

Democratic Services
c/o One Angel Square
Angel Street
Northampton NN1 1ED

Meeting: West Northamptonshire Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 3 November 2020

Time: 6:00 pm

Venue: Virtual meeting via Zoom

The meeting will be available for the public to view here:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCujrRO-y6RzkN6zPQ-xNAtA>

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Agenda

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2	Notifications of requests to address the meetings	-
3	Members' Declarations of Interest	-
4	Chair's Announcements	-
Items requiring a decision		
5	Minutes <i>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2020</i>	3-7
6	Finance Scrutiny <i>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the Shadow Executive report on Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme as part of the consultation process</i>	9-16
7	Vision and Culture <i>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider issues in</i>	17-19

	<i>relation to vision and culture</i>	
8	WNSA – Executive Forward Plan <i>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the WNSA Executive Forward Plan for potential future pre-decision Scrutiny</i>	21-25
Urgent Business		
Urgent Business Such other business which, by reasons of the special circumstances to be specified, the Chair is of the opinion is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration. (Members who wish to raise urgent business are requested to inform the Chair beforehand.)		
9	None notified	
Exempt Items		
In respect of the following items the Chairman may move the resolution set out below, on the grounds that if the public were present it would be likely that exempt information (information regarded as private for the purposes of the Local Government Act 1972) would be disclosed to them: The Committee is requested to resolve: “That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that if the public were present it would be likely that exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act of the descriptions against each item would be disclosed to them”		
		Exempt Category
-	None Notified	

Andrew Hunkin, Proper Officer

Date Issued: 26 October 2020

**WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
SHADOW OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, 20 October 2020

Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members present:

Councillor Ann Addison	Councillor Jamie Lane (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Dermot Bambridge	Councillor Ken Pritchard
Councillor Jane Birch (Chair)	Councillor Ken Ritchie
Councillor Julie Davenport	Councillor Emma Roberts
Councillor Penny Flavell	Councillor David Smith
Councillor Andre Gonzalez de Savage	Councillor Mike Warren
Councillor Enam Haque	Councillor Mark Wesley
Councillor James Hill	

Other Members Present:

Councillor Adam Brown	Chair, Governance Task & Finish Group, West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority
Councillor Jonathan Nunn	Chair, Communications and Engagement Task & Finish Group, West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority

Officers present:

Ed Bostock	Democratic Services Officer, Northampton Borough Council
George Candler	Chief Executive, Northampton Borough Council
Claire Hazelgrove	Communications and Engagement Lead, Future Northants
Andrew Hunkin	Interim Monitoring Officer, West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority
Alex Melia	Democratic Services Officer, West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority (Minutes)
Tracy Tiff	Democratic and Member Services Manager, Northampton Borough Council

1. APOLOGIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Ann Addison and Julie Davenport for exiting the meeting before the close. Councillor Addison left the meeting at 19.00 hours and Councillor Davenport left the meeting at 20.03 hours.

2. NOTIFICATIONS OF REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE MEETING

There were none.

3. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

4. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair of the West Northamptonshire Shadow Overview & Scrutiny Committee announced that going forward, the committee will have access to the notes of Task & Finish

Group meetings, but stressed that these notes are not for public circulation. The Chair also announced that Members of the committee will be able to attend future Task & Finish Group meetings as silent observers. Following this, the Chair asked for volunteers to attend the Vision & Culture and Budget Task & Finish Groups.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8th SEPTEMBER 2020

RESOLVED: That the Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 8th September 2020 as a true and accurate record.

6. GOVERNANCE SCRUTINY

Councillor Adam Brown, Chair of the Shadow Authority Governance Task & Finish Group, introduced the report, advising that the main body of work undertaken by the group relates to putting in place the governance structures and constitution for the future West Northamptonshire Council.

