

# Vision SPECIAL

Issue 95

## Welcome to the future

More colleagues are talking about the 21st Century public servant, but what does it all mean for you?

Vision caught up with the team that's been investigating the change local government is going through and looking at how our workforce can adapt and change to meet the challenges we face now and in the future.

Role names such as 'municipal entrepreneur', 'resource weaver' and 'navigator' might sound a bit alien, but chief executive Rob Walsh says the terminology isn't important, it's about how we face change.

He told Vision: "I happened across a piece of academic research produced by the University of Birmingham.

"The research was about the role of workers in the public sector of the 'here and now' and the future.

"I asked for a group of willing volunteers to put their heads above the parapet and translate the research into something that could have meaning and impact for this organisation.

"That group of volunteers have embraced the challenge and have started something that I sincerely hope will catch on, because it really needs to.

"Don't be overwhelmed or put off by the terminology - reflect on what your role is now, the people and organisations you rely on to do your job, the relationships you need to manage and the resources you need to deploy.

"In many cases, that will involve the need to influence, secure and rely on the support of others from both within and beyond the walls of this council.

"Welcome to the world of the 21st Century public servant."

**To find out more about the 21st Century public servant, download the new brochure and start the conversation with your colleagues.**

**Keep up to date by joining the new 21st Century public servant group on the intranet.**

## Delivering the future

Read on to find out how some of the team got involved and what being a 21st Century public servant means to them.



### Samantha Crossley

"It has been a fascinating project - not least because we started almost with a blank piece of paper and Rob's complete faith in us - no pressure there then!

"It has certainly made me think about what sort of 21st C Public Servant I am, or could be, but more importantly, I think it has real potential to uncover where all our networkers, brokers and storytellers etc, are and think about how we can get them involved in all the work that needs to happen."

### Mary Marsh

"Being involved in the 21st Century public servant work has given me an opportunity to challenge myself about the way I work and to decide what I need to do to be 'fit for purpose' for some of our new work programmes.

"It has been inspiring to work with others to think through how we can adapt to succeed and I loved the idea of being able to imagine myself in new roles, and to then think about how I can gain the skills needed."

### Karen Linton

"When I first read the research it felt a bit like the dust had been blown from the shelves and the shutters flung open letting in the sunlight - a bit like an old Dickensian office.

"What the research described was a different way of thinking, talking, being, that was so more relevant, or should be, to what we do and how we behave today and in the future."

### Guy Lonsdale

"We are living in very uncertain times and the way in which public services are organised and delivered seems to be changing all the time.

"By thinking about skills and behaviours in this way we can ensure that everyone within the Council is able to contribute in the future.

"Personally the project has made me think about the things I do well

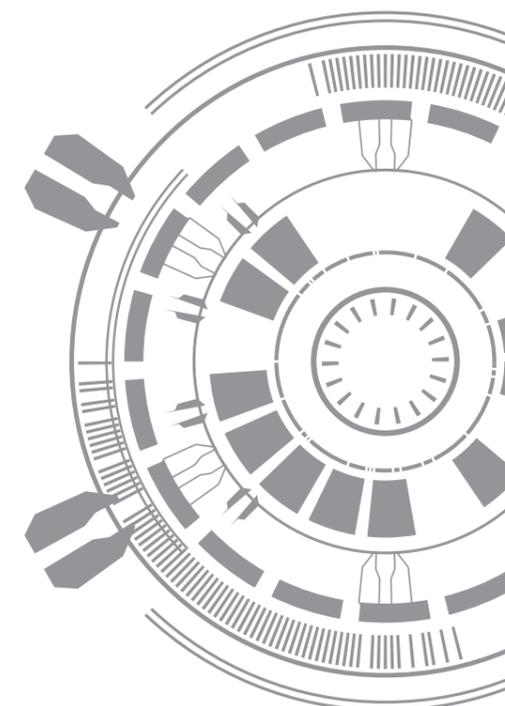
and the things that perhaps I need to work on."

### Deborah Haines

"When I first saw the 21st century Public servant academic research it felt like a real opportunity, the only problem was it was written in a way that may not appeal to everyone and could even switch some people off from the ideas.

"The challenge was to try and take the research and bring it to life for our workforce.

"I think we have done this and I hope the tools we have created will help to identify what's needed to be well equipped for the future."



## Helen Thompson

When I first heard the term '21st Century public servant' I thought, 'what on earth is that – I'm intrigued, let's find out more.'

"I'll be honest, it did take a while to understand what it means, but I've come to realise that as our organisation changes we, as individuals, also need to think about how we can work differently in the future.

"We all do our every day jobs, but this an opportunity to think and behave differently and make the most of our skills and talent."

## Claire Thompson

"The Birmingham research hit home with me as it is a brilliant summary of the way we have started to work across the public sector.

"The roles and the work we've done illustrate to me that we all have some of the key traits needed to take the organisation forward, but also that we may not have the right types of people in the right places to always deliver the results we need."

## Susan Harrison

"This captured my interest straight away.

"For me, the huge benefit is in seeing the work translate into the way we work.

"There are many more conversations to be had and exploration about what it is that we need and how to do it and then have we got the right attitude, skills and knowledge.

"For example, how can we share our skills, knowledge and attitudes – by encouraging people to be brave and move out of their everyday role to a new challenge."

## Nicola Miller

"I first came across the idea of the 21st public servant whilst undertaking an ILM course.

"I could see the real potential in it helping to develop and shape the organisation as we move forward.

"The project has really made me think about not only my role but how all of us contribute to the organisation in different ways.

"It has been a really interesting project to work on and I am looking forward to seeing how this develops across the Council and partners."

**Members of the 21st Century public servant team would like to thank Lewis Perkins, Philip Huntley, the Employee Council and the Developing NELC Network for their support.**

**We've covered all sorts of amazing stories in Vision about colleagues who go the extra mile to make a difference, from epic sporting challenges to youth theatre and cultural associations to life saving.**

We know lots of you do a massive range of activities at work and in your spare time - tell us about it by emailing [communications@nelincs.gov.uk](mailto:communications@nelincs.gov.uk).

Let us know what you'd like to see more of in Vision, it's your staff newsletter.

Email [communications@nelincs.gov.uk](mailto:communications@nelincs.gov.uk).

# 21st Century public servant

