alcohol, drugs, tobacco, nutrition and exercise, mental wellbeing and suicide prevention, and giving particular attention to people living with the harmful impacts of homelessness and domestic violence)
- community and public transport (including planning and improvements, highway maintenance, bus travel including schools)
- environmental services (waste and recycling, flooding & climate change)
- economic development (including employment and skills, broadband, tourism)
- recreational and cultural services (including library services, arts, trails & country parks)
- services for school (including school admissions).

The services most frequently used by people who completed the survey were²:

- Environmental services, with 84% of respondents identifying that they make use of this either 'frequently', or 'occasionally'.
- Recreational and cultural services, with 79% of respondents identifying that they make use of this either 'frequently', or 'occasionally'.
- Community and public transport, with 71% of respondents identifying that they make use of this either 'frequently', or 'occasionally'.

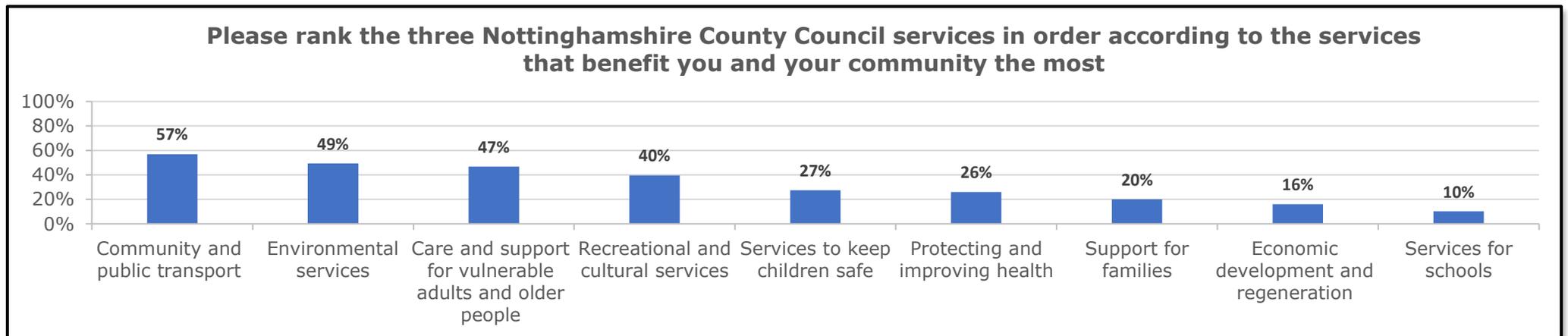


² Service usage (question 4) has been arranged in service priority order, to correspond with question 5.

Question 5 – Please rank the three Nottinghamshire County Council services in order according to the services that benefit you and your community the most (with 1 being highest priority and 3 being lowest priority).

The three services most often identified by respondents as benefitting them and their communities were³:

- Community and public transport, with 57% of respondents identifying this as one of their top three services.
- Environmental services, with 49% of respondents identifying this as one of their top three services.
- Care and support for vulnerable adults and older people, with 47% of respondents identifying this as one of their top three services.



Both environmental services and community and public transport featured among the top three services most frequently accessed by respondents, and were also included in the top three identified as benefitting respondents and their communities.

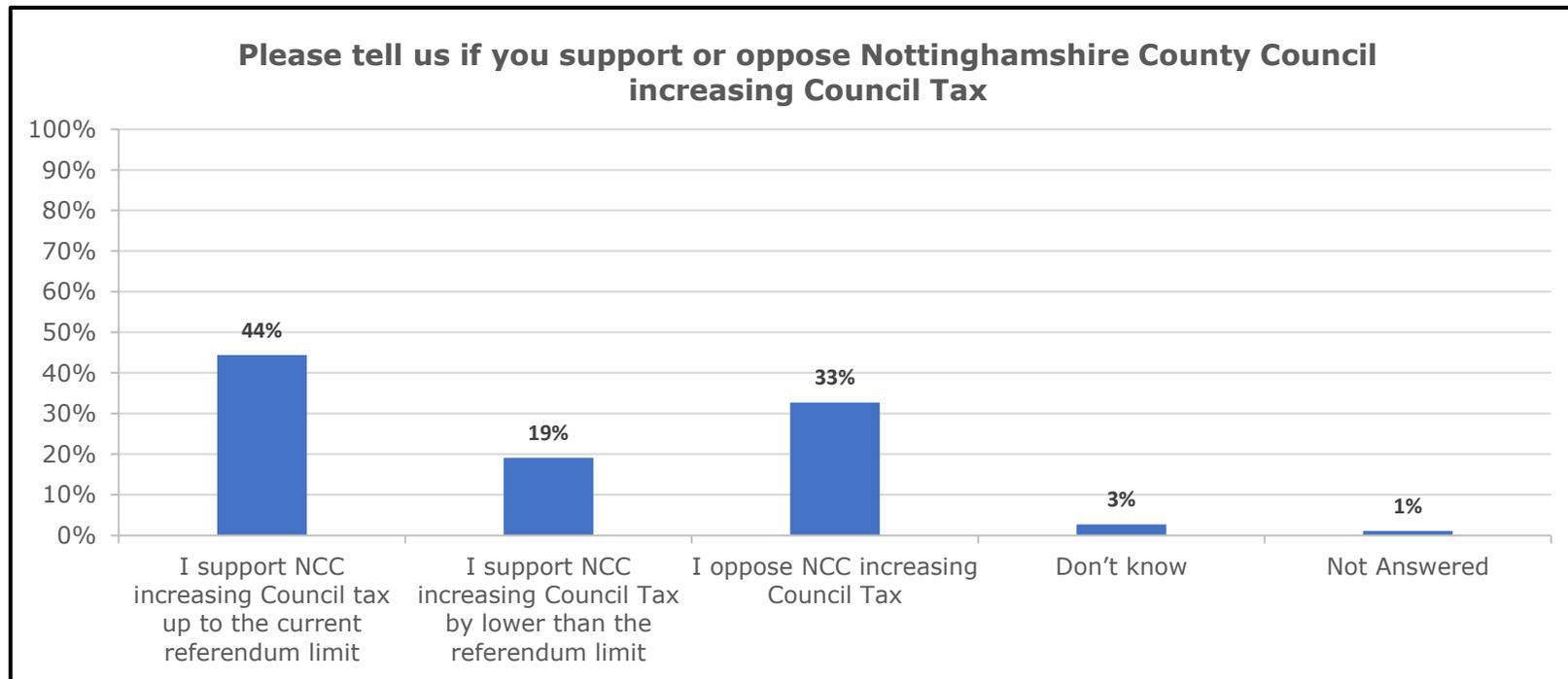
Services which were considered to benefit respondents and their communities, did not always mean that these were the frequently used services. For example, high priority was given to care and support for vulnerable adults and older people (47%), despite relatively low usage among respondents (13%).

³ The number of times a service was ranked as either priority 1, 2 or 3 was counted to calculate the percentage of respondents who had ranked that service as a priority from the overall number of respondents. Service priority was ranked by these percentages.

Question 6 - In February 2024, Full Council will consider the council tax rate will be from April 2024. In line with the maximum permissible Council Tax increase at the time, we asked respondents if they would support an increase in council tax, either up to the current referendum limit of 2.99%, or by a lower limit.

The majority of respondents (63%) would support an increase in council tax, either by the current level permitted by Government, or by a lower percentile increase.

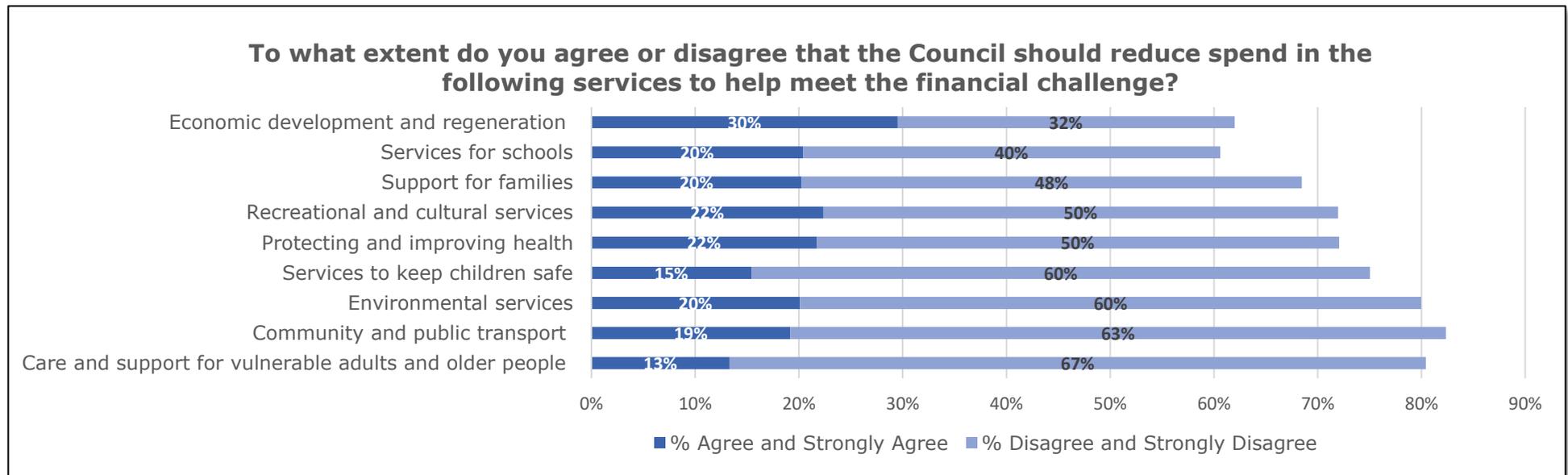
Specifically, results showed 44% of respondents would support an increase in council tax up to the current referendum limit, 19% would support an increase by lower than the referendum limit, 33% oppose the Council increasing council tax and 3% did not know. A small number (1%) of respondents did not answer this question.



Question 7 - To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Council should reduce spend in the following services to help meet the financial challenge?

Overall, the majority of respondents did not agree or strongly agree with reductions to any of the services outlined in the survey document. The closest to a majority was economic development and regeneration, with 30% of respondents selecting that they either agreed or strongly agreed. More respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with reductions to:

- Care and support for vulnerable adults and older people, with 67% of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with reductions to these services.
- Community and public transport, with 63% of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with reductions to these services.
- Services to keep children safe, and environmental services, both of which received 60% of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with reductions to these services.

