



GEDLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

POSITION STATEMENT

2022// PREPARED BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Serving People **Improving Lives**



Serving People **Improving Lives**



Where we are
TODAY

foreword

LEADER & DEPUTY LEADER

We and all of the elected Members and staff at Gedling Borough Council welcome the Peer Challenge Team to the borough and look forward to working with you in undertaking the Corporate Peer Challenge Review.

As Leader of the Council, my ambition is to build a better borough and this is something that is supported by the Chief Executive and the Council as a whole. Our Gedling Plan has the overriding vision of Serving People, Improving Lives:

We aspire to be regarded as an excellent Council by the people and businesses we serve and the staff we employ, by making a positive difference to people's lives and creating opportunities for everyone to achieve their full potential.

We have been successful so far in managing the uncertain journey of financial austerity, making tough decisions on the way we provide the services to the community. We pride ourselves on delivering a financially efficient council and hope to continue this path through continued partnership working with local residents, businesses, community groups and neighbouring authorities as we strive to learn and improve for now and the future.

We welcome the opportunity for the Peer Challenge Team to help us identify ways we can move forward with the key work that we are still to achieve. We acknowledge the journey won't be easy but we are dedicated in our overall ambition for the people, who work, live and enjoy the borough of Gedling.



Gedling borough lies adjacent to the boundary of the City of Nottingham and covers 120Km². It consists of a mixture of urban and rural areas, with main shopping areas in Arnold, Mapperley and Carlton.

The latest estimated population is 118,200, with just over 53,000 households.

Gedling's resident population is 51.3% female and 48.7% male. Life expectancy is higher than the national average at 80.1 years for males and 83.0 years for females

The largest ethnic group is 'Number of usual residents who are White' with 93.1% of the district's population. That compares with a figure of 95.5% for Nottinghamshire County as a whole and 85.4% for East Midlands.



Gedling's employment rate for 16-64 years is 78% (Jan 2021-Dec 2021 – Annual Population Survey via NOMIS).

According to the 2019 Indices of Deprivation overall, Gedling is ranked the 207th most deprived out of 317 councils in England.

In terms of deprivation overall, the Netherfield ward is our lowest ranked area and is in the bottom 20% of all wards nationally and has got worse in comparison to 2015.



The Council is under a Labour administration and has been for the past three terms. The Leader of the Council is Councillor John Clarke and his Deputy Leader is Councillor Michael Payne. They lead a cabinet of seven members with a range of portfolios.

There are 41 councillors in total at Gedling Borough Council.

- 28 members are from the Labour Party
- 8 members are from the Conservative Party
- 2 members are from Independent Parties
- 3 members are from the Liberal Democratic Party

The Labour Party have the overall majority and have been in power since 2011.

Gedling Borough Council is one of the largest employers in the area. It employs over 460 staff across several services. It has a civic centre, where most staff are based, a depot, four leisure centres and a theatre/cinema.

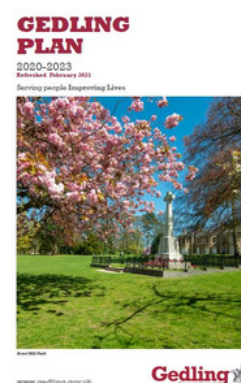


The Council vision and priorities, and the outcomes sought by them

The Council's ethos is a simple one. Serving people, improving lives. It is this message that goes along the entire Council's services and sums up the Council's role in the community and its position with its local businesses. It is this ethos that sets the focus of the Council's strategy. The Council's overall strategy and objectives are set out in the Gedling Plan. The plan lays out the Council's overall vision, ambition, values and priorities for the period to March 2023. This is reviewed each year and approved by Full Council

The five main priorities are

- Cohesive, Diverse and Safe Communities
- High Performing Council
- Vibrant Economy
- Sustainable Environment
- Healthy Lifestyles



Preparations are underway to develop the Gedling Plan 2023-27 including public consultation on priorities.

How were the priorities developed?

We used data from responses to our residents' satisfaction survey, the Gedling Conversation, to help shape our priorities for the Gedling Plan. Every two years we ask for feedback from our residents and businesses. We undergo a range of consultation events and send surveys out to every household. On average we get over 5% response, which gives the Council a clear indication of the main priorities of our residents. Our work on our residents' consultation was recognised by the Local Government Association as a good example of public engagement.

The current Gedling Plan was produced in early 2020, which considered a range of datasets to identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) of both the Borough and the Council.

This analysis was considered by the Senior Leadership Team and Service Managers at a series of workshops, where a revised set of data-led priorities and objectives were developed and a range of strategic actions proposed.

Consultation on the draft Gedling Plan took place with an internal working group, community groups and representatives of business.