Councillor Brown highlighted the volume of work required to create the constitution, noting that many areas are bound by statute and therefore offer little room for alterations. It was also noted that legal advice had been sought on the possibility of moving away from the Leader & Cabinet model of governance, as the Structural Changes Order mandates that the West Northamptonshire Unitary Authority utilises this model at the outset. It was advised that any changes to this model could bind the authority to a five-year term of that model. Therefore, the Task & Finish Group, whilst not a decision-making body, is working on the basis that the constitution will be drafted on the Leader & Cabinet model but leaving open the possibility that in 2022 the West Northamptonshire Unitary Authority can move away from this towards a Committee structure, for example.

It was noted that much of the work is ongoing and subject to change. Councillor Brown highlighted that a first draft of the Rules of Procedure for full Council meetings was complete. However, any subsequent changes to other areas of the constitution may necessitate changes within the Rules of Procedure.

The Council Governance Task & Finish Group intends to present a full draft of the constitution to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee prior to it being seen at the Shadow Executive. It was also noted that the Scrutiny Members committee would be consulted for input on proposed Scrutiny arrangements. Councillor Brown advised that under the Terms of Reference, the Task & Finish Group is on schedule to deliver a draft constitution towards the end of 2020 or into early 2021.

Cornwall Council had been suggested as an exemplar for constitutional arrangements and the manner in which local boards operate within the authority.

The Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee made comment, asked questions and heard:

- Members commented that references to Cornwall Council were positive, as this authority is viewed as a model for local representation within a unitary authority, but that the governance structure should not simply be copied for the future West Northamptonshire Authority.
- In response, Councillor Brown confirmed that feedback on the governance structure of Cornwall Council had been taken from the Local Government Association and informal, whilst noting that the model would be adapted to suit the needs of West Northamptonshire.

- Concerns were raised that a model for local representation may undermine the work of existing Parish Councils.
- It was noted that some divisions within West Northamptonshire do not have Parish Councils, and as such residents still require a mechanism to feel involved with local issues, with planning given as an example.
- Councillor Brown advised that the Council Governance Task & Finish Group has requested a paper to detail planning considerations to be brought to a future meeting.
- Members questioned the impact of the Council Governance arrangements on the budget moving forward. In response, Councillor Brown noted that budgetary preparations are not at an appropriate stage to make clear potential limitations, and commented that feedback from the Shadow Executive on this topic will be considered given the validity of opinions outside the five members of the Task & Finish Group.

RESOLVED: That the Shadow Overview & Scrutiny Committee noted and commented on the contents of the report.

7. COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT SCRUTINY

Councillor Jonathan Nunn, Chair, Communications and Engagement Task & Finish Group, introduced the report, noting that Future Northants is entering a key implementation phase.

Councillor Nunn noted that the key objectives of the Communications and Engagement Programme are to keep residents fully informed and inspire confidence that the new council will deliver services on day one, along with ensuring that staff are engaged with the work of the authority and look positively upon the future.

Councillor Nunn also highlighted the need to create a visual identity for the West Northamptonshire Unitary Authority, which extends beyond simply an aesthetically pleasing logo, to represent the ambition and objectives of the new council. He suggested that following the positive survey response to the logo designs, a final draft design would emerge soon. He also advised that some branding aspects are necessary to ensure that safe and legal requirements are met on 1 April 2021.

Claire Hazelgrove, Communications and Engagement Lead, Future Northants, noted some of the key recent activities within the Future Northants Programme:

- All-Member and all-staff briefings held online
- Work with newly appointed West Northamptonshire Chief Executive, Anna Earnshaw, to increase engagement and offer new channels of communication
- The piloting of a new FAQ process to answer questions in a timely manner

Claire Hazelgrove drew attention to the upcoming milestones of the Programme that form the roadmap to day one, underlining the importance of the Residents' Day One Campaign that will run from January to March 2021, as a means to ensure that residents are fully informed about the work of the future West Northamptonshire Authority.

The Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee made comment, asked questions and heard:

- Concerns were raised that the key objectives cited did not make reference to Members, to which Councillor Nunn explained that the priority areas are those who will use the services and those who deliver them, but that he considered Members to be an integral part of shaping the Programme.

