



# Corporate Business Plan

2011/12 to 2014/15

## Introduction

### **Funding and resources**

Despite completing a thorough cost reduction exercise in 2003/04 and keeping tight control over budgets and staffing levels, this council, along with much of the rest of the public sector, has been through tough and difficult times over the last twelve months. This was hot on the heels of local government review which proved an unnecessary distraction to the council between 2007-09 and ultimately resulted in no change to structures in Norfolk.

The reduction of government grant by 28% over the period to 2013/14 was announced in the autumn 2010 in the first spending review of the coalition government and represents a £3.4m cut in the first two years.

We anticipated funding cuts and started a series of fundamental service reviews in 2010/11 that would look at every service area and take out 25% of costs. This resulted in taking out over 90 posts, losing valued colleagues who had contributed towards the success of this organisation over previous years. The remaining staff had a pay freeze in 2010 and 2011. Despite uncertainty and the significant level of organisational change, staff have continued to deliver high quality services that meet people's needs.

### **National priorities that influence our work**

The coalition government have announced a raft of policy initiatives many of which impact on the Council and the public sector locally. In January 2011 the Prime Minister set out his priorities for modernising public service:

1. Free professionals from top-down control and bureaucracy eg abolition of audit commission, inspection regime, performance indicators, local area agreements
2. Give choice to service users, eg Free schools, Open data / web technologies, participatory budgeting
3. Encourage competition between suppliers, eg tendering of services on a regional scale for delivery of the Work programme, certain probation services
4. Pay by results wherever appropriate, eg Work Programme - based on people being in work for a period of time, or probation service, payment on actual v predicted reconviction rates
5. Publish information everywhere you can, eg local crime mapping [www.maps.police.uk](http://www.maps.police.uk) and publication of all council spend over £500: [www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=25883](http://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=25883)
6. Make public service professions answerable to people rather than the government machine. Eg transparency agenda, locally-published data supporting 'arm-chair auditors'

There is a raft of legislation that whilst it doesn't directly impact on the council will shape the landscape that we are working in. Examples include:

- directly elected Police Commissioners
- universal credit and the transfer of benefits away from Council administration
- major changes within the health sector with the abolition of the Primary Care Trusts
- extending the school leaving age to 18 by 2014
- introduction of Local Economic Partnerships and the abolition of the regional development agencies

- the localism bill
- Open Public Services white paper

### **The principles that underpin our work**

The following principles will underpin the way that we work towards these outcomes. We will

- stand up for the interests of West Norfolk. If we are not a champion for the area, who will be?
- Retain sufficient capacity to enable us to respond to local issues such as Local Government Review, the Incinerator or the Football club,
- Share overheads wherever possible across the public sector to reduce costs and improve services
- Achieve efficiency savings. These are not an end in themselves, instead they need to be means through which we will achieve better services
- Test out new approaches to service delivery where they help us achieve our priorities - through shared services, partnership arrangements, joint procurement, externalisation, joint service reviews
- Ensure people receive responsive services that meet their needs, irrespective of who provides them.
- respond to opportunities that arise from the current levels of change within the public services
- Ultimately keep council tax at or below inflation

### **The outcomes we are working to achieve**

The council will work as a champion for West Norfolk and stand up for local interests. We monitor the range of issues that impact on the quality of people's everyday lives even where these don't directly relate to our core services. We do recognise that these issues are all interlinked. As a result it is important that the council works with the wider public sector to address them. These wider quality of life issues are essential to developing west Norfolk as a good place to be. They are set out in more detail in the strategy for West Norfolk under six outcomes:

- People play an active role in their community
- People lead safe and healthy lives
- People maximise their potential
- People benefit from a thriving economy
- People live in locally distinctive neighbourhoods
- People enjoy a clean and attractive natural environment

These form the framework for the council's new business plan which sets out our priorities for the four year period 2011-2015 and shows how we will contribute towards these outcomes.

## Outcomes

In West Norfolk...

People play an active role in their community

- Helping people support community activities
- Helping people resolve local issues
- Helping people value their cultural heritage

People lead safe and healthy lives

- Helping people making positive lifestyle changes
- Helping people stay safe
- Helping people be more active

People maximise their potential

- Helping people raise self-esteem and aspirations
- Helping young people succeed

People benefit from a thriving economy

- Helping people grow their business
- Helping develop vibrant town centres
- Helping people access services and facilities

People live in locally distinctive neighbourhoods

- Helping people access suitable housing
- Helping improve built environment

People enjoy a clean and attractive natural environment

- Helping people minimise their impact on the environment
- Helping people look after their local area

*People receive value for money services*

- *Providing quality services at lower costs*
- *Achieving our outcomes through new ways of working*
- *Responding to external pressures*

## People play an active role in their community

*Our population continues to change in West Norfolk with new arrivals from both within the UK and outside of it, with residents growing older and people choosing to move here for the latter part of their lives. It is important that we understand the needs of all members of our community and work to ensure that everyone feels they can play an active role in their community.*

We know:

- The northern, coastal part of the borough has experienced significant levels of second home ownership reaching over 50% of the housing stock in some parishes.
- Rates of road injuries and deaths have reduced since 2009 and are now similar to the England average, although there were still 448 casualties in 2010 with nearly 21% killed or seriously injured.