Closely linked to the Gedling Plan, is the Council's Local Plan, comprising the Aligned Core Strategy, Local Planning Document and Neighbourhood Plans. These plans work together to shape future development in Gedling Borough by planning for new homes, jobs and infrastructure until 2028.

Development and growth will be managed to ensure that local infrastructure impacts are mitigated. Whilst facilitating this growth, the Borough's Green Belt, natural habitats and heritage will be safeguarded and the impact of growth on the environment minimised. Other strategies have fed into the development of the Gedling Plan and a list is attached in the appendix.

How the priorities have been communicated?

The Council's Communications Team have put together a strategy that sets out how the Gedling Plan will be communicated and implemented across service areas. The Gedling Plan has also been published as an easy to read document and there are supplementary brochures that break down key elements of the plan for stakeholders. The Communications Team provide quarterly performance reports that directly link to their strategic objectives which includes highlighting the Council's priorities through their proactive publicity and internal communications.

At the end of each year, a Gedling Plan annual report is produced and promoted to all.



Any key changes or transformation the Council will undergo to deliver its priorities in an environment of austerity

In order to safeguard services and minimise the impact on front-line delivery, Gedling has rationalised its management arrangements significantly. This was subsequently followed by a full scale review of all posts within the organisation.

The ultimate aim of this was to become a more modern and responsive council that delivered on projects and aspirations identified as part of the Gedling Plan.

It is important to emphasise that the Council has always performed well and is continuing to do so. The driver for change therefore was to create a streamlined team to both generate efficiency savings and to respond quickly to Gedling Plan priorities.

Finance and council resources are a major issue and the council has not received government support in the form of Towns Fund, Future High Streets or Levelling Up funding. Instead the Council has utilised borrowing to facilitate the development of Arnold Market Place to regenerate the town centre.

Internally, the Council is reviewing its use of IT software to transform and improve support and front line services.

It is also commencing a strategic review of leisure provision, both facilities and services.



Local Government Review

During 2018, Nottinghamshire County Council set out proposals to form a single Unitary Council, which abolishes the district and borough councils. In response to this, Gedling Borough Council carried out a survey with all residents in December 2018 asking a simple question: Do you support Nottinghamshire County Council's plans to abolish your local council? This was an extremely popular consultation exercise, and at the close of consultation, we had received over 9,000 responses, with an overwhelming 91% of these against the proposals.



In 2020 the County Council once again applied to the Minister to be in the first tranche of local authorities to go through Local Government Review. However the response from the Minister was to wait until the White Paper on Devolution was published.



The White Paper was published in February 2022 and the four councils of Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottingham City Council, Derbyshire County Council and Derby County Council were named as pathfinder areas, and invited to apply for a devolution deal.

The principles of the deal would be to "hand down" greater powers from central government to allow for greater autonomy and allocation of funding around transport and infrastructure, business growth, inward investment, strategic regeneration, destination management, employment, education and skills.

The Council is supportive in principle of the bid as long as sovereignty of the council, and borough powers around housing and planning are all retained.



How the Council convenes, co-ordinates, facilitates discussion of key strategic partners

As a lower tier authority, the opportunity to be the lead Council in these types of discussions are somewhat limited, however, both leading Members and senior officers contribute to local partnerships as discussed in the following sections. Four examples of the Council leading discussions are as follows

Our role	What it does
The Leader of the Council is the Chairperson of the APSE Strategic Forum – Climate Emergency	This forum explores the issues of Climate Emergency, in response to the vast numbers of local councils that have declared action on climate change. This forum includes the opportunity for senior officers and elected councillors to share thoughts, ideas and best practice amongst interested local councils with a focus on climate emergency being 'owned' across the local authority and all services.
The portfolio holder for Growth and Regeneration is the Chairperson of the Developer Forum, and is supported in that role by the Head of Development and Place and the Head of Regeneration and Welfare	The Forum meets quarterly and involves representatives from house builders, developers, landowners and registered housing providers. Representatives include national builders as well as regional builders. The Developers Forum has been used to inform the preparation of planning policy documents, to promote funding opportunities e.g. Homes England, and to seek feedback on frontline council services.
The Chief Executive is the Chair of the OPE N2 Steering Group and joint Chair of the North Midlands Strategic Land and Assets Board	This group works with all public sector partners, including the Clinical Commissioning Groups and local universities. The aim is to work together to get wider public service outcomes from collective assets, whether that is catalysing service transformations, unlocking land for new regeneration, reducing asset running costs, or generating income through capital receipts for sites no longer required in public service.
The Chief Executive is the Chair of the Safer Nottinghamshire Board – Modern Slavery Partnership	This group works to the overarching Safer Nottinghamshire Board. Its aim is to encourage a victim focused approach and good practice in victim care, and add value to local delivery and tactical responses to slavery and trafficking



