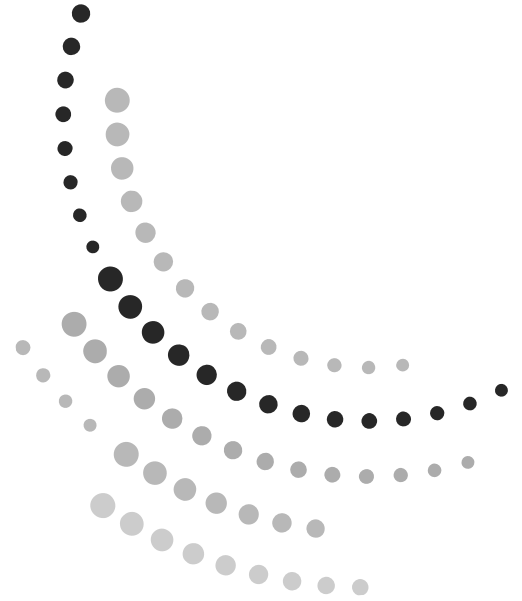


Rutland
County Council



Commissioning Framework

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Summary of document

This Framework sets out the Council's approach to commissioning, and the basis on which commissioning decisions are made.

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Rutland County Council Mission:

“Improve lives by focusing quality services and expertise where they are needed most, helping the County to grow and thrive whilst remaining the special place our residents know and love.”

1. Introduction

This Commissioning Framework sets out Rutland County Council’s approach to commissioning; what we want to achieve from our services, and how we undertake commissioning.

Rutland’s scale is an advantage when it comes to commissioning – the organisation is small enough to be able to make connections, spot synergies and opportunities, and collaborate to join up services. This offers a real opportunity to join up commissioning outcomes and develop a place-based model of public services.

Our communities in Rutland are rich in assets: the people of Rutland have skills, energy, and passion for the county; individual villages often have a key physical structure at their heart which gathers the community in; we have a plethora of green spaces and activity opportunities. By using commissioning opportunities and social value to support our communities to make the best use of these assets, we will support the sustainability of services within Rutland.

We want to deliver value for money for Rutland residents by commissioning outcome-based services, based on current demand but also able to adapt to future needs.

We want to support our communities to be resilient, to take ownership of issues important to them and, with our support, to develop their own resources and resilience.

We recognise that an approach which combines the resources, knowledge and experience of the Council, our partners, our communities, people and organisations will put us in the best position to deliver the solutions and services which will help us to deliver the Future Rutland Vision.

1.1 What is commissioning?

Commissioning exists at different levels in the organisation, from strategic commissioning that shapes services at a place-based level to micro commissioning that fulfils the day to day needs of service users.

Strategic commissioning is a cycle of activities often described as Analyse, Plan, Do, Review, which identify need, put services in place, and measure their effectiveness.

Commissioning is not...

- **just about budgets**
Effective commissioning can influence others through the planning process – understanding needs to focus and target services. Sometimes additional investment in effectively commissioned services creates efficiencies in the longer term through greater impact and improved outcomes, especially where this reduces demand in other settings.
- **just about procurement**
Commissioning is much wider than procurement processes and contracts. The key to effective commissioning is agreeing the need for, and purpose of, services; this supports the development of options with a wide range of stakeholders, and designing a delivery model which ensures the best possible outcomes can be achieved. Procurement can only take place once these essential stages have been completed.
- **just about external supplier contracts**
Services aimed at ensuring better outcomes for individuals and communities should be delivered by those best placed to do so and at the best value. This does not always mean contracting an external provider; it may mean delivering a service in-house, shifting the focus of an existing service, or enabling communities to deliver for themselves.
- **just about the Council's view**
By involving everyone in the initial stages to understand needs and design a service, including current and potential service users, staff and providers, services can be commissioned in a way that will make the most impact. Joint commissioning with partners can create more effective use of resources; and where the Council does not have a direct commissioning role there may still be opportunities to influence with partners, including local communities, to ensure the best possible outcomes.

2. Commissioning Drivers and Influences

2.1 Policies and Priorities

At the heart of all of our commissioning in Rutland sits the Future Rutland Vision and our Rutland County Council Corporate Plan. There are also a wealth of policies and strategies locally, regionally and nationally which inform and steer how particular types of services are commissioned.

The changes to government funding and the increasing need across the public sector to do 'more for less' make effective commissioning even more key in the delivery of public services.