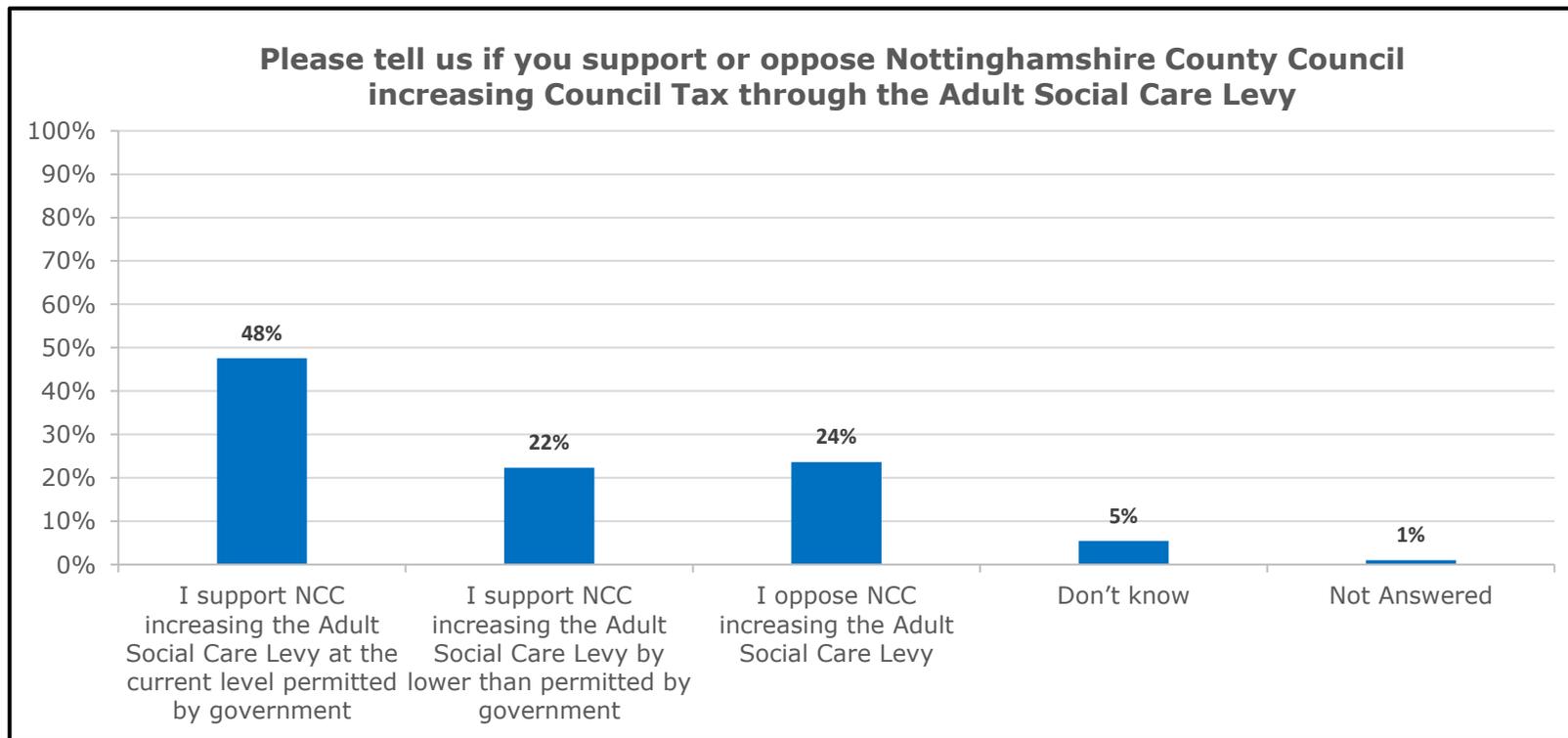


The areas identified to be least suitable for budget reduction broadly align with the services identified by respondents to be of most benefit to them and their communities.

Question 8 – In line with the maximum permissible increase at the time, respondents were also asked if they would support an increase in the Adult Social Care levy, either by the level currently permitted by Government (2%), or by a lower limit.

The majority of respondents would support an increase, either by the current level permitted by Government, or by a lower percentile increase (70% of total respondents).

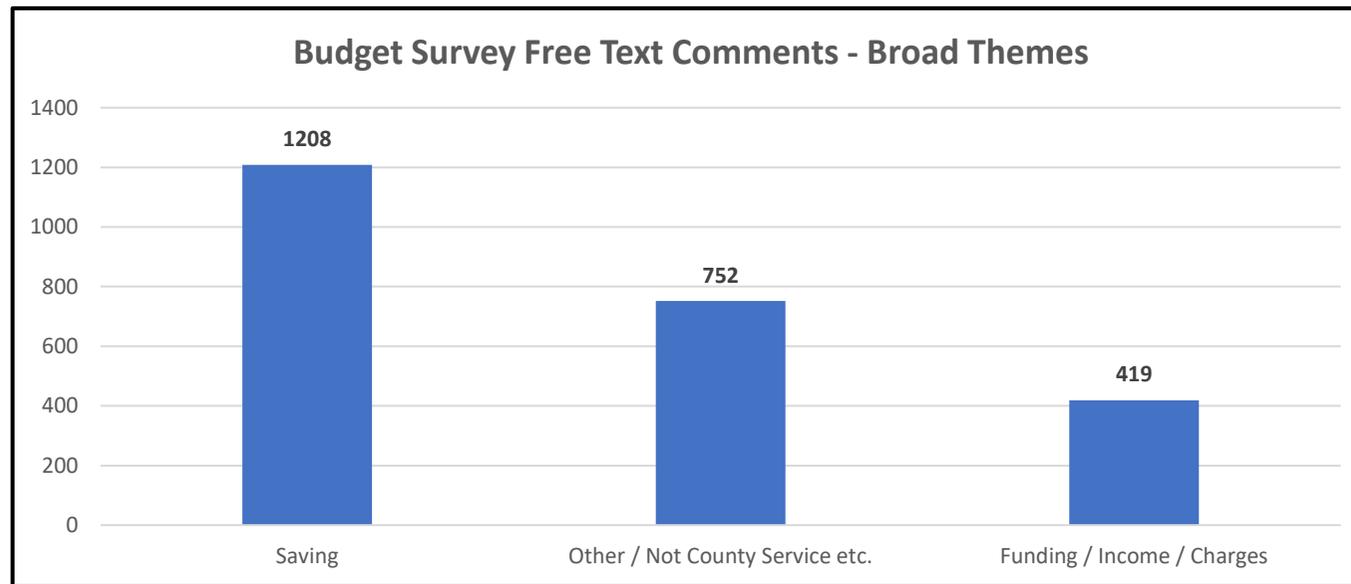
Specifically, 48% of people completing the survey would support an increase in the Adult Social Care Levy by the maximum level currently permitted, whilst 22% would support an increase by a lower level permitted. 24% opposed an increase, whilst 5% did not know. Only 1% of respondents did not answer this question.



Question 9 - The survey also offered respondents with an opportunity to give suggestions about how the council could save money or raise additional revenue, as a free text box option.

1,885 free text comments were received - representing 48% of respondents. Themes arising from these comments have been captured and analysed, with the three primary category of theme/s being "savings", "income", and "other".

1,208 comment themes (51%) related to savings, 752 (32%) to "other", and 419 (18%) to "income". "Other" included comments that did not relate to savings or income, and also comments that clearly did not relate to County Council functions.



14 more detailed themes were derived from the comments, with some comments containing multiple themes.

Efficiency / Performance was the most common theme with 491 mentions (occurring in 21% of comments). This is followed by Funding / Income / Charges, which had 419 mentions (18%).

Certain themes could be seen to overlap. For example, closer scrutiny of external contracts and bringing more outsourced / contracted functions inhouse were sometimes seen as ways of increasing efficiency.

Overall, 2379 mentions of different themes were logged and broken down by category. The below provides an explanation covering each theme.

Theme	Explanation
Efficiency / Performance	Ensuring all services are operating as efficiently as possible and getting things right first time.
Funding / Income / Charges	Increasing income from a range of streams including lobbying central government for more funding, increasing council tax, encouraging business sponsorship, holding more paid events, charging for services that are currently free, increasing enforcement income, having a local lottery.
Roads / Transport	Making sure roads are properly maintained / improved, to save money, and to support economic development
Essential Services / Prioritise	Focusing only on essential services (getting back to basics), properly targeting services to those who need them most.
Salaries / Expenses (Staff / Members)	Considering the salaries / expenses for elected members and / or staff.
Staffing / Members (Number / Layers)	Considering the number of elected members and / or staff needed to fulfil the Councils core duties.
Estate / Assets	Selling or renting out under-used NCC buildings to save money and/or generate revenue.
Contracts / In-house delivery / Procurement	Considering how services are best delivered to (in-house or external to the Council) and reviewing all external contracts and procurement to maximise value for money.
Prevention - Early Intervention	Moving more towards prevention and early in areas like adults and children's social care and highway maintenance, to avoid escalation of needs and costs
Combine Councils / Share Services	Combining services, premises and councils where possible to ensure efficiency and avoid duplication.
Energy / Recycling / Environment	Ensuring the energy efficiency and recycling is maximised, for example by turning off street-lights at night where safe to do so, and reducing heating and lighting in council buildings
Economic Development / Tourism	Encouraging more businesses and tourism, exploiting and promoting local attractions more, getting more local people back into employment
Volunteers / Offenders / Community	Encouraging more community involvement and volunteering in providing services such as maintenance of green spaces.
Technology	Making more use of new technology to increase efficiency and cut costs in areas like adult social care
Other / Not County Service etc.	Covers a wide range of topics and functions not directly related to Nottinghamshire County Council but provided by the City Council, Districts, Police, central government and other agencies

b) Demographics

- The most common age range of respondents was between 65-74 years of age (27%), closely followed by those aged 55-64 (26%).
- Respondents, aged 45 and over, represented 83% of respondents. This is significantly higher than the Office of National Statistics 2021 mid-year estimate of Nottinghamshire's 45+ population, which was estimated to be only 49%.
- 45% of respondents were Male, 50% of respondents were Female, which is similar to the population split for Nottinghamshire (Office of National Statistics 2021 mid-year estimates: 49% Males / 51% Females).
- Responders who identified their ethnicity as White/British stood at 89%. Again, this is similar to the proportion of Nottinghamshire residents who identify their ethnicity as White/British according to Office of National Statistics 2021 mid-year estimates (88%).
- The district of Gedling was the most common locality respondents identified as residing in (20%), followed by Rushcliffe (18%).
- 91% of respondents did not consider themselves to be a care experienced person, 4% did identify, 4% preferred not to say and 1% did not answer.
- 7% of respondents had served in the Armed Forces
- The most common employment status of respondents was 'wholly retired from work', which represented 39%. This was followed by 'employed in full-time job (30 years plus per week)', which had 31%. The lowest was 'unemployed and unable to work' (less than 1%).
- With regards to how respondents heard about the survey, the most popular route was via email from the County Council (78%), the next nearest was social media, which accounted for 7%, whilst the MyNotts app represented 5%. Less than 1% of respondents heard about the survey via the printed material from libraries.
- 27% of respondents identified as having a long-term health need or disability, 64% said no, 7% preferred not to say and 2% didn't answer. The most common issue reported was mobility (14%), followed by hearing (7%), and mental health (6%).