The Council's contribution to local partnerships and regional structures

The Council is keen to work in partnership on strategic matters with organisations that stretch across the borough boundary into Nottinghamshire and the wider East Midland region. These partnership meetings are attended by the Leader of the Council and in most cases the Chief Executive. Three examples of the arrangements in place are:

The organisation

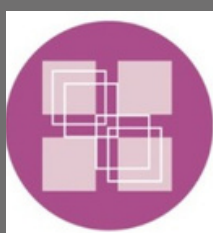
D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership



Our role

- Overarching Board supported by a Growth Hub Executive Board, Investment Board, ESIF Committee, People & Skills Advisory Board, Business Growth & Innovation Advisory Board, Place Advisory Board.
- It aims to increase economic growth and productivity in the area by developing an evidence-based Local Industrial Strategy; identifying and developing investment opportunities; and by bringing together partners from the private, public and third sectors.
- Key documents: Local Industrial Strategy; Vision 2030 Strategy (strategic economic plan); Energy Strategy.

Industrial Communities Alliance



- All party association of local authorities in the industrial areas of England, Scotland and Wales.
- It aims to make sure that support via policies and funding is in place to enable economic, social and environmental renewal in the cities, towns and committees covered by Alliance members authorities,

City of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Economic Prosperity Committee



- A decision-making body on strategic economic development issues.
- It aims to drive future investment in growth and jobs by prioritising, commissioning and monitoring money available to Nottingham and Nottinghamshire via the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership and makes recommendations to D2N2 on its investment priorities.
- It also oversees individual local authority plans to ensure they are aligned and contributing to economic growth.



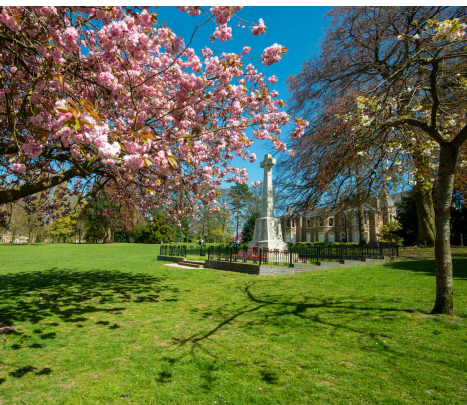
How the Council develops collective leadership and consensus between organisations across the place

The Leadership and Chief Executive determine the strategic direction for the council by attending and contributing to the countywide decision-making meetings. This collaborative approach is also embedded in the achievement of other council objectives, with the Chief Executive, Directors and Heads of Service all working with colleagues across the County on matters of strategic importance. Three examples of the arrangements in place are set out below and a full list is appended to the position statement.



Community Safety

Numerous groups such as: Safer Nottinghamshire Board; South Nottinghamshire Community Safety Partnership; Hate Crime Steering Group; Modern Slavery Partnership; County Youth Offending Board; Serious Organised Crime Project Board; Safeguarding Adult Board etc.



Environment management

- The Nottinghamshire Joint Waste Management Committee brings together the waste collection and waste disposal authorities to provide strategic direction for waste.
- The Nottinghamshire Environmental Strategy Working Group coordinates with the Midlands Net Zero Hub to give strategic direction for carbon management.



Greater Nottingham Planning Partnership

Numerous working groups covering: Employment Land Study; Retail Study; SHLAA Methodology; Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments; Sustainability Appraisals etc



Partners roles and contributions to Council priorities and shared outcomes

Most of the collaboration and collective work is between Gedling Borough Council and other upper and lower tier local authorities. Other partners, such as government bodies, do provide grant funding as a contribution towards the delivery of specific initiatives, and other funding partners become involved when contributing to specific capital projects, such as regeneration schemes.

However, in the true sense of shared outcomes, these are mainly developed around providing community services, such as our humanitarian work with the local church leaders and foodbanks, and also for providing advice for example with the Citizens Advice Bureau and other similar voluntary bodies.



Shared Services and Partnerships

The Council has had a number of shared service arrangements with other local authorities over the years, but in reality very few are now in existence. There is no 'one size fits all' approach and as such, potential shared service arrangements have always been considered when an appropriate opportunity has arisen and where the benefits to both authorities outweigh any potential negative impacts. The Council's committed team work hard to deliver services in tandem with our voluntary sector, either through formal service level agreements or via more informal networks.

The Council has a Partnership Register which provides details of current arrangements that are in place. This is appended to the position statement.



Regeneration Projects



Arnold Market Place Development



Carlton Square Development

The Council has just completed two major projects in its town centres, despite not receiving any central government funding:

- Arnold Market Place – to redevelop the site to safeguard market provision in the centre of Arnold, and provide a catalyst for further change within the town centre including offering space for business start ups.
- Carlton Square – Phase 1 - to improve the quality and configuration of the car parks, and include environmental considerations in the design. Phase 2 will be working with the owners to improve the shopping precinct areas.