- Members noted that existing sovereign councils have a large social media presence, and it was suggested that this should not be lost during the transition to a unitary authority. Councillor Nunn commented that this has been considered by the Task & Finish Group, as maintaining continuity for residents trying to access services and information is key.
- Concerns were raised that residents with accessibility issues may struggle to engage with the content being produced. Issues highlighted included, but were not limited to, those who do not have regular internet access, those who have a visual or hearing impairment, and residents who do not have English as a first language.
- In response, Councillor Nunn noted the diversity of West Northamptonshire and the need to engage with all members of society. It was suggested that lessons from the current Covid-19 situation could help provide new methods of communication going forward. Claire Hazelgrove further commented that engagement with residents would not solely be reliant on digital formats.
- Members noted previous discussions on the input of Parish Councils and Residents' Associations, and suggested that these bodies could be utilised to fully engage local communities with the work of the future authority.
- The importance of creating a quality website was stressed. It was reiterated that information and services must be easily accessible via numerous mediums on day one of the new authority, with attention drawn to current issues such as mobile optimisation.
- It was noted that whilst providing information to residents should remain a key focus, engaging with the residents to find out the information they require is equally vital. The importance of keeping Northampton Partnership Homes tenants informed during the transition period was highlighted as an example.
- In response, Councillor Nunn advised that tenants would continue with Northampton Partnership Homes as the main point of contact, and agreed that communication with residents on this topic should occur.
- Claire Hazelgrove advised that the Day One Residents' Campaign was in the early stages of development and suggested that this item could be brought to a future meeting of the Shadow Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
- Members noted that engagement with residents should commence in the correct manner, with an open discussion between the authority and its residents.

In response to a question, Councillor Nunn and Claire Hazelgrove confirmed that references to point 3.1.3 to the report were erroneous inclusions from a previous draft.

RESOLVED: That the Shadow Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

- a) Noted the updates in this report on communications and engagement resource and approaches as we move into the implementation phase;
- b) Noted the key communications and engagement milestones ahead; and
- c) Endorsed the role, responsibilities and key priorities of the Communications and Engagement Task and Finish Group (as set out in item 3.5) for the implementation phase, with these upcoming milestones in mind.

8. WNSA - EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN

George Candler, Chief Executive, Northampton Borough Council, addressed the Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee and referred Members to the WNSA Executive Forward Plan. He advised that the agenda for the next Shadow Executive meeting on 27 October has been published and contains significantly fewer items than the seventeen listed in this report.

An agreement has been reached to create a Forward Plan that will cover the period between this meeting and the end of March 2021. The Chief Executive stated that he and Andrew Hunkin, the Interim Monitoring Officer, will collaborate on this work. As such, an updated set of proposed papers is currently being drafted with the intention to circulate these in advance of the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 3 November 2020.

The Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee made comment, asked questions and heard:

- Concerns were raised that some items were not marked as being a key decision, but in the opinion of some Members they should be considered a key decision.
- The importance of pre-decision scrutiny was highlighted, with attention drawn to decisions that may be taken by sovereign councils but will receive endorsement by the West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority.
- Attention was drawn to the legacy of the existing scrutiny committees within the sovereign councils and the importance of considering where the work of these committees will fit within the new authority.
- It was also stressed that information regarding decisions made by sovereign councils between now and 1 April 2021 should be given to the Shadow Authority to allow full transparency.

In response, the Chief Executive, Northampton Borough Council noted that some decisions originally included within the Forward Plan would be taken by sovereign councils, rather than the West Northamptonshire Shadow Executive. In some cases, reports were included in the Forward Plan for awareness.

Andrew Hunkin, Interim Monitoring Officer, West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority, noted that plans are in place to ensure the “neat and tidy” transfer of information and records from sovereign councils, allowing the West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority to begin operations as efficiently as possible.

In response to a question regarding the Assets, Capital Schemes and Reserves Notification Process, the Chief Executive, Northampton Borough Council, advised that these reports provided focus for the Shadow Executive to view instances where sovereign councils intend to spend over £100,000 revenue or over £1,000,000 capital, if this spend is not accounted for within the sovereign council’s approved budgets. These decisions can still be made by the sovereign council, but protocols are in place for the West Northamptonshire Shadow Executive to consider decisions that may have an impact on the finances of the future authority. The Chief Executive advised that at present he felt no decisions had been sent to the Shadow Executive that would cause concern in this respect.