ANNUAL BUDGET SURVEY 2023 – FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

The below showcases some of the digital material that was used to promote and highlight the budget survey for 2023:

Digital bus shelter ad / Budget Survey poster

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE | supporting independence, building resilience

Have your say on how your council budget is spent

29 September to 12 November

The budget survey takes just minutes to complete

As the council faces increased costs and demands on its services, help us rise to the challenge of balancing the budget in the best way to improve life in Nottinghamshire for all.

Visit: nottinghamshire.gov.uk/budgetsurvey
Alternatively, pick-up a printed copy at your local library or give us a call on: **0300 500 80 80**

Find out first... emailme | facebook.com/nottinghamshire | @NottsCC

Nottinghamshire County Council

049 064 2316/27

EmailMe banner

Have your say on the budget | 29 September - 12 November

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE | supporting independence, building resilience

Example social media post

Nottinghamshire County Council @NottsCC

! Only two days left to have your say

We want to know your priorities to help us create a healthy, prosperous, and greener future for everyone who lives in #Notts

You can help us do this by completing our quick survey
orlo.uk/BudgetSurvey_O...

Nottinghamshire County Council

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE | supporting independence, building resilience

The budget survey is now open until 12 November, so have your say today on how together we can best rise to the challenge.

ALT

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

supporting independence,
building resilience

Budget Survey 2023

29 September to
12 November

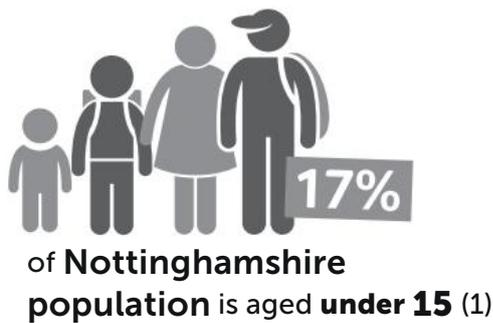
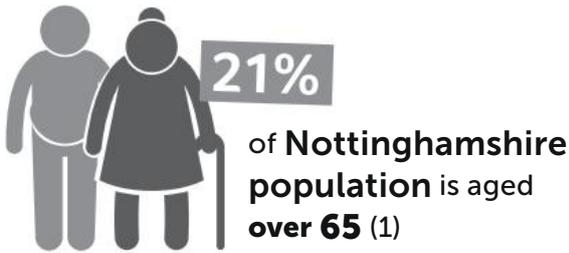


Have your say on how your
council budget is spent

nottinghamshire.gov.uk/budgetsurvey



State of the County – Key Facts and Figures



Nottinghamshire's population is expected to grow from **824,800** in 2021 to **895,300** in 2031 (a 9% increase)



- Notes:** (1) ONS, 2021 census
(2) ONS, Annual Population Survey (APS), December 2022
(3) ONS, Subnational Population Projections, 2018



What Nottinghamshire County Council does

We want to create a healthy, prosperous and greener future for everyone who lives and works in Nottinghamshire, as is set out in our 10 year vision, The Nottinghamshire Plan 2021-2031 (<https://plan.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/>). The building blocks for this include healthy early years, education, employment and transport, as well as access to services for people needing more specialist support.

As part of this the County Council provides a huge range of services. This includes providing essential care and support for vulnerable older people. This is where the vast majority of the Council's budget is spent. The Council also provides help, protection and care for hundreds of children and young people through a wide range of services such as children's centres, youth services and children's social care. We help people with learning disabilities into education and work. We support people out of hospital to get back onto their feet.

We also maintain thousands of miles of roads and pavements, commission major road projects and play a big role in planning public transport. We're also a lead agency for flood prevention.

We run Trading Standards, protecting consumers and supporting businesses across Nottinghamshire. We fund partners to run our libraries and cultural services, as well as some of the best country parks and visitor attractions in the County.

We officiate thousands of weddings as part of the important role we play in registrations. We support the school admissions process. We also fund and commission new schools. We attract inward investment into the county, promoting and supporting access to modern, reliable broadband services, whilst we also work with partners to pave the way for investment to support businesses, jobs and housing.

We work with communities to strengthen the building blocks for good health, helping to give children the best start, supporting people wanting to make healthy changes relating to alcohol, drugs, tobacco, nutrition and exercise, and giving particular attention to people living with the harmful impacts of homelessness and domestic violence.

Each year we have a legal duty to balance our budget and just like the people in Nottinghamshire, we're also feeling the pressures that are driving up the cost of living such as record inflation and energy costs. We also have additional demands on our services, including an increase in complex and specialist health care needs and a national shortage of social care staff. To see specific actions we are aiming to delivery over the coming months, see our Annual Delivery Plan 2023-2024 (<https://plan.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/our-progress/>), which sets out what we will do this financial year to achieve our ambitions. It also contains the measures that we will use to monitor our progress towards achieving each of the overarching ambitions found within The Nottinghamshire Plan.

How we are rising to the challenge

From 2024/25 onwards, the Council is projecting a budget shortfall of £30.8m across the duration of our Medium Term Financial Strategy, to 2026/27.

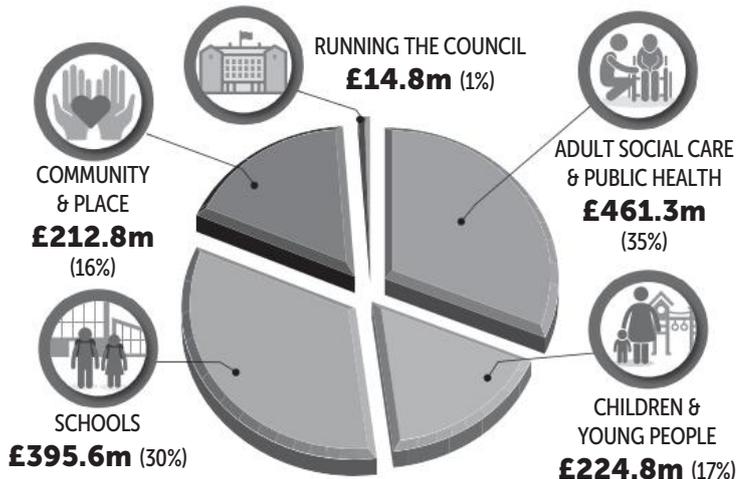
As a council we have a proven track record in balancing our budgets and saving money. We've delivered substantial savings over the last 10 years, in part by transforming the way we deliver some of our key services. We also continue to do all we can to mitigate and reduce pressures on our budget, whilst introducing life changing 'prevention' services that help to reduce demand for expensive care.

We are working to keep children safe at home wherever possible and to get more children who need specialist care into long-term family-based placements, including foster families and kinship care. Family-based placements improve children's life chances and cost the Council less.

Investing in our highways also helps us to boost the economy and deliver better value to the taxpayer. For example, we build major new roads and junctions that will support people and businesses. We're also changing the way we maintain our 2,500 miles of roads to reduce costs and improve our service. You can see a wide range of achievements in our Annual Report 2022-2023 (<https://plan.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/our-progress/>).

We want you to tell us what matters to you.

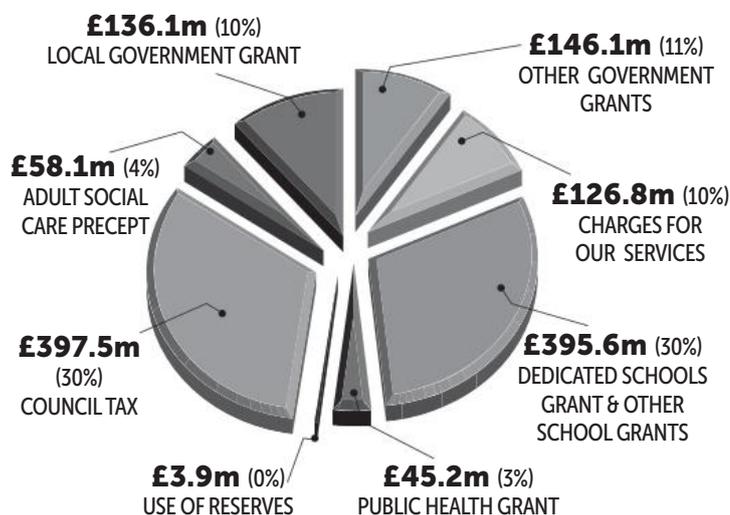
How we spend our annual revenue budget



The Council spends most of its money on Adult Social Care and Public Health (£461.3m), followed by schools (£395.6m).

Community and place services are allocated £212.8m, with services for children and young people allocated a similar amount of money (£224.8m). £14.8m (roughly 1 per cent of money) is allocated to the running of the Council.

How the Council is funded



The Council's biggest source of funding is from Council Tax at £397.5m. The next biggest is from the Dedicated Schools Grant and other school grants at £395.6m.

The Local Government Grant makes up £136.1m with other Government grants making up £146.1m. Charges for services amount to £126.8m. The Public Health Grant is £45.2m, whilst the Adult Social Care Precept brought in £58.1m.

Percentages are presented for illustrative purposes and therefore shown to their nearest whole number

Have your say

As we look to set our budget for 2024/25 we are asking people to complete a survey about what they think our priorities should be.

The easiest way to complete the survey is online at: www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/budgetsurvey

- Complete this printed copy and hand it in at the council building where you picked it up or send it to the freepost address shown on the back.
- Call us on **0300 500 80 80** to complete the survey over the phone.

- If you are deaf or hard of hearing, you can use the text relay service by dialling **18001 0115 9774050** from your textphone or the Relay UK app.
- Or, download the SignVideo app to communicate with us in British Sign Language via an interpreter. Visit nottinghamshire.gov.uk/contact-us for more information.

Feedback regarding the results of this consultation will be available on our website in spring 2024.

LIVING IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

The following questions are designed to help the Council understand residents' feelings about living in Nottinghamshire and how the Council supports people. When referring to your 'local area', we mean anywhere that is within 15-20 minutes walking distance from your home.

01 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very satisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> Fairly satisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fairly dissatisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> Very dissatisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

02 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Nottinghamshire County Council runs things?

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very satisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> Fairly satisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fairly dissatisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> Very dissatisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

03 To what extent do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

Budget priorities

We know that people are facing pressures on their household finances.

Demand on our services for older people, people with disabilities and for vulnerable children are increasing. Government grants have reduced whilst inflation, and the challenges in meeting the National Living Wage, mean our services are more expensive than ever to deliver. As we look to set our budget for 2024, we want you to tell us which services are important to you. This will help us to understand what we should prioritise and where there are the potential opportunities to make savings.