The Council will be submitting an application to round 2 of the 'Levelling Up' Fund for the Arnold North area with a focus on leisure, arts and culture. However given that Gedling is not in the 'priority listing', then a sense of realism will mean it is difficult to see a positive outcome, despite a visible need for regeneration in Arnold, other towns and wards of the borough.



Environmental commitments



The Kids Against Plastic campaign is supported by Gedling Borough Council

Gedling Borough Council declared a climate emergency in November 2019 recognising the serious immediate and future impacts of global warming, and committing to take action at the local level.

We're working collaboratively with other Nottinghamshire Local Authorities and the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership (the LEP) on the Climate Emergency Agenda through the Environmental Strategy Working Group, recognising that the energy, climate and sustainability agenda does not respect Local Authority boundaries. This Group meets on a regular basis utilising a workshop approach that is addressing the challenges laid out in the D2N2 LEP Energy Strategy. This partnership work enables a clear oversight to the work going on across the County, and allows Local Authorities to identify areas of collaboration and joint working, investment and a sharing of resources with workshop themes including:

- Decarbonisation of leisure centres and other energy intensive buildings
- Improving the sustainability of existing housing stock
- Planning for sustainable new build
- Decarbonisation of fleet vehicles
- Installation of Electric Vehicle infrastructure
- Green procurement and joint investment
- Offsetting and investment in green energy

The Council will be a driving force in moving the borough towards becoming carbon neutral and will lead by example in the way in which it delivers its operations. The Council adopted its Carbon Management Strategy and Action Plan in March 2022 following consultation with residents, partners, stakeholders and community groups.

The arrangements that facilitate and support member-officer relationships and respective roles/responsibilities

The Council has adopted the Leader and Cabinet model as its political management structure, and the Cabinet is responsible for most day-to-day decisions. The Leader has responsibility for the appointment of members of the Cabinet (7 including the Leader), and has appointed Policy Advisors to the political structure.

The Council is required to have a Local Code of Corporate Governance which sets out the governance structures we have in place to demonstrate how we comply with the Core principles and sub-principles set out in a CIPFA and SOLACE publication “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework”. This Code, alongside the requirements of the Constitution, set out the arrangements and behaviours that form the member-officer relationships. These are reviewed at year end and reported as part of the Annual Government Statement.

In practical formal terms, this translates into:

- a weekly meeting between the Chief Executive, Leader and Deputy Leader
- an ambition to hold monthly meetings with the main opposition group
- monthly meetings between portfolio holder/cabinet members and Directors and relevant Heads of Service
- periodic ‘awaydays’ between the Cabinet members and Senior Leadership Team
- pre-agenda meetings between the Chief Executive, Leader and Deputy Leader prior to the publication of cabinet papers
- a weekly Senior Leadership Team meeting

Opportunities for all members (including non-executive) to inform/influence decision-making and policy development



Leadership, Cabinet Members and Officers at the opening of the visitor centre

All members of cabinet have the opportunity to influence and steer council activity to meet agreed strategic priorities. Other council members sit on the various committees of the council, including overview and scrutiny, standards, audit, planning, environment and licensing. In addition to these there are staffing committees consisting of Appeals and Retirements, Appointments and Conditions of Service, and Joint Consultative and Safety.

The Overview and Scrutiny committee operates an annual programme of review which then report their findings back to cabinet for a decision on whether to implement recommended actions or not. Examples of scrutiny reviews include flooding, domestic abuse, access to emergency accommodation, waste and public parks and recreational facilities.

Arrangements in place to ensure timely scrutiny, challenge and performance management – including member-led Overview and Scrutiny

The terms of reference for the overview and scrutiny committee are set out in the Constitution. There are 6 meetings held each year with the specific functions of policy development and review, scrutiny, finance, and annual reporting.

In regard to scrutiny per se, the duties are to:

- Review cabinet and other committee decisions
- Review the performance of the council
- Question portfolio-holder/cabinet members
- Make recommendations to the cabinet and other committees
- Review the performance of other public bodies in the borough



Strategic risk management arrangements

The Council has an approved Risk Management Strategy and Framework which defines how risks are managed by the council, and provides guidance on the processes, procedures, roles and responsibilities for risk, and it sets out the context on how risks are to be managed.

The Council operates a Corporate Risk Register which provides overall assurance on the key risks identified as corporate risks – 13 in total. These risks are then filtered down into departmental and service risk registers, including any project risks. Any new, emerging risks are identified by the service risk register and escalated, if necessary, to the corporate risk register.

A quarterly update on the corporate risk scorecard is provided to both the Audit Committee and the overview and scrutiny committee.

