

Future Rutland VISION

*A vision for the future of
Rutland, shaped by the
people who call it home*



A place to live your best life

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Introduction

People in Rutland were asked what kind of county they want to live in. This is their vision, which paints a picture of the place they described.

Rutland is seen by many as a truly special place – somewhere that you can live your best life. Recognising that Rutland has something unique which needs to be preserved, enhanced and built upon, the Future Rutland Conversation asked local people what really matters to them. Having listened carefully, this shared vision provides a set of long-term goals and aspirations based on the things that local people have said are most important: Rutland's character, its homeliness and community spirit, peace and well-being, nature, wildlife, rurality and the freedom to enjoy life.

The Vision is split into four sections that cover all aspects of life in Rutland:

- **A special place:** Sustaining a vibrant rural county that harnesses the enterprise of its businesses, the ambition and creativity of its residents, and the passion of its local communities.
- **Sustainable lives:** Living sustainably and combatting the climate crisis through the power of choice, the removal of barriers, and real collective action.
- **Healthy and well:** Promoting health, happiness and well-being for people of all ages and backgrounds.
- **A county for everyone:** Celebrating diversity and ensuring everyone has the opportunity to live well, be heard and overcome any challenges they may face.

This Vision is not meant to be a detailed plan. It sets out big, long-term goals for Rutland, based on the things that local people have said really matter. More detailed plans and policies will stem from the Vision and serve as the catalyst for change. They will also help to strike the right balance wherever goals appear to be incompatible with one another. As a county, we will need to keep working together to agree our priorities, develop these plans of action, and continually test them against the Vision to make sure they achieve the outcomes we want.

The Vision is a generational document. It may cover 20 or 30 years, so won't become a reality overnight. Rutland County Council started the Future Rutland Conversation but cannot achieve all these goals alone. Other organisations and local communities also have a huge role to play. Further details about this process and an indication of the first steps towards achieving the Future Rutland Vision are set out on **page 11**.

If everyone pulls together Rutland will continue to be a great place to live, raise a family, work and visit.



A special place

Rutland is a special place because of the people who live here and a rural charm that goes right to the heart of the county's identity. The relationship that people in Rutland have with each other and the countryside around them has created tight-knit communities that value peace, security and togetherness. This is a source of real pride for those who call the county home, as well as something to be celebrated and preserved for current and future generations.

Rutland is also a place of innovation where independent businesses and entrepreneurs use the county's location and infrastructure to operate regionally, nationally and internationally. The same infrastructure and technology that allows Rutland's local businesses to flourish also keeps people and communities connected.

Drawing on all of its unique qualities and attributes, Rutland should capitalise on its location and natural assets to become a leading example of a modern rural county. It will embrace change that can improve people's quality of life, while taking great care to protect and preserve the fundamental characteristics that make it special.

Rutland will be a county where heritage and the natural world are cherished and enhanced – a place that actively recognises, appreciates and celebrates its historic environment for the benefit and enjoyment of all generations.

Towns and villages will promote inclusion, retain their sense of identity and encourage even greater community spirit – all things that help to give Rutland its distinctive feeling of closeness, familiarity and security.

Rutland's market towns of Oakham and Uppingham will thrive as vibrant destinations to shop, socialise and enjoy life – both for those who live locally and the many thousands of people who come to the county every year.

Rutland will also build on its existing reputation as somewhere for a great day out by becoming a key destination in the East Midlands for leisure, sport and cultural activities – a place where individuals and families can visit, stay and enjoy themselves.

“ I think there are two main drivers for enjoying life in Rutland. One is just the sheer beauty of the area and wanting to be here; and also the community spirit and people making you feel welcome.”



“ We are here because we like it. People don’t realise how nice it is. Lots of people take it for granted that it is beautiful and I want to see it continue in its unique way.”



Plans to grow Rutland’s local economy will build on its existing strengths – its wide and varied network of small businesses; its traditional rural industries; and leading companies that value work-life balance and digital connectivity.

Rutland will celebrate innovation, creativity and excellence to attract greater investment and enhance its status as a county where businesses of all shapes and sizes can start, grow and succeed.

In growing Rutland’s economy and establishing sustainable businesses, care will be taken to create the right employment opportunities for young people and aspiring professionals, as well as ensuring that business makes a positive contribution to the environment.

The housing needs of current and future generations who want to make Rutland their home will be met by a healthy mix of well-designed and genuinely affordable properties that cater for everyone, regardless of their life stage, financial constraints, or choice of tenure.

Growth in Rutland will be sustainable and preserve the county’s quintessential character. Wherever new homes are needed, they will be built in a way that protects and enhances the things that matter most to everyone – Rutland’s sense of community and its unique rural identity.

By doing all of this, Rutland will continue to strengthen its reputation a thriving county of enterprise and opportunity – a special place to live well, spend time, do business and invest.

