

Public
Key Decision – No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Transformation Framework

Meeting/Date: Cabinet, November 18th, 2025.

Executive Portfolios: Executive Councillor for Climate,
Transformation & Workforce

Report by: Business Performance & Transformation
Manager

Wards affected: All

Executive Summary:

This report presents the Council's approach to Transformation for 2025/26, detailing the strategic change programmes, major change projects, and operational level transformation plans. It consolidates actions from the Corporate Plan, change programmes, and service plans into a single, focused Transformation Framework.

Our Council's approach to Transformation is a commitment to continuously improving how the Council operates, placing residents and communities at the heart of service improvement, enhancing the district as a great place to live, work, study and visit, and working closely with partners to ensure services meet future needs. It is a crucial tool for delivering the Council's Corporate Plan priorities and the Huntingdonshire Futures vision.

This document responds to the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge recommendation to define and communicate a clear transformation framework.

The Council has implemented the Transformation Framework with a robust governance structure including the officer-led Transformation Board, to oversee strategic delivery and assurance. An internal audit confirmed good controls in place regarding strategic alignment and decision-making, recommending a unified framework for consistent reporting and benefits realisation. The transformation activity is embedded across services and is actively monitored.

There is a risk that Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) may slow or pause some transformation initiatives the council is aiming to deliver. As the new unitary

authority establish strategic direction, it may be necessary to realign programmes to reflect evolving priorities.

It should be noted that:

- **Local Government Reorganisation (LGR):** LGR may slow or pause some transformation initiatives as programmes are realigned to reflect the emerging priorities of the new unitary authority. Transformation resources will shift toward supporting the transition, presenting both constraints and opportunities for ongoing change.
- **Scrutiny and Transparency:** The framework and supporting documents will be refreshed and published annually, offering additional assurance on the work. An update will be brought to the Overview & Scrutiny committee in June 2026.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet is

RECOMMENDED

1. To approve the approach to Transformation

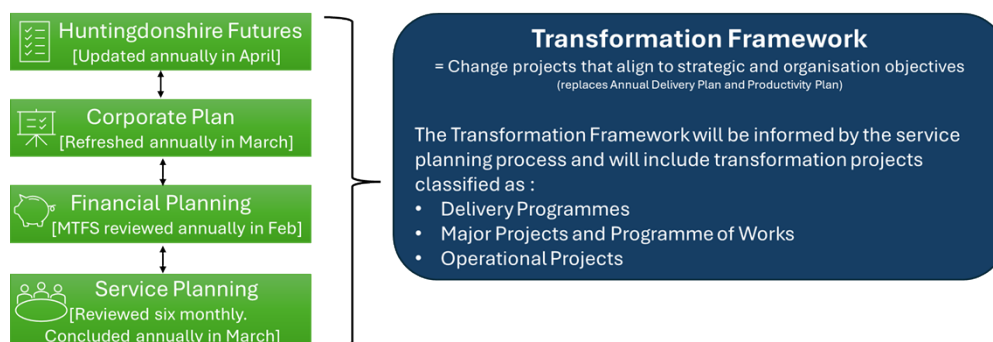
1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present the Council's approach to Transformation with the framework, including the delivery of programmes and projects for 2025/26; which sets out six Programmes, 31 Major Projects and 30 Operational Projects.
- 1.2 The Transformation Framework is not a new, additional piece of work, but a concise summary of the projects across the Council focussed on transformation and service improvement.
- 1.3 The Transformation Framework includes projects that deliver on the objectives of the Corporate Plan, change programmes, and service plan projects classified as major or operational level projects.
- 1.4 A series of 80 continuous improvement activities from across the council, underpinning service delivery and the successful implementation of transformational projects, were also identified through the service planning process. These have not been included in the Transformation delivery for 2025/26.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Corporate Strategic Planning Framework

The council has established a framework that forms the 'golden thread' from vision and desirable outcomes to objectives and then projects by which these are achieved. This is summarised in Appendix 1 and illustrated in the diagram below:



2.2 Corporate Plan

The Council's Corporate Plan guides everything we do as we deliver our vision, review priorities, and collaborate with staff, residents, partners, communities, and businesses. It outlines how we will achieve the vision set by our communities in Huntingdonshire Futures.

The corporate plan has three priorities:



Transformation is an activity that runs throughout the organisation to deliver these priorities successfully.

2.3 Corporate Peer Challenge

The Council undertook an LGA Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) 15th – 17th May 2024, as a key part of the improvement and assurance framework for local government. The Challenge assists councils to meet part of their Best Value duty, with the UK Government expecting all local authorities to have a CPC at least every five years.

Recommendation 8 arising from the review identified that the Council would benefit from:

‘Defining and communicating your approach to transformation and continuous improvement.’

The Council was acknowledged for its innovative and transformational work on its Workforce Strategy, Community Health and Wealth Building, health prevention work and works towards the prevention of homelessness. But a single clear framework for transformation was identified as something that would encourage and support additional innovation, digital implementation and cross service working.