Arrangements for reviewing/refreshing governance arrangements

The Constitution has recently been re-written and it was approved by Full Council in March 2022.

The review involved all Heads of Service and each new chapter was presented to the Senior Leadership Team for approval. These were then presented to a Member-Officer working group before formal submission to full Council.

The Council also holds a monthly meeting of the 'Statutory Officers Group' which involves the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and the S151 Officer. This meeting discusses: Constitutional issues, policy strategy updates, ombudsman contacts and other arising governance issues.



Staff engagement mechanisms and internal communications

The Council has a dedicated Communications Team who manage all staff engagement events, internal communications and external press releases. A Communications Strategy has been prepared which sets out the council's approach to communications, including celebrating/remembering certain awareness days in the events calendar.

With the help of the Communications Team, the Chief Executive provides regular updates to all staff and Councillors on key council actions (e-Gen alerts and Councillor Updates). On a quarterly basis the Senior Leadership Team delivers staff briefings, which are held face to face in the Council Chamber and staff can also take part in them from home.

The Communications team also provide a proactive engagement service with staff and the general public that includes Keep me Posted, Well@work newsletters, Community and Voluntary newsletters, Health and Wellbeing newsletters.

There is also the Our Gedling group, that are responsible for council wide staff engagement. The group, consisting of staff members drawn from all departments, organise the staff awards, events, social gatherings, employee conference and occasional consultation events.



A message from Mike

Hi everyone

I hope you all enjoyed the bank holiday break and had a chance to enjoy some sunshine. Thank you to everyone who attended the staff briefing, it was great to see so many faces in the chamber but it was also a great turn out online, we had over 100 attendees in total and plenty of questions, which was great. You can watch the briefing online (intranet only) if you couldn't attend on the day.

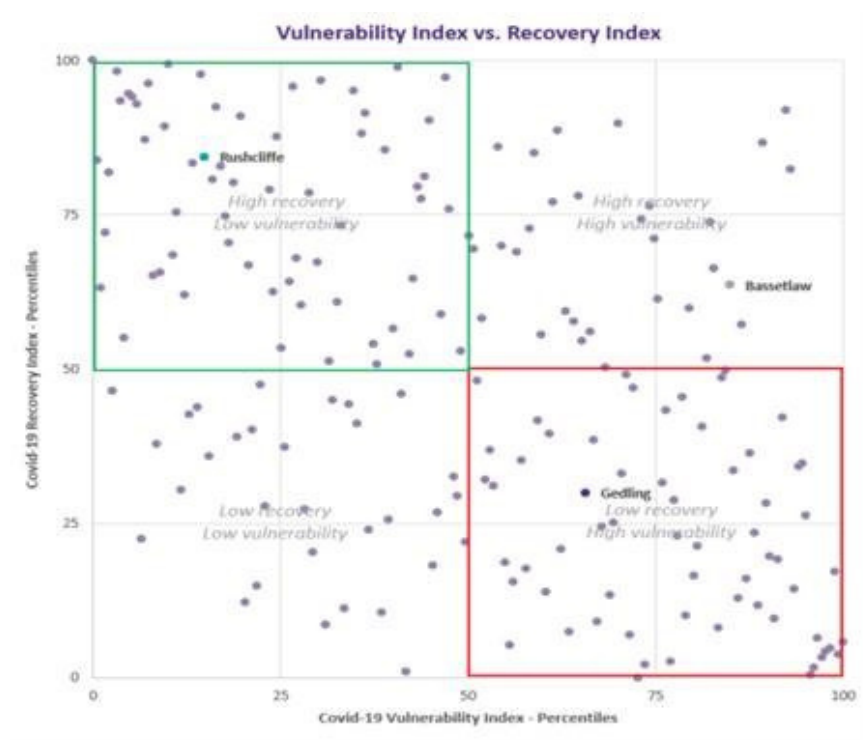
At our Senior Leadership Meeting this week, we discussed a number of items. Sickness levels was one of them, the quarter 4 report shows that we had 11 days sickness against a target of 9, however, if you take out covid related illness, we are around the 9 target. There are a couple of service areas where they are above



Current financial 'health' of the Council

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has presented significant financial challenges for the Council. This was not only for the whole of the 2020/21 financial year, but also into 2021/22 as well, with the total cost in excess of £1m that has been funded from reserves. Due to a prolonged recovery and reset period, there remains a significant amount of uncertainty around the full impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in the medium term, particularly around leisure services.

