2025 - 2026

Annual Report

Stronger **families**, thriving **communities**, a connected **county**

Nottinghamshire County Council

Welcome to the Council's Annual Report 2025-2026

This Annual Report tells the story of Nottinghamshire County Council's progress during 2025-2026, focusing on what we set out to do, what we delivered, and where we are continuing to improve. It shows how we are listening to residents, investing in the services and places that matter most, and being open about our successes and the challenges ahead.

The Annual Report itself is one of the main ways the Council checks and reports against our priorities. It is produced at the end of each financial year to review key delivery milestones and for 2025-2026, there were **48 priority actions** the Council sought to progress. At yearend, we've completed the vast majority of the targets we set out to, with good progress being made on the remainder.

Looking ahead, for 2026-2027 the Council's latest **Annual Delivery Plan** builds on our successes over the last year, ensuring we remain focused on, amongst other things, fixing roads more effectively, strengthening support to foster and kinship carers, and ensuring we have sufficient, high quality local school places to meet the needs of Nottinghamshire's children and young people.

More information, including additional assurance reports, are available on the Council's website – **Welcome to Our Council Plan 2025 - 2029.**

Councillor Mick Barton
Leader of Nottinghamshire
County Council

You said, We Did

In the Council's most recent budget survey, held during 25 November 2025 through 7 January 2026, residents were asked what some of their key priorities were, in the context of the Council's budget setting process. **Analysis of the results**, which saw over 1,500 respondents, identified the below headings as key areas through repeated mention by respondents.

Based on this, the following are just a few examples of actions delivered during 2025-26 against these headings, which show commitment to act on the views of local people and communities. For further examples, see the remainder of this document.

Road Maintenance

You said you wanted to see more investment on Nottinghamshire's roads, with particular attention to their condition and the fixing of potholes. Below shows how we have listened to this:

Record levels of funding to be spent on fixing Nottinghamshire's roads – **£181.25 million is to be invested in Nottinghamshire's roads** as part of the first phase of a record-breaking highways programme, with more significant funding set to follow. As part of this, Nottinghamshire County Council will deliver a six-point plan to address the backlog of repairs and deteriorating condition of its highways network, including:

- Prevent problems early by treating roads sooner.
- Carry out permanent repairs first-time wherever possible
- High quality fixes using longer-lasting materials and methods.
- Improve efficiency and get better value from crews and equipment.
- Strengthen winter resilience with extra crews working through the season for the first time.
- Make the case for increased long-term funding from central government.

The investment package, a record level for Nottinghamshire, includes £107m for maintenance across all 14 of our highway asset types, including; roads, footways, drainage, structures managed by the Council. This sits alongside a £5.2m winter resilience package, £3.25m for new pedestrian and cycling links and major investment in community-focused integrated transport schemes including pedestrian crossings and road safety improvements. This investment follows on from the £2m of additional resurfacing for urgent repairs to winter-damaged roads which were recently completed.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Support

You responded by saying that you want to see more support provided to those with special educational needs and disabilities. Below shows how we have listened to this:

SEND leaders commit to continued improvement in Notts – Local leaders who are responsible for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) services in Nottinghamshire have committed to continue their work to improve support for families. The SEND Improvement Board, set up in March 2023 as a time-limited measure to address significant concerns following an Ofsted and Care Quality Commission inspection, held its final meeting in March 2026. From April, a SEND Executive Leadership Group will meet quarterly in place of the SEND Board to drive further improvements including addressing gaps, waiting times and quality; workforce and systems development; transitions; and inclusive practice.

Since the SEND Board was established, a number of improvements have been made including:

- Improved quality of Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) and an increase in EHCPs completed within the statutory 20-week timescale.
- Additional support for children and young people waiting for a neurodevelopmental assessment or a speech and language assessment.
- Better involvement with parents, carers and young people to hear their voices.
- A new data dashboard to identify gaps and measure outcomes.