RESOLVED: That the Shadow Overview & Scrutiny Committee noted the contents of the Forward Plan.

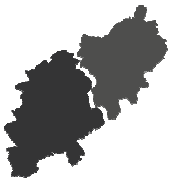
9. URGENT ITEMS

There were none.

10. EXEMPT ITEMS

There were none.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 20.33 hours.



FUTURE NORTHANTS



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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SHADOW AUTHORITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

3 November 2020

Report of the Executive Director - Finance

Report Title	Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme
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1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide information on the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme that has recently gone out to consultation.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To consider the attached report that was considered by the Shadow Executive on 27 October 2020.

3. Issues and Choices

Report Background

- 3.1 In August 2020 this committee received a report and presentation setting out the work that had been considered in the task and finish group at that point in time in relation to Local Council Tax Reduction schemes.
- 3.2 The report and presentation:
- described Local Council Tax Reduction Schemes (LCTRS)
 - highlighted that currently the schemes in Daventry, Northampton and South Northants are different
 - highlighted that West Northamptonshire would need their own new scheme
 - Estimated a cost neutral scheme being a 26.5% minimum contribution scheme
- 3.2 A report has been prepared for the Shadow Executive meeting on the 27 October 2020 and consultation on the new scheme for West Northamptonshire commences for a six-week period from 2 November 2020.

3.3 The reported is attached to this report and scrutiny are requested to consider the report.

4. Implications (Including financial implications)

4.1 Financial

4.1.1 These are set out in the shadow executive report

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 These are set out in the shadow executive report

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 These are set out in the shadow executive report.

4.4 Equality and Health

4.4.1 These are set out in the shadow executive report.

5. Background Papers

5.1 Shadow Executive 27 October 2020 “Consultation on Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2021-2022” (Attached as an appendix)

Report author: Martin Henry

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SHADOW AUTHORITY**SHADOW EXECUTIVE MEETING****27 October 2020**

Report Title	Consultation on Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2021-2022
Report Author	Martin Henry Executive Director of Finance martin.henry@westnorthants.gov.uk

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to propose, for consultation purposes only, a new Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) for West Northamptonshire for the financial year 2021-2022 and to provide details of the consultation process.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Shadow Executive approve, for consultation purposes only, the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme outlined in this report for West Northamptonshire for the year 2021-2022.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 Since April 2013 billing authorities have been required to determine a Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) which replaced the national Council Tax Benefit scheme.
- 3.1.2 The scheme applies to working age claimants only as the government prescribes the scheme (CTRS Prescribed Requirements Regulations 2012) for those of pension age which provides up to 100% support based on the circumstances of the individual.
- 3.1.3 Each billing authority has discretion as to their local scheme including the maximum level of support available to working age claimants (and therefore the minimum percentage of the bill they are required to pay) and the eligibility criteria for the scheme.

3.1.4 Currently in West Northamptonshire, each District and Borough has a different LCTRS that gives different levels of support to working age people. From April 2021 the current schemes will end and a new scheme will need to be agreed.

3.2 Issues and Choices

Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme Harmonisation

3.2.1 The LCTRS must be approved and in place by 31 January 2021 and prior to that the authority must consult any precepting authority and any other persons who may have an interest in the scheme.

3.2.2 The Task and Finish Group recommended a consultation period of six weeks which is the required period for a meaningful consultation.

3.2.3 The Shadow Executive are not being asked to decide on the LCTRS at this meeting but to approve the proposal by the Task and Finish Group to go out to consultation on the scheme detailed below.

Details of the LCTR scheme proposed for consultation.

3.2.4 The Task and Finish Group met throughout July, August and September to receive details of the existing schemes, the various options that could be taken to change the scheme and the financial implications of any proposed changes both for the new authority and the residents of West Northamptonshire particularly those in receipt of LCTRS.