The Framework contributes to Rutland County Council's Corporate Strategy priorities of:

1. Tackling the Climate Emergency
2. Provide good public services
3. Support the most vulnerable
4. A diverse and sustainable local economy

Strategic commissioning assists the Council to fulfil our role as a 'place-shaper' enabling us to:

- Understand the evolving needs of the community, as well as the key priorities that public sector bodies can most effectively deliver against.
- Design and deliver appropriate services to meet these needs, utilising the full capabilities of in-house services, market providers and community groups.
- Review how the work delivered via contracts with private and voluntary sector providers is effective, thereby supporting the best use of our resources.
- Manage the process effectively, identify and maximise opportunities for collaboration, challenge 'accepted thinking', and encourage innovation about the right way to meet community needs.

3. Commissioning Principles

Our services should meet individuals' and communities' needs in ways which make sense to them and support them. Our focus is on how our services add value to people's lives and how they meet people's needs.

We will commission in a way which enables services to:

- ✓ Meet the needs of our residents in a way which makes sense to them
- ✓ Be local and sustainable
- ✓ Enable the best use of our assets and resources
- ✓ Deliver value for money

To do this, we will work to 5 principles:

i. Needs-Led and Evidence-Based

We will use data and evidence to inform service planning. We understand that people using services are experts in their own experiences of services and will encourage them to share those with us. We will involve customers and service users to ensure that their views are central to commissioning services, from defining outcomes to reviewing success in delivery.

ii. Collaborative

We will work in partnership with other commissioners and with providers to reduce duplication and make best use of resources; supporting local communities to help themselves and working with everyone to further develop local community-based services. We will build partnerships with the private sector as well as the public and the voluntary and community sector, where appropriate to support the delivery of our wider strategic aims.

iii. Transparent

We will be open-minded about potential solutions and how services can be provided. We will be transparent in our decision-making - being clear what we cannot do, as well as what we can – and how we allocate our resources.

iv. Sustainable

We will focus on quality, workforce development and value for money, re-aligning our resources to maximise the impact of services. We will hold internal and external services to account for their delivery. We will use our commissioning activity to support diverse and sustainable markets which deliver positive outcomes for local people and communities.

v. Value for Money

We will balance quality, outcomes and cost to make best use of resources; encouraging and supporting external sources of investment in our communities. We will endeavour to ensure that our fees and payments for services reflect the true cost of delivery for both internal and external services.

4. An Informed Commissioning Approach

We will start our commissioning in a timely manner, allowing sufficient time to understand needs, consider solutions and ensure, where procurement is needed providers have opportunities to understand our requirements and respond effectively.

Traditionally, commissioning is described as a 4 stage approach of analyse, plan, do, review.

4.1 ANALYSE - Identify need and future demand

We will use internal performance data on the Council's own services and the contract monitoring information taken from across the lifetime of the contracts we commission to understand service provision in more detail, highlight gaps in provision, and to understand how individuals make use of services.

We will use feedback received of an existing service and, where possible, engage with residents who use those services to develop ideas and plans for new services. We aim to make best use of providers' knowledge and insight through our existing contractual relationships, and wider local and regional networks.

We will use wider data, looking at the changing population and the geography of the county to understand what future demand may be.

4.2 PLAN – Develop a model to deliver services

We will use the analysis we have completed to identify gaps in provision and develop options to consider what and how services could best meet Rutland's needs. We will identify the resources currently available and the cost benefits of adopting different models of provision.

We will allocate resources for a specific service out of total available resources dependent on need, priority and available budget.

We will use strategies and national policy to drive our approach to service models, and good practice to understand what works elsewhere and what we might adapt to meet Rutland's needs.

We will undertake 'soft market testing' for services to establish which providers are available and able to deliver and to ensure models we develop are viable. We will consider if the services are best delivered by Rutland providers and there is justification to 'reserve' contracts specifically for local businesses.

4.3 DO – Put the services into place

Where services need to be provided by an organisation external to the council, we will follow clear and transparent procurement processes in line with the Council's Constitution and with UK procurement regulations.

We will ensure that our contracts or grant funding agreements accurately reflect what has been procured or agreed. Contracts will clearly stipulate who is responsible for what, how we will determine payments, what outcomes or outputs are required, responsibilities of all parties and a process for resolving performance or compliance issues. Grant funding agreements will set out what the grant is for, payment, duration and obligations.

We will commit to ensuring a good mix of service providers and effective communications and relationships with existing and potential providers. We will support providers to deliver in Rutland, managing market capacity and identifying areas of risk of provider failure, and mitigating those risks where we can.