Early Help & Preventation

You said you wanted to see easily accessible services and earlier opportunities for help and support, preventing issues from escalating. Below shows how we have listened to this:

Refreshed strategy builds on aim of giving Nottinghamshire children the best start in life – The Council is working hard with partners to ensure that **all children have the best start in life**. A good start helps children and families to stay healthy and thrive, as well as reducing inequalities, and creates a solid foundation for young children to successfully develop. The council works with parents, communities and local services to create the right conditions for children and families to grow and develop interpersonal skills. Family hubs are central to the approach, and offer a wide range of sessions, groups and activities designed to support families and those expecting a baby.

The Nottinghamshire Best Start for Life Strategy 2025 – 2030 identifies five key priorities which will be the focus over the next five years:

- Building blocks of health and wellbeing
- Parent's mental health
- Preparing to be parents and healthy beginnings
- Building strong relationships
- Early experiences, chat, play, read and learn.

Mental Health & Family Support Services

You reiterated the importance of mental health and the challenges faced by local communities in coping with mental health struggles, alongside the importance of support for the whole family. Below shows how we have listened to this:

NottAlone podcast receives national recognition – A podcast which encourages real and open discussions about mental health and wellbeing has been recognised nationally – just seven months after its launch. **The NottAlone Podcast**, launched in May 2025, was shortlisted for the Best Small Team award at the 10th annual Comms2point0 UnAwards – which recognise 'genuine creativity, innovation and brilliant results' in public sector communications. NottAlone is a partnership between Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottingham City Council and Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board and is co-hosted by founders and educational psychologists Dr. Orlaith Green and Dr. Maddi Popoola.

Dr. Green, Temporary Director of Education, Learning and Inclusion at Nottinghamshire County Council, said she was delighted the podcast had been recognised for its work:

> *"It is fantastic that the podcast has been showcased on a national platform and hopefully we will continue to go from strength to strength as part of our ongoing work to shine a light on mental health and wellbeing."*

Environmental Impact & Services

You stressed the importance of protecting the local environment and ensuring nature across the county is a place all communities can enjoy. Below shows how we have listened to this:

Nottinghamshire expands its recycling service to help residents recycle more and waste less – As of 31 March 2026, households across all districts and boroughs in Nottinghamshire will be able to **recycle foil, food and drink cartons, plastic/metal tubes and all pots, tubs and trays** as part of their kerbside recycling collection.

This positive change supports the government's Simpler Recycling objective to make recycling collections more consistent across England. It will help reduce confusion, improve recycling rates, and support national ambitions to reach a 65% recycling rate by 2035.

Once collected, these materials are sent to Veolia's local Mansfield Materials Recovery Facility to be sorted and then delivered to recycling reprocessing facilities where they are transformed into new products. Recycling these items saves energy, conserves natural resources and helps keep valuable materials in circulation for longer.

Stories of difference

1 Outcome 1 – Stronger Families, Caring Connections

We believe everyone should get the best start in life, with all children able to access a good education and live in a loving family home. As we grow and live our lives, we know that family – the people we feel close connections with – help us feel cared for and supported. When families are having a tough time, we will do what we can to help. We will care for people providing care to their loved ones, celebrating the vital work of our carers across the County.

Local authorities collaborate to strengthen fostering

Derby City Council, Derbyshire County Council, Nottingham City Council, and Nottinghamshire County Council have continued their commitment to improve the lives of children in care. Through the **Foster for East Midlands Councils (FFEMC) initiative** they are working together to increase local fostering capacity and providing children with stable, nurturing homes close to their communities.

The FFEMC initiative offers a one-stop recruitment process, ongoing professional support, and an inclusive approach that welcomes carers from all backgrounds. The programme is designed to make fostering as accessible and supportive as possible, helping new carers start the year with reassurance and guidance. Since its launch in March 2024, FFEMC has supported over 600 enquiries, processed applications, conducted home visits, and approved new fostering households across the region. Early results indicate that the initiative is strengthening local fostering provision and ensuring children in care have stable, loving homes.