Sustainable lives

Rutland is a rural area where people love and appreciate nature. However, it is not as 'green' as it could or should be. More than just improving in this area, the county will become a leader and an innovator when it comes to environmental issues, sustainable living and the fight to tackle the climate crisis.

Rutland will strive to become a carbon neutral county by 2050 – a place where environmental sustainability and responsibility complement rural living.

New homes and developments will have sufficient infrastructure and be built in sustainable locations. Their construction will raise environmental standards, as well as having a positive impact on wildlife and the local ecology. Homes will be designed with the latest zero-carbon and green technologies in mind and in a way that makes sure communities can stay connected to nature. People in Rutland will have access to the information and support they need to decarbonise and make sustainable choices.

Rutland will also be a place that seizes opportunities to create and develop wild areas which support greater biodiversity – adding to the immense ecological value of Rutland Water and its world-renowned nature reserve. Local agricultural, planning and development practices will contribute towards a biodiversity net gain for the county.

Communities, organisations and businesses in Rutland will embrace their environmental responsibilities. Awareness and education will be at the heart of the county's climate response, so that everyone is armed with the knowledge they need about recycling, biodiversity, protecting wildlife, growing food and reducing their carbon footprint.

More than this, the county of Rutland will fundamentally redefine its relationship with waste – embracing the principles of a circular economy and reducing the amount that is consumed and then thrown away.

“ As a community, Rutland has the opportunity to lead the way in environmental matters. ”





Transport is key to sustainable living in a rural area. Put simply, transport is about much more than completing a journey, because people cannot live life to the fullest without the freedom to travel. This is one area, in particular, where Rutland must improve. **The county will have an integrated network of sustainable and accessible transport options that keep people of all ages connected with the things they need, the activities they enjoy, and with friends and family.**

Rutland's local transport offer will provide a realistic alternative to car travel, as well as making the county friendlier for cycling and walking. Genuinely accessible travel options will help to meet the specific needs of young people and older residents who must have use of convenient and affordable transport to stop them being isolated.

Rutland will also continue to look beyond its borders, working with neighbouring counties to take advantage of opportunities and tackle big challenges together – contributing to the wider health and prosperity of our region.

Rural areas must be connected by more than roads and footpaths if they are to remain sustainable in an increasingly digital world. A lack of digital connectivity is not just an inconvenience. It can lead to disadvantage and even exclusion. **Rutland's communities will be digitally enabled and fully capable of utilising the latest internet technology for work, education, communication and much more.**

Healthy and well

Rutland is often held up as one of the UK's best places to live because of its schools, its countryside and the safety of its communities. It offers a fantastic quality of life for families, working age professionals and those wanting to enjoy retirement. Key to this quality of life is the ability for people to stay healthy and do the things which make them happy.

People in Rutland will be able to live healthy, active lives and make positive choices about their wellbeing. They will have every opportunity to invest time in self-care and continuous personal development, as well as chances to connect with others, to maximise their wellbeing and happiness.

Leisure and recreation create opportunities to have fun and socialise, which adds to the richness of life and brings people and communities closer together. **People in Rutland will be able to access a wide range of leisure opportunities for all ages, abilities and interests.** The county's exciting leisure offer will promote the important role that sport and exercise play in maintaining healthy minds and bodies. It will also recognise that people's ability to access culture and the arts are integral to Rutland, and equally important for creativity, learning and the county's visitor economy.

Rutland will remain one of the safest places to live anywhere in the country.

“ Our green and open spaces are a key contributor to mental wellbeing. ”





“I like the fact that Rutland, as a whole, feels very safe as a community. I feel I can go around places on my own or with friends and not feel too exposed or too at risk.”

Sadly, it's not possible to keep everyone well all the time. When people are ill, they must be able to get help without delay or added stress. This is not currently the case for everyone. Rutland's growing and ageing population will be served by the right health infrastructure (including GP services), staffed by a workforce that keeps pace in terms of its size and skills.

Health and care services in Rutland will work closely together and be easy to access when needed. Rutland will be a county that harnesses technology where appropriate and provides better care closer to home to reduce the need to wait or make difficult journeys for treatment. Recognising there will always be a need to access healthcare in person, the county's transport network will connect people with essential services inside and outside Rutland, as quickly and conveniently as possible. By keeping individuals and communities connected, Rutland will also be a place that actively combats loneliness and isolation.

The impact of poor health goes far beyond illness or ailment and can have a truly life-limiting effect for individuals and families. Rutland will overcome health inequalities so that everyone gets the same high-quality care and support, regardless of where they live in the county or go to access care. **People with multiple illnesses or long-term conditions, as well as those who are frail or vulnerable, will be supported to manage their care needs and live independently.**

Understanding that that mental wellbeing is just as important as physical health, Rutland will be a place where the idea of wellness is learned and understood at an early age, and then carried through into adulthood. Communities will be encouraged to offer support and normalise discussion about mental wellbeing so that everyone feels able to seek help when they need it. Adults, children and young people will have swift access to the right care in moments of crisis, as well as support for serious problems like addiction.