A report commissioned by the Society of District Council Treasurers provides an insight to the potential ongoing Covid related impacts facing District Councils. Based on a set of national indicators the report provides a Vulnerability Index and a Recovery Index to help us understand the key vulnerabilities and how well placed we are to recover in the medium term. The resulting indicators place Gedling in the highest risk percentile in relation to other districts indicating a higher level of vulnerability to Covid and a lower ability to recover, primarily due to a higher than average number of people employed in 'lower level' occupations on below average income, coupled with a high number of businesses and a high level of employment considered to be in 'at risk' sectors. Other Nottinghamshire districts also in the highest risk percentile include Ashfield, Broxtowe and Mansfield.



The key facets of the Medium term financial strategy

In order to achieve a balanced MTFP and ensure the Council's balances do not fall below the minimum required, a target of additional ongoing budget reductions or funding increases of £1,000,000 was set in the budget as £100,000 in 2023/24 and £900,000 in 2024/25, and these are included in the summary MTFP table below.

Whilst these budget reductions are not yet supported by outline business plans meaning this aspect of the financial plan is less robust, given the prevailing backdrop of funding uncertainty, and that the first savings are not proposed for delivery until year 2 of the MTFP, this gives the Council a good lead in time for developing detailed plans. The Council will not be complacent and will consider options for potential budget reduction options during 2022/23 which can be implemented from 2023/24 in the event that additional funding is not available in the next Local Government Finance Settlement.

The table below demonstrates a balanced medium term financial plan with a projected surplus on balances at the end of year 5 (2026/27). Whilst the budget still requires a contribution from balances in years 1,2 and 5, the inclusion of a higher savings projection to that detailed above was not recommended due to the uncertainties surrounding the future of local government funding. Given the many variables in the medium term financial plan there is sufficient time to address any future imbalance that may arise.



MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2022/23 TO 2026/27 - HIGH LEVEL SUMMARY

	2022/23 £	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £
Net Council Budget	12,374,100	12,180,300	11,284,200	11,671,400	12,232,900
Financed by					
SFA Business Rates Baseline	(3,076,400)	(3,138,000)	(3,200,700)	(3,264,700)	(3,330,000)
SFA – Revenue Support Grant	(500)	(500)	(500)	(500)	(500)
Lower Tier Grant	(140,700)	(140,700)	(140,700)	(140,700)	(140,700)
Services Grant (2022/23 only)	(212,100)	0	0	0	0
NNDR Growth/ Collection Fund(Surplus)/Deficit/ S31 Grant	(1,008,100)	(620,000)	(800,000)	(800,000)	(800,000)
NDR Deficit Reliefs 2020/21	2,458,500	0	0	0	0
Council Tax Deficit/Losses Grant/CTRS Support	0	19,100	0	0	0
New Home Bonus - Current	(427,700)	0	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus - Legacy	(93,100)	0	0	0	0
Less: Amount (from)/to Balances	(3,147,200)	(1,306,700)	122,200	64,500	(162,400)
Council Tax Requirement	6,726,800	6,993,500	7,264,500	7,530,000	7,799,300
Council Tax increase	£5 (2.89%)	£5 (2.81%)	£5 (2.73%)	£5 (2.66%)	£5 (2.59%)
Tax Base	37,776	38,201	38,626	39,001	39,376

The MTFP above assumes that a £5 increase will be applied between 2022/23 and 2026/27 but the actual increase will be determined on an annual basis by Council.

Expected balances at year end	1,614,000	1,007,300	1,129,500	1,194,000	1,031,700
Required balance	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
(Surplus)/Deficit on required balances	(614,000)	(7,300)	(129,500)	(194,000)	(31,700)

Note: Actual General Fund Balance at 1 April 2021 was £7,923,000 and the estimated balance at 1 April 2022 is £4,761,000 which includes S31 Grant for the funding of the 2021/22 business rates reliefs, which will fund the related Collection Fund deficit of £2,458,500 (as detailed paragraph 2.5.9 and in the table above). Estimated balances assume the reclassification of £700,000 of Earmarked Reserves back to General Fund Balance in 2023/24.



The key financial risks facing the Council and the plans to manage those

These are set out in the General Fund Revenue Budget report 2022/23 reported to council on 3 March 2022.

The risks are reviewed annually in response to budget pressures, and the report details three high risk and two medium risks. The high risks are a) viability - the continuation of one-year local government financial settlements and delays in fair funding review b) Profile - the budget is reliant on the effective delivery of the efficiency programme c) Adaptability - need to identify and work with partners to share ideas and possibly workforce.



The involvement of elected members and managers in the strategic financial planning process

A further efficiency target of £1.0m was set as part of the 2022/23 budget. The process for determining efficiency targets is for the Chief Financial Officer to determine requirements, which is then agreed with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council. Senior Managers are then issued with a target and tasked with identifying courses of actions and associated risks to delivery. These are then discussed with and scrutinised by the Leader and Deputy Leader, agreed with the Labour Group, before inclusion in the budget. Similarly, the budget report is always discussed in detail and agreed with the Leader and Deputy Leader before being uploaded onto the cabinet agenda.

