

Draft

Strategic Commissioning Framework | 2023



Nottinghamshire
County Council



Foreword

Strategic Commissioning is about securing good outcomes for our residents and in particular those who draw upon our services and support. Strategic Commissioning when it is at its best is about using clear data and needs assessment to understand need, and through coproduction and use of insight, develops solutions and interventions that can address that need in a cost-effective way, making best use of public money.

As a Council we aspire to building resilience and skills within our citizens that can support them through their life course to achieve their potential and enjoy a good life in our County. This Strategic Commissioning framework is intended to guide our service development, strategic development and market shaping activity at every step of the commissioning cycle to improve outcomes and incorporate evidence on what works across the diverse range of Council's duties, services and interventions.

The goal is to foster practice and culture where strategic planning is focused on outcome and results and aligns effort and resources across the Council to best effect, demonstrating the underlining principles of the Council plan such as whole family approaches, prevention, personalisation, strength-based and asset- based approaches, collaboration with partners, excellence in contract management and has place at its core.

This document will set out what is required to implement the framework, how strategic commissioning competency will be developed through the Nottinghamshire Way and the key areas of strategic activity that will enable delivery of the Council Plan and Transformation programmes.



Cllr Bruce Laughton

Deputy Leader
Nottinghamshire County Council



Nottinghamshire County Council's Strategic Commissioning Framework

Our Council Plan 2021-2025 states our ongoing commitment to make Nottinghamshire a place:

- where People are healthier and live independent lives for longer
- where communities and families are resilient and well supported
- where our children, vulnerable adults and communities are kept safe
- that enjoys improved transport and connectivity
- that protects its environment and reduces its carbon footprint
- that is attractive and vibrant
- where businesses are stronger with more high-quality jobs
- that attracts more investment in infrastructure, the economy and green growth
- where people have the education and skills, they need to get good local jobs

To achieve our priorities, Nottinghamshire County Council needs to build on the success of existing commissioned arrangements and set the direction of travel alongside the new Council Plan. Using the new strategic commissioning framework, and through co-production with services users and residents, we are aiming to ensure there is a clear focus on improving outcomes for the lowest possible cost, whilst maximising social value for the resources that the Council and its partners have available.

The Council has already responded well to the funding challenges, but with expectations that the funding challenges will remain, and that demand for services will increase as Nottinghamshire's population is projected to increase from 828,200 in 2019 to 895,000 in 2031.

The Council remains more determined than ever to be ambitious for Nottinghamshire and to deliver for its residents. We spend nearly £600m with third parties which gives us a fantastic opportunity to benefit our residents through delivering social return on every pound we spend.

Our Vision for Strategic Commissioning

'Strategic Commissioning is data/evidence led, collaborative and supports the achievement of strategic aims by securing cost-effective outcomes.'

Definition of Strategic Commissioning

For the purposes of this document strategic commissioning is defined as

'The cycle of assessing the needs of people and communities in Nottinghamshire. Using these to design effective services and support and, where necessary, influencing the market to shape and secure the right services to deliver the outcomes sought at the right cost. Thereafter, monitoring and reviewing the impact of those services being delivered to assess whether we can learn and improve those services for the benefit of the people and communities of Nottinghamshire.'

It is important to remember that strategically commissioned services can be provided through direct delivery as well strategic alliances, partnerships or through procurement.



Strategic Commissioning Principles

The principles adopted in our strategic commissioning framework will support the delivery of effective and efficient services over the short, medium and longer-term through:

- a culture that supports innovation, collaboration and partnerships
- smart resourcing and governance that ensures value for money and resilience.

Principle 1:

Resident Focused - all commissioning will be based on a clear understand of residents' needs

Our Aim:

We will put our residents at the centre of our commissioning approach. Users from all our communities will inform and shape future commissioning decisions and residents will have a say in the vision for their local area.

How will we achieve this?

- Embed opportunities for residents to be involved in all stages of the commissioning cycle
- There will be early involvement of existing and prospective service users to understand priorities and inform commissioning decisions.
- Embed customer experience and insights into our contract monitoring arrangements
- Gather new insights from our residents through community research

Principle 2:

Outcomes orientated – our commitment to better commissioning means achieving the best outcomes

Our Aim:

Through an outcome-based approach, we will focus on the difference we can make and not just focus on inputs and processes. We will promote innovation and make effective use of resources, specifically identifying multiple outcomes and delivering value for money each time.