04 To what extent do you and your family access the following Nottinghamshire County Council services

- care and support for vulnerable adults and older people (this includes services such as residential placements, day care, respite care, homecare, supported housing)

- | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frequently | <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally | <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely | <input type="checkbox"/> Never | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|

- services to keep children safe (including fostering, adoption, safeguarding and child protection, residential care, short breaks)

Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never Don't Know

- support for families (including children centres, youth services, early years and childcare services)

Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never Don't Know

- protecting and improving health (including helping to give children the best start, supporting people wanting to make healthy changes related to alcohol, drugs, tobacco, nutrition and exercise, mental wellbeing and suicide prevention, and giving particular attention to people living with the harmful impacts of homelessness and domestic violence)

Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never Don't Know

- community and public transport (including planning and improvements, highway maintenance, bus travel including schools)

Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never Don't Know

- environmental services (waste and recycling, flooding & climate change)

Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never Don't Know

- economic development and regeneration (including employment and skills, broadband, tourism)

Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never Don't Know

- recreational and cultural services (including library services, arts, trails & country parks)

Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never Don't Know

- services for schools (including school admissions)

Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never Don't Know



05

Please rank the three Nottinghamshire County Council services in order according to the services that benefit you and your community the most - with 1 being the highest priority and 3 being lowest priority to you. Please do not select more than 3 services.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> care and support for vulnerable adults and older people (this includes services such as residential placements, day care, respite care, homecare, supported housing) | <input type="checkbox"/> community and public transport (including planning and improvements, highway maintenance, bus travel including schools) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> services to keep children safe (including fostering, adoption, safeguarding and child protection, residential care, short breaks) | <input type="checkbox"/> environmental services (waste and recycling, flooding & climate change) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> support for families (including children centres, youth services, early years and childcare services) | <input type="checkbox"/> economic development and regeneration (including employment and skills, broadband, tourism) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> protecting and improving health (including helping to give children the best start, supporting people wanting to make healthy changes related to alcohol, drugs, tobacco, nutrition and exercise, mental wellbeing and suicide prevention, and giving particular attention to people living with the harmful impacts of homelessness and domestic violence) | <input type="checkbox"/> recreational and cultural services (including library services, arts, trails & country parks) |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> services for schools (including school admissions) |

In February 2024, Full Council will consider what the Council Tax Rate will be from April 2024. When setting Council Tax we need to consider that more and more people in Nottinghamshire are needing help from the Council, and the cost of these services goes up every year. One option to fund these increases is to raise Council Tax. Whilst subject to change, the maximum increase currently permitted (referendum limit) is 2.99% and for every 1% increase, our latest estimates show that this raises (or avoids cutting) roughly £4.5m a year. Each 1% increase would mean approximately, an additional 33p a week for a Band D property.

The Council would still need to make some savings, but an increase in Council Tax would support us in balancing the budget. Based on this:

06

Please tell us if you support or oppose Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) increasing Council Tax:

- I support NCC increasing Council tax up to the current referendum limit
- I support NCC increasing Council Tax by lower than the referendum limit
- I oppose NCC increasing Council Tax
- Don't know

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Council should reduce spend in the following services to help meet the financial challenge?

- care and support for vulnerable adults and older people (this includes services such as residential placements, day care, respite care, homecare, supported housing)

<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

- services to keep children safe (including fostering, adoption, safeguarding and child protection, residential care, short breaks)

<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

- support for families (including children centres, youth services, early years and childcare services)

<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

- protecting and improving health (including helping to give children the best start, supporting people wanting to make healthy changes related to alcohol, drugs, tobacco, nutrition and exercise, mental wellbeing and suicide prevention, and giving particular attention to people living with the harmful impacts of homelessness and domestic violence)

<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

- community and public transport (including planning and improvements, highway maintenance, bus travel including schools)

<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

- environmental services (including waste and recycling, flooding & climate change)

<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

- economic development and regeneration (including employment and skills, broadband, tourism)

<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

- recreational and cultural services (including library services, arts, trails & country parks)

<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

- services for schools (including school admissions)

<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

ABOUT YOU

The Council and partners are committed to ensuring that all of its services are delivered fairly and in compliance with its public sector duties within the Equality Act 2010. The questions in this section are voluntary but the more information you provide, then the more we can learn about customers' views of our services.

WHAT IS YOUR AGE? TICK ONE BOX ONLY

<input type="checkbox"/> Under 18	<input type="checkbox"/> 35-44	<input type="checkbox"/> 65-74
<input type="checkbox"/> 18-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 45-54	<input type="checkbox"/> 75+
<input type="checkbox"/> 25-34	<input type="checkbox"/> 55-64	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say

WHAT IS YOUR GENDER? TICK ONE BOX ONLY

<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female
<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say	
<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer to self-describe (specify)	
<input type="text"/>	

WHAT IS YOUR ETHNIC ORIGIN? TICK ONE BOX ONLY

<input type="checkbox"/> White - English/Welsh/Scottish/ Northern Irish/British	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Asian British - Chinese
<input type="checkbox"/> White - Irish	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Asian British - Any other Asian background (please state)
<input type="checkbox"/> White - Gypsy or Traveller	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> White - any other background (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/> Black/Black British
<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Black/Black British - African
<input type="checkbox"/> Mixed - Black Caribbean & White	<input type="checkbox"/> Black/Black British - Caribbean
<input type="checkbox"/> Mixed - Black African & White	<input type="checkbox"/> Black/Black British - Any other Black, background (please state)
<input type="checkbox"/> Mixed - Asian & White	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Mixed - any other mixed background (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/> Arab
<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Any other ethnic group (please state)
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Asian British - Indian	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Asian British - Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi	

DO YOU HAVE A LONG-TERM HEALTH NEED OR DISABILITY?

TICK ONE BOX ONLY

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
------------------------------	-----------------------------	--

PLEASE SPECIFY WHAT ACCESS NEEDS YOU HAVE

<input type="checkbox"/> Mobility	<input type="checkbox"/> Vision	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health	<input type="checkbox"/> Hearing
<input type="checkbox"/> Learning	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say			

WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS? TICK ONE BOX ONLY

<input type="checkbox"/> Employed in full-time job (30 hours plus per week)	<input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed and not currently seeking work
<input type="checkbox"/> Employed in part-time job (under 30 hours per week)	<input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed and seeking work
<input type="checkbox"/> Self employed - full-time	<input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed and unable to work
<input type="checkbox"/> Self employed - part-time	<input type="checkbox"/> Long-term sick or disabled
<input type="checkbox"/> Employed on an apprenticeship	<input type="checkbox"/> Wholly retired from work
<input type="checkbox"/> Full-time education or training (not working)	<input type="checkbox"/> Looking after family/home (e.g. homemaker, carer)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Not working - other
	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say

WHEREABOUTS DO YOU LIVE?

<input type="checkbox"/> Ashfield	<input type="checkbox"/> Rushcliffe
<input type="checkbox"/> Bassetlaw	<input type="checkbox"/> Nottingham City
<input type="checkbox"/> Broxtowe	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
<input type="checkbox"/> Gedling	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Mansfield	
<input type="checkbox"/> Newark and Sherwood	

Care experienced is someone who, at any stage of their childhood, and for any length of time, has been in care e.g. looked after by the local authority. Based on this;

DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF TO BE A CARE EXPERIENCED PERSON?

TICK ONE BOX ONLY

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
------------------------------	-----------------------------	--

TICK HERE IF YOU HAVE SERVED IN THE UK ARMED FORCES, REGULAR OR RESERVE:

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THIS SURVEY? TICK ONE BOX ONLY

- County Council Councillors
- Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)
- MyNotts app
- Email from County Council
- Email from another organisation

- Posters/leaflets in libraries
- Town/Parish Councils
- Local media (e.g. newspaper, radio, TV)
- Word of mouth
- Other (please specify)

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE SURVEY.

Please hand it in at the council building where you picked it up or send it back to:

FREEPOST RTCU-CTYJ-XXKA

**Notts Survey, Nottinghamshire County Council,
County Hall, Loughborough Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 7QP**

Data Protection

Personal data supplied on this survey will be held electronically and will be used in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Act (2021). The information you provide will be used for statistical analysis, management, planning and the provision of services by the County Council.

For more information explaining how NCC protects and uses your information read its Consultations and Surveys privacy statement by visiting <https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/consultationsandsurveysprivacynotice>

When completed online, the survey data is hosted by Delib who are acting as data processors for this service and as such will not pass your data to any individuals or agencies. To read their privacy policy visit https://www.delib.net/legal/privacy_notice

We want to ensure we hear from all of our communities. Please contact us if you need this document in an alternative format or language.



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W nottinghamshire.gov.uk
E policy@nottscc.gov.uk
T 0300 500 80 80

Nottinghamshire County Council,
County Hall, Loughborough Road,
West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 7QP

**REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ASSET
MANAGEMENT****SPHERICAL TOKAMAK for ENERGY PRODUCTION (STEP) FUSION PROJECT UPDATE****Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide an update to Cabinet regarding the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority's (UKAEA) Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production, (STEP) fusion project and to seek approval for the County Council's further role in facilitating the benefits of the STEP prototype being located at West Burton.

Background

2. STEP was announced as part of the Government's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution in 2020, and is an ambitious Government led programme to design and construct a prototype fusion power plant. It will result in the UK being one of the first countries in the world to commercialise fusion energy and therefore be at the international forefront of the clean energy revolution.
3. The programme is being led by the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) which launched a nationwide search for a site to host its ground-breaking STEP fusion project in early 2021. The decision to select West Burton as the home of STEP was formally announced in October 2022.
4. In line with the UKAEA's project timetable, work is underway on the evidence gathering phase. This is focused on better understanding the wider West Burton site and undertaking detailed site-specific assessments.
5. Between 2024 and 2032, the design of the STEP facility will be further developed through detailed engineering design and, at the same time, planning permission to build the power plant will be sought. The aim is to have a fully evolved design and approval to build by 2032, enabling construction to begin. By 2040 STEP will bring the world's first commercially viable fusion plant into commission.
6. On 6 February 2023 the Science and Innovation Minister, George Freeman, speaking at West Burton, announced the creation of UK Industrial Fusion Solutions Ltd (UKIFS). The establishment of UKIFS will enable STEP to accelerate its journey towards delivery of electricity from fusion energy to the grid. The new body is established as a programme delivery organisation, driving performance and pace and engaging industry in this endeavour. The delivery of STEP will be led by UKIFS, as a wholly owned subsidiary of the UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA), with Professor Sir Ian Chapman remaining as the UKAEA Group CEO.