We want to help people:

- play an active role in their community
- resolve local issues

## People lead safe and healthy lives

*Our health is the key to our quality of life. West Norfolk has high quality healthcare delivered by committed professionals. But there is more we can do to support people in building healthier lifestyles for themselves and for their families. Preventing the onset of physical or mental ill health is far preferable to treating disease at a later stage. West Norfolk remains a very safe place to live and this is reflected in our low crime rates.*

### We know:

- The difference in life expectancy between the best and worst wards in the borough is over 10 years, representing significant health inequalities.
- The number of people aged 65 plus with social care needs is projected to increase by 62% over the next 20 years (a 71% increase for people with dementia).
- South Downham ward has the second highest average age of all 8,850 wards nationally; North Downham ranks 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Crime rates reduced by almost 23% between 2006-09, but by the last quarter of 2010 all crime types except robbery were up on the same period the previous year, reflecting in part the tightening economic circumstances in which people are living.

### We want to help people:

- make positive lifestyle changes
- be more active
- feel safe

## People maximise their potential

*Aspirations, skills and attainment remain the highest priority for the West Norfolk Partnership. The area continues to lag behind many areas in terms of formal educational attainment and there are still substantial numbers of people with low levels of qualifications or no formal qualifications, a key barrier to participation in employment. Compared to the rest of the county and the country the area is characterised by low skills and low aspirations.*

### We know:

- the share of the population either with no qualifications or qualified just to NVQ Level 1 or equivalent is 42.4 per cent, compared to 37 per cent for the East of England and 35.1 per cent for Great Britain.
- 17.3 per cent of residents have at least an NVQ Level 4 equivalent qualification (a first degree or higher), compared with 24 per cent in the East of England, and 25.7 per cent for the country as a whole.
- In 2009, only 42% of pupils achieved five or more GCSEs at level A\* to C (including Maths and English) compared with 50% in Norfolk, 52% for the region and 50% nationally.

### We want to help:

- People improve self-esteem and raise aspirations
- young people succeed

## People benefit from a thriving economy

*West Norfolk has proved relatively resilient to the worst of the recession due in part to the important role played by King's Lynn as a commercial centre within the region. We have been working hard across the partnership to make sure that we all play our part in achieving the vision for the area, not just in King's Lynn with its growth plans, but also in our market towns and rural areas.*

### We know:

- Average gross weekly earnings of £384 place West Norfolk in the bottom 20% of all districts, £72 a week below the national average.
- The gap between Gross Value Added (GVA) per capita in West Norfolk (£13,000) and Norfolk (£16,200) in 2007 reflects a trend that has been getting worse since 2001. GVA reflects the value of goods and services produced per head of population.
- Between 2006 and 2008 the number of employees in West Norfolk increased by 5.9%, relatively strong and above average growth by national standards.

### We want to help:

- people grow their own business
- develop vibrant town centres
- people access services and facilities



## People live in decent housing and a quality built environment

*Decent homes in vibrant neighbourhoods give people a springboard from which they can meet their full potential. They provide a starting point for family life, for good health, and for sustainable communities. Only with the right supply of good housing, appropriate to our future needs, can West Norfolk be a place where people want to live.*

We know:

- Information from the Land Registry shows that between the 1st quarter of 2001 and the 1st quarter of 2009 average property prices in England and Wales rose by 69.9%. For Rural East Anglia the increase was 71.3% whilst for West Norfolk the figure was 70.7%.
- There is a low proportion of affordable housing developed in West Norfolk with 367 affordable houses built between 2008 and 2011. All new developments containing 15 or more houses in King's Lynn and Downham Market and 10 or more houses in other locations now contain 30% affordable housing.

We want to help:

- people access suitable housing
- regenerate our built environment

## People enjoy a clean and attractive natural environment

*The quality and diversity of the local environment is one of West Norfolk's greatest assets and we need to work together to make sure that it remains that way both for our residents and tourists.*

We know:

- West Norfolk has 110 scheduled ancient monuments, 43 conservation areas, around 2000 Listed Buildings, 5 historic parks and gardens, 23 ancient woodlands and numerous buildings and landscapes with cultural value
- Much of the borough is low-lying, increasing the risk of flooding and adding to the impact of climate change. The potential for coastal erosion, tidal and river flooding all have significant implications for the future physical development of the area.

We want to help people:

- make sustainable lifestyle choices
- look after their local area

## The council provides value for money services

*Blah blah.*

We want to ensure we:

- Provide services at an appropriate quality
- Provide services at an appropriate cost
- Provide services through new ways of working