



**NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**  
SHADOW AUTHORITY

**INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL  
BRIEFING PACK**

January 2021

# **BRIEFING REPORT**

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## SECTION 1

### 1. BACKGROUND AND TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

- 1.1. Local Government in Northamptonshire is facing its biggest change in over 40 years. The eight existing councils – Wellingborough, Corby, Daventry, East Northants, Kettering, Northampton, Northamptonshire County and South Northants – will be replaced with two new unitary councils.
- 1.2. A new North Northamptonshire unitary authority will start providing services to the residents and businesses of North Northamptonshire on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021. North Northamptonshire Council will be responsible for the former duties, responsibilities, assets and liabilities of the Borough Council of Wellingborough, Corby Borough Council, East Northamptonshire Council, Kettering Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council (disaggregated). The new unitary authority will provide more efficient service delivery with considerable opportunities to develop and transform services to improve outcomes and increase value for money.
- 1.3. Allowances for councillors must be determined by councils after consideration of recommendations by an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), which must operate in accordance with a framework set out in legislation. The Northamptonshire (Structural Changes) Order 2020 applied the regulations relating to members' allowances to the Shadow Authority with modifications.
- 1.4. The membership of the IRP for North Northamptonshire is:
  - Professor Steve Leach – Emeritus Professor of Local Government at De Montfort University and an experienced chair of IRPs.
  - Ms Sue Watts of Age UK, a representative of the voluntary sector and experienced IRP member.
  - Gerard Dempsey JP – a background in financial management, a lay member of the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Committee and experienced IRP member.
- 1.5. The Panel's initial task was to formulate recommendations for the Shadow Authority for the period 2020/2021 (the "Shadow Period"). A scheme for the payment of allowances to members of the Shadow Council was prepared by the IRP and adopted by the Shadow Council on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2020.
- 1.6. The IRP is now required to conduct a second review to consider the role of members of the new North Northamptonshire Council. The Panel's recommendations will be considered by the Shadow Council at a meeting to be held on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

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- 1.7. IRPs consider and recommend fair schemes of remuneration for councillors which take into account their statutory responsibilities and the roles councillors are required to fulfil as an elected member of the council. IRPs also have an important role in highlighting how barriers to people becoming councillors can be removed.

### **North Northamptonshire Council**

- 1.8. The new North Northamptonshire Council will comprise 78 Members, elected across 26 wards. A functional map taken from the Blueprint for North Northamptonshire (Appendix i) sets out an overview of the services to be provided by the new Council, including how these services are made up from Northamptonshire County Council, District and Borough services. The full Blueprint document is available on the Future Northants North [website](#).
- 1.9. The elections to North Northamptonshire Council will take place on 6th May 2021.
- 1.10. A Children's Trust has been created that will act on behalf of the two new unitary councils in Northamptonshire. The Children's Trust will undertake the majority of duties and responsibilities formerly undertaken by Northamptonshire County Council in this service area.
- 1.11. North Northamptonshire Council will be the direct provider of social housing, with the current housing stocks from Kettering Borough Council and Corby Borough Council transferring to the new Council.
- 1.12. The new Council will adopt a Constitution based upon what is often referred to as a "hybrid model of governance". It is still legally a Leader and Cabinet governance model. However, cross-party Executive Advisory Panels, led by a relevant Executive member, provide support on policy development and make recommendations to the Executive before they make decisions; this allows more inclusive member decision making.

### **Terms of Reference for the IRP**

- 1.13. The IRP is required to consider and make recommendations on the level and application of the following allowances: -
- a basic allowance for 78 unitary councillors
  - special responsibility allowances for the Leader, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Members
  - allowances for the leaders of recognised political groups
  - special responsibility allowances for the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Committees
  - an allowance and the application of travel and subsistence allowances for the Independent Person(s) and Co-opted Members.

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- appropriate civic allowances for the Chair and Deputy Chair of the council
- childcare and dependants' carer's allowances
- mileage and subsistence allowances
- whether an IT Allowance is incorporated into the Basic Allowance, or a separate allowance is accessible on request.