3.2.5 Across West Northamptonshire there are currently around 21,277 residents in receipt of Council Tax Reduction, 13,000 of whom are of working age. The total cost of the current schemes is £17.7m, £9.1m of which is for working age claimants. The total population for West Northants is currently 405,050 so around 5.25% of the population receive LCTRS. The Task and Finish Group considered all the background information and proposed the following for consultation:

Level of contribution for working age

3.2.6 The current councils have different levels of minimum Council Tax contribution that working age claimants must pay. The existing rates across West Northamptonshire are as follows:

	Minimum contribution by the customer	Maximum discount awarded by the Council
Daventry	20%	80%
Northampton ¹	31%	69%
South Northants	8.5%	91.5%

¹ Note: there are two ways to calculate the scheme percentage. Daventry and South Northants calculated it using one method and Northampton used the other method. Neither are incorrect. In order to compare the schemes on a 'like for like' basis the Northampton method was re-calculated so it became consistent with the method of calculation used by South Northants and Daventry.

3.2.7 The Task and Finish Group proposed that the consultation should be based on a LCTRS which is cost neutral for the new authority. The harmonised percentage that would have no financial impact on the finances of the new Council would be a minimum payment of 26.5% **based on current caseloads**. It should be noted that the Covid-19 pandemic may mean an increase in the number of claims for the LCTRS and this may impact on the cost neutrality of the scheme.

3.2.8 It is important to note that decreases from this break-even point would reduce Council Tax income. So, for example, it is estimated that a 20% minimum payment scheme would cost an additional £885,000.

3.2.9 The recommendation from Task and Finish Group was to consult on a LCTRS based on 26.5%.

Alignment of the LCTRS differences that currently exist.

3.2.10 The Task and Finish Group received information on the elements of each individual scheme for each Council in West Northamptonshire. Although the current schemes are, to a certain extent, aligned there are some differences (mostly around mirroring the changes made to the DWP Housing Benefit scheme over the last 7 years) which need to be harmonised as we design a scheme for the new West Northamptonshire Council.

3.2.11 The proposal is to consult on the changes set out below:

Removal of the family premium for new claims. Northampton Borough Council continues to award a family premium in the applicable amounts when assessing new claims for LCTRS. Daventry and South Northants Councils do not as they aligned their schemes to reflect the changes introduced to Housing Benefit. The proposal would align the scheme differences and would be in line with DWP Regulations.

To limit the child allowance to two children in the calculation of new claims for LCTRS. Changes under the wider welfare reform agenda limit the child allowance used in applicable amounts to a maximum of two children. South Northants and Daventry have already introduced this change. This proposal would align the differences in the existing schemes.

To apply a minimum income for self-employed claimants when assessing LCTRS. South Northants do not currently apply a minimum income to self-employed claimants. The proposal would align the differences in the schemes.

To harmonise the rates of non-dependant deductions in line with the prescribed amounts. Where an adult friend or family member resides with a claimant, LCTRS is reduced by a set amount normally based on prescribed amounts and on the weekly income of the non-dependant. Daventry has slightly higher rates of deduction. This proposal would align the differences in the existing district and borough's LCTRS

To disregard 100% of War Widows and War Disablement income.
Whilst this is not a change to the proposed scheme as all three Councils

currently disregard 100% of income under local schemes the proposal is for this disregard to continue at relatively low cost to the taxpayer.

Other options considered

3.2.12 Other options for the LCTRS were considered but were not taken forward as follows:

- Continuing with the three current schemes after April 2021. This was considered but is not currently feasible as we would need MHCLG to allow us to either defer the implementation of a single scheme or for harmonisation to take place over a period of time. Even if MHCLG allowed either of these options, it is worth noting that this would mean that residents across the new West Northamptonshire Council would not be treated the same and this would lead to confusion and differing levels of support for residents based on where the resident lives.
- Setting the level of contribution for working age customers to a lower than break even level. This option was considered but would mean that the scheme would become more expensive and this would impact on the finances of the new Council.
- Setting the level of Council Tax contribution for working age customers to a higher level. This would mean that the support to claimants would, on average, be less than the current level of support offered to claimants.
- Introduction of a banded scheme. This would be based on levels of income grouped into bands. With the wider roll out of Universal Credit having taken place, this scheme could be seen as a simpler way to support people on low income. This has been discounted at this stage

Consultation approach

3.2.13 As previously mentioned the consultation period will run for six weeks from 2 November 2020. However, it is recognised that the proposed changes have an impact on our residents and therefore the consultation process will be as full as possible and will ensure that we reach some of our more vulnerable customers.

