

West Northamptonshire Shadow Executive

22nd September 2020

Shadow Executive Members Present:

Richard Auger	Matt Golby
Lizzy Bowen	Phil Larratt
Rebecca Breese	Ian McCord (Chair)
Adam Brown	Jonathan Nunn

Other Shadow Authority Members Present:

Rufia Ashraf	Jonathan Harris
Fiona Baker	Danielle Stone

Officers Present:

George Candler	Interim Chief Executive, West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority
Anna Earnshaw	Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Adults' Services, Public Health and Wellbeing
Richard Ellis	Chief Executive, SNC
Cathi Hadley	Director for Children's Services, Early Help, Safeguarding & Children's Services
Paul Hanson	Democratic Services Manager, NCC
Paul Helsby	Programme Director, Northants Unitary Integrated Programme
Martin Henry	Interim s151 Officer, West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority
Andrew Hunkin	Interim Monitoring Officer, West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority
Katie Jones	Programme Manager, Communications & Digital, Future Northants Programme
Alex Melia	Democratic Services Officer, West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority (Minutes)
Audra Statham	Finance Enabler, Future Northants Programme
Ian Vincent	Chief Executive, DDC

1. APOLOGIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE:

None received.

2. NOTIFICATION OF REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE MEETING:

Councillor Jonathan Harris requested to address the meeting on Item 11b.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

None received.

4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25th AUGUST 2020

RESOLVED: That the Shadow Executive approved the minutes of the meeting held on 25th August 2020 as a true and accurate record.

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were none.

6. PROGRAMME DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

The Programme Director, Northamptonshire Unitary Integrated Programme, introduced the report to the Shadow Executive and highlighted the salient points:

- All new resources are now in place for the Communications and Engagement aspect of the Programme, with George Candler taking on Senior Responsible Officer duties.
- The high-level blueprints were shared with Trade Unions for comments and feedback on the 13th August 2020.
- A dedicated report for West Northamptonshire on the progress of implementation planning and preparation will be introduced at the Shadow Executive meeting on the 27th October 2020.
- There are 80 requirements for day one assurance, with sub-requirements sitting below this. Work is ongoing with each of the programmes to clarify and resolve implementation issues. This will continue on a weekly basis moving forward.
- The 30 recommendations received from the Programme Health Check have been turned into an action plan, with each action being assigned an owner at senior level.
- The recruitment process for Transformation Directors has finished with appointments now made.
- The number of change champions has increased to 332. A gap analysis is underway to identify the areas in which more change champions are required.

In response to questions, the Programme Director noted that the proportional number of change champions from Northampton Borough Council is low. The recruitment process was halted due to Covid-19, but work in this area has now resumed and numbers should begin to rise. The expectation is for the change champions scheme to operate from a bottom-up perspective, giving a clear pathway in different localities from frontline staff to the Chief Executive.

In response to a further question, the Programme Director stressed the importance of putting the metrics in place to assess the ability of residents to access services in the new Authority.

The Finance Enabler, Future Northants Programme, introduced the finance monitoring report to the Shadow Executive and highlighted the salient points:

- A variance of £468,000 was noted, an increase £229,000 from the previous report.
- The variance increase is primarily a result of the opening of Oak Tree Rise for Transforming Care Clients being delayed until 2021/22.
- It was reiterated that profiling issues are causing the variance, due to the impact of Covid-19 etc., and not an inability to achieve these savings.

