



# Breckland Corporate Plan 2021-2023

A place where people and business can thrive.

## June 2021

## Introduction

Breckland is a special place and as a Council we are working hard to make it a place where people and business can thrive. This Corporate Plan sets out our vision for the district and the people we serve. It is a revision of the Plan that was first published in February 2019 and has been updated to reflect changes in our district, the organisation and its management, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and our subsequent recovery efforts.

We will deliver on our ambition by driving change in four strategic priority areas: -

- Inspiring Communities
- Thriving Places
- Breckland 2035
- Working Smarter

Our priority areas are outcome focused. We are not starting from scratch and have a strong track record of delivery and achievement to build on. But there are new actions included that reflect emerging priority areas and recent developments. We remain highly ambitious and working with our key strategic partners will deliver real change and improvement right across the district.

Breckland spans over 500 square miles of beautiful countryside and forest in the heart of Norfolk. With a range of thriving rural village communities and the five bustling market towns of Attleborough, Dereham, Swaffham, Thetford and Watton. The area's rural nature is characterised by its 112 parishes, numerous villages and low crime rate which make Breckland one of the most attractive and safe places to live in the UK. Breckland's population is set to grow from the current 140,500 residents to 159,400 by 2041. Half of the current residents live in one of the five market towns with the remainder living in rural village homes. This means that the district has a low population density. Agriculture, advanced engineering and manufacturing, logistics and forestry are the dominant business sectors with professional, scientific, and technical and food processing not far behind. Breckland's local economy continues to grow bringing new employment to the area. Thetford and Attleborough are key areas for future housing and business growth which is expected to deliver economic benefits for the whole district.

Breckland Council now stands alone. The strategic relationship with South Holland District Council has come to an end after twelve successful years. All the learning and experience gained from this partnership has not been lost and is being used to strengthen our organisation and its strategic management. We also remain committed to working partnerships with, for example, the award-winning Anglia Revenues Partnership and the tripartite waste and recycling contract with Kings Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council and North Norfolk District Council.

Whilst we do not want to continue to be dominated by the pandemic, we must recognise that we have all been impacted by the Covid-19 in some shape or form. We are committed to enable and support the recovery process for our individuals, families, communities, and businesses – to build back stronger. We will continue to play a full part in the recovery processes of rebuilding, restarting, and rehabilitating the economy and community. We will be brave but measured in our approach as we understand that, in all likelihood, what is recovered will be very different to what is being replaced.

Our relationships and level of collaboration has never been stronger with businesses, communities, and the most vulnerable people in our district. We care about these relationships and will continue to work on them as they are foundation for much on the work on our four key strategic priorities.

We are passionate about developing a low carbon future and have pledged to be carbon neutral by 2035.

Finally, we are extremely excited to share our **Breckland Cares** campaign for the first time, which is made up of seven 'campaigns' delivered over a rolling twelve-month programme. The campaign will shine a light on several passions of ours including mental health, diversity and inclusion and climate change.

## Inspiring Communities

Breckland Council will help our residents to live safe and healthy lives by playing an active part in local communities. We will do this by providing excellent services that understand and support the needs of our residents and local areas enhancing the quality of life for all.

Working collaboratively with our partners, as part of a community led approach, we will work to address vulnerability in Breckland. This will be delivered through our Inspiring Communities programme.

Covid-19 has left a lasting effect on our communities, and we are committed to supporting our residents and businesses to recover from the pandemic and to support them to adjust to life with covid into the longer term.

## Outcomes

By 2025 we will have delivered on the following key outcomes:

- **To lead the recovery from Covid19** supporting all Breckland's communities and businesses;
- **To address vulnerability** and work with the most disadvantaged members of our communities to improve their life chances;
- **To enhance the health and wellbeing of Breckland's residents** by providing excellent leisure facilities and activities.

## Strategic Priorities

To achieve these outcomes, we will focus on the following strategic aims:

- We will work to prevent homelessness in the district;
- We will ensure that our residents have suitable, safe, and secure homes;
- We will support vulnerable residents through our £1 million vulnerability programme;
- We will continue to deliver our Community Grants scheme;
- We will continue to take a robust approach to Community Safety;
- We will work to address health inequalities in our communities;
- We will actively work with partners to further develop Breckland's communities;
- We will enhance leisure provision within the district;
- We will continue to support our businesses and resident's recovery from COVID-19;

## Thriving Places

Breckland Council will play an active role in creating the right conditions for new and existing local businesses to thrive. We will continue to support growth in the local economy, bringing forward and shaping large-scale projects and activities, which will unlock significant employment and housing opportunities.

Each of our five town centres are different. We will lead and enable strategic and focussed action within each of them and their hinterlands, working with key stakeholders and partners, to drive investment and change which will help the towns to thrive now and in the future.

The Covid-19 pandemic means the council is keen to support businesses effectively recover from its impact. Our Breckland 2035 commitment also means we are keen to support sustainable business growth and environmentally focused initiatives.