Rutland will be a county where mental and physical wellbeing are seen as priorities. A place where the health of residents is not just measured by life expectancy but by people's ability to live well for the whole of their lives.

A county for everyone

Equality is about making sure everyone has the same access to opportunity. No one should be disadvantaged because of who they are, their individual circumstances or where they live.

Rutland will have resilient and well-connected communities where everyone can enjoy what the county has to offer. A place for those of all ages and walks of life. Rutland will also be a county that celebrates diversity – bringing people from all cultures and backgrounds together as a single community.

Rutland children will continue to get the best start in life and go on to be happy, safe and successful at each stage of their development.

Young people of all abilities will have the benefit of a positive and inclusive education, so that they can learn, do well and realise their ambitions. Recognising that the county's next generation is knowledgeable, intelligent, and extremely passionate, Rutland will be a place where young people are able to bring their views and ideas to the fore as community leaders and educators in their own right.

Rutland will also be a county where young people have the means to travel and get around independently, so they can stay connected with friends, interests and the wider community.

Rutland will be a county where everyone can reach their full potential. There will be opportunities to learn and develop sought-after skills well beyond the age of 18 and the end of formal education. Rutland is proud of its rural roots and its ties to farming and agriculture. The county is also right at the forefront of the UK's digital revolution, thanks to broadband and fibre broadband technology. Successful businesses will offer highly skilled jobs in both traditional sectors and emerging industries – providing employment opportunities that allow young people to stay in Rutland if they want and choose to.



“I want to see Rutland moving forward... I want it to be a place that everyone can live in and enjoy.”



Rutland’s towns and villages will be accessible to everyone, regardless of age or disability. They will be connected to other communities inside and outside of the county by convenient and reliable transport that works for everyone. Town centres will be enjoyable places where anyone can spend time safely, without having to worry about traffic, reduced mobility or disabled access.

Vulnerable people, whatever their age or circumstances, will continue to be supported and protected in Rutland. The county will have community support networks that extend beyond formal care services to help anyone who is disadvantaged, facing hardship or at risk from harm.

Rutland will be a county where no group or individual is marginalised or ignored. Everyone will have a voice and the chance to be heard, so they can participate fully in their community and any discussions which affect them. The county will also continue to celebrate its connection to the Armed Forces – showing appreciation for those who have served and continue to serve.

Finally, Rutland will be a place where inequalities are reduced and communities are tolerant and welcoming. It will be a county of respect, which challenges prejudice and discrimination in all its forms. Somewhere that people are encouraged to celebrate their differences and create strong ties based on the things they have in common.

Achieving the Vision

This Shared Vision for Rutland comes from the Future Rutland Conversation, which spoke to more than 2,000 people all around the county to understand what is most important to them.

The Vision is meant to be bold. It paints an ambitious picture of the kind of place that local people say they want Rutland to be. It also provides an important guide when deciding how best to achieve our long-term goals through more detailed plans, practices and policies.

So, what happens next? The Future Rutland Vision does not belong to any single group or organisation. Everyone can help to create the place it describes. However, Rutland County Council is uniquely placed to bring people together in a way that helps to advance the aims and aspirations captured in the Vision – whether by developing new public policies and strategies with partners and the community, or by acting as a common link between the many local groups and organisations who can effect change.

Rutland County Council's emerging Corporate Plan will set out its commitments in relation to the Future Rutland Vision and explain how the Council will contribute directly to various goals – helping to show others how they can do the same. The Council will also use its networks and leadership role to foster joint working and close collaboration between local communities, organisations, and professionals, to share responsibility for the Vision.

Progress against the Vision will be assessed year-on-year, as detailed plans take shape. This will lead up to a full review in 2026, accepting that there will still be a long way to go. Work to achieve the goals and aspirations in the Future Rutland Vision will also need to account for changes in the national context and other factors which are beyond the control of any local group or organisation – even when everyone works together.

The overriding aim is to make the Future Rutland Vision central to every plan and big decision that's made in the county, to bring about positive change. Everything that is done to achieve the goals set out in the Vision will also help to create a strong and distinctive brand for the county. An identity that puts Rutland on the map, gains national recognition and helps to generate investment that benefits businesses and communities:

Rutland: A modern rural county with an unrivalled quality and pace of life. Somewhere different and special, where you can escape from the norm. A place to be active and connect with nature. A friendly and welcoming county with incredible food, drink and heritage. A genuine surprise where countryside and traditional market towns are complemented by technological advancement and innovation. A county for everyone and a place to live your best life.

“Looking forward, it will be great for me to see Rutland as an aspirational place... So how can we develop that? What would it look like? ”