2.4 Transformation Audit

To ensure the right framework of delivery is in place to underpin the revised approach to transformation, an internal audit was commissioned to assess compliance with the established best practice guidance. The audit was completed in August 2025. This recommended a refreshed programme and project management framework to enable consistent and efficient reporting, benefits realisation and project closure. This supports the planned work in transformation.

The audit also confirmed well designed controls surrounding the establishment of a transformation programme and its review.

3. CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 Vision, Focus & Goals

The Council has developed its transformation vision as:

Vision for Transformation

 Transformation vision: *To be a leading Local Authority preparing for the future; with our services 'doing things well' and delivering a positive legacy for the people of Huntingdonshire as a place to live, work, study and visit.*

This will be achieved by:

Goals- drivers for change

 **Place and Communities**
Positive Legacy

 **Services**
'Doing things well'

 **Future**
Preparing for Devolution/ LGR

Focus

Enhancing Place to support Sustainable Council

Pride in Place Empowered Communities

Doing things well and financial efficiency

Strong workforce and culture

Evidence based proposal

Pre-unitary implementation

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These principles align with the Huntingdonshire Futures Outcomes and the Corporate plan objectives to achieve them.

Appendix 2 shows the actions in the Transformation Framework that deliver against the corporate plan priority and objectives.

3.2 Governance

3.3.2 Transformation Board

The Council has established an Officer led Transformation Board which ensures effective execution and assurance of strategic transformation activity. The board also ensures activity is prioritised to maximise benefits aligned with the corporate plan and the transformation principles. The board is also presented with research and analysis of Council services to

ensure transformation activity is focused in the right place which considers benchmarked performance, unit and service costs:

- Approving, prioritising, evaluating, or terminating activity.
- Overseeing transformation pipeline and funding.
- Managing assurance and benefits realisation.
- Supporting transition to business as usual.

Triggering interventions when:

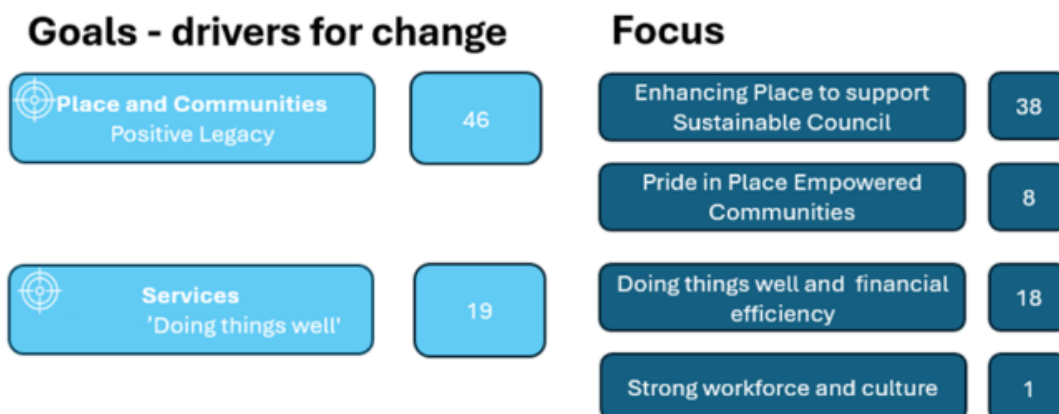
- Innovation, digital, or cultural change faces challenges.
- Activities exceed time/cost/risk/quality limits.
- Benefits fail to be realised.

3.3.3 Transformation Framework and Summary 2025/26

The current Transformation Framework and Summary for 2025/26 is set out in Appendix 3. This document sets out the strategic framework as well as transformation vision, focus for change. This work cuts across the council's programmes, major projects and operational projects. The Framework shares a summary of activity for 2025/26 being undertaken that is driving change. This is drawn directly from the Corporate Plan and Service Plans and ensures that the transformation focus is accurately represented and embedded within core service planning.

Appendix 4 sets out the number of projects at each level of the Transformation Framework, organised by service area.

Appendix 5 is the full list of the Transformation Framework programmes and projects for 2025/26, grouped by the drivers for change. The summary of this breakdown is shown below:



3.3.4 Publication of the Transformation Framework

The Council will publish an annual Transformation update providing assurance on current work and achievements. An update will be brought to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in June 2026.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

4.1 The Overview & Scrutiny (Performance & Growth) Panel discussed the report at its meeting on 5th November 2025.

4.2 Councillor Jennings sought clarification regarding the use of the word 'endorse' on the recommendation for Cabinet, as he stated that it is not within the Panel's remit to do this. It was heard that the term endorse was to seek support for the Report and to share their comments.

4.3 Councillor Martin expressed his disappointment in that the report is not a plan for transformation but a list of the projects already in place. He would have liked for it to show the transformation of the organisation. He feels the organisation should be working on ways to improve, where it currently stands and how the organisation can reach the level they aspire to. He referenced the Local Government Agency (LGA) website where it shows benchmarking capabilities, providing different capabilities to review and a scoring matrix. He wanted to understand how the Officers are being set up towards (Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) so they are in the best position for new job opportunities and how successful Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) are delivering services to residents.