3.2.14 The consultation will be an online survey and will be open to all residents, stakeholders and people representing organisations. The survey will also be available in other formats and languages upon request. There will also be an email address and telephone number for any enquiries and/or comments

3.2.15 The consultation will be promoted as follows:

- Banners on all District and Borough's websites
- Advertising on email signatures
- Internal staff communications
- Social Media platforms
- Press Release
- Liaison with the voluntary sector
- Liaison with money and debt advice services
- Liaison with Homeless and Housing officers
- Liaison with the DWP (Job Centre Plus)
- Direct emails/letter to preceptors (Police, Fire, Town & Parish Councils)

- Member Briefing to be circulated to all.

3.2.16 The planned timetable for approval of the scheme is set out in the table below:

Milestone	Date
Proposed scheme for consultation considered by Executive	27 October 2020
Consultation on proposed scheme commences	2 November 2020
Consultation concludes	12 December 2020
Consultation responses analysed and considered	13 December onwards
Final scheme approval by Executive	26 January 2021
Scheme in place	31 January 2021

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 The approach adopted by West Northamptonshire Council in respect of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme will be pivotal in determining the total level of resources available for the new Council. It is therefore a fundamental and key policy decision.

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 It should be noted that although the proposed scheme for consultation is cost neutral this position could change. This is due to a number of factors including the LCTRS caseload and possible changes in entitlement and the impact of Covid-19 and how it affects individuals who may need to claim LCTRS. The break-even position will be kept under review, particularly as government support for Covid-19 such as the furlough scheme changes.

4.3 Financial Implications

4.3.1 The estimated cost of the 2020-2021 financial year of the existing LCTRS across the three sovereign councils is £17.7m

4.3.2 The scheme proposed for consultation is cost neutral from a West Northamptonshire Council perspective and does not lead to any additional financial pressures on the new Council's budget. .

4.3.3 As outlined in this report the cost neutral position may change and this may lead to a pressure or surplus on the new Council's budget depending on ongoing caseloads.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 The adoption of a Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for West Northamptonshire is a legal requirement and is set out in the Local Government Finance Act 1991 section 13A (2) .

4.3.2 There is a legal requirement to consult on any proposed LCTRS, therefore failure to do so will leave West Northamptonshire Council open to challenge on the scheme that is introduced

4.4 Equality and Health

4.4.1 An equality Impact assessment has been carried out.

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SHADOW AUTHORITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

3rd November 2020

**Report of the Unitary Vision and Culture Task and Finish Group
Councillor Ian McCord (Chair) and Martin Cox (Lead Officer)**

Report Title	Work Programme of the 'Unitary Vision and Culture Task and Finish Group'
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1. Purpose

To provide the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the following information;

- An introduction to the work and remit of the Task and Finish Group
- A summary of the work completed to date by the Task and Finish Group
- An outline of the planned work programme between November 2020 and March 2021

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee agree to the work programme outlined in the table below for the period between November 2020 and March 2021.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 This report has been compiled by the Task and Finish Group to ensure there is full agreement of the Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the work programme to identify and gather opinions of key stakeholder groups as to what the Vision and Culture of West Northamptonshire Council should include.

The work carried out so far and planned for this programme is to ensure that the Task and Finish Group's sought outcome of, developing new blue prints

for overarching vision statement and a set of harmonised values and behaviours, is achieved.