7. On 19 October 2023, the Minister for Nuclear and Networks, Andrew Bowie MP, further announced the appointment of Paul Methven as the inaugural CEO of UK Industrial Fusion Solutions (UKIFS). The County Council has been working closely with Paul in his role with the UKAEA and welcomes his appointment which ensures continuity of partnership working.
8. Minister Bowie made the announcement during his first visit to STEP's home at West Burton where he also emphasised the wider benefits the programme will bring to the region, saying: *"The STEP programme is at the heart of our Fusion Strategy – key to making the potential of new fusion energy a commercial reality, and to drive economic growth."*

Securing STEP in Nottinghamshire

9. The County Council played a key role securing STEP by acting as the nominating body and working with the landowner, relevant Local Authorities and a wide range of stakeholders such as the Midlands Engine, D2N2 LEP, local universities and businesses to promote West Burton as the site for STEP. The Council continues to play a key role in promoting STEP by securing stakeholder engagement and ensuring major economic funding initiatives such as the East Midlands Investment Zone are linked closely to the presence of STEP in Nottinghamshire.

Ambition 7 of The Nottinghamshire Plan 2021-2031 - Attracting investment in infrastructure, the economy and green growth - states that the Council will: *"with the owners of Nottinghamshire's coal-fired power stations, we'll plan long-term futures for them to secure investment and create new jobs. We'll also continue working with our partners on technological innovations like Spherical Tokamak Energy Production (fusion power) to benefit Nottinghamshire's economy and environment."*

STEP Enabling Collaboration: a proposed approach update

10. In order to build on the successful collaboration that helped to secure STEP, the Council and key stakeholders have continued to shape the approach to collaboration as proposed in a previous report to Cabinet in March 2023. This approach is building a strong network to ensure that the socio-economic benefits are realised for communities, businesses, and academic institutions across the county and wider geographic area.
11. Continued progress has been ensured through the STEP Collaboration Programme Team which has continued to meet monthly, and the Programme Interface Board which has met on a regular basis.
12. At a more strategic level the STEP Strategic Collaboration Group held its inaugural meeting on 20 September 2023. Chaired by Sir John Peace (Midlands Engine) with representatives from EDF, UKAEA, academia including Nottingham University and the Energy Research Accelerator (ERA), MPs, Midlands Connect, and Bassetlaw District Council. The representatives from the County Council included the Chief Executive, the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Asset Management.
13. The Group was set up to support and create an attractive inward investment environment for fusion and associated industries in the region. Its aims are to maximise the benefits of the STEP programme being located in Nottinghamshire, and to promote wider enabling matters not covered by the STEP programme but complementary to it. It will also provide an ambassadorial role linking into government departments and agencies and encouraging and working with fusion companies and organisations wishing to relocate to the region to better understand the conditions required to improve the long-term success of the region as a base for such industries.

14. The Group was keen to ensure that it is action driven and the following were the essential actions which emerged from its first meeting:

- *Widen the group to include representatives from Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities (DLUHC) and Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), Lincolnshire County Council, West Lindsey District Council and the East Midlands Combined Authority.*
- *Further develop the partnership working between the different parties as the detail around the STEP project increases.*
- *Commission the STEP Economic Impact Assessment (EIA).*
- *Begin work on developing a vision for the local area around the STEP site at West Burton including the two other decommissioned coal fired power stations at Cottam and High Marnham. Ensuring the vision for the area ties into the UKAEA's vision that is being developed specifically for the STEP site at West Burton.*
- *Working collectively to identify and start to develop transport schemes that would be required for the STEP development due to long lead in times.*
- *Ensure that these meetings happen on a more frequent basis than that originally proposed. The next meeting of the STEP Strategic Collaboration Group is scheduled for 31 January 2024.*

15. Actions taken to date:

- All the additional organisations proposed have been approached and all have agreed to join the Group as active participants.
- In terms of further developing the partnership as STEP progresses, key considerations are resources and capacity. The time is right to consider further resources and officer capacity. In this respect, establishing a dedicated Programme & Stakeholder Manager should be considered and funding opportunities for the role explored further. The County Council could act as the employing body as it has done for the emerging EMCCA secondees and interim appointments.
- It has been agreed that the cost of the EIA will be made up of contributions from the UKAEA, Nottinghamshire County Council, Bassetlaw District Council, Lincolnshire County Council and West Lindsey District Council. The Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Assessment Management has approved the County Council's contribution and that the County Council undertake the procurement of the EIA on behalf of the STEP partners.

Emerging vision

16. Following the direction given by the Group, consideration is now being given to how best to develop a strong and coherent partner vision for STEP, to act as a platform for the longer-term development of the programme and the North Notts area. It is intended that the vision will set out how STEP is an anchor for the wider area and a cluster point for green industries, helping STEP partners to attract major industry, innovative businesses and research and design, and other investment in fusion, in clean energy, and related supply chains from around the world. North Nottinghamshire has real potential, with its energy infrastructure of former coal fired power stations, alongside other opportunities from Government, such as the East Midlands Investment Zone with its focus on green industry and advanced manufacturing, to be a national and internal focal point for inward investment over the coming decades. The emerging East Midlands Combined County Authority will be a catalyst to help

harness investment, boost local skills and deliver the infrastructure needed to ensure the maximum possible benefit from STEP for residents.

17. The vision for STEP will also consider emerging Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) in the area, to support a proactive approach to integrated development that will best support STEP and ensure the greatest and most sustainable set of benefits for the region. Given the desire to develop a unified vision for the area, driven by green industry and advanced manufacturing that offers both high skills and high-volume employment, STEP partners will look to work collaboratively with all private sector partners (including energy promoters) to deliver and achieve shared long-term objectives for energy generation in the area.
18. Work is underway to consider the joint commissioning approach for the wider vision described above. In addition, the UKAEA has appointed transport consultants to commence the site-specific transport requirements. This will interrelate with the wider visioning work to ensure a comprehensive and strategic long-term consideration of transport requirements.

Other Options Considered

19. The selection of the West Burton site has secured the high-profile STEP project in Nottinghamshire. This will result in the creation of thousands of highly skilled jobs in Nottinghamshire and across the East Midlands and drive the green industrial revolution. As a result, the 'do nothing' option was discounted.

Reasons for Recommendations

20. Fusion generated energy is needed to radically decrease carbon emissions. The County Council has an ambition to raise the profile of Nottinghamshire, doing all the authority can to create the best conditions for investment and growth. Nottinghamshire as home to the UK's ground-breaking prototype fusion power plant will pave the way to a supply of low carbon, clean energy and help support thousands of new highly skilled jobs.
21. By acting as the nominating body, the County Council has been instrumental in securing STEP in the County. It can continue to facilitate the delivery process and ensure that the knowledge from a wide range of bodies and stakeholders can be harnessed and fed into the next stage to ensure economic growth opportunities are fully realised.

Statutory and Policy Implications

22. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

23. There were short term County Council resource requirements to support the successful STEP site nomination submission which amounted to £50,000 which was funded through the Investment and Growth Service budget.

24. The focus on supporting the additional work for the final stages of the nomination process were identified as an additional budget requirement of up to £100,000 including programme leadership, technical information gathering, research, public relations, programme coordination and associated activity. A range of these resources including officer capacity have previously been commissioned through Arc Partnership Limited. Those costs were met from the Investment and Growth Services budget for major projects.

25. Stakeholders including the UKAEA, Midlands Engine and Bassetlaw District Council have combined expertise and financial resources in order to fund studies such as the economic impact assessment. The County Council provided an allocation of up to £200,000 from the existing Investment & Growth Services budget to continue to develop the STEP programme for economic growth alongside contributions from other parties.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1) notes the current proposals for the regional collaboration arrangements which continue to be progressed as outlined in the report, subject to any future approvals by the relevant decision makers required to establish these bodies, agree their terms of reference and nominate relevant members and officers to them;
- 2) approves the building of capacity across the partners to drive the STEP programme forward;
- 3) agrees to receive a further report to review the delivery of STEP and the collaboration arrangements in twelve months' time.

Cllr Keith Girling

Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Asset Management

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Andy Evans, Programme Director, 0115 977 3915 andy.evans@nottscc.gov.uk

26. Constitutional Comments (LW 28/11/2023)

The recommendations fall within the remit of the Cabinet by virtue of its terms of reference.

27. Financial Comments (PA 23/11/2023)

The financial implications are set out in paragraphs 23 to 25 of the report. A sum of £200,000 has been allocated within Place major projects in the Investment and Growth Services budget to further the necessary work to support the STEP programme, including the economic impact assessment.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- [Policy Committee 17 March 2021: A zero carbon energy future for the UK: Potential sites in Nottinghamshire for energy production](#)

- Economic Development & Asset Management Committee 7 December 2021: [A zero carbon energy future for the UK: potential sites in Nottinghamshire for energy production](#)
- [Cabinet 3 March 2023: Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production \(STEP\) fusion project update](#)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All.

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SCRUTINY REVIEW OF EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLANS

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide a response to the Children and Families Select Committee recommendations arising from the committee's review of Education, Health, and Care Plans.

Information

2. The Children and Families Select Committee previously agreed to prioritise a review of Education, Health, and Care Plans within its work programme. This was partly prompted by the findings of the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission Inspection in early 2023 which raised significant concerns about the experience of children and young people with SEND in Nottinghamshire and highlighted Education, Health and Care Plans as a key priority area for scrutiny.
3. The Council had previously expressed deep regret at the findings of the inspection and this scrutiny review provided a timely opportunity for additional scrutiny and review of this issue.
4. At the meeting of the Children and Families Select Committee held on 16 October 2023 members considered the report from the task and finish scrutiny review that had been carried out on Education, Health and Care Plans. The report is attached as **Appendix A**. At the meeting it was resolved:

“That the recommendations of the scrutiny task and finish review of Education, Health and Care Plans be endorsed and referred to Cabinet for consideration.”

5. In accordance with Section 21B of the Local Government Act 2000, Cabinet is required to provide a response to the recommendations of the Overview Committee. In providing this response the Cabinet is asked to state whether or not it accepts each recommendation and the reasons for this decision. Cabinet must also indicate what action, if any, it proposes to take in response to each recommendation.
6. It should be noted that subsequent to the Review outcomes being presented to the Cabinet Member for Children and Families for response in October 2023, the Leader has changed the remit of certain Cabinet Member portfolios. One of the changes implemented by the Leader was to establish a new Cabinet Member position specifically to deal with Education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), in recognition of the importance of such issues. Councillor Sam Smith, who as Chairman of the Children and Families Select

Committee led the Review, will be responsible for the implementation of the outcomes agreed by Cabinet in his new role of Cabinet Member – Education and SEND.

7. The responses from the Cabinet Member for Children and Families to the recommendations are set out in the table at **Appendix B**.

Other Options Considered

8. None. In accordance with Section 21B of the Local Government Act 2000, Cabinet is required to provide a response to the recommendations of the Overview Committee.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

9. To consider for approval the response of the Cabinet Member for Children and Families on the recommendations arising from the Children and Families Select Committee's review of Education, Health, and Care Plans.

Statutory and Policy Implications

10. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

11. There are no direct financial implications relating to the recommendations of this report.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) That the recommendations from the Children and Families Select Committee review of Education, Health, and Care Plans be received.
- 2) That the response to the recommendations arising from the Children and Families Select Committee's review of Education, Health, and Care Plans be approved.