The Cabinet periodically has 'awaydays' where the Cabinet members and the Senior Leadership Team get together to discuss important council issues and the delivery of strategic objectives. The budget is always an agenda item for these meetings.



In-year budget monitoring/financial management process including approach to underspends and overspends

The finance team delivers a 'business partnering' approach to all managers of the council which provides detailed knowledge of all budget areas expenditure and income levels. The team submit quarterly budget monitoring reports to cabinet, and any further approvals required by the Constitution/Financial Regulations are submitted onto full Council.

**Capital programme/investment plans that support the delivery of Council priorities and/or the financial sustainability of the Council**

Each year the full council is recommended to approve a three year capital programme, currently up to 2024/25, and to note a further two year indicative programme, currently up to 2026/27. This is supported by a five year Capital Investment Strategy.

Any new bids for capital resources are scored and prioritised in line with the adopted methodology to ensure that they meet the Council's objectives and provide value for money. They are also assessed for affordability in line with the approved Prudential Code Indicators.

Rolling programme items such as ICT and vehicle replacements are prioritised for investment, followed by asset maintenance of a capital nature e.g. refurbishments, before considering any new resource development bids. Exception to this might be 'invest to save' schemes, or bids where a significant proportion of the cost is funded by external grant(s).



Key facts and figures regarding staff morale/satisfaction, sickness absence, etc

At the end of March 2022, the council employed 446 Officers (350 full time equivalents). Since 2015/16 the headcount has reduced by 58, a reduction of 11.5% of the workforce. This has been a direct result of the efficiency programme resulting from the reduction in government funding. Reductions have been achieved in many areas of the business through process review and the development of improved IT systems. This has allowed the council to continue to provide high-quality services across its range of delivery.

Sickness absence is reported as a key performance indicator, and at year-end the number of working days lost due to sickness absence on a rolling 12-month total was 11.2 days against a target of 9.0 days. In March 2022, long term absence accounted for 39% of all days lost (and about 10% of all occasions of absence), and this is constantly monitored by managers and Heads of Service in line with our Managing Sickness Absence policy as well as being reported into Senior Leadership Team. Quarterly, the sickness reports are also reviewed by Members through report to the Joint Consultative and Safety Committee.

During the last year, Covid-19 accounted for 13.5% of all working days lost to sickness and has of course had a significant impact on workload and capacity to deliver. Issues of shielding, reprioritisation of resources and changed working practices have all had impact.

The latest staff satisfaction survey was conducted in September 2021. 186 employees (42%) responded to the survey which asked a series of questions about working for Gedling Borough Council. 72% of employees said they feel happy working for the council, 70% said they were proud to work for Gedling Borough Council and 83% feel that they know how they make a positive contribution to people's lives.



The main facets of the approach to OD and workforce development to ensure it has the skills/expertise needed (now and future)

Other than the workforce development described as “training and development” below the organisation has a strong history of positive policy development benefitting the organisation and its employees. An example is the recently-adopted “Menopause in the workplace” policy which was one of the first of its kind within the region. In part, this arose from suggestions put forward through our recognised trade unions with whom we have a very positive and constructive working relationship. Recently, a revised Equality Policy (Employment) has been adopted as has a Workforce Strategy taking us through to 2023 that is designed to be not just a statement of intent but also action-centred. The Performance and Development Review process is embedded (from which relevant learning needs are identified) and other than over the last, exceptional year, takes place annually with compliance monitored and reported into Senior Leadership Team.

Training and development (staff and member development)

The organisation is now at a turning point in its delivery of staff training and development. Up until last year, the council had a training centre that was accredited from the Institute of Leadership and Management to deliver programmes and apprenticeships. After literally hundreds of staff and managers passing through the centre to gain awards and two cohorts of apprentices, the centre has now been wound up due to resource issues and the fact that internal demand for accredited training and apprenticeships has diminished. Instead the HR Team, now reduced in size again, is embarking on an internal training programme for managers and supervisors more focussed on good management practice within our own local policies; things like absence management for example. These programmes will be delivered on a cyclical basis; a “carousel of learning”.



Ways that the Council leverages external capacity to deliver priorities (e.g community capacity, voluntary sector, shared services, etc.)

The Council has a broad range of community health and wellbeing priorities identified for delivery within its Gedling Plan. With base budgets being limited, a small Communities team and no community and voluntary service support organisation locally, to succeed the authority has developed an innovative model of community collaboration, community development and partnership coordination. This approach has seen it deliver outcomes for communities before and during the Covid 19 pandemic and now provides a strong framework for the Council's community recovery work. At its heart is a community-centred health and wellbeing model adopted in the Council's Health and Wellbeing Delivery Plan and championed by the authority led Gedling Health and Wellbeing Delivery Partnership. Partnership has become the day job, influencing and enabling the wider health and social care system resources and the local voluntary and community sector to deliver against those key Gedling Plan actions.