The recommendation was proposed and seconded. Upon the vote being taken it was:

RESOLVED: That the Shadow Executive:

- a) Noted the high level programme delivery status;**
- b) Noted the update on change readiness and change champion recruitment;**
- c) Noted the communication and engagement update; and**
- d) Noted and approved the finance monitoring report.**

7. ADDRESSING HEALTH INEQUALITIES

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Adults' Services, Public Health and Wellbeing, introduced the report and highlighted the salient points:

- The report is related to one seen at Northamptonshire County Council's cabinet last year, regarding Public Health contracts for social wellbeing.
- This contract was due to end in March 2020, but was extended for a year to allow time to consider how the outcomes sought by Public Health around health inequalities could best be addressed.
- The extension was granted at a reduced level to maintain the organisations and contacts during this period.
- The report sets out the plan that Public Health have pursued, and is seeking endorsement to begin the tender process later in the year.
- Members were asked to note that engagement for this process, allowing partners and the public to offer feedback, is ongoing and will end on the 28th September 2020.
- There is some risk involved, as the Public Health grant has previously been utilised to fund day centre places and housing support, withdrawing this funding may create further demand on those services.
- Both the Adults service and the Chief Housing Officers Group have been engaged on how to support the prevention of homelessness going forward.

The Chair wished to clarify that the Cabinet mentioned in the recommendations is the NCC Cabinet. The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Adults' Services, Public Health and Wellbeing, confirmed that the final specification and feedback will be given to NCC for approval to begin procurement in November 2020.

In response to a question, the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Adults' Services, Public Health and Wellbeing, clarified that the procurement and contract to be agreed will cover the entire county of Northamptonshire. The geographical boundaries referenced in the report are based on those used by Health to plan its services. These services run nationally, and as such do not recognise Unitary boundaries in the same way that the Shadow Authority does.

The recommendation was proposed and seconded. Upon the vote being taken it was:

RESOLVED: That the Shadow Executive:

- a) Endorsed going out to tender for a new contract to address health inequalities;**
- b) Noted that engagement is taking place from 1st to 28th September 2020 and that this feedback will be used to update Cabinet and to develop the service specification; and**
- c) Noted that once Cabinet approval is obtained, the procurement for this new service will launch in November 2020 and the new service will start on 1st April 2021.**

8. DETAILED BLUEPRINT

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Adults' Services, Public Health and Wellbeing, introduced the report and highlighted the salient points:

- The blueprint being presented is a more detailed version of the high level blueprint previously seen by the Shadow Executive. The information within is not different, but contains added detail to provide more information on the safe and legal approach for Day One.
- The blueprint is not intended as a structure chart, it is designed to act as a starting point for further engagement.
- The large volume of work given to this blueprint has been primarily focussed on ensuring the safe and legal transfer of services to the new authority in April 2021, which has been done in the context of Covid-19.
- The detailed blueprint has a consistent format for each service area, providing staff and Trade Unions with more specific detail on the function of these services, with a focus on minimising disruption on Day One.
- Members were asked to note section 6, which covers feedback from stakeholders. Numerous briefings have been held via YouTube and an FAQ log is being developed to answer queries from staff.
- Concerns have been expressed over staffing and location issues in the new authorities. However, it was emphasised that there are currently no plans for significant redundancies. Staff and Trade Unions have been advised that there may be duplication of roles across some services, but there will also be new opportunities that arise from the restructuring process.
- Covid-19 and its consequences remain the biggest risks to the programme and its finances.

The Programme Director, Northants Unitary Integrated Programme, commented that there are approximately 130 days remaining until Vesting Day, which requires a critical path to create the two new authorities as set out in the Structural Change Order. The blueprint is presented as the general pathway to achieve this.

In response to a question, the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Adults' Services, Public Health and Wellbeing, confirmed that there was sufficient time to carry out due diligence on the disaggregation of staff. Engagement with staff and the Trade Unions is ongoing, with an emphasis on providing stability and excitement for the new West Northamptonshire Authority being built.

The Chair offered thanks for the hard work of those involved in producing the detailed blueprint, adding that there is further detail still to come. It was also noted that there may have to be some flexibility on the ambitions for the new authority, as dealing with Covid-19 will remain the priority.