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## SECTION 2

### 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE REVIEW

2.1. North Northamptonshire Council requires a scheme of Members' Allowances that adequately supports Councillors and provides the best possible opportunity for any resident who is qualified to become a local councillor to stand for election and serve. Financial support for councillors must therefore reinforce the culture of a forward-looking and developing Council and address, as far as possible, any disincentives to serving as a councillor.

2.2. The Scheme of Members' Allowances for North Northamptonshire Council should be in accordance with all relevant legislation (Appendix ii), and the scheme should be capable of supporting any new statutory activities or duties that may be introduced.

2.3. The Budget for North Northamptonshire Council is due to be approved by the Shadow Council at its meeting on 25th February 2021. Although the Shadow Council will need to take account of North Northamptonshire Council's financial position in considering the recommendations of the IRP, it wants the panel to consider a scheme only against the objectives of the review. The Shadow Council will consider affordability issues.

2.4. Does the Panel endorse the following basic principles?

2.4.1. Only one Special Responsibility Allowance should be payable to any member

2.4.2. Duties qualifying for a Special Responsibility Allowance must be within one or more of the following categories:

- (a) acting as leader or deputy leader of a political group
- (b) being a member of the authority's Executive
- (c) being the Chair or Vice Chair of the Council or a Committee
- (d) representing the Council at meetings of or arranged by any other body
- (e) membership of a committee or sub-committee which meets with exceptional frequency or for exceptionally long periods
- (f) any other duties which require time and effort equal to, or greater than, the other examples listed

2.4.3. Does the Panel endorse that the basic allowance be increased annually in line with other officer pay awards?

## SECTION 3

### 3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1. The exact governance structure of North Northamptonshire Council is likely to be as follows (subject to consultation particularly for planning functions):

- Executive
- Executive Advisory Panels (chaired by a Portfolio Holder)
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee (one)
- Planning Committee (number to be determined)
- Licensing and Appeals Committee
- Democracy and Standards Committee
- Audit and Governance Committee
- Employment Committee

There will be other meetings including, but not limited to, Sub-Committees, Executive Committees, Health and Wellbeing Board, School Forum, etc. However, these do not form part of the basic governance structure.

#### 3.2. Ward Councillors - Basic Allowance

The Council will comprise 26 wards in total, each electing three councillors. The wards are based on existing Northamptonshire County Council divisions. The current electorate of each ward varies in size from 8,609 electors in one ward, to 11,787 electors in another.

The average ratio of councillor/elector across North Northamptonshire (based upon September 2020 data) is 1:3,373. Councillors will undertake the normal duties and responsibilities associated with constituents' enquiries and complaints.

The IRP is requested to consider a basic allowance for 78 unitary councillors.

#### 3.3. The Executive (Cabinet)

The Leader will normally chair the Cabinet meetings. The IRP is requested to consider and recommend allowances for:

- The Leader
- The Deputy Leader
- Cabinet Members

The Cabinet will likely comprise of 8 members in addition to the Leader and Deputy Leader. Members of the Cabinet will be allocated portfolios by the Leader. Portfolio holders will take the lead in representing the Cabinet both internally and externally in their areas; however, they will not be delegated authority to make individual decisions.

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In addition to considering and recommending a level of allowances for the Leader, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Members, the Panel is requested to recommend whether a future increase/decrease in the size of the Cabinet should result in an increase/decrease in the overall budget for the Cabinet or whether the increase/decrease should be shared.

### **3.4. Leaders of Opposition Groups**

The IRP is requested to consider allowances for the leaders of recognised political groups. A recognised political group must consist of a minimum of two councillors.

### **3.5. Chairs and Vice Chairs**

The IRP is requested to consider an allowance for chairs of other committees, and whether an allowance for vice-chairs is applicable. In particular, it is requested to consider whether there should be parity between Executive members and the Scrutiny Chair to show the importance of Scrutiny to good governance.

### **3.6. Civic Allowances for the Chair and Deputy Chair of North Northamptonshire Council**

The IRP is requested to consider appropriate allowances for the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Council. These are known as “civic allowances”.

The Chair will be responsible for chairing Full Council meetings and acting as an ambassador for the Council at civic and community events.

### **3.7. Independent Person(s) and Co-opted Members**

The Council is required by law to adopt a code of conduct and make arrangements under which allegations can be investigated and decisions on allegations can be made about councillors. North Northamptonshire Council will appoint at least one Independent Person in accordance with the provisions of The Localism Act 2011. The Independent Person plays a key role in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct amongst councillors.