Vision and Culture including values and behaviours are an integral part of the TUPE induction/on-boarding process wherein these are understood by employees

The proposed forthcoming work programme for November 2020 to March 2021 builds upon the work the Task and Finish Group has completed between June 2020 and October 2020. This has been as follows for the past 4 months;

- reviewing existing councils' vision and values,
- mapping out key requirements and outcome,
- drafting potential Vision statements, and
- identifying key questions for focus groups and agreeing approach.

The forthcoming work programme is as follows;

Key dates	Activity
November 2020	Explore ideas and gain feedback on Vision statement, core values and behaviours for new authority by holding 10 focus groups with a diverse cross section of stakeholders including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners • Employees • Service Users Residents, Businesses, Schools, Childrens and Young People Panel • Members
December 2020	Collate and summarise themes and ideas from Focus Groups feedback/answers to questions and share with Culture Task and Finish Group Feedback themes summarised and anonymised for public view
January/February 2021	Agree and communicate vision statement, core values and behaviours for new authority. Agree next steps to embed Vision and Culture for existing and prospective employees in coming months.
March 2021	Review of Vision and Culture communication and engagement plan

4. Implications (Including financial implications)

4.1 Financial

- 4.1.1 None – facilitation of focus groups will be delivered via internal employees experienced and professionally trained in this area of work

4.2 Resources and Risk

- 4.2.1 Members of Task and Finish Group will provide a 5 to 10-minute introduction to each of the focus groups so as to set the context and reinforce the importance of gathering opinions and feedback
- 4.2.2 Will be delivered remotely via Zoom so as to adhere to Rule of Six guidance.
- 4.2.3 Facilitation of focus groups and compilation of outputs will be resourced internally by experienced employees

4.3 Legal

- 4.3.1 No personal details such as email addresses of focus group participants who are members of the public will be shared so as to adhere to GDPR regulations.
- 4.3.2 Feedback and opinions will be anonymised in the report summarising the focus group outputs, themes and suggestions.

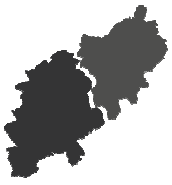
4.4 Equality and Health

- 4.4.1 There will be a diverse selection of participants for the focus groups to ensure representation of all the stakeholder groups identified.

5. Background Papers

- 5.1 None

Tracy Tiff
Democratic and Member Services Manager



FUTURE NORTHANTS



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FORWARD PLAN OF DECISIONS AND NOTIFICATION OF EXEMPT ITEMS

Plan Number 005

November 2020 to January 2021

The next forward plan covering the period Decembe 2020 to February 2021 will be published
on 20th Novemober 2020

Published by: West Northamptonshire Democratic Services

Leader of the West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority: Councillor Ian McCord

INTRODUCTION

This is the West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority's Forward Plan. It is published pursuant to The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012. Its purpose is to provide the required 28 days notice of the Shadow Authority's intention to take 'key decisions' and to hold meetings or parts of meetings in private. It gives advance notice of all the "key decisions" and other executive decisions which the Shadow Executive or another body or officer so authorised are likely to take over a four-month period. The Plan is updated on a monthly basis.

At times it may be necessary for the West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority to give consideration to items where the public must be excluded from the meeting. Members of the public are excluded from meetings whenever it is likely that, in the view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that confidential information would be disclosed. This includes exclusion from access to any pertinent documents. Details of the exemption categories can be found in the 'Access to Information Procedure Rules' section in the Shadow Authority's Constitution. This plan provides advance notice of any items which may be held in private.

Each entry identifies:

- The matter in respect of which a decision is to be made.
- The name of the decision-making body.
- The date on which, or the period within which, the decision will be taken.
- How and to whom representations (about the decision) can be made.
- What reports/papers are, or will be, available for public inspection.

The concept of a "key decision" is intended to capture the most important or significant decisions. "Key decisions" will be made at meetings open to the press and public. The press and public will only be excluded from such meetings as and when the Shadow Authority's Monitoring Officer determines that this is necessary in order to avoid the public disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

A Key Decision means a decision which is likely: -

- (a) to result in the relevant local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are significant. For the purposes of the West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority, significant shall be defined as expenditure or savings of £500,000 or more in a single transaction or related series of transactions.
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards or electoral divisions in the area of the relevant local authority."