Council's outdoor education service celebrates landmark 40th anniversary

A Nottinghamshire educational service which provides outdoor learning opportunities for young people is **celebrating its landmark 40th anniversary**. Notts Outdoors was launched by Nottinghamshire County Council in 1985 to improve the lives of thousands of children and teenagers by encouraging them to enjoy the great outdoors. The pioneering programme has since gone from strength to strength and has hosted around 60,000 pupils on its bespoke residential trips which are designed to build confidence, independence and resilience.

St Peter's Junior School celebrates the official opening of its record-breaking new learning village

Work on the new **£6.5 million purpose-built temporary learning village**, which includes four new buildings, started in the new year and was completed by early April 2026, ready for the new summer term. This makes it the fastest-ever turnaround for a project of this type in the country, with it built next to the current building, accommodating all 350 pupils.

Nottinghamshire County Council Leader Mick Barton was joined by cabinet member for Economic Development and Assets, Councillor James Walker-Gurley and cabinet member for Children and Families, Councillor Rory Green, to officially open the learning village. The councillors praised the school for its resilience over the last few months and expressed how fantastic it was to see teachers, pupils and staff all back together on the school site. Councillor Barton added:

"We are really proud of how quickly this project has been turned around as we know how important it was to get the school site back up and running... It was a real team effort with contractors and council colleagues working around the clock to get this ready in record-breaking time."

A new state-of-the-art school in Mansfield is now supporting children with special educational needs (SEN)

Horizons Academy provides a specialist learning environment for children with social, emotional, and mental health needs. The £30m purpose-built school, managed by the Diverse Academies Trust (DAT), has been built on the former Ravensdale School site and has capacity for up to 160 pupils across the seven to 19 years age range.

It forms part of Nottinghamshire County Council's commitment to create up to 490 additional SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) school places by 2026 to help address the growing demand for more specialist school places across the county. County Council Leader, Councillor Mick Barton, said he was delighted that Horizons is now open and benefitting young people. Speaking at the school he said:

> *"Horizons Academy is such an impressive, top of the range facility and is helping regenerate an important area of Mansfield which will benefit many generations to come."*

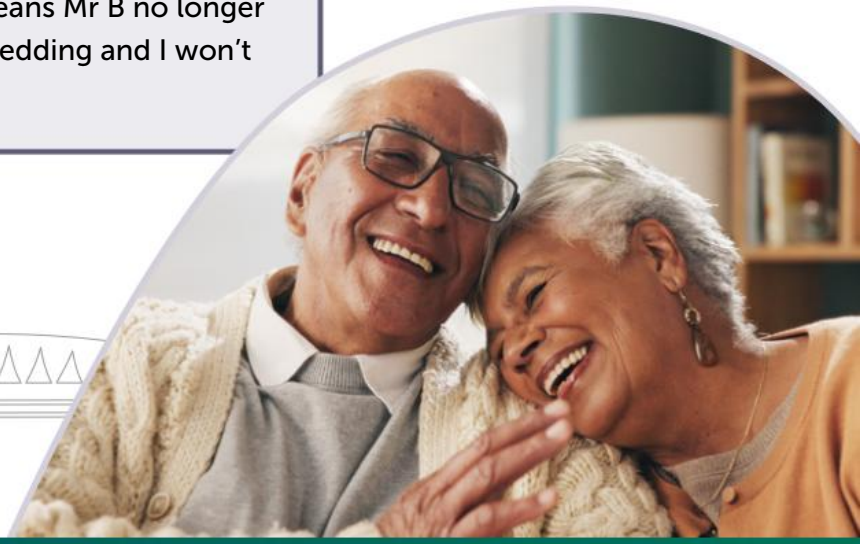
Positive feedback from a parent carer for our Preparing for Adulthood team