**COUNCILLOR TRACEY TAYLOR
CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (GMG 29/11/23)

12. The process for Cabinet to consider the recommendations from the Children and Families Select Committee are set out in Section 6, Part 2, paragraphs 40 – 44 on pages 99 and 100 of the Council's Constitution.

Financial Comments (PAA29 29/11/2023)

13. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act.

- Report to Full Council – Changes to Cabinet Member Arrangements and Appointment of Committee Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All



16 October 2023

Agenda Item 6

**REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SELECT
COMMITTEE**

OUTCOMES OF THE REIVEW OF EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLANS

Purpose of the Report

1. To share the findings arising from the scrutiny task and finish review of Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans with the Children and Families Select Committee.
2. To seek the Select Committee's endorsement for the review's recommendations to be submitted to Cabinet for consideration.

Information

Background

3. As part of the development of the Select Committee's work programme, the EHC Plan process was identified as an important area for a detailed scrutiny task and finish review – particularly in the context of Ofsted's and the Care Quality Commission's findings following their inspection of the local area arrangements for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) during January and February 2023.
4. The review of how the Council's organisational processes, structure and capacity operate was carried out to support it in fulfilling its statutory duties sustainably and efficiently in relation to EHC Plans. The review considered the full EHC Assessment process, from what is in place to mitigate the need for an Assessment request being made to the decision-making regarding placements for pupils for whom an EHC Plan has been issued.

Review Scope

5. The scoping of the review was carried out by the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Select Committee, in consultation with the Service Director for Education, Learning and Inclusion and other officers. This work identified the key objectives for the review and set out the strategic context in which the issues involved would be considered.
6. The key objectives set out for the review were:
 - to gain an understanding of the issues and challenges surrounding the implementation of EHC Plans and the carrying out of the preceding Assessments,

- to establish what organisational processes, structures and capacity the Council has in place so that it can fulfil its statutory duties relating to EHC Plans sustainably and efficiently,
- to examine the processes being carried out at neighbouring and statistically similar local authorities in relation to EHC Plans and consider if this identifies any new learning or best practice that could be adopted, and
- to make appropriate recommendations on how the processes surrounding EHC Plans could operate more effectively at the Council to ensure that the best outcomes are achieved for children, young people and families.

Links to the Council's Corporate Plan

7. The work of the scrutiny function should always be focussed on supporting the delivery of the Council's strategic priorities, which will in turn develop the provision of the best possible services to the residents of Nottinghamshire. The work that was carried out in scoping the review identified that it would support a range of strategic priorities, as well as the strategies and policies that underpinned them.
8. The Nottinghamshire Plan 2021-31 sets out the strategic vision for the future of the county and the Council. The activity in the Nottinghamshire Plan is built around achieving a 10-year vision for a 'healthy, prosperous and greener future for everyone'. This vision is supported by nine ambitions that act as a framework for all Council activity. The scoping of the review identified that it would support the following ambitions of the Plan:
 - Ambition 1: Helping our people live healthier, more independent lives.
 - Ambition 2: Supporting communities and families.
 - Ambition 3: Keeping children, vulnerable adults, and communities safe.
 - Ambition 4: Building skills that help people get good jobs.

Local area SEND (Ofsted and Care Quality Commission) inspection Nottinghamshire 2023

9. Between 30 January and 3 February 2023, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) carried out an inspection of the Nottinghamshire local area to assess how effective the local education, health and care services were at identifying, and meeting the needs of, children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) aged 0 to 25. Nottinghamshire's area SEND inspection was the first to be carried out under a new area SEND inspection framework guidance.
10. The Nottinghamshire local area inspection highlighted significant concerns about the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND in Nottinghamshire.
11. The findings of the Nottinghamshire local area SEND inspection set out two areas for priority action:
 - That leaders, the NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board, and education, health, and care providers should cooperate to urgently identify, assess and provide for the needs of children and young people with SEND. This includes assessment of needs, timely issuing of EHC Plans and holistic oversight of these Plans through annual reviews.

- That leaders, including commissioners and providers, should act urgently to identify and address the delays and gaps in access to some health services, particularly speech and language therapy, neurodevelopmental pathways and equipment services. They should also ensure that they use available performance data to identify where gaps exist and whether actions taken to address these are effective.
12. Four areas for improvement were also identified, setting out that leaders across the partnership should:
- continue their work to gather a wider range of views of children and young people with SEND and their families so that they can use these views to inform their planning for, and evaluation of, SEND services,
 - establish effective processes for the quality assurance of EHC Plans and use these to improve the quality of new and existing Plans,
 - use performance data and information effectively to inform their evaluation and joint commissioning of SEND services, and
 - put in place the appropriate governance arrangements to deliver their SEND plans both individually and across the wider partnership.
13. The Nottinghamshire local area SEND partnership is now undertaking focussed work to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and families. The SEND Improvement Programme and the supporting action plan will take forward the learning from the Ofsted and CQC inspection process and the areas for improvement identified through the inspection. A Nottinghamshire SEND Partnership Improvement Board has also been established to oversee the improvement actions needed. This Board is chaired independently by a recognised sector expert, Dame Christine Lenehan, Director of the Council for Disabled Children.

Review Process and Activity

14. The review process was led by the Chairman of the Children and Families Select Committee, Councillor Sam Smith. Other members who contributed throughout the review process were:
- Councillor Francis Purdue-Horan
 - Councillor Robert Corden
 - Councillor Kate Foale
 - Councillor Roger Jackson
 - Councillor John Lee
 - Councillor Michelle Welsh

James McGeachie (the co-opted representative of the Roman Catholic Church in relation to education matters on the committee) also participated in the review process.

15. In undertaking the review, the Chairman and members carried out:
- evidence-gathering briefings with the Service Director for Education, Learning and Inclusion and the Service leadership team,
 - discussions with the Nottinghamshire Parent Carer Forum, and
 - desktop research and benchmarking in relation to the approach taken by other local authorities to EHC Plans and Assessments.

11. The first evidence-gathering session of the review group took place on 17 May 2023, with a second session on 22 May 2023. At these meetings, members received detailed information from the Service Director for Education, Learning and Inclusion; the Acting Group Manager and the Service Manager for Integrated Children's Disability Services; the Group Manager for Psychology and Inclusion Services; the Designated Clinical Officer; and the SEND Strategic Lead on:

- the outcomes of the 30 January to 3 February 2023 Nottinghamshire local area SEND inspection by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission – including the identified areas of strength, improvement and priority action, the actions taken by the Service following the inspection and the upcoming next steps,
- the current national Code of Practice and legal framework governing EHC Plans,
- the processes in place in Nottinghamshire to support children with SEN within mainstream education without requiring an EHC Plan, the EHC Assessment processes in place and the context of partnership working with Health, Social Care and Community partners within the EHC Plan process – including what was working well and the current areas of challenge,
- the statistical performance data for the EHC Plan process from 2018-22, and
- the operational delivery of the EHC Assessment and Plan process.

12. Following these sessions, the review group requested and received further information on the current Service budgets, staffing levels and structures, in addition to the most recent document that mapped out the EHC Plan processes in a visual way.

13. On 17 June 2023, review group members met with the Chair of the Nottinghamshire Parent Carer Forum to explore the experiences of families supporting children with SEN and engaging with the EHC Plan process.

14. Finally, a benchmarking process began on 21 June 2023 with the following questions being submitted to neighbouring and statistically similar local authorities of Derbyshire, Doncaster, Durham, Hampshire, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Nottingham, Oxfordshire, Rotherham and Warwickshire:

- How many requests for EHC Assessments were made in 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022, how many EHC Plans were issued as a result?
- What percentage of notifications as to whether an EHC Assessment would be undertaken were returned to the applicant within 6 weeks of the request having been made, and what percentage of EHC Plans were issued within the statutory 20 weeks?
- What has been the cost to the Council in fines for EHC Plans not being issued within the statutory 20-week period between 2018-22?
- What steps has the Council taken to improve the number of EHC Plans issued within the statutory 20-week period?
- What procedures are in place to engage with parents and carers if it becomes apparent that it will not be possible to issue an EHC Plan within the statutory 20-week period?
- What proportion of children and young people with SEN have their needs supported in mainstream education without an EHC Plan being issued?
- What proportion of children and young people with an EHC Plan attend a Special School, or are currently waiting for a Special School place?

- How many Educational Psychologists are employed directly by the Council, and how many are employed via agencies?
 - What proportion of the directly employed Educational Psychologists' time is allocated to carrying out statutory assessments?
15. After the conclusion of the information gathering and benchmarking processes, members reviewed the information that had been received in order to formulate their recommendations.

Review Findings and Recommendations

Recommendation One

That the Select Committee receives progress reports on the implementation of the activities being delivered to address the Areas for Improvement and Priority Action identified by the Area SEND Inspection of the Nottinghamshire Local Area Partnership.

11. The majority of Nottinghamshire children with SEN, including those with an EHC Plan, are in mainstream education. It is vital for young people to be able to access required support early and in a timely way so that an EHC Plan is not required for their particular educational needs to be met. Consequentially, the right resources should be available in the right places to ensure that mainstream schools are a supportive and inclusive environment for as many young people as possible. Schools should also prioritise maintaining implemented SEN provision where it is required to give parents and carers confidence that this provision will not be discontinued if a child accessing it does not have an EHC Plan.
12. Schools must work to integrate children with SEND effectively and flexibly so that they do not experience periods of being outside of an educational setting. Schools should engage with parents in a sensitive way on meeting a child's specific needs when reintegration is required and be aware of instances when a child may come from a family context where there are wider support needs. All safeguarding requirements must be managed effectively.
13. Early access to therapy is an important priority and requires a strong partnership approach for it to be delivered effectively. It is important that schools communicate clearly with parents and carers on the early support and funding available, but problems can arise if there is not a strong relationship between the school and the parents and carers. Comprehensive information is provided by the Council to schools on how to secure funding to support children with SEN within the mainstream environment without a child needing an EHC Plan.
14. Potentially, schools could view the EHC Plan process as a means of transferring young people from a mainstream to a special educational setting. However, Special School places should only be used for those children with the greatest needs, so there should be as many pathways as possible within mainstream education to ensure that children with SEN are not separated from their wider communities and peers.
15. In Nottinghamshire, 90% of schools are currently rated as 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted. However, in addressing the areas of priority action identified in the local area SEND inspection it is vital that all partners listen to and engage with parents and carers, schools and young people on the challenges being experienced, to ensure that SEN are being identified early and met effectively within mainstream educational settings wherever possible – with clear monitoring, assurance and benchmarking processes in place.

