



# GEDLING PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

**2023-2024**

Serving people Improving Lives



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Tel: 0115 901 3901

[www.gedling.gov.uk](http://www.gedling.gov.uk)

**Gedling**  
Borough Council 

# INTRODUCTION

I am particularly proud to be writing this year's foreword to the Council's Annual Report as we reach the end of the first year of delivery of the new Gedling Plan 2023-27.

As has been the case in previous years, the four-year business plan for the Council has been ambitious in its nature in spite of the continuing difficult financial position. Although this does of course impact on our ability to do everything that we want to, or sometimes to the standard that we would ideally like, it does also provide opportunity for us to shine as we rise to meet the challenge.

To give just a flavour of our work this year, under the Gedling Plan theme of "Economy", we have been busy preparing for our input into the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan and have consulted on our Preferred Approach to housing, employment and logistics. To support this the Council has also commissioned the production of evidence documents focusing on transport modelling, housing needs, town and local centres, habitats and carbon reduction. This evidence will underpin a full draft plan which is to follow.

Under the theme of "Community" the Council provided support to almost all of our residents through the successful administration of two energy bill rebate schemes that helped to offset rising energy costs. In addition, our Customer Services team referred over 3,600 people eligible for the Household Support Fund which released additional grants totalling almost £500,000 for those most affected by the cost-of-living crisis.

Even in a year that has seen a huge amount of rainfall, two storms, "Babet" and "Henk" particularly stood out in terms of their impact in relation to flooding. The Council has worked hard

to administer grants available to both domestic and commercial property owners to enable them to improve the resilience of their properties.

Further work to support some of our most vulnerable residents and service users included the provision of over £1million for adaptations to allow people with disabilities to remain living in their own homes together with the provision of "changing places" toilet facilities in Arnold to support people with learning and physical disabilities.

In our work to improve "Place" we have planted a total of 3,656 trees on several sites in the borough including Gedling Country Park, Arnot Hill Park and Digby Park, far exceeding our targets.

Activities and projects undertaken under our theme of "The Council" include the creation of a "Diversity Network" of employees drawn from teams across the Council to help inform work to improve service delivery, and also the adoption of a new Workforce Strategy taking us up to 2027 that will help to shape the workforce for our challenges ahead.

This Annual Report is a celebration of these successes and many more besides. I hope that when you read it, like me, you will be impressed by the hard work of Elected Members and Officers who have achieved so much. Also, be assured that we all know there is much more to come and are excited by the opportunities for the year ahead.

**Councillor John Clarke**  
Leader of the Council

## OUR PRIORITIES AND WHAT WE DELIVERED

# ECONOMY

To encourage and support healthy businesses in our town and local centres, improving local skills and employment opportunities, and promoting an economy that attracts visitors throughout the day and supports leisure activity.



## Our key achievements

- In partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions, we held four jobs fairs over the year. Around 1,000 people attended those events, where they learnt about job and career opportunities and received advice from over 100 exhibitors representing employers, apprenticeship providers, training providers and advisors.
- Working together with Nottinghamshire County Council we held four business surgeries, providing vital support and advice on how to either start or further grow a business. All the surgeries were well attended.
- Our support to businesses is also demonstrated through our payment of 98.4% of invoices within 30 days.
- Several events were held at the Arnold Marketplace (AMP) including a Chinese New Year event, a Nottinghamshire Makers and Vintage Market and summer holiday events involving Inspire Learning and the Play Forum.
- As part of the preparation of the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan the Council consulted on its Preferred Approach to housing, employment and logistics. A range of evidence documents have been commissioned focusing on transport modelling, housing needs, town and local centres, viability, habitats and carbon reduction. This evidence has informed policy preparation which will underpin a full draft plan.
- As a part of the Town Centre improvement plan "Ambition Arnold", a contractor has been appointed to develop a strategic vision to support the regeneration and long-term sustainability of the Borough's main retail centre. Additional progress has been made for the programme with the Council recently securing £150k from "One Public Estate" government spending to develop feasibility.
- Funding for Carlton has been awarded by the Government under a second tranche of the Long Term Plan for Towns. This could equate to up to £20 million over a 10-year period to use on community projects to regenerate Carlton, improve connectivity and reduce anti-social behaviour.



# COMMUNITY

To enable a resilient, empowered, connected, inclusive and healthy community.



