



STRATEGIC REPORT 2024-2026

# Managing Change

**VOLUNTARY**  
IMPACT NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



[www.voluntaryimpact.org.uk](http://www.voluntaryimpact.org.uk)

# Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire's next strategic plan is entitled "Managing Change", and with good reason.

Our State of the Sector Survey 2026 demonstrates beyond doubt the fragility of the VCFSE within West Northamptonshire, and VIN is not immune from these challenges.

System deficits across Northamptonshire will undoubtedly mean a continual reduction in grant or contract support in the future, and VCFSE organisations will be expected to manage that transformative shift. VIN will need to do likewise. Changing from what you are, to something else, whilst holding true to your Mission and Values is complex and often difficult, but it must be done. In many cases, it's a brand stretch rather than a Mission drift.

The State of the Sector report can be viewed here: <https://voluntaryimpact.org.uk/news/sawn-state-of-the-sector-survey-autumn-2025/>

VIN has always worked to a hybrid framework, with projects supporting the amount we receive for our Infrastructure work. In previous years, external Grant - Givers and Foundations have enabled us to build on that Infrastructure model to support more VCFSE organisations.

These Grants have enabled us to embed Infrastructure around service delivery, which has been useful not only to us, but the VCFSE partners we work with. In the last few years, VIN has brought more than £2 million into

the County through programmes like Connect Northamptonshire and Volunteering for Health. However, times are changing. External Funders like the National Lottery and the NHS are moving away from large systemic programmes (which

> £2 million

VIN has brought into the county

are the lifeblood of Infrastructure) and into more grass roots service delivery. At the same time, our traditional Infrastructure funding sources remain static and our approach has had to be reconfigured within this context. This Plan has been built collaboratively using the data we received from the State of the Sector Survey, and through working with both our Trustee Board and our staff. It covers the next 24 months, as that is all we can reasonably foresee given the level and pace of transformation within the County.

**Nic Jackson, VIN Trustee states:**

**"While the economic landscape remains challenging, by leaning into the passion and talent of our team, I believe we are in the best position possible to turn that challenge into opportunity. It's never easy, especially given the complexity of transformation within the county, but our people are our greatest asset, and I am convinced we can ride the current pressures to continue to deliver for both community organisations and our communities."**

INFRASTRUCTURE ↓

FUNDING ↓

SECURED PROJECTS

## FOREWORD

# Collaboration is key

Russell Rolph, the CEO of VIN states:

“I have always been a firm believer in collaboration and partnerships as a means by which our sector can survive and thrive. It’s just more important now than ever. VIN will be looking to establish 15 effective partnerships over the life of this strategy around the themes of neighbourhood and place. Partnerships take time and energy but create opportunity and sustainability. As part of this, we will be aligning more closely with our Infrastructure partner SNVB (South Northants Volunteer Bureau) to provide a more cohesive offer across West Northamptonshire. This will provide a foundation for other partnerships where infrastructure support and project delivery comes together.”

## MISSION, VALUES, AND ETHOS

# As always, our plan starts with a refresh of our mission and values.

## OUR MISSION

# Our mission is to support community organisations and their communities.

We do this through



Our beneficiaries are

COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS →

COMMUNITIES ↓

↑ VOLUNTEERS

← INDIVIDUALS



## OUR VALUES

# Our values underpin our mission position.



### BEING STRATEGIC AND SUPPORTIVE

- Connecting and valuing people.
- Advocating on behalf of communities and community organisations.
- Influencing West Northamptonshire policy initiatives.



### MAKING THINGS HAPPEN

- We listen so that we understand and provide the best possible service.
- We challenge where it's right to do so.
- We are clear on what we can do and how we can do it.



### LEADING IN OUR FIELD

- We are creative and intuitive.
- We share and partner where we can.
- We seek organisational self improvement.



### PLACING PEOPLE AT OUR HEART

- We value every individual.
- We work positively to effect change.
- All views and expectations are heard and respected.



## OUR ETHOS

Our ethos is built on transparency, honesty, and integrity.



### TRANSPARENCY

We will work to support the sector in the most transparent manner possible. We will advocate and represent community organisations, with particular emphasis on levelling the playing field for the micro or smaller charities within West Northamptonshire.



### HONESTY

We will work to promote the work of community organisations wherever possible and at every opportunity. We speak honestly and are not afraid to challenge where challenge is required.