"[The practitioner] started working with my son and us as a family in March 2024. Since meeting her, the difference she has made to my son's, his sister's and my life has been indescribable. The care, support and compassion shown by her is something that I never expected from the adulthood team. It was clear that everything she did for us was because she genuinely cared and not just because it was her job. Everything that [the practitioner] said she would do was done, and always straight away. If it couldn't be done, I was kept informed. I never felt like I was waiting for updates or feeling like I didn't know what was going on. [The practitioner] provided a great deal of support to my son and us as a family during a time which I can only describe as possibly the most difficult time of my life as a mother. When looking for a suitable placement for my son, she looked out for things I wouldn't have thought about, which clearly shows how much she cares and needed to make sure that the placement was the right one. It was so important that this was right from the start.

My mum used to be a foster carer and had many dealings with social care which we believe failed in many ways - meeting this practitioner has shown me they aren't. "

Praise for our Technology Enabled Care (TEC) team

Mrs B lives at home with her husband. She has dementia, sight loss, diabetes and has had several falls. At night, her catheter sometimes leaked onto the bed. This meant Mr B had to keep waking to check she was dry and comfortable. The TEC Team provided a simple sensor sheet linked to a pager. Now Mr B is alerted quickly if the bed gets wet. This helps Mrs B stay comfortable and protects her skin and dignity. It also means Mr B no longer has to change all the bedding during the night. Mr B said: "It will save me changing all the bedding and I won't have to keep listening out for her in the night."



2 Outcome 2 – Rooted in Communities, Thriving Together

We believe that having a place to call home and feeling part of your community helps people stay healthy, safe, and independent. We want to support friends, neighbours, and local groups to look out for one another, stepping in and providing help when someone needs it. By making sure people get the right help, at the right time, close to where they live, we can stop problems from getting worse. This can reduce the need for more complex and expensive services, allowing people to lead healthier, happier lives.

Care Quality Commission rates Nottinghamshire's Adult Social Care as 'Good'

Adult social care services at Nottinghamshire County Council have been assessed as **'Good' by the Care Quality Commission**, following an inspection at the end of last year. The inspectors met with social care colleagues, people who draw on care and support, people involved in coproduction and partners to get a full picture of the quality of adult social care provision and people's experiences across the county. Highlighted strengths included:

- solid foundations across adult social care and health services in Nottinghamshire, with the authority understanding the needs of local people
- that most people who draw on adult social care services are happy with the quality of care they receive, generally feel safe and protected from harm
- that people felt listened to and strategies are coproduced with people who draw on services, demonstrating meaningful involvement that makes a real difference to people's lives.

Proud to Care Awards showcase the best of care in the county

Over 300 people attended Nottinghamshire County Council's **second Proud to Care Awards**, which recognise and celebrate people who work in the private care sector across the county. The awards, held in partnership with Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Care Association, are held to celebrate and thank people who work in a wide range of roles across adult social care – care homes, home care, day services, supported living, and administration – making a real difference to the people they support every day.

The award ceremony was held at Colwick Hall in Nottingham, and gave finalists, their colleagues, guests and sponsors an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of those who work in social care, connect with others in similar work environments, and be inspired by moving stories of how care has transformed people's lives. Attendees enjoyed an evening of music, fun and laughter, sharing ideas and hearing what made the winners' and finalists' contributions to care so life-changing and why these awards were so richly deserved.

Dozens of groups and charities set to benefit from latest round of community-boosting grants

Forty-two groups have been awarded grants via the **Nottinghamshire County County's Local Communities Fund** (LCF). Improvements to local sporting facilities and upgrades to community centres are among the many projects which are due to help make a difference to residents' lives thanks to council funding. Two sets of funds were available: capital grants designed to support towards improvements to local facilities, and smaller revenue grants helping with essential running costs. Just some of the groups benefiting include:

- **Lifespring Church and Centre, Warsop** - £20,000 towards making the centre being more accessible and welcoming for everyone via a series of essential upgrades. These works will improve safety, comfort, and inclusivity throughout the building.
- **Granby and Sutton Village Hall, near Bingham** - £17,266 will go towards essential maintenance and repair work to a listed building dating from the 1870s.
- **The Social Action Hub, serving Blidworth, Rainworth, and nearby villages** - £5,000 towards running costs of a project which supports counselling and advice sessions for young people, to bring them together to build strong relationships and engagement with the wider community.