How will we achieve this?

- Working with residents we will define the outcomes to be achieved in our Council Plan and Commissioning Intentions.
- Be clear about how the outcomes contribute to the Council's strategic priorities at the start of the commissioning process.
- Start with defining the outcomes and vision for what we are setting out to achieve before identifying the options for delivery.
- Ensure we embed robust mechanisms and monitoring processes to measure, and report based on SMART outcomes.



Principle 3:

Effectively manage demand – ensure our commissioning approach helps to manage demand

Our Aim:

Forecasting, planning and developing a better understanding of demand for our services will be a key part of our commissioning approach.

How will we achieve this?

- Understanding what causes demand for services and identify opportunities for changing level of demand. This will be key for managing future pressures on services against available resources.
- Take a long term and holistic view of demand to avoid delivering false economy where reduction in provision in one area results in an increase elsewhere.
- Develop an early intervention and prevention strategy.
- Understanding the impact of our intervention – what we are setting out to do and what difference has it made.



Principle 4:

Evidence based – we will use our data and insights to inform robust decision-making.

Our Aim:

Data and insights play a key role in commissioning by enabling us to understand levels and types of need. We have a wealth of data – both within the Council and from our providers. We will actively harness and analyse the data at every step of the process to ensure the appropriate decisions and actions are taken.

How will we achieve this?

- Use NCC and Partner data to identify trends and understand demand
- Use our data to identify solutions and feed into commissioning plans and decision making
- Conduct robust review and evaluation of services commissioned before re-commissioning
- Use the Strategic Insight Unit (SIU) to analyse and report on the effectiveness of our commissioning decisions
- Develop and analyse category level spend to feed into commissioning intentions



Principle 5:

Deliver social value – we are committed to improving social, environmental and economic well-being in Nottinghamshire

Our Aim:

Commissioning should ensure the maximum benefit in delivering multiple outcomes outcomes for our residents. We will create opportunities that enhance our communities and improve the lives of our residents.

How will we achieve this?

We will develop a sustainable procurement policy statement which sets out how we will enhance social value through our commissioning. This will include:

- Encouraging a diverse base of suppliers
- Maximising community benefits through encouraging suppliers to make social contributions to the area
- Promoting greater environmental sustainability
- Increasing employment and training opportunities through our contracts



Principle 6:

Market shaping – we will work with our providers to develop and shape the market

Our Aim:

Our providers have a key role in achieving outcomes for our residents. Our aim is to take our relationship with providers, existing and new, a step further by shaping solutions with the market to respond to needs, support capacity building, encourage innovation and help build sustainable service models.

How will we achieve this?

- Regular market engagement activities with clear and coherent communication
- Analyse the current market and identify strengths, weaknesses and any gaps
- Shape the market for short, medium, and long term
- Maintain and strengthen relationships with providers, supporting them to be flexible to local needs



Principle 7:

Commissioning culture – we will empower our commissioners

Our Aim:

Develop a ‘commissioning culture’ – empower our commissioners to be bold, ambitious and have confidence to explore new delivery models. We will not default to always procuring what we’ve had before – we will consider a full range of options.

How will we achieve this?

- Give commissioners proactive management of existing contracts in order to develop innovative solutions
- We will undertake a holistic approach to forward thinking commissioning
- We will support our commissioners to develop the skills and expertise required to deliver our commissioning principles
- Developing our commissioners as leaders – not view strategic commissioning as transactional at a micro level



Principle 8

Commissioning together – where appropriate, we will integrate commissioning across departments and with partners

Our Aim:

We will look to integrate commissioning (expertise, capacity and resources) across departments and with partners to maximise benefits for our residents.

How will we achieve this?

- We will develop a forward plan of commissioning activity and engage with our partners and across departments to focus on service users
- We will demonstrate open and honest communication and flexibility to work in an integrated way from planning to delivery
- We will look to avoid duplication and positively influence how collective resources are used, for example through pooled budgets or shared services
- We will work to shared values and goals and take joint responsibility for delivering outcomes



A consistent commissioning approach to planning, designing and evaluating services

Good commissioning is not an end in itself, but rather it is an approach that we use to ensure that the decisions we take and the services we offer to our residents are the most effective that they can be. Across every service we will demand equally high standards for commissioning.

Figure 1: Commissioning Framework