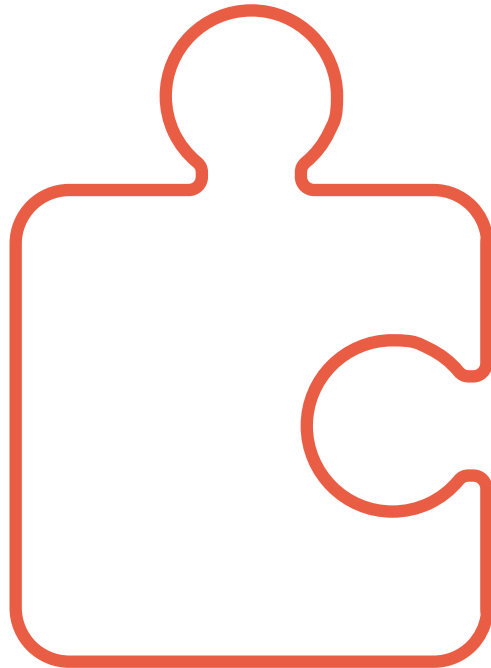


### INTEGRITY

We operate a 3Cs approach to our work. We compete where we must but would always prefer to work in collaboration and coalition. The sector is wide and diverse but is always stronger when it speaks collectively on issues that matter.

## DRAWING FROM OUR PAST

Drawing from our past is a valuable way of understanding what we have become known for and what we might do better.



In our case it's:



- How best to provide Group Support.
- How best to support communities through social action and health inequalities.
- Advocating and representing the sector.
- Bringing people of influence together.
- Delivering projects with clear aims and outcomes.
- Understanding the changing nature of volunteering and how people volunteer.
- Understanding the strategic implications of change and how we can best help smaller organisations survive and thrive.
- How to better contract manage.
- How to build and maintain better budgets.
- The importance of continued income diversification and mitigating financial risk.
- Understanding the changing West Northamptonshire operational landscape and its many transformative programmes.

## THE FUTURE

# How we will change



### INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT

We will strengthen our alignment to SNVB under the banner of SAWN (Social Action West Northamptonshire) to provide a consistent Infrastructure offer across West Northamptonshire. As funding constraints intensify, more of this work will be virtual or will be viewed through our online resource portal.

Where it matters though, we will continue to meet with our VCFSE colleagues, and we will develop the VCFSE Engagement Group and the CEO Network over the next 2 years. Further and continual alignment with SNVB will be a central plank of this plan, although the detail has yet to be configured. It will undoubtedly stretch to partnership working, conjoined bids and a possible merger at a later date if circumstances allow and both Trustee boards agree. With VIN (predominantly urban) and SNVB (predominantly rural) our reach and scope can be intensified and better outcomes and value for money achieved. As SAWN, we will look outside of our traditional partners for match funded Infrastructure support.



### PLACE AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

The transformation we have seen within health over the past 12 months has been substantial. Place and Neighbourhoods are now important across the entire Northamptonshire system.

How the VCFSE works at Place, Neighbourhood and within Local Area Partnerships (or LAPS) will be crucial, and VIN will provide advocacy and voice in these discussions.

However, working with newer partners like the ICB or NHFT will require a different approach from our sector. Framework agreements or block commissioning from health is probably beyond the scope of any single VCFSE organisation, and so Neighbourhood collaborations will be crucial, and in that Infrastructure plays a key role in organising, specifying and fund giving.



## THE FUTURE

# How we will change



### PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

We will actively seek 15 Partnerships to build upon our work with health and at Place and Neighbourhood. These Partnerships will form coalitions to strengthen our approach to conjoined working and bid writing, whilst adopting an assets based approach to our capacity and resources.



### CONSIDERED SPACE

VIN will be pursuing the concept of space, using St Giles Street as a pilot.

A physical space will allow VIN to open further grant or contract opportunities outside of Infrastructure and will give us a greater depth and breadth in working with and bringing in our VCFSE partners.

This search for space and its utilisation will be a crucial and central plank of our change management approach.

In doing this we will be sympathetic and empathetic, and work in partnership where and if we can.



### MANAGING OUR STRENGTHS

Our staff are VIN's most valuable asset and understanding their strengths (as opposed to their skills) is a key component of our new Plan. To this end, we have commissioned a Strengthscope Contractor to build our staff strengths profiles and see where our gaps are moving forward.



### MANAGING OUR COSTS

VIN is not immune from the challenging pressures of cost reduction or restructuring, and this must be a live debate throughout the evolution of this plan.

Infrastructure is a difficult concept to generate income against, largely due to the multifaceted nature of its activities. VIN will need to do this, though, and in a variety of differing ways.

For many, explaining Infrastructure is hard enough, without attempting to understand its granular complexities. If income generation is not the answer, then reducing costs is a necessary component of any organisation's approach to its work and its future.



## THE FUTURE

# How we will change



### PROJECTS

VIN will undertake more projects and extend its current portfolio. Physical space will enable us to undertake this change shift more easily, but we will always work with partners and other spaces to identify gaps in service provision or to meet Group or Beneficiary needs. In undertaking these projects, we will attempt to embed our infrastructure core values of support, representations, advice, networking, voluntary and social action.