## Our key achievements

- Our Revenues team administered two further Energy Bill Support schemes, making payments to our harder to reach customers, such as those in care homes, who were initially not included in the Government's general energy support. This provided equal opportunity for people in care homes and other shared accommodation who pay towards the energy cost as a part of their care and accommodation, to receive the same support as those who have their own energy contracts.
- Our customer services team referred over 3,600 residents in need for the Household Support Fund. Gedling Borough Council have always been in the top three local authorities for the number of referrals. The scheme aims to provide a lifeline to residents experiencing financial hardship due to the cost-of-living crisis.
- The Council spent £1,024,000 on disabled adaptations to enable residents with disabilities to remain living independently in their own homes and 95 grants were awarded to fund the adaptation works.
- Our highly successful annual Arnold Summer Fair coincided with Refugee Week and the 75th anniversary of Windrush arrivals. Residents celebrated the vibrant multicultural heritage of the area enjoying live music, performances and creative workshops. Other successful events throughout the year included Christmas Markets and light switch-ons, Easter and Chinese New Year Trails and children's summer holiday activities in the AMP event space in Arnold.
- We opened our new "Changing Places" public toilet block at King George V Recreation Ground in Arnold. The facility is designed to meet the needs of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities as well as people with other physical disabilities and is available by Radar Key and monitored by our existing network of CCTV cameras.
- Our highly successful learn to swim scheme reached an all-time high of over 4,000 customers with over 600 children achieving their 25m swim badge. Successful campaigns around drowning prevention and the annual swim galas at Arnold and Carlton Forum Leisure Centres also took place.
- During the year, the number of visitors to our five leisure centres in the borough reached 1,153,000 – an increase of over 20,000 from pre-Covid levels. Upgrades to our Leisure Centres included new surround sound audio equipment and mood lighting at Calverton Leisure Centre, creating a superb sensory experience for people with disabilities. A special Armed Forces Leisure Card scheme reached the number of 410 subscribers.
- To improve their life chances and help young people develop essential skills and confidence, we hosted eleven school age work experience places over the year.
- The Council delivered on 90% of its key equality actions (74 in total) with the remainder being carried forward for delivery during 2024/25. The improvements focused both on external service delivery such as the development of a new Equality Policy (Services) and internal actions such as the introduction of a new equality training programme for staff.

## OUR PRIORITIES AND WHAT WE DELIVERED

# PLACE

To promote and drive sustainable growth across the borough to meet current and future needs.



## Our key achievements

- Over 200 long term (between 6 months and 5 years) empty homes were returned to use helping to improve neighbourhoods and reduce antisocial behaviour along with providing more available housing.
- The play area at Lambley Lane recreation ground was completely refurbished thanks to £100k of funding from FCC Communities. The redesigned site includes wheelchair accessible facilities.
- We exceeded our targets, by planting a total of 3,656 trees on several sites in the borough including Gedling Country Park, Arnot Hill Park and Digby Park. Our tree planting initiative enhances the local environment, provides improved air quality, increases shade, improves habitat for wildlife and aligns with the broader goal of creating a more sustainable and resilient community in the face of climate change.
- We were announced winners at the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) Awards in the category “Best Collaborative Working Initiative, with other public sector or third sector” for our entry of “Notts Green Rewards – Helping Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City residents take action to reduce their carbon footprint and to help tackle climate change”.
- We proudly took part, once again, in the nation’s Great British Spring Clean campaign, inspiring residents to take pride in their surroundings and take care of their environment. Many volunteers took part in local litter pick activities and our Climate Change Officer also visited local schools, encouraging creativity in tackling environmental challenges through competitions.
- New CCTV cameras have been installed at Balmoral Road in Colwick, St Wilfred’s Square Car Park in Calverton and Church Lane recreation ground in Arnold to assist the police with investigations and aid the Council’s Community Safety Team and Neighbourhood Wardens in tackling anti-social behaviour.
- Our robust approach to hygiene of the food premises in the borough brought about the success of 96% of food premises scoring four or five in the national food hygiene rating scheme, with five being the highest level.
- As residents were given an opportunity to enjoy a range of local cultural activities, an achievement of 47,000 visits to Bonnington Theatre was recorded which is an 18% increase from the previous year.

## OUR PRIORITIES AND WHAT WE DELIVERED

# THE COUNCIL

To be a high performing, efficient and effective council.



## Our key achievements

- Our Customer Services outreach team continued to advise over 1,000 customers at our Outreach hubs at Calverton, Carlton and Bestwood Village, helping with services such as housing, council tax, benefit claims and services from our partners.
- We introduced web chat as a new digital access channel for residents of the borough, totalling 4,155 interactions in its first six months of use. Many positive comments were received from the public, mainly relating to the user-friendly aspect of this online communication system.
- Our residents are now able to sign up to access their Council tax bills and invoices online. This not only allows the customer 24/7 access to their account, but also results in significant savings to the Council on postage and printing costs and benefits the environment.
- We successfully completed local elections in May 2023, for the first time under the new voter ID requirements. Positive feedback was received from election staff, internal officers, candidates, agents and councillors.
- We created a “Gedling Inclusion Group” of employees drawn from teams across the Council to contribute to its work to the benefit of the organisation and its workforce in respect to issues relating to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- To underpin our new Gedling Plan (2023-27) we have this year adopted a revised Workforce Strategy and a new Digital, Data and Technology Strategy. These are the foundations from which, combined with a review of our structures, we will fundamentally transform the ways that we deliver our services. Still with our residents, customers and service users at the heart of our delivery we will streamline processes and introduce appropriate technology to ensure that we continue to deliver great services that are innovative and even more efficient and cost-effective.
- The Council produced a balanced Medium Term Financial Plan for the period of 2024/25 – 2028/29. This means that as long as the Council continues to meet its efficiency targets, the budget is robust and the Council should remain in a financially stable position for the duration of the medium term plan.