There will be two Independent Persons for Audit and Standards (the same as Independent Persons for Standards matters), two Independent Co-opted members for the Audit and Governance Committee, one Parent Governor for the Scrutiny Committee (voting in relation to education) and one Co-opted Healthwatch member (voting in relation to health matters). The IRP is requested to consider an allowance and the application of travel and subsistence allowances for the Independent Persons. The IRP is also

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requested to consider an allowance and the application of travel and subsistence allowances for Co-opted Members

### 3.8. Information Technology (IT)

North Northamptonshire Council is likely to place a strong emphasis on the use of information technology by councillors. The IRP is requested to consider whether an IT Allowance should be incorporated into the Basic Allowance or a separate allowance accessible on request.

It is not yet known whether councillors will be supplied with IT devices.

The IRP is requested to consider and recommend the application of an allowance in the following scenarios:

- Councillors to supply and use their own device
- Councillors to be supplied with a device paid for by the Council

### 3.9. Childcare and Dependant's Carers' Allowance

The Shadow Authority is keen to ensure that councillors who have childcare or other caring responsibilities are not disadvantaged from fully participating in council activities.

The IRP is requested to consider whether this allowance should be set at an hourly rate which may vary depending on the sort of care that has been required. The IRP may wish to consider whether the allowance should be subject to a maximum cap or, alternatively, whether allowances paid should equal the costs incurred.

The Shadow Authority would like the IRP to give careful consideration to this matter and ensure that any recommended scheme, at a minimum, meets the requirements of the Living Wage criteria

### 3.10. Travel, Mileage and Subsistence Allowances

The IRP is requested to consider and recommend travel, mileage and subsistence allowances relating to those councillors engaged in the authorised business of the council.

The IRP is requested to consider whether the HMRC mileage rate is used, and whether the subsistence rates agreed by the LGA are incorporated into any scheme. Travel, Mileage and Subsistence allowances for Councillors should, as far as possible, align with allowances for staff.

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## SECTION 4

### 4. TIMESCALE AND RESOURCES

4.1. The IRP will meet on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2021, with recommendations being reported to Council on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021. The timescale is set out below:

Steps	Dates
Letter to all Shadow Councillors; Group Leaders; Chief Executive; Director of Legal and Democratic & Monitoring Officer and existing Standards Committee Chairs and Independent Persons	Wednesday, 20 <sup>th</sup> January
Publicity for the review on Future Northants North website and media release with a link to further information (this briefing pack)	by Friday, 22 <sup>nd</sup> January
Deadline for representations/comments	Tuesday, 2 <sup>nd</sup> February
Zoom meetings with Task and Finish Group and Shadow Executive Members	Tuesday, 2 <sup>nd</sup> February
IRP meets via Zoom (meeting manager provided if required) Individual Slots, if requested, by appointment – am IRP meeting – pm	Friday, 5 <sup>th</sup> February
Deadline for Panel's report and recommendations to be submitted	Friday, 12 <sup>th</sup> February
Statutory Notice Northants Telegraph website Notice in newspaper (published Thursdays)	Website - as soon as possible after receipt of IRP recommendations Notice - 25 <sup>th</sup> February
Shadow Council to consider officers' report and IRP's recommendations and approve a Scheme of Members' Allowances for North Northamptonshire Council	Thursday, 25 <sup>th</sup> February