Recommendation Two

That the Council should take all available steps to maximise its partnership working with schools to ensure that mainstream educational settings:

- i. participate fully in the early intervention agenda,**
- ii. take advantage of the available support to achieve educational environments that are as inclusive as possible for the widest range of children,**
- iii. integrate children with SEND effectively and flexibly so that they do not experience periods of being outside school, and**
- iv. maintain implemented SEN provision where it is required, to give parents and carers confidence that this provision will not be discontinued if a child accessing it does not have an EHC Plan.**

16. The statutory deadline for a new EHC Plan being issued is within 20 weeks of the request for an EHC Assessment being made. Demand for Assessments has increased significantly both locally and nationally, with some local authorities seeing requests levels doubling over the last five years. In Nottinghamshire, 524 EHC Assessment were requested in 2018 compared to 1,081 in 2022 and, during the first seven months of 2023, there has been a further 39% increase in Assessment requests compared to the same period in 2022. As such, it is proving difficult to ensure that the right level of capacity is in place to carry out the full EHC processes within the statutory deadlines, increasing the risk of complaints being made to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.
17. Although the High Needs Funding Block is available to support the needs of children with SEND, this resource cannot be used for ensuring capacity to manage the EHC Assessment and review process – which is paid for from the Service’s revenue budget. The current establishment of SEND services is under review internally to ensure that they are fit for purpose and to identify where rapid improvements can be made, as well as establishing how an efficient service can be funded.

Recommendation Three

That, as a result of the internal review of the Council’s SEND offer, the appropriate measures and allocation of resources should be implemented to ensure that future service provision is sustainable in the context of increasing demand.

18. From 2018 to 2020, over 90% of EHC Assessments in Nottinghamshire were carried out and the resulting Plans issued within the 20-week statutory deadline. However, due to the sharply increased demand, this reduced to 44% in 2021 and 5% in 2022. Improvement work to date has resulted in 21.23% of EHC Plans being implemented within the 20-week statutory deadline between January and July 2023, which is up from 4.5% for the same period in the previous year.
19. The benchmarking process with neighbouring and statistically similar local authorities identified that a similar trend has been experienced by many other councils in the same period. Details of a number of approaches to investment and transformation to seek to improve performance levels going forward were shared, which included:

- working in partnership with education providers, local Parent Carer Forums, Public Health, the Department for Education (DfE) and other key partners in planning a recovery process,
- working with schools and other providers to deliver effective SEN support that helps to ensure that young people are referred for an EHC Assessment at the right time when required, and also reduce the number of unnecessary Assessment requests,
- reviewing decision-making and monitoring processes,
- reviewing processes in relation to the early identification of SEN,
- improving inclusion in mainstream educational settings,
- redesigning key documentation to facilitate information-gathering and timely decision-making,
- reviewing service staffing structures, including recruitment and retention,
- improving resourcing for the case management of Tribunals,
- increasing Educational Psychologist advice-giving capacity and developing external contracts with agency providers to deliver additional Educational Psychologist support over a fixed-term period,
- considering the greater use of agency capacity commissioned by educational settings, and
- introducing new case management systems to better track performance and timescales.

Recommendation Four

That the Council engages with the local authorities that participated in the benchmarking exercise that are undertaking transformation activity for the improved delivery of EHC Assessments and Plans, to consider any further measures or approaches that could also be used effectively in Nottinghamshire.

20. The challenges to delivering the timely completion of EHC Plans largely relate to the high and increasing number of applications being received. There has also been a significant impact in workload caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. There is a straightforward, electronic process to make an EHC Assessment application and the level of need that has to be demonstrated to have an Assessment carried out is relatively low.
21. The size of the Council's directly employed Educational Psychology Service is relatively small when compared to that of other local authorities. As part of the current EHC Assessment process, the Service is being asked to complete around 100 statutory assessments each month. Of these, around 30 are done by Educational Psychologists employed via an agency. To address the current backlog of required assessments, it is intended to at least double agency capacity, in addition to the implementation of other measures – though this will need to be coupled with increasing resources within the Council's Integrated Children's Disability Services so as not to simply move the backlog from one service area to another.
22. There is currently a need to use Educational Psychologists from an agency to complete the statutory assessments as the Council's Educational Psychologists have a wide range of other duties to carry out, including important early intervention work to ensure that as many young people as possible have the right support at the right time so that an EHC Assessment may not ultimately be necessary. It is vital that young people have early contact with Educational Psychologists where required, as a lack of access can result in parents and carers applying for an EHC Assessment as a means of securing psychological support, further increasing the workload in this area.

23. Additionally, if an Educational Psychologist wished to focus on statutory assessments alone, the pay for doing so in the private sector is significantly higher than that offered by local authorities, as the market environment is currently highly competitive. As a result, significant work has been carried out to ensure that the time of the Council's Educational Psychologists is being used efficiently and in the right areas, within the constraints of the resources currently available.
24. A number of schools now appoint their own Educational Psychologists to offer early support and, potentially, these staff could assist in the statutory assessment process – provided that this does not give rise to a possible conflict of interests.
25. Ultimately, effective assurance and audit processes must be maintained to ensure that in working to clear the backlog and to address the rising number of EHC Assessment requests, all statutory assessments and EHC Plans are still produced to a high standard and within the required timescales.

Recommendation Five

That the effectiveness and sustainability of the current cap on the time that Educational Psychologists employed directly by the Council spend on carrying out statutory assessments is reviewed, to ensure that it is set at the right level.

26. The amount of time that the Council's own Educational Psychologists spend carrying out statutory assessments is currently capped. This enables vital early support and preventative work to be carried out. If the Council's own the Educational Psychologists were solely focussed on completing statutory assessments, whilst enabling more assessments to be completed, this approach could undermine morale and reduce resources for vital early support and prevention work.
27. The current cap that is in place on the time that Educational Psychologists who are employed directly by the Council spend on carrying out statutory assessments enables them to carry out 50 statutory assessments a month. A further 20 statutory assessments are carried out by agency staff. Members of the review group noted that if the cap on the amount of time spent by Educational Psychologists who are employed directly by the Council was increased then more statutory assessments could be completed.

Recommendation Six

That, to manage the demand for EHC Assessments effectively, consideration should be given to an increase in resources within the Educational Psychology Service for the provision of additional Educational Psychologists, to enable further early support to be implemented within mainstream educational settings.

Recommendation Seven

That effective assurance and audit processes should be maintained to ensure that all statutory assessments and EHC Plans are produced to a high standard and within the required timescales.

28. Delays in the production of EHC Assessments and Plans can have a significant impact on families, particularly if the family is seeking a school place at an educational setting that they consider would best meet their child's specific needs, but for which the child would not meet the entry criteria without an EHC Plan. If a young person without an EHC Plan does not have any option other than to attend their catchment school, but this school is not able to meet their specific needs effectively, there is a risk of the child refusing to go to school and becoming isolated.
29. As the EHC Assessment process can be a significant challenge at a difficult time for families, every effort should be made to engage with them when the statutory deadline for the EHC Assessment and Plan will not be met. There should also be a very clear and accessible point of contact at the Council for queries and support, as it is vital to ensure that parents' and carers' voices are heard. The digital EHC Hub is an important tool for increasing the openness and transparency of the process, but care should be taken to also support families who do not have digital access. Ultimately, many families do not have the resources or the endurance to engage with the numerous and potentially difficult processes involved in securing the best outcomes for their children. As such, the Council should aim to offer as much support to these families as possible.
30. There have been very few cases of the statutory deadlines being exceeded due to parents and carers requesting a longer review period, in Nottinghamshire. Although not all exceeded deadlines have resulted in a complaint to the Ombudsman and a compensation payment being awarded, the maximum level of compensation possible has been sought through the formal complaints process in a number of cases.

Recommendation Eight

That it should be ensured that schools, parents and carers are communicated with regularly, clearly and in good time by the Council during the EHC Assessment and Plan development process (making full use of the EHC Hub), particularly if it becomes apparent that an EHC Assessment or Plan will not be completed within the statutory deadline.

Recommendation Nine

That parents and carers should have a clear and accessible point of contact at the Council for queries and support during the process of applying for an EHC Plan.

31. The Service's target is to complete 90% of the regular, annual reviews of all existing EHC Plans on time. It is vital that both young people and their parents and carers are closely involved in the review process to ensure that the Plan remains clearly focused on the child. It is important that these reviews involve all of the relevant parties – including health professionals and Council officers. The reviews are often carried out at the level of the child's educational setting, so their timely completion is not completely within the Council's control. The Council, however, must ensure that it is properly involved in the review process so that any amended EHC Plan is completed and issued in a timely way.

Recommendation Ten

That the Council should work closely with individual educational settings to ensure that the EHC Plan annual reviews are carried out with the right level of participation from health partners, other professionals and the relevant Council officers, and are completed within the required deadlines.

Recommendation Eleven

That, where an annual review concludes that the EHC Plan should be updated, the Council ensures that the amended EHC Plan is completed in a timely way.

32. Although the Council has the responsibility to ensure that all EHC processes are completed within the statutory deadlines, it does not have direct control over a number of areas of the system. It is hoped that this will be reviewed by the DfE at the national level, but this has not yet occurred.

Recommendation Twelve

That the Council should engage further with the DfE to request that the criteria for justifying the carrying out an EHC Assessment is raised, and that the existing direct liability risks to local authorities for processes outside of their control are mitigated.

33. Summary of recommendations:

- 1) That the Select Committee receives progress reports on the implementation of the activities being delivered to address the Areas for Improvement and Priority Action identified by the Area SEND Inspection of the Nottinghamshire Local Area Partnership.
- 2) That the Council should take all available steps to maximise its partnership working with schools to ensure that mainstream educational settings:
 - i. participate fully in the early intervention agenda,
 - ii. take advantage of the available support to achieve educational environments that are as inclusive as possible for the widest range of children,
 - iii. integrate children with SEND effectively and flexibly so that they do not experience periods of being outside school, and
 - iv. maintain implemented SEN provision where it is required, to give parents and carers confidence that this provision will not be discontinued if a child accessing it does not have an EHC Plan.
- 3) That, as a result of the internal review of the Council's SEND offer, the appropriate measures and allocation of resources should be implemented to ensure that future service provision is sustainable in the context of increasing demand.
- 4) That the Council engages with the local authorities that participated in the benchmarking exercise that are undertaking transformation activity for the improved delivery of EHC Assessments and Plans, to consider any further measures or approaches that could also be used effectively in Nottinghamshire.
- 5) That the effectiveness and sustainability of the current cap on the time that Educational Psychologists employed directly by the Council spend on carrying out statutory assessments is reviewed, to ensure that it is set at the right level.

