

Harborough District Council Draft Operating Model

The Vision

The Council's Strategic Vision is:

"That the residents of Harborough District live in safe, prosperous, sustainable, self-reliant and well informed communities, where they are happy to take decisions and empowered to take actions that shape their own lives"

And

"That Harborough District Council is felt to support and assist residents in a cost effective way to build the communities they choose"

Key Principles

The Council will:

- work with and through others for the benefit of the community.
- engage effectively with the communities it serves.
- ensure that elected members are accountable for the Council's services through effective governance processes.
- retain responsibility for providing public services without necessarily delivering those services itself.
- ensure that the services delivered to the community provide value for money, consistently high quality and are subject to democratic scrutiny.
- seek to reduce the dependency of the community on the Council and manage demand for services.
- generate income where possible to ensure the sustainability of its services.
- make its priority the provision of services that help those who are unable to help themselves.
- expect those who are able to do so to pay for services that the Council provides.

The Council will procure services for the community from other providers; where it does so, it will ensure that its processes are legal and compliant and that they achieve value for money through effective commissioning and contract management.

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The Council will work in a business like and entrepreneurial way to ensure that it provides value for money for the community; it will actively seek opportunities to develop services in ways that generate income so that they are sustainable and offer returns on investment to the community.

The Council will support the local economy by working with local businesses to sustain and encourage commercial, technological, agricultural and industrial enterprise.

Principles in Practice

The Council will make sure that these key principles guide and determine its policies, structures, processes and practice:

- This means that we will build and sustain strong relationships with Parish and Town Councils, Voluntary Sector Organisations and Community Groups. The Council will be honest and open in its dealings with these partners; it will communicate its policies clearly and ensure that expectations of its role are realistic; it will offer support where it can; and it will respect the independence of its partners and seek to maintain good relationships even when there are differences of view.
- The Council will capitalise on the strength of the community to help itself; it will seek to devolve budgets and decision-making to parishes and community groups where this will achieve value for money and give communities more control.
- The Council will provide opportunities for all citizens to express their views; it will listen and respond in a considered, timely and respectful way; the Council will be honest about its obligations and the limits to its capacity to act so that expectations are realistic. It will work consistently to develop and maintain a sound understanding of the needs of the community it serves.
- The Council will commit itself to effective partnership working with other organisations where this is the best way of achieving its vision; this does not mean that it will engage in all potential partnerships: in some cases, the Council will decide that its resources are better employed elsewhere or that others should take a lead role. However, the Council will always make such

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decisions openly and consciously; it will communicate honestly with external organisations; and where it commits to partnership working it will strive to be a conscientious, dedicated and reliable partner.

- In general, the Council will offer services on the basis that it will recover its costs from customers who are able to pay for them; it will help those who are unable to do so to meet the costs. In some cases, the Council may decide to offer services free of charge or at a subsidised rate if this helps it to achieve its priorities and to manage demand; however, this will always be a deliberate decision based on a clear rationale. The Council's charging policy will be consistent, transparent and fair.
- The Council will be realistic about its capacity, resources and responsibilities; it cannot do or provide everything that it might consider desirable, and will acknowledge that in some cases, by doing so, it may stifle the development of community capacity and create dependency. The Council will recognise its span of control, when it should 'let go' and when it can best serve the community through influence and leadership rather than direct provision.
- The Council will ensure that it provides, either through commissioning or direct delivery, services that represent value for money and quality for its citizens and customers. The Council will embed outstanding performance and service improvement within its culture; it will maintain the accountability, efficiency and quality of services delivered by external providers through effective commissioning and rigorous contract management. The Council will explore and develop opportunities to reduce the burden on Council Taxpayers by seeking to generate income and providing services using business models that are self-sustaining; this will require entrepreneurship, innovation and a commercial approach to management.
- Council services should be examined on a case-by-case basis; the Council will not implement a blanket policy of either outsourcing or in-house provision. This process may mean that the Council has a mixed operating model including some in-house and some outsourced service provision.
- Council services should be planned as a strategic whole, taking full account of the relationships and inter-dependencies between them; when developing business cases for the provision of individual services, full consideration

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should be given to any possible implications for other services or functions and any decisions should be informed by such considerations. The way in which services are planned and delivered must ensure that they complement and support each other.

- The Council will adopt a rigorous, coherent and transparent corporate approach to its operations and structure. This will promote consistency; clear and robust decision making; effective performance management and efficiency; a shared vision and focus amongst members and officers; and a reputation for reliability, decisive action and delivery. The Council's Operating Model, Transformation Programme, the Medium Term Financial Plan and Corporate Plan will form the foundations of the Council's work; they will inform and support each other, and provide a coherent and consistent framework for planning and delivery.
- Democratic accountability is of fundamental importance to the Council's purpose; its values will recognise the leadership role of elected members, their responsibilities and the role of effective scrutiny and sound governance in its decision-making, service delivery and in its leadership of the community.

Next Steps

Developing the Operating Model

To develop the Operating Model, the Council will:

- Review and update its Partnership Strategy to ensure its approach to partnership working supports its priorities and uses resources wisely.
- Develop an approach to working with parishes and community groups that enhances their control and increases their responsibility.
- Adopt and implement a new Commissioning Strategy to address strategic commissioning, procurement and contract management.
- Review its current Shared Service arrangements, both individually and as a whole and determine and articulate a strategic approach to shared services.
- Explore the potential of establishing a delivery vehicle (whether a Joint Venture Company or a Local Authority Trading Company) as a means of ensuring accountability, effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery.

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- Review its current structure, both organisational and democratic, to identify modifications that might be necessary.
- Employ a strategic approach that encompasses the Council's values, processes and policies as well as its structure, to ensure that the Operating Model shapes and directs its operations and functions.

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