The recommendation was proposed and seconded. Upon the vote being taken it was:

RESOLVED: That the Shadow Executive:

- Noted the content of the detailed blueprint which sets out more detail of how services will operate and the design principles that will underpin their future operation and service to stakeholders;**
- Noted the key elements of service functions that we plan to transform and improve in the functions and services (the "plus);**
- Noted the key activities that will be undertaken in each area during the first year of the new Council;**
- Noted the high level feedback from the initial detailed blueprint briefings with staff, unions and members; and**

- e) **Adopted the detailed blueprint as the basis of day one functional design, subject to the identification of any further agreed opportunities to transform and improve service areas during the remaining months leading up to Vesting Day on 1st April 2020.**

9. SAFEGUARDING ADULTS OPTIONS PAPER

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Adults' Services, Public Health and Wellbeing, introduced the report and highlighted the salient points:

- The purpose of the report is to bring forward a recommendation for the Adult Safeguarding Board and its future constitution. The new authorities are obligated to establish a board of this type under the Care Act 2014.
- The recommendation is for the Shadow Executive to establish a single strategic safeguarding partnership to provide support to both the North and West Northamptonshire Authorities on Day One.
- The alternative is to create two separate boards moving forward, an option which was considered as set out in the report.
- It was noted that maintaining a single board is considered to constitute best practice and would maintain continuity and certainty for partners, but would not interfere with individual unitary arrangements.
- There is a further consideration regarding alignment with a single Children's Safeguarding Partnership Board, which will be recommended at Item 10.
- Member engagement will be built into the terms of reference of the board.

In response to a question from the Chair, The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Adults' Services, Public Health and Wellbeing, confirmed that if either the North or West Northamptonshire Authority wished to establish a separate Adults Safeguarding Board, the establishment of a single board would not prevent this.

Members of the Shadow Executive commented as follows:

- Concerns were expressed that establishing a single Adults Safeguarding Board would run contrary to the path being followed by other services: to create two separate sovereign bodies for the North and West authorities where possible.

In response to questions, the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Adults' Services, Public Health and Wellbeing, noted that the national trend is to maintain integrated boards, which allows for more efficient regional coordination and intelligence sharing. Members also commented that the future West Northamptonshire Authority will have closer links to Milton Keynes than the East Midlands region to which it will likely be associated. In response, the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Adults' Services, Public Health and Wellbeing clarified that Milton Keynes is considered part of the East Midlands region, along with the future Adults Safeguarding Board.

The Chair proposed adding a third recommendation, to endorse a review of the arrangement following a full year of the full West Northamptonshire Unitary Authority being in operation.

The recommendation was proposed and seconded. Upon the vote being taken it was:

RESOLVED: That the Shadow Executive:

- a) **Endorsed the establishment of one single Safeguarding Adults Board which would encompass North and West Northamptonshire Unitary Authorities;**
- b) **Endorsed the creation of one system-wide Chief Officer post to support the Board and to provide professional advice and guidance to the DASS in each Unitary Authority; and**
- c) **Endorsed that the West Northamptonshire Authority should review the arrangement after 12 months of operation.**

10. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S PARTNERSHIP

The Director for Children's Services, Early Help, Safeguarding & Children's Services introduced the report and highlighted the salient points:

- This report is similar in nature to the Adults Safeguarding Options Paper presented at Item 9, therefore the recommendation is to have a single board across the two Unitary Authorities, hosted in North Northamptonshire.
- The prospect of having two separate boards was discussed. However, maintaining continuity through a single board was considered the best option.
- The single NSCP has been designed as mechanism for shared learning across the Unitary Authorities, with one point of contact for scrutiny. It was noted that duplicating the arrangements would incur further costs.
- Maintaining and strengthening effective partnerships with other boards in the East Midlands region is a key aim moving forward.

Members of the Shadow Executive commented as follows:

- It was suggested that, considering the upcoming establishment of the Children's Trust, maintaining a single NCSP is the logical step.
- Members were asked to note that the desired outcome for Children's Services is stability and not the serving of ideological interests.

The recommendation was proposed and seconded. Upon the vote being taken it was:

RESOLVED: That the Shadow Executive:

- a) **Endorsed continuing with a single NSCP from 1st April 2021.**
- b) **Endorsed agreeing a hosted model for the NSCP business support office to be located with the Joint Director of Children's Services in North Northamptonshire Council.**

11a) MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR ZOE SMITH

The motion stood referred to the Shadow Executive.