In addition, grants totalling around £50,000 have been awarded to **85 Nottinghamshire athletes and para-athletes** to help boost their sporting ambitions as part of the Talented Athletes fund. The funding is designed to support up-and-coming athletes to realise their potential in their chosen sport, particularly those competing in disability/parasports who may require expensive adapted equipment, clothing, or have higher transport costs. Successful applications included representation from all Nottinghamshire districts covering 34 different sports.

Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award

Nottinghamshire County Council's **ongoing commitment to supporting the Armed Forces community** has been recognised again. The council has received the highly-coveted Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award for a further five years - which means it will continue to be part of a select group of organisations to hold the accreditation. Speaking at Full Council in March, Armed Forces Champion, Councillor (Dr) Kelvin Wright VR Col (retired), said:

> *"The Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award is the highest honour for any council that provides exceptional and sustained support to the armed forces community. It reflects a strong commitment to reservists, cadet force adult volunteers, veterans, and their families."*

3 Outcome 3 – A Connected County, Creating Opportunity

We want Nottinghamshire to be a strong and successful county that attracts the investment and development it deserves. We will work to make sure that any investment really benefits local people, by improving transport, digital connections, the condition of our road network, and by protecting our local environment. We also want more people to be in good, stable, local jobs, with those that are not in work being able to access clear and practical pathways to employment, supporting an economy that works for everyone.

All round good news for bus passengers in Mansfield

A brand-new bus ticket which allows passengers to travel on more than 30 bus services in Mansfield with just one ticket has now launched. The Mansfield All Rounder ticket can be used on any bus within the zone, which includes Mansfield town centre, Berry Hill, Oak Tree, Forest Town, Ladybrook, Mansfield Woodhouse and Pleasley. Nottinghamshire County Council has worked with Stagecoach and trentbarton to launch the ticket, which aims to make travelling by bus simpler for passengers making multiple journeys. Passengers can now board the bus and ask for an All Rounder, with day and week tickets available for adults and ages five to 19 inclusive. All ticket types can be purchased on board with the exception of week tickets which, with Stagecoach, can only be purchased via the Stagecoach app. A map of the Mansfield All Rounder zone along with information on fares for adults and ages five to 19 inclusive **can be found on the county council's website**.

Major investment secured for A614/A6097 upgrade in Nottinghamshire

Long-awaited improvements to one of Nottinghamshire's most crucial road corridors have been given the go ahead following the **final approval of the A614/A6097 Major Road Network scheme**. More than £43 million will now be invested in this landmark project. Five key junctions: Ollerton Roundabout, White Post Roundabout, Warren Hill, Lowdham Roundabout, and Kirk Hill at East Bridgford will all be upgraded as part of the scheme. These improvements are expected to ease congestion, improve safety and boost connectivity, helping to create a more efficient and accessible transport network for residents, commuters and HGV drivers passing through Nottinghamshire on their daily journeys.

Further funding for the Youth Guarantee Trailblazer

Across the East Midlands, young people aged 18 to 21 face persistent barriers to employment and training, with high rates of NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and increasing mental health challenges. The Youth Guarantee Trailblazer (YGT) was launched in April 2025 to address these challenges, aiming to ensure every young person has access to training, an apprenticeship, or support to find work. In Year One, the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) mobilised eight projects across three themes: Transition Support, Tailored Support, and Employer Participation. By September 2025, over 350 young people had engaged with the programme, with 93 completing and progressing into work or training. Building on this success Government announced a further £5 million in funding for 2026 to 2027. The programme will continue to evolve, ensuring inclusive, responsive support for young people across the region.