## Outcomes

By 2025 we will have delivered on the following key outcomes:

- **To support our five town centres** to become better places and to highlight their own unique offerings as destinations for local shoppers and visitors;
- **To secure or attract inward investment** and make the district an attractive place for new and growing businesses;
- **To support local businesses** through continued collaboration and further proactive engagement

## Strategic priorities

To achieve these outcomes, we will focus on the following strategic aims:

- We will develop a coherent Strategic Infrastructure Plan and Growth Pipeline for the future;
- We will improve housing supply in Breckland;
- We will ensure the success and effectiveness of the Future Breckland project;
- We will develop a new deal, and new way, for Town-Level support and investment including a refresh of the role and function of the Market Towns Initiative Programme;
- We will build out, in each Town, opportunities of significant strategic impact to unlock future growth, and with a full pipeline of investable opportunities in the longer-term;
- We will develop a focus on creating an 'Inclusive Economy';
- We will focus on the support we provide to our businesses, new and old;
- We will continue to work with our businesses to help them adapt their covid security as the pandemic evolves allowing them to thrive during these challenging times;
- We will ensure our covid support and enforcement work continues to be robust giving resident's and visitor's confidence in Breckland communities and businesses (Covid in Communities);
- We will attract new investment and Government support and funding for key programmes.

## Breckland 2035

Breckland Council has recognised that there is a climate emergency that needs our urgent attention, and as a result we have created our 'Breckland 2035' Sustainability Strategy which sets out the direction of how we play an active part to help mitigate its impacts.

We will lead by example as an organisation taking action to reduce our own impacts to achieve net zero emissions by 2035. We recognise that we cannot achieve this alone so we will use our resources and regulatory powers to create an environment in which our residents and other key stakeholders are enabled to act for themselves to contribute to this agenda.

We recognise that Breckland is an amazing place of outstanding natural beauty that needs to be protected to allow our residents and future generations to continue to access it in a safe and sustainable way.

Our approach to sustainability will underpin everything we do as an organisation, from how we collect waste and recycle, what our towns and villages will look like in the future, through to how we use our own offices.

## Outcomes

By 2023 we will have delivered on the following key outcomes:

- To lead by example and start to deliver our sustainability strategy, **reducing our carbon footprint** and enabling residents to take actions for themselves.
- To **protect and enhance our outstanding local environment** by taking a proactive approach to preventing environmental crime.
- To build on the success of our tripartite waste and recycling contract - to not only deliver strong performance and efficiency, but also use it as a mechanism to **educate our residents about reducing waste**.

## Strategic priorities

To achieve these outcomes, we will focus on the following strategic actions:

- We will deliver a community green grants scheme to enable community activity;
- We will increase tree canopy cover by planting trees for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee as well as creating a woodland of thanks;
- We will deliver a strategy for electric vehicle charging across the district that will increase the number of locations where there are charging points;
- We will make improvements to our buildings and explore renewable energy options to reduce their carbon footprint;
- We will work towards delivering the council's target to be NetZero by 2035;
- We will increase uptake and education on waste and recycling, through our waste contract;
- We will support our businesses to dispose of their waste in a sustainable way through expanding our trade waste scheme;
- We will shape our planning service and the Local Plan to deliver our sustainability goals;
- We will switch our energy supplier to a fully renewable option when our current contract ends;
- We will grow our approach to environmental enforcement to protect our natural environment;

## Working Smarter

Prior to the pandemic Breckland Council committed to a significant transformation programme to change the way in which the Council's Members and Officers undertake their respective roles, ensuring we put our residents and businesses at the heart of everything we do. The outcome will allow us to continually improve the delivery of services, make better use of space and resources, and future-proof the organisation – enabling us to operate as a modern council. Ultimately, making the organisation more efficient and effective whilst continuing to operate within our established budget.

Enabling agile working will see us break down the barriers of site-specific working, so members and officers are empowered and enabled to work at the location and time which meets business demand and best supports the delivery of high-quality services.

We are continually developing our culture, with a proactive focus on wellbeing for all (members, officers, partners, residents, and businesses) and embedding being performance led organisation. We will use data to strengthen our organisational intelligence to inform our decisions, so we make the right choices at the right times.

## Outcomes

By 2023 we will have delivered on the following key outcomes:

- **Provide exceptional services** in a flexible way to meet our residents, businesses, visitors, and partner's needs, ensuring services are accessible to all;
- Continue to innovatively use our resources to **produce a balanced budget** to enable the delivery of our (statutory and discretionary) services;
- **Build on the success of our tripartite waste and recycling contract** with strong performance and efficiency.

## Strategic priorities

To achieve these outcomes, we will focus on the following strategic aims:

- We will develop a 'smarter working' organisation (strengthening our existing organisational intelligence), using data to shape and inform decisions;
- We will rationalise our IT estate to improve service and reduce costs;
- We will provide an exceptional customer service for residents, businesses, and partners by providing a simple user experience no matter how they choose to engage with us;
- We will transform our website, providing a frictionless user experience;
- We will have a financially sustainable balanced budget in the short, medium & long term which supports diversification of our investments;
- We will identify a deliverable efficiencies programme and deliver it over the life of the Medium-Term Financial Plan;
- We will maximise external funding income;
- We will protect the organisation by making sure we are well-governed, democratically accountable, and legally compliant;
- We will support and empower our people to be the best they can be through wellbeing support, development, and training;
- We will promote our council to protect and enhance its reputation, helping us to attract and retain high-calibre staff; and making sure we are seen to be a partner of choice to work with others across the district, and beyond;

- We will ensure that we have an efficient asset portfolio by diversifying it as necessary, allowing us to seek new investments, which will continue to generate an income which will support our services;