**Notable outcomes for community and wellbeing delivery have included:**

- As part of Covid-19 response the Council collaborated with local Church Leaders and Foodbanks in March 2020 to offer the Richard Herrod Centre as a new Humanitarian hub to provide foodbank and advice services to local residents affected by the pandemic. We engaged with over 500 volunteers to support the process and worked with residents to raise over £35,000 for vulnerable residents as part of our "Giving for Gedling" and "Feeding Gedling's Children" Spacehive campaigns. In total 850 vulnerable people were supported by our Humanitarian team in the first wave of the pandemic.
- As the Humanitarian Hub was stood down the Council worked with NHS partners to develop Richard Herrod Centre as the leading Community Vaccination Centre in the County. Supported by Council staff and volunteers, the Centre has delivered over 130,000 Covid vaccinations.



Ways that the Council leverages external capacity to deliver priorities (e.g community capacity, voluntary sector, shared services, etc.)

Notable outcomes for community and wellbeing delivery (cont)

- We are leading on the Community Development Executive for the South Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Partnership. The Council has been funded £35,000 per annum to lead on community development work to support social prescribing across the boundaries of its neighbouring authorities of Rushcliffe, Broxtowe and Ashfield.
- A transformed community events programme bringing greater collaboration in community led settings, to reach the communities and individuals who would most benefit from participation. A contract with Gedling Play Forum enables play activities at each of our events and to bring in other providers, partners and community organisations to provide appropriate activities alongside them in response to the needs of each community and venue.
- Gedling was selected as a national NHS GoodSam Integration and Learning pilot and allocated £30,000. Learning from this coordination of volunteer work in the Borough is being reported to the Clinical Commissioning Group and Local Resilience Forum to shape Countywide approaches to supporting volunteers.
- We used community fundraising money and external Covid-19 grant money to establish a Gedling Covid 19 VCS Recovery Grant Scheme. £43,000 has been allocated so far to support the recovery work of local community organisations.
- 725 young people attending activities and received food provision as part of Gedling's Holiday Activity and Food allocation in summer 2021. This involved collaboration with key community organisations across the Borough's neighbourhoods to target eligible families.
- We developed a ward by ward database of community led and commissioned services available across the Borough as we emerge from Covid restrictions. This includes 52 community venues offering 142 different services/activities for partners and communities to access.
- We have been involved in other social projects such as Supported Internships in partnership with West Notts College and employed 7 Kick Start young workers through the government scheme.



How the Council uses of external challenge, expertise and innovation to inform its thinking

The Council subscribes to a number of professional bodies e.g. Local Government Association, District Councils Network, East Midlands Council, Local Government Information Unit, Association for Public Service Excellence etc. and both the Leader and Deputy Leader sit on the various Executive Boards of these organisations. This provides an opportunity for the council to learn from the experience of others, and we are very willing to put ourselves forward as a pilot authority to trial new initiatives.

By using these organisations to network with other member authorities, we are able to maximise our full potential for continuous learning, and to develop and improve our own systems and procedures. A good example of this is APSE where we are frequently recognised as either a winner or finalist in the categories of Best Service Team for our street cleansing, grounds maintenance and leisure teams.

Equally, we face a robust challenge from our external and internal audit colleagues, who make a number of challenging recommendations on the completion of audit reviews, and implement these improvements within an agreed timescale. During 2021/22 our internal auditors (BDO) made 1 high recommendation, 17 medium recommendations, and 11 low recommendations.



How the Council transfers and mainstreams learning from success

By utilising external challenge from professional bodies, the council has been able to make changes and deliver improvements to our services. We are not complacent when it comes to service delivery, and we need to keep re-inventing ourselves in terms of delivering to changing customer needs and demands.

The council has maintained a list of corporate awards won since 2010. In recent years we have received recognition for our communications, customer services, legal, leisure, street cleansing, environmental health, and building control teams, plus awards for our accredited training centre, health and safety procedures, disability access to our leisure centres, and the construction of the Gedling Country Park visitor centre.

A good example of mainstreaming learning is from the Green Flag Awards, where back in 2010 we received one award for Arnot Hill Park, and now in 2022 we have used our experiences to manage and operate four Green Flag recognised Parks.

The council has also introduced a Programme Management approach to the delivery of its major projects. As part of this, post project evaluation is undertaken, and all learning experiences, either good or bad, are shared with staff across the council.





GEDLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
CIVIC CENTRE
ARNOT HILL PARK
ARNOLD
NOTTINGHAM
NG5 6LU

0115 901 3901

2022// PREPARED BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE



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