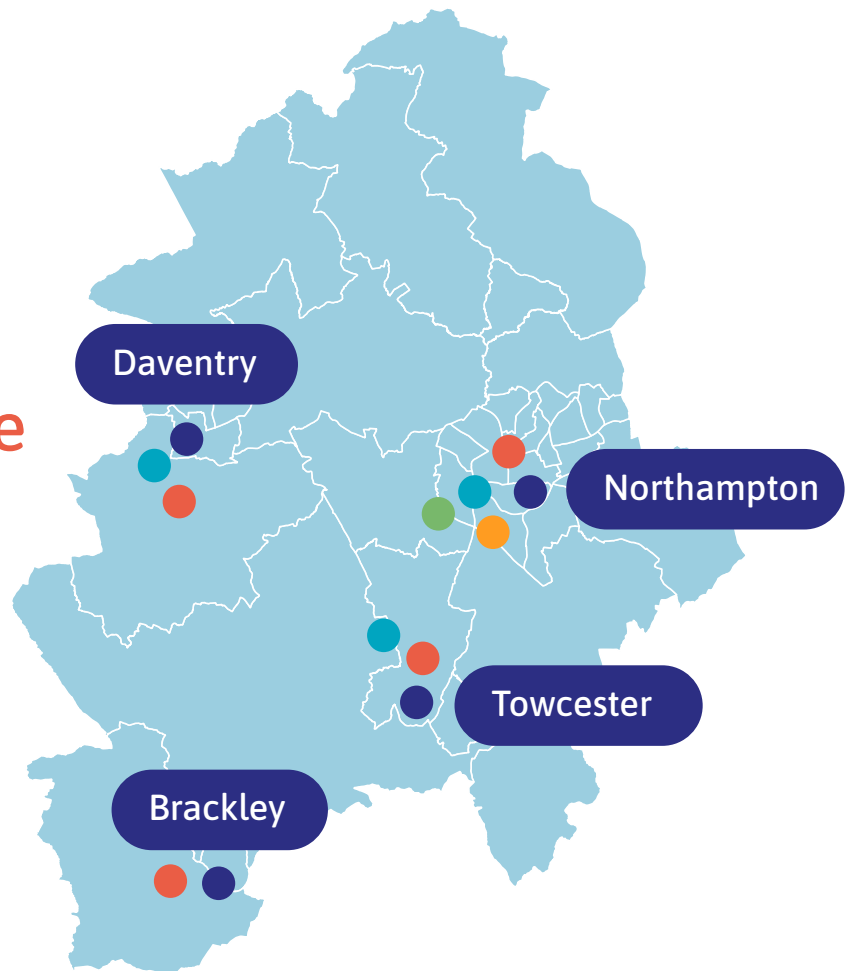
### GRANTS AND FOUNDATIONS

We will continue to review and develop our Pipeline of funder applications. Moreover, we will be lobbying for VCFSE support across Neighbourhoods, using the wealth of inequality data which exists within our system. We will be particularly keen to develop funding around personal financial resilience, volunteering, social cohesion and community development.



## THE MAP

# Voluntary Sector Infrastructure across West Northamptonshire



### COMMUNITY HUBS / VENUES

#### **Doddridge Community Centre**

St James, Northampton — VCSE meeting & activity hub

#### **Riverside Centre**

Islington Road, Towcester — home of SNVB

#### **Daventry Volunteer Centre**

Hosts local VCS Forum for networking & training

#### **CAWNAC CHIPs network**

Community Help & Information Points in libraries & centres across West Northants

### HEALTH & WELLBEING

#### **Inspire (Turning Point)**

2 hubs in Northampton + satellites in Daventry, Towcester, Brackley, Brixworth

#### **Age UK Northamptonshire**

County-wide support for older people

#### **Well Northants**

Community health project — St David's, Blackthorn, Kings Heath (Northampton) & Southbrook (Daventry)

#### **Citizens Advice (CAWNAC)**

Debt, benefits & wellbeing advice across West Northamptonshire

### CVS / INFRASTRUCTURE

#### **Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire (VIN)**

Northampton town centre

#### **South Northants Volunteer Bureau (SNVB)**

Riverside Centre, Towcester

#### **Daventry Volunteer Centre**

Daventry

#### **SAWN consortium**

VIN + SNVB + Daventry Volunteers — county-wide WNC contract

#### **Community Action Northants (CAN)**

Riverside Centre, Towcester

### FUNDING BODIES

#### **Northamptonshire Community Foundation**

County-wide — £1m+ grants annually

#### **West Northamptonshire Council**

UKSPF / REPF community grants

## GLOSSARY

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# Our jargon buster will help you understand the acronyms used throughout this report.

VCFSE	Voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise
NHS	National Health Service (and its constituent parts such as NHS Partnerships)
VIN	Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire
SNVB	South Northants Volunteer Bureau
SAWN	Social Action West Northamptonshire
ICB	Integrated Care Board
NHFT	Northamptonshire Healthcare Foundation Trust

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