"Our Sovereign Councils have agreed there is a climate emergency. As the shadow successor authority, we have agreed a task and finish environment group to advise on the way forward. We call on this group to consider:

- How best to draw on the knowledge, expertise and commitment of climate emergency groups;
- How to engage all partners in this issue; and

- How to put the climate emergency on everyone’s agenda and in everyone’s work plan.”

Councillor Brown proposed an amendment and highlighted the salient points:

- South Northamptonshire Council has not declared a climate emergency, therefore the wording of the first sentence has been changed to reflect this.
- The first recommendation has been simplified to draw on relevant expertise irrespective of the source.
- The second recommendation has been altered to now refer to engaging relevant partners, rather than all partners, as this will be impracticable.
- A list of key partners is being created to inform the work of the Environment Task & Finish Group moving forward.
- The third recommendation has been amended to reflect the wording of the first point.
- Members were asked to note that none of the amendments constituted a political stance, and minor alterations to wording were made for consistency purposes.
- It was noted that all of the work being undertaken by the Environment Task & Finish Group is designed to ensure that the future West Northamptonshire Council considers environmental matters in all of its work.

Councillor Larratt seconded the amendment. Upon the vote being taken it was:

RESOLVED: That the Shadow Executive amended the motion as referred. The motion now to read:

“Some of our Sovereign Councils have agreed there is a climate emergency. As the shadow successor authority, we have agreed a task and finish environment group to advise on the way forward. We call on this group to consider:

- **how best to draw on the knowledge, expertise and commitment of members of the public;**
- **how to engage relevant partners in this issue; and**
- **how to put environmental matters on everyone’s agenda and in everyone’s work plan.”**

11b) MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR JONATHAN HARRIS

The motion stood referred to the Shadow Executive.

“The recent decision by NCC to go ahead with arranging and awarding the Highways Maintenance Contract is premature. The new West Northamptonshire Council should make these decisions as the contract need not start until 2022 and its impact will be felt for years to come. This Shadow Council is asked, therefore, to request that NCC does not adopt a new Highways Maintenance Contract covering West Northamptonshire and that approval of any contract is deferred until it can be considered by the new West Northamptonshire Council in 2021 and as part of that process, the option of bringing the maintenance work in-house is thoroughly assessed.”

Councillor Harris proposed the motion and highlighted the salient points:

- Concerns were expressed over the outlay of £1,400,000 of taxpayer money on a tendering process to guide the thinking of the Unitary Authority.

- It was suggested that based on estimates obtained by Councillor Harris that this figure is an overspend which the Shadow Authority is in no position to approve.
- It was noted that the incoming administration may choose to pursue different paths for contracts and consultants, potentially causing this expenditure to be wasted.

Members of the Shadow Executive commented as follows:

- The Chair clarified the process being followed for this subject – whilst NCC will undertake the work, the Shadow Authority will be making the final decision.
- It was also noted that as a result of the delays caused by Covid-19, the decision may be taken by the future Unitary Authority, rather than the Shadow Authority.
- The £1,400,000 figure quoted would be for two separate contracts, rather than one.
- It was noted that previous contracts have been considered deficient in certain areas, and as a result there will be a necessary expenditure to rectify these deficiencies.
- Concerns were raised that the recommendations would cause issues if supported, with the expiry of maintenance contracts cited as an example. It was noted that an element of continuity with contracted services will be required to ensure services operate on day one of the new Authority.

Upon the vote being taken it was:

RESOLVED: That the Shadow Executive rejected the motion submitted by Councillor Jonathan Harris.

URGENT ITEMS

There were none.

EXEMPT ITEMS

12 – WEBSITE SUPPLIER AWARD

The recommendation was proposed and seconded. Upon the vote being taken it was:

RESOLVED: That the Shadow Executive:

Adopted the recommendations as set out in the report, the content of which was exempt from publication under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 19.56pm.