East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) Connect to Work Programme

Economic inactivity across the region remains a persistent challenge. The regional employment rate stands at 76.3%, below the national average of 80%. A significant proportion of economically inactive individuals (30.2%) cite long-term sickness as the primary barrier to securing employment. These individuals often face complex health-related challenges that require integrated support. EMCCA has assumed the role of Accountable Body for the Connect to Work programme. Working in partnership with the council, Department for Work & Pensions (DWP), NHS, local authorities, and the voluntary sector, collectively we have developed a delivery plan to support economically inactive residents.

Procurement for delivery partners began in summer 2025, with a £44 million grant secured from DWP to support around 12,243 residents over five years. The full programme rollout began on 1 January 2026 across Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire areas. Delivery partners will scale up to support nearly 4,000 participants annually through to March 2030. Continued collaboration with local partners will be vital to provide good employment so residents enjoy healthier lives.

Council one of the first local authorities to be recognised as a Water Literate Organisation

Nottinghamshire County Council has become **one of the first local authorities to be recognised as a Water Literate Organisation** (WLO) – highlighting its commitment to fostering a culture of sustainability.

It has received the accreditation as part of the wider **Water Literacy Programme** pilot for demonstrating commitment to excellence in water efficiency. The WLO accreditation is aimed at encouraging organisations to commit to water conservation through their operations and activities, which in this case has led to the council being awarded a Waterwise Checkmark for one of its buildings, to develop a three-year water-saving action plan and an employee training programme.

The water-saving plan and training programme, which has been implemented to drive a culture change, will strengthen the organisation's progress towards protecting the environment and delivering efficiencies outlined in the Council Plan.

New Nottinghamshire community woodland featured in national report

A new community woodland in Nottinghamshire, which is home to thousands of trees, has been showcased in a national report. More than 87,000 trees have been planted at the Thorney Abbey site, near Southwell, through the Defra-funded Trees for Climate programme and delivered via the Greenwood Community Forest initiative, hosted by Nottinghamshire County Council's conservation team. The wooded area has been created on 48-hectare land purchased by Greenwood in 2024, with trees planted using contractors, community volunteers and a delegation of agricultural students from Nottingham Trent University's Brackenhurst Campus. Now a report published by England's Community Forests, which has delivered the Trees for Climate programme in partnership with the National Trust, Woodland Trust, and Community Forest Trust, includes a case study detailing the work which has taken place at Thorney Abbey.

4 Outcome 4 – A Council That Leads, A Council That Listens

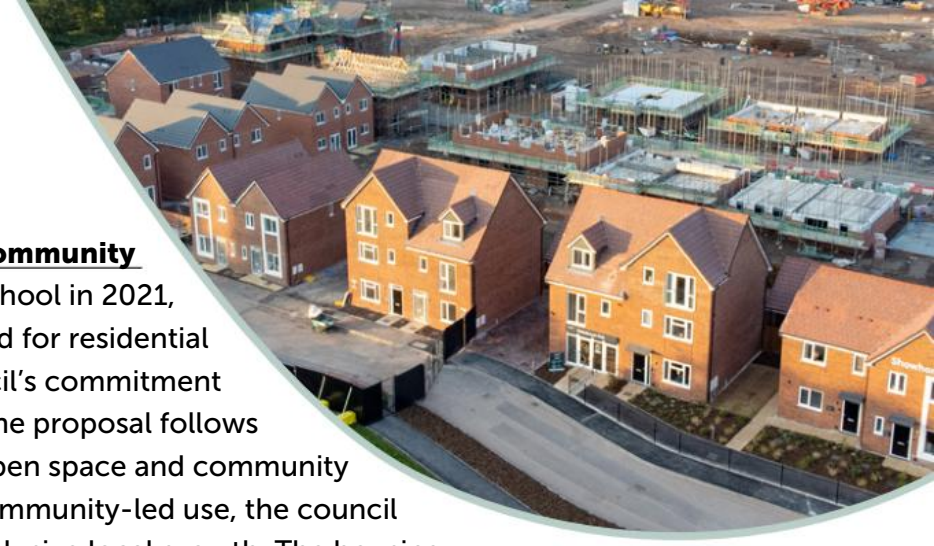
To achieve our Outcomes, we must ensure Nottinghamshire County Council is efficient and effective. We will deliver together as One Council - managing budgets responsibly and making best use of the resources available to us. We will develop a skilled workforce whilst taking advantage of new opportunities presented by national and local changes. We will also improve how we deliver services and listen to local communities, helping people be involved in the decisions that matter to them.