4.4 REVIEW – Monitor how effective services are

We will monitor the delivery of services to ensure that what we have commissioned is delivered in the way that we would expect and is required by the contract. We will collect customer and service user feedback either directly, or via the provider, and expect providers to take feedback into account when they develop and improve their services throughout the lifetime of the contract.

We will bring together relevant data on finance, activity and outcomes to establish the effectiveness and impact of services. We will analyse any changes in legislative requirements, best practice and population need to consider how services need to be developed or changed during their contract period to remain as effective as possible in meeting needs, identifying changes to service aims and priorities.

5. Responsible Commissioning

5.1 Commissioning with the Voluntary and Community Sector

The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) covers an array of organisations, including charities, social enterprises and community organisations. In Rutland it ranges from large national or regional organisations with dedicated infrastructure support to small community groups run solely by volunteers.

The potential contribution of the VCS should be considered as part of the development of commissioning plans in order to make effective use of all available resources to deliver the best outcomes. As public service funding becomes more restricted, the VCS has a significant role to play both in the delivery of services and in building social capital within communities. However, it should not be relied upon to simply replace contracted services, but rather to better understand the assets already within communities and to support identification of alternative, additional sources of funding.

The Voluntary Sector in Rutland have developed a Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy which will set out their aims and priorities, enabling a framework for working with public and private sector parties. Through reference to the VCS Strategy, we will aim to improve communication, understanding, collaboration, trust and respect between the public sector and VCS, and to increase awareness across the VCS of the commissioning opportunities available to them.

5.2 Equalities

The Council is required to show compliance with the Equality Duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010. In Rutland as well as the Protected Characteristics covered by the Equality Duty, we include Care Leavers and the Armed Forces community. Equality Impact Assessments can help to identify gaps in service provision, areas of synergy between services and/or with partner agencies; and help to indicate how effective services are at reaching residents. Equalities implications will be considered from the very initial stages of the commissioning cycle and during the needs analysis will help to identify specific requirements of potential service users and allowing these requirements to be appropriately reflected in the design of the service model. We use a set process to screen and assess for equalities' impacts.

5.3 Social Value

Social value refers to approaches which maximise the additional benefits that can be created through the delivery and procurement of goods and services, above and beyond those directly related to that provision. In particular, it relates to:

- Health and wellbeing
- The wider economy
- The environment
- Community cohesion and empowerment

We have a Social Value Framework setting out the Council's approach to Social Value and the contracts it is included within.

<https://www.rutland.gov.uk/my-business/selling-to-the-council/procurement/>

6. The Role of Providers and the Community

We recognise that other organisations are sometimes better placed than the Council to attract external funding into the county. Providers and the wider community play a vital role in supporting us to achieve our ambitions, and we are committed to engage with and understand the needs and demand of our communities, and to secure the best possible solutions.

We will ask providers to:

- Offer flexible adaptable services which can respond to the needs of Rutland communities.
- Work with people using their services to gather feedback, find solutions, and improve services throughout the lifetime of their contract.
- Identify ways to understand the impact of their service and use contract monitoring arrangements to generate and share insight on current and future needs.

- Create sustainable supply chains, which as far as possible are local and retain funding and employment within the local economy.
- Offer social value and consider how they might contribute to Rutland's ambitions in ways beyond their contracted service.

We will ask people in our communities to:

- Take responsibility for their own wellbeing and that of their family.
- Look after and enjoy the environment around them, and help others to do so.
- Be open about what they want from services, understand who might be best placed to provide that, and be realistic about what can be provided.
- Actively contribute to consultations to inform the decisions that affect them.
- Feedback to providers and commissioners their experiences of services, both good and bad.
- Proactively be part of a community or social network, however small; recognise what they, their families, and others in their community can do for each other.

7. How do we know our commissioning is effective?

We aim to ensure that services don't cost more than they should, are delivered by those best placed to do the job, are delivering the right outcomes and support local jobs and economic growth. This means that, where there is strong evidence that services are not delivering the outcomes for our customers in the most efficient or effective way, we will no longer continue to deliver them in their current form.

We will know our commissioning approach works when:

- We deliver efficient and effective services that make the best use of resources.
- Every commissioning decision is evidence based.
- We understand our strategic and community leadership role and the resources and assets available through working with partners, providers and communities.
- Our officers understand what we are trying to achieve and their role in this and feel that their contribution is valued and recognised.
- Our communities understand what we are trying to achieve and their role in this and feel that their contribution is valued and recognised.