Welcome to the first bulletin of the revised Future Northants programme.

This comes hot on the heels of our very first West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority meeting which was truly an historic occasion. Opened by the High Sherriff of Northamptonshire, it was a chance for us all to reflect on our great history as a county and to plan for the future as we look to create a new West Northants Council for our residents and businesses.

It was an honour to be appointed as leader of the shadow authority and with Chris Millar selected as chair and the support of the many councillors from the Daventry District, Northampton Borough, South Northamptonshire and Northamptonshire County Councils, we have a great network in place to deliver the West Northamptonshire Council.

We know that we also have the support of our many partners including parish and town councils, the voluntary and community sectors, the health and emergency services and local businesses, all of whom have joined together to respond magnificently to the public health pandemic. The Northamptonshire response, in particular, is proof that we can all work together to do things differently, to operate in a new way. I’m looking forward to developing these improved relationships and newly adopted ways of working so that our residents really feel the benefit and live better lives as a result.

Please read on to keep yourself up to date on the very latest work in the programme and if you have any questions, let me know.

First shadow meeting an online success

It was great to see the involvement in the first meeting of the West Northants shadow authority, as the next chapter to create our new Council got under way.

The inaugural meeting took place on 2 June via Zoom video-conferencing and was live-streamed to the public on Youtube, shortly followed by the first Shadow Executive meeting on 9 June.

Thanks to these two meetings we have now adopted our Constitution, Code of Conduct, appointed our interim statutory officers, received and endorsed the membership of the new Shadow Executive and decided the membership of other shadow committees for Overview and Scrutiny, Standards and Senior Appointments as well as agreeing the Task and Finish Groups for the Programme.

For more information on future meetings visit https://cmis.northamptonshire.gov.uk/cmis5live
Who's who on our committees
Here's a recap of the membership of the Executive and committees

All systems go for our new Task and Finish Groups

Colleagues from across our councils and their different political parties will soon be rolling their sleeves up and getting involved in the work of the new Shadow Authority Task and Finish Groups.

Membership and Terms of Reference for each of the 11 groups were agreed at the recent Shadow Executive meeting on 9 June, with nominations sought from each of the political groups.

The aim of the Task and Finish Groups are to:

- Facilitate a wider understanding of the issues being dealt with through the Future Northants Programme, including interdependencies.
- Broaden political ownership of the issues, recommendations and decisions.
- Enable Members in the Groups to hold each other to account and to test out ideas informally with each other and officers.
- Spread the workload (for Members) - when there is so much to do and so many meetings to attend.

Full membership of the new groups is set out opposite.
A key part of redesigning the Future Northants Programme for the new Safe and Legal Plus approach has focused on changing its scope and structure to ensure that Day One Readiness is at the forefront of our activities. The previous 13 portfolio and programme teams have been restructured into a series of new programme areas, reflecting the new priorities. These are:

- **Place** – the remit for this programme includes environmental and regulatory services, communities and leisure and Day One accommodation, with North and West programme teams being set up to support its delivery.
- **Finance** – key work streams include disaggregation and aggregation of budgets, Council Tax harmonisation and Revenues and Benefits.
- **ICT** and **Customer & Digital** – ICT will be ensuring the infrastructure, technology and software is in place for Day One of the new councils.

**Update from Paul Helsby Programme Director**

Customer & Digital will focus on customer contact and digital services for the new councils including the websites and intranets, CRM systems, telephony and email.

- **Corporate** – programme areas includes HR services, such as staff transfer and payroll set-up, as well as communications and engagement, corporate services structures, legal support and member training.
- **Adults** – continuing the transformation work already well under way for adults services alongside ensuring Day One readiness.
- **Children’s** – continuing the work towards establishing the new Northamptonshire Children’s Trust and ensuring Day One readiness for social care and education services.

Working with all these areas is the Day One Programme

Manager, Stuart Hill. His focus is on ensuring everything is in place safely and legally for go-live day by developing the critical path and his priority is to set up and make operational a new assurance framework to help achieve this that brings together all the other programme plans.

You can read more about the work of these programme areas and who’s involved in this month’s updates using the links on the front of the bulletin.

Work is under way to fully establish these revised programme areas, such as realigning resources and staffing and setting up new programme boards.

This also means that a review of the work streams and working groups, which some members of staff have been involved in as Subject Matter Experts. Some may change and others may continue as they did previously, depending on how they are prioritised under the revised programme.

We’ll continue to keep you updated on this work.
The two new interim Heads of Paid Service, monitoring officers and chief finance officers are now in place for the Shadow Authorities.

For the North Northamptonshire Shadow Authority, Liz Elliott has been appointed Interim Head of Paid Service, with Glenn Hammons as Interim Chief Finance Officer (Section 151) and Bhupinder Gill as Interim Monitoring Officer.

Liz is also Managing Director of the Borough Council of Wellingborough, Glenn is Resources and Commercial Executive Director at East Northants Council and Bhupinder is Monitoring Officer for East Northants, Wellingborough and Deputy at Kettering councils. He is also the chief legal officer for the shared legal service, District Law at Kettering. For the West Shadow Authority George Candler is appointed Interim Head of Paid Service, with Susan Zeiss as Interim Monitoring Officer and Martin Henry as Interim Chief Finance Officer (Section 151).

George is also Chief Executive of Northampton Borough Council, Susan holds the role of General Counsel at Northamptonshire County Council and Martin is Executive Director for Finance at South Northamptonshire Council.

Glenn, Martin, Susan and Bhupinder will carry out the interim statutory roles in addition to their responsibilities at the sovereign councils, until the permanent statutory officers are appointed later this year.

A national recruitment drive is underway to find and appoint the senior managers that will head the two new unitary councils.

Legislation requires that by the end of December this year, a permanent Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and Finance (Section 151) Officer must be in place ahead of the councils being created on 1 April 2021.

Recruitment is also taking place for a Director of Children’s Services as a joint appointment for both North and West unitary councils to assure Children’s outcomes through the countywide Northamptonshire Children’s Trust; as well as a Director for Adult Social Care, for each new authority. Interviews are scheduled to take place in July and August. Application details available at www.shapethefuturenorthants.co.uk

Key dates for your diary: our future meetings

1. Shadow Executive – 23 June
2. Overview & Scrutiny – 30 June
3. Shadow Executive – 21 July
4. Shadow Council – 28 July
5. Shadow Executive – 25 August
6. Overview & Scrutiny – 8 September

Shadow Council meetings will start at 7pm and Shadow Executive and Overview & Scrutiny meetings will start at 6pm.

Meeting information and agendas are available at https://cmis.northamptonshire.gov.uk/cmis5live/NorthNorthamptonshireShadowAuthority.aspx