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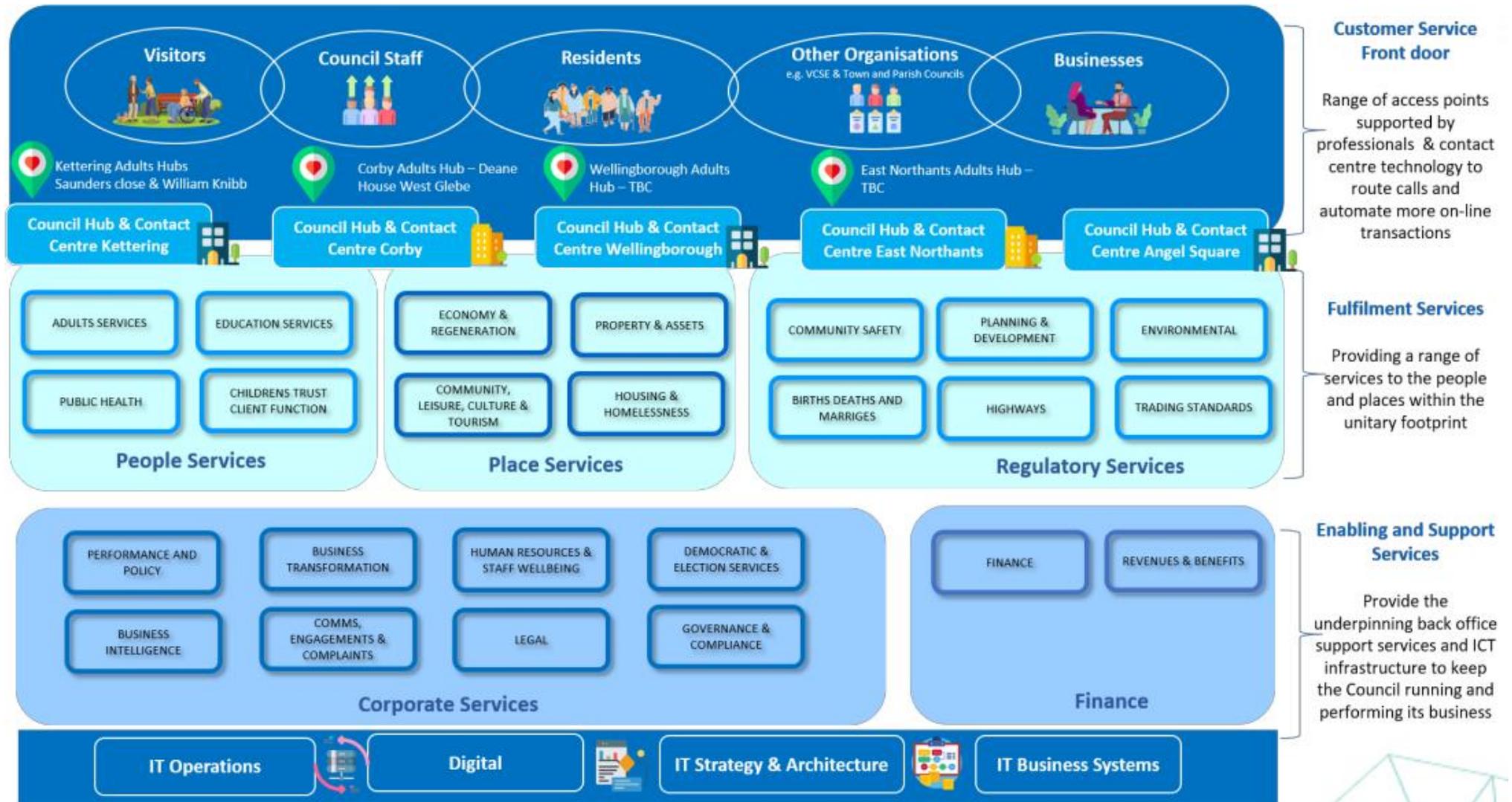
## Coronavirus

- 4.2. The Panel will decide on the methods it will use for the review in accordance with the requirements of Coronavirus primary legislation, health protection regulations, local restrictions, government guidance and any future amendments to legislation that may be applicable as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

## Resources

- 4.3. Officers will provide administrative support to the Panel as required.
- 4.4. Members and officers will be available to discuss any issue with the panel. The Shadow Council would expect the Panel to make use of any relevant previous work in this area.