Successful completion of the Local Government Association's Corporate Peer Challenge

In November 2025, the Council invited the Local Government Association (LGA) to carry out a **Corporate Peer Challenge**. The Peer Challenge process aims to provide robust, strategic and credible challenge to activity designed to support the Council's decisions, ambitions, and appraise the organisation's current performance and improvement capabilities.

The LGA spent three and a half days on-site, engaging with over 200 people through 35 meetings. The peer team praised the Council for its strong leadership, dedicated staff, positive organisational culture, strong practice in co-design, and its strategic relationships with partners. Following this, the Council is dedicated to continuing to improve its own performance and being transparent with progress that it makes.

Former Nottinghamshire school site set to get new lease of life



A former primary school near Newark is set to provide **new housing and improved community facilities for residents**. The vacant 1.2-acre Manners Sutton site, which closed as a school in 2021, is proposed to be split to maximise public benefit, with around half of the site intended for residential development and the remainder for community use. This approach reflects the council's commitment to sustainable growth, stronger communities, and making best use of public assets. The proposal follows feedback from local groups and elected members highlighting a shortage of public open space and community facilities in Averham and neighbouring villages. By setting aside part of the land for community-led use, the council aims to create a space that supports social connections, health and wellbeing, and inclusive local growth. The housing element would help meet local needs, with all new homes required to meet current national and local sustainability standards.

Colleagues in our Adults' and Children & Families' Social Care services are benefitting from the use of Beam Notes to support conversations with Nottinghamshire residents

The AI-powered tool automatically generates detailed, structured notes from meetings, that are compatible with social care workers' case management systems. Results for frontline staff have included halving the write up time for some meeting types reduced; reducing colleagues' administrative workload; allowing practitioners to spend more time with service users and give people their full attention; as well as supporting colleagues to write more consistent case records. This has allowed teams to reduce backlogs of work, see families faster and support staff wellbeing.