- 6) That, to manage the demand for EHC Assessments effectively, consideration should be given to an increase in resources within the Educational Psychology Service for the provision of additional Educational Psychologists, to enable further early support to be implemented within mainstream educational settings.
- 7) That effective assurance and audit processes should be maintained to ensure that all statutory assessments and EHC Plans are produced to a high standard and within the required timescales.
- 8) That it should be ensured that schools, parents and carers are communicated with regularly, clearly and in good time by the Council during the EHC Assessment and Plan development process (making full use of the EHC Hub), particularly if it becomes apparent that an EHC Assessment or Plan will not be completed within the statutory deadline.
- 9) That parents and carers should have a clear and accessible point of contact at the Council for queries and support during the process of applying for an EHC Plan.
- 10) That the Council should work closely with individual educational settings to ensure that the EHC Plan annual reviews are carried out with the right level of participation from health partners, other professionals and the relevant Council officers, and are completed within the required deadlines.
- 11) That, where an annual review concludes that the EHC Plan should be updated, the Council ensures that the amended EHC Plan is completed in a timely way.
- 12) That the Council should engage further with the DfE to request that the criteria for justifying the carrying out an EHC Assessment is raised, and that the existing direct liability risks to local authorities for processes outside of their control are mitigated.

Acknowledgements

34. The Chairman and members of the review group would like to express their thanks to Peter McConnochie, Service Director for Education, Learning and Inclusion, and the Service leadership team for their support provided during the review process. Thanks are also extended to Georgina Palmer, Chair of the Nottinghamshire Parent Carer Forum, for her participation in the review process, and to the eleven local authorities that provided data for the benchmarking process.

Financial Implications

35. There are no direct financial implications relating to the recommendations of this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) That the recommendations of the scrutiny task and finish review of Education, Health and Care Plans be endorsed and referred to Cabinet for consideration.

Councillor Sam Smith
Chairman of the Children and Families Select Committee

For any enquiries about this report, please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (LPW 14/09/2023)

36. The recommendation falls within the remit of the Children and Families Select Committee by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (SES 15/09/2023)

37. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

38. Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years](#)
- [Summary of the SEND review: right support, right place, right time](#)
- [SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan](#)
- [Area SEND inspection of Nottinghamshire Local Area Partnership](#)
- [Area SEND inspections: framework and handbook](#)
- [The Annual Report of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2021/22 \(sections 4.3 to 4.5\)](#)
- [Education, health and care plans](#)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All

Appendix B

Response to the recommendations arising from the Children and Families Select Committee review of Education, Health, and Care Plans

Children and Families Select Committee recommendation	Cabinet Decision	Action to be taken (if any) and timescale for completion
<p>1. That the Select Committee receives progress reports on the implementation of the activities being delivered to address the Areas for Improvement and Priority Action identified by the Area SEND Inspection of the Nottinghamshire Local Area Partnership.</p>	<p>Accept</p>	<p>The SEND Improvement Board are overseeing the progress of activities being delivered to address the Areas of Priority Action. Monthly updates are being provided to Select Committee members through Stakeholder Briefings following each SEND Improvement Board. Regular reports can also be received by Select Committee.</p>
<p>2. That the Council should take all available steps to maximise its partnership working with schools to ensure that mainstream educational settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. participate fully in the early intervention agenda, ii. take advantage of the available support to achieve educational environments that are as inclusive as possible for the widest range of children, iii. integrate children with SEND effectively and flexibly so that 	<p>Accept</p>	<p>Outcome 3 in Priority Area 1 of the SEND Improvement Priority Action Plan is dedicated to this recommendation.</p> <p><i>‘Children and young people with additional needs, but without an EHC Plan, have their needs identified, met, and monitored effectively.’</i></p> <p>A programme of work is planned and underway led by Dr. Órlaith Green, Group Manager, Psychology and Inclusion Services.</p> <p>Within the academic year 2023-2024 actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Piloting of a SEND funding tracker tool with 2 families of schools (Started Nov 2023). This tool will help schools and NCC colleagues to track the allocation of High Level Needs (HLN) and Additional

	<p>they do not experience periods of being outside school, and</p> <p>iv. maintain implemented SEN provision where it is required, to give parents and carers confidence that this provision will not be discontinued if a child accessing it does not have an EHC Plan.</p>		<p>Family Needs (AFN) funding within mainstream schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multi-agency review of the Nottinghamshire Graduated Response to include health, social care and early help colleagues (Action to start January 2024). School and settings representatives will be involved in this work. - Direct work with District, Family and School SENCOs to re-build confidence in the Nottinghamshire Graduated Response (Started November 2023). <p>Group Managers from Education Learning and Inclusion are also working with NCC and ICB colleagues and educational setting representatives (Schools and Private, Voluntary and Independent Settings) to review and summarise the local Early Years Inclusion Processes to clarify the support available to early years settings to support children with SEND who do not have EHC Plans as well as support more effective information sharing during transitions (Action already underway, to be completed by the end of January 2023).</p>
3.	That, as a result of the internal review of the Council's SEND offer, the appropriate measures and allocation of resources should be implemented to ensure that future service provision is sustainable in the context of increasing demand.	Accept	The service resource requirements have been increased to reflect increased demand and this will be monitored and reviewed through the budget setting cycles.
4.	That the Council engages with the local authorities that participated in the benchmarking exercise that are undertaking transformation activity for the improved delivery of EHC	Accept	As part of the SEND Improvement Plan there is a commitment to learn from other local authorities especially regarding timescales for new EHCPs, the Council has already engaged with several local authorities.

	Assessments and Plans, to consider any further measures or approaches that could also be used effectively in Nottinghamshire.		
5.	That the effectiveness and sustainability of the current cap on the time that Educational Psychologists employed directly by the Council spend on carrying out statutory assessments is reviewed, to ensure that it is set at the right level.	Accept	<p>Current arrangement for EPS capacity reviewed and validated via a new EPS activity audit completed in September 2023.</p> <p>Ratio of statutory work to early intervention work has been moderated nationally.</p> <p>Current ratio of EPS activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% Statutory Casework (New EHCP Assessments 45% and Other Statutory Assessments including tribunals and annual reviews 5%) • 35% Early Intervention School Casework (25% core and 10% traded) • 15% Essential Professional Requirements (e.g. Psychological Supervision, Continuing Professional Development, Supervising Trainee EPs) • Critical Incident support offer to all schools and educational settings continues to be a priority area of service delivery which is delivered immediately when required. <p>Current strategy ensures 100% of available time allocated to EHC assessments, without reducing our core offer to schools and essential professional requirements for EPs to practice.</p> <p>The issue now is one of capacity, which will be addressed by the extension of the EPS establishment and additional use of locum EPs.</p>

			<p>Impact of our current strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% staff retention in the academic year 2021-2022. Our EPS is fully staffed. This compares well to our regional neighbours, some of whom are carrying 50% vacancies. • Protected EP time for early intervention work in schools to support confidence in the graduated response, inclusion in mainstream schools and schools' ability to meet needs outside of the EHCP process (SEND Improvement PAP - Outcome 3). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hartlepool Area SEND Inspection Outcome - Positive ○ <i>'The educational psychology team is a strength of the area. The team provides school leaders with valuable advice, support and training. This directly contributes to the accurate assessment of children and young people's education, health and care needs.'</i> ○ <i>'Leaders have made a significant investment in the educational psychology provision for the area. This investment means that children and young people benefit from accurate identification of needs and timely support'</i> <p>Sustainability of Impact</p> <p>Our strategy is to increase efficiency of EP assessments and maintain EPS capacity for early intervention work in schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 36% Increase in EP EHCP assessments completed by our core staff this year, without a staffing increase • New efficient assessment and report writing processes with 96% of internal EPS deadlines being met.
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are also using agency/locum EPs to reduce the backlog of 400+ assessments. Working on advice from Derbyshire EPS who cleared a similar backlog using locum staff. Additional locum contract with Skylakes/Sanctuary agency has been secured.
6.	That, to manage the demand for EHC Assessments effectively, consideration should be given to an increase in resources within the Educational Psychology Service for the provision of additional Educational Psychologists, to enable further early support to be implemented within mainstream educational settings.	Accept	<p>Expansion of our Educational Psychology Service has been approved – <i>Cabinet Report: CF0078 EPS capacity 15.09.2023</i>.</p> <p>The increase is planned as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional 9 Full Time Equivalent EPs – 3 per year for 3 years Additional Trainee EP (TEP) placements aiming towards 3 x Year 2 TEPs and 3 x Year 3 TEPS asap. <p>Recruitment processes are currently underway.</p>
7.	That effective assurance and audit processes should be maintained to ensure that all statutory assessments and EHC Plans are produced to a high standard and within the required timescales.	Accept	<p>Senior practitioners with the EHC assessment team carry out quality assurance checks of all new draft and amended EHCPs. This is done by using a digital form that collates strengths and areas for improvement.</p>
8.	That it should be ensured that schools, parents and carers are communicated with regularly, clearly and in good time by the Council during the EHC Assessment and Plan development process (making full use of the EHC Hub), particularly if it becomes apparent that an EHC Assessment or Plan will not be completed within the statutory deadline.	Accept	<p>At the point of an EHC Needs Assessment being agreed the EHC assessment team explains in writing that there may be a delay in completing the statutory assessment due to current capacity issues within the Educational Psychology Service (EPS). Further communication is sent at 8 weeks and 20 weeks if required.</p>

9.	That parents and carers should have a clear and accessible point of contact at the Council for queries and support during the process of applying for an EHC Plan.	Accept	<p>The local authority has established SEND education pathway officers who make contact with parents and carers when they apply for an EHC Needs assessment. These posts have been created to ensure children and young people receive the right support at the right time.</p> <p>When an EHC Needs assessment is agreed, children and young people are allocated to an EHC Co-ordinator who will oversee the process for parents and carers. They make contact, by telephone or email, to explain the next steps in more detail.</p>
10.	That the Council should work closely with individual educational settings to ensure that the EHC Plan annual reviews are carried out with the right level of participation from health partners, other professionals and the relevant Council officers, and are completed within the required deadlines.	Accept	<p>Annual review dates are available on the EHC Hub. All educational settings are contacted to remind them of their responsibility to complete the annual review within timescale. An escalation process, providing support and challenge has been established for settings that miss key deadlines. Further workstreams regarding participation are due to be reviewed as part of the priority action plan.</p>
11.	That, where an annual review concludes that the EHC Plan should be updated, the Council ensures that the amended EHC Plan is completed in a timely way.	Accept	<p>There has been a significant investment to secure additional EHCP writers in the EHC assessment team. These have been secured to ensure that the local authority can meet the 12-week timescale for amendments to take place.</p>
12.	That the Council should engage further with the DfE to request that the criteria for justifying the carrying out an EHC Assessment is raised, and that the existing direct liability risks to local authorities for processes outside of their control are mitigated.	Partially accept	<p>The Council should not request raising the criteria for justifying the carrying out an EHC Assessment however we continue to work with the DfE regarding the SEND reforms and implementation of the SEND and AP Improvement Plan in order to better identify and meet the needs of children and young people with SEND. We will continue to engage</p>

			regionally and nationally to seek proper funding for SEND provision.
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