In determining the meaning of “*significant*” for these purposes the West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority will have regard to any guidance for the time being issued by the Secretary of State in accordance with section 9Q of the Local Government Act 2000 Act

Other decisions that will be published in the Forward Plan include:

- (a) The draft Budget or a draft of one or other of the plans or strategies which make up the Shadow Authority’s “policy framework”. The Shadow Executive’s role in relation to these matters will be to agree a draft which will then be presented to the Shadow Authority Full Council for approval (details of all of plans/strategies etc which are to be considered within the life of the plan are set out at the back of the plan); and
- (b) Other decisions which, whilst they are not “key decisions”, are considered by the Leader to have significant cross-cutting or corporate implications.

The Members of the Shadow Executive are:	
Councillor Ian McCord	Leader of the West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority
Councillor Jonathan Nunn	Deputy Leader of the West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority
Councillor Richard Auger	
Councillor Elizabeth Bowen	
Councillor Rebecca Breese	
Councillor Adam Brown	
Councillor Matthew Golby	
Councillor Phil Larratt	

All general questions or queries about the contents of this Forward Plan or about the arrangements for taking key decisions should be raised with Democratic Services.

Please email: democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk

Subject of the decision:	Committee	Responsible Shadow Executive Member	Is it a key decision?	Will the report contain exempt information?	Reason for exemption, if any	Anticipated Date of Decision:	Report Author	Supporting documents (if any):
October 2020								
Programme Director's Update and Budget Monitoring Report	Shadow Executive	-	No	No	N/A	27 Oct 2020	Paul Helsby	
Consultation on Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2021-2022	Shadow Executive	-	No	No	N/A	27 Oct 2020	Martin Henry	
West Northamptonshire Customer Service Opening Hours	Shadow Executive	-	No	No	N/A	27 Oct 2020	Richard Ellis	
Health and Wellbeing Board	Shadow Executive	-	No	No	N/A	27 Oct 2020	Anna Earnshaw	
Public Health Operating Model	Shadow Executive	-	No	No	N/A	27 Oct 2020	Anna Earnshaw	
Assets, Capital Schemes and Reserves Notification Process – Update Report	Shadow Executive	-	No	Yes	Paragraph 3 – financial information	27 Oct 2020	George Candler	
November 2020								
Programme Director's Update and Budget Monitoring Report	Shadow Executive	-	No	No	N/A	24 Nov 2020	Jane Carr	
Discretionary Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR)	Shadow Executive	-	No	No	N/A	24 Nov 2020	Barry Scarr	
Recovery and Enforcement Policy	Shadow Executive	-	No	No	N/A	24 Nov 2020	Barry Scarr	

Subject of the decision:	Committee	Responsible Shadow Executive Member	Is it a key decision?	Will the report contain exempt information?	Reason for exemption, if any	Anticipated Date of Decision:	Report Author	Supporting documents (if any):
Health and Safety Policy	Shadow Executive	-	No	No	N/A	24 Nov 2020	Martin Cox	
Discretionary Housing Payments	Shadow Executive	-	No	No	N/A	24 Nov 2020	Barry Scarr	
Programme Structure	Shadow Executive	-	No	No	N/A	24 Nov 2020	Thersa Grant	
West Northamptonshire Logo/ Branding Audit	Shadow Executive	-	No	No	N/A	24 Nov 2020	Martin Cox	
Assets, Capital Schemes and Reserves Notification Process – Update Report	Shadow Executive	-	No	No	Paragraph 3 – financial information	24 Nov 2020	George Candler	
December 2020								
No meeting scheduled.								
January 2021								
Programme Director's Update and Budget Monitoring Report	Shadow Executive	-	No	No	N/A	24 Nov 2020	Jane Carr	
Assets, Capital Schemes and Reserves Notification Process – Update Report	Shadow Executive	-	No	No	Paragraph 3 – financial information	24 Nov 2020	George Candler	