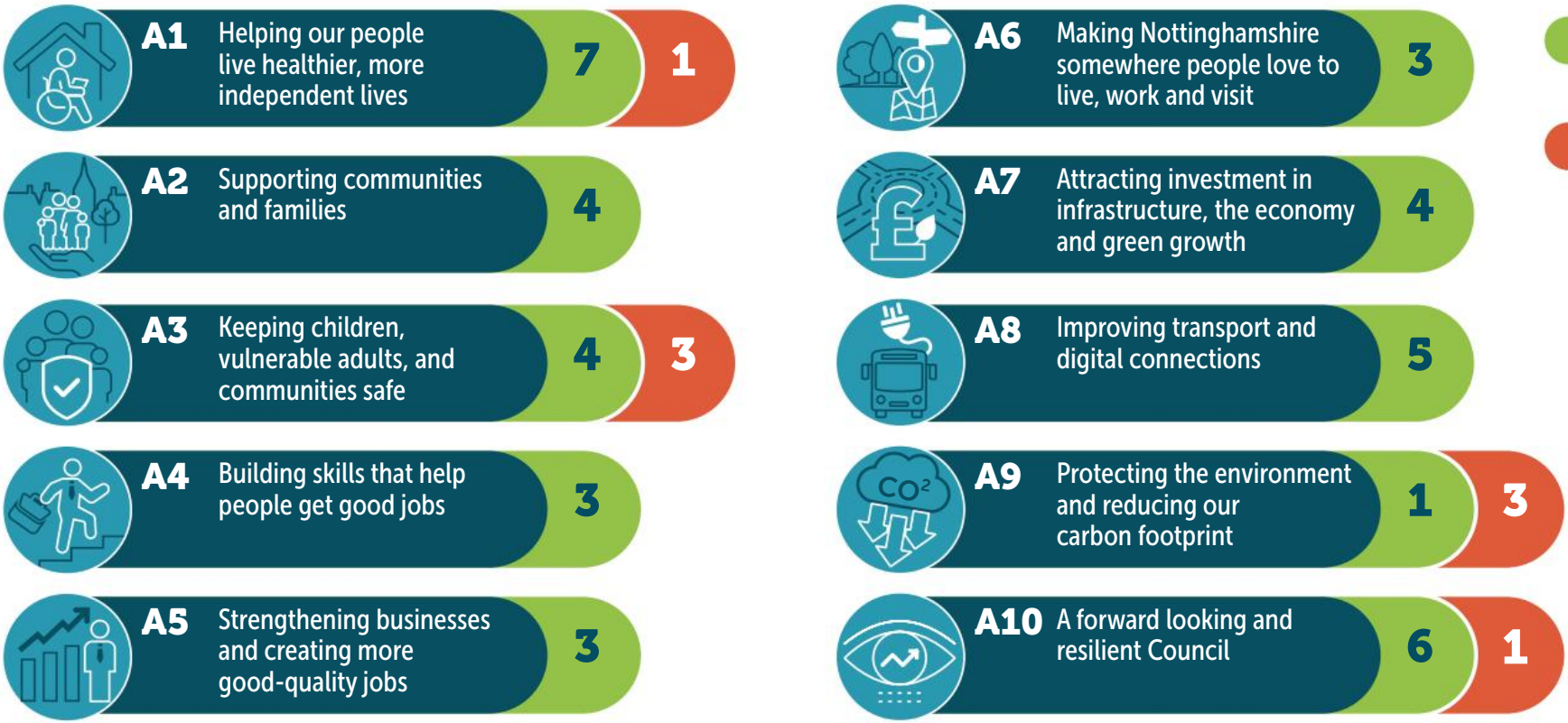
Following this early success, Children & Families colleagues are now rolling out Beam Notes to additional frontline staff, meaning that soon all of Adult's Social Care and many of Children & Families frontline colleagues will have access, benefitting Nottinghamshire residents further.

Delivering on What We Promised

Overall, there were 48 priority actions the Council sought to progress during 2025-26. At yearend, we've completed the vast majority of the targets we set out to, with good progress being made on the remainder.

As an open and transparent Council, we want to celebrate what has gone well and be honest about where there have been some obstacles to delivery. This section sets out progress against actions from the previous Nottinghamshire Plan, reflecting that the 2025–26 Annual Delivery Plan was agreed before the new 'Our Council Plan' was approved in November 2026.

Action status by ambition



Where delivery of actions is not complete, this is largely due to reprioritisation required as a result of the scale and complexity of emerging national reform initiatives, which could not be fully anticipated when the 25/26 Annual Delivery Plan was agreed. The Council will continue to focus on activity that matters most to Nottinghamshire's people and communities, making sure that there are informed decisions about organisational priorities, so that new national reforms are progressed alongside existing local commitments.

Next Steps

Following approval of the new **Annual Delivery Plan 2026-27**, progress will begin to be reported against this following the end of the first quarter (June 2026). A report will be presented to Cabinet each quarter throughout the year, with an additional report to Overview Committee as part of both half year and yearend reporting.

Further detail and reports, including the full Council Plan itself, **can be seen here**.

Nottinghamshire County Council

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