# North blueprint

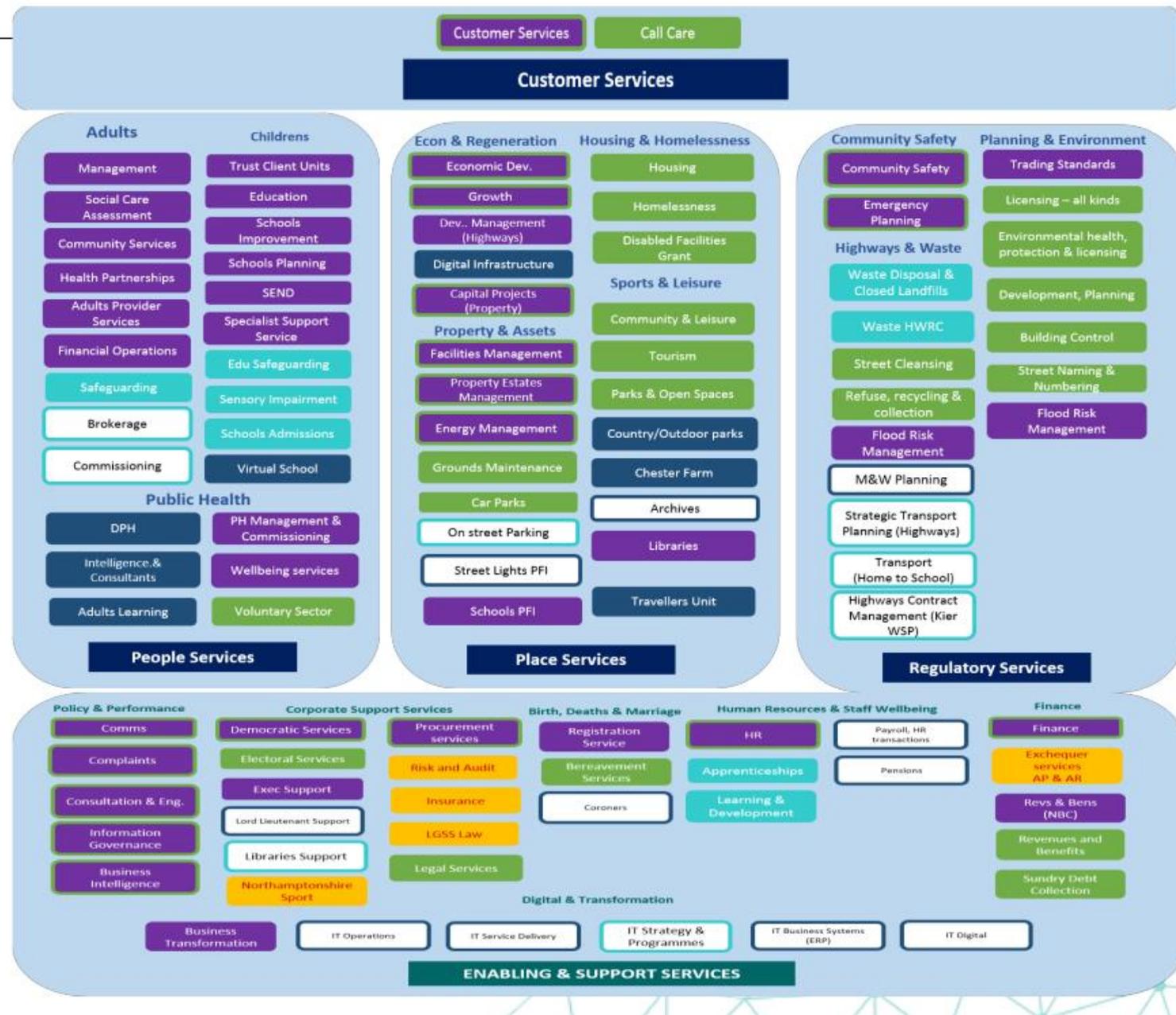


# North Draft Blueprint

This is how the North blue print is made up from the NCC & D&B services

**Key:**

- NCC only function that is disaggregated
- NCC & D&B Common function
- District & Borough only function that is aggregated
- NCC function that is Lead Authority - Provider
- NCC function that is Lead Authority - Receiver
- NCC function hosted for up to 12 months - Provider
- NCC function hosted for up to 12 months - Receiver
- NCC function hosted for more than 12 months - Provider
- NCC function hosted for more than 12 months - Receiver
- Function provided by other organisations to the new authorities



**THE STATUTORY FRAMEWORK**

The Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the 1989 Act)

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations 1991 (as amended)

The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 as amended by the Local Government Act 2000

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (Amendment) Regulations 1995

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2001

The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003

The Local Government Act 2000 Part III

The Localism Act 2011