4.4 The Panel heard that an enormous amount of work goes into delivering services to residents and continuously improving every year. They were advised that this is a first draft of the plan and is ongoing. Officers are developing the benchmarking data as per the LGA guidelines as part of the mid-year review and aspects of this report are a reflection of a recommendation from the Corporate Peer Review.

4.5 Councillor Martin acknowledged that the Workforce strategy incorporated Culture which falls under one of the seven C's of Transformation in the organisation but was not comfortable that this be called a Transformation Plan and made a recommendation that the report have an alternative title such as "*Project Tracker*" or "*Service Plan*" as he does not feel it is a Transformation Plan which he would like to be brought back for discussion at a later date.

4.6 The Vice Chair was pleased that all of the information was in the report, however agreed with Councillor Martin that she feels the report did not reflect the Transformation plan.

4.7 Councillor Catmur requested further insight into project classifications and asked how the projects that do not meet the criteria are tracked. It was heard that the project classifications are trying to bring distinction on how projects are categorised based on the elements such as risk, cost, delivery time and impact on other services. The projects not classified as such are tracked elsewhere.

4.8 Councillor Tevlin expressed agreement with Councillor Martin's point regarding the report showing legacy projects rather than an action plan for transformation.

4.9 Councillor Gardener drew attention to the Workforce strategy and asked how the Council are attracting new talent and supporting wellbeing in the workforce and thought it would have been beneficial to include this in the report.

4.10 The Vice Chair expressed her disappointment that the St Neots Riverside Parks project was absent from the projects covered in the report. It was heard that although the project has planning consent and part of the project has been completed, there is no funding available to continue. The projects in the report are reflective of the Council's agreed Capital Programme and the St Neots Riverside Parks is not part of this. It was suggested this be taken directly to Members through budget setting for further discussion.

4.11 The motion proffered by Councillor Martin was seconded by Councillor Jennings.

4.12 The Panel heard the new Recommendation and a vote was called. It was unanimous in favour of the Recommendation.

4.13 Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for Cabinet to make a decision upon the recommendations within the report, and additionally, the Panel request that the Cabinet consider adding the following recommendation to their report;

- 1) For the title of the report be changed to reflect the nature of the report's contents and that the Portfolio Holder bring back a report for the Transformation Plan when ready.

5. RISKS

- 5.1 Local Government Re-organisation (LGR) may slow or pause some transformation initiatives the council is aiming to deliver. As the new unitary authority establish strategic direction, it may be necessary to realign programmes and projects to reflect evolving priorities.
- 5.2 Transformation resources will shift toward supporting the new unitary authority transition, presenting both constraints and opportunities for ongoing change. This may increase the demands on the Council and impact on the ability to deliver planned transformation.
- 5.3 This demand will be managed by rigorous prioritisation and strong operational governance.

6. LINK TO HUNTINGDONSHIRE FUTURES, THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 The transformation driver of **Leaving a Positive Legacy for Place and Communities** is directly derived from the vision established in the Place Strategy:

'delivering better outcomes for our residents and communities to ensure Huntingdonshire continues to be one of the best places to live in the country. Together we can reach a brighter future for Huntingdonshire'.

- 6.2 The transformation framework consists of programmes and projects delivering change and service improvement that delivers against the Corporate Plan priorities and objectives as set out in section 3.1 of this report. These are detailed in Appendix 2.
- 6.3 Priority 3 of the Corporate Plan – **Doing our core work well** is a key driver for the service improvement activity within the transformation plan, the number of actions reflect how this is demonstrated across all services shown in section 3.3.3 of this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Transformation Framework documents are not legally mandated but are strongly encouraged and often necessary to meet broader policy goals, funding criteria, and public expectations.
- 7.2 There was a legal requirement for UK local authorities to produce and publish Productivity Plans by July 2024, and the Council were compliant in meeting this deadline. There is no government requirement for 2025.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Council's Medium Financial Plan is approved to support the programmes, change projects and continuous improvement activity of the Council which deliver the Corporate Plan priorities and objectives.
- 8.2 There are no new resource implications arising from the publication of the Transformation Framework.

9. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 9.1 This report explains how the Council will make changes in 2025/26. It brings together all the main projects, programmes, and plans for improving services into one clear Transformation Framework.
- 9.2 The Transformation Framework is an essential tool for achieving the Council's main goals and vision for Huntingdonshire's future. It encourages ongoing improvement, new ideas, and teamwork across different services. It also meets the LGA's advice to have a clear approach to transformation.
- 9.3 The Council has set up strong oversight through the Transformation Framework governance and Transformation Board. An internal audit found good controls and advised creating a single system for clear reporting and tracking progress.

10. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – Corporate Strategic Planning Framework

Appendix 2 – Transformation Delivery Programme by Corporate Plan Priority

Appendix 3 – Transformation Framework and Summary for 2025/26

Appendix 4 – Transformation Delivery Programme by Service Area

Appendix 5 – Transformation Delivery Programme list of Programmes and Projects

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Corporate Peer Challenge
Productivity Plan](#)

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