



Cabinet

A meeting of the Cabinet will be held at the Council Chamber, The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester, NN12 6AD on Tuesday 19 September 2023 at 6.00 pm

Agenda

Public Session	
1.	Apologies for Absence
2.	Declarations of Interest Members are asked to declare any interest and the nature of that interest which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.
3.	Minutes (Pages 5 - 18) To confirm the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 11 th July 2023..
4.	Chair's Announcements To receive communications from the Chair.
5.	Urgent Business The Chairman to advise whether they have agreed to any items of urgent business being admitted to the agenda.
6.	Report of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Scrutiny review of child and adolescent mental health and the risk of self-harm – ICB update (Pages 19 - 28)
7.	Corporate Plan Performance Report - 2023-24 Q1 (Pages 29 - 66)

8.	Revenue Monitoring Period 4 - Financial Year 2023-24 (Pages 67 - 110)
9.	Period 4 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Monitoring Report 2023-24 (Pages 111 - 130)
10.	Care Experienced to be seen as a Protected Characteristic (Pages 131 - 162)
11.	Procurement and Implementation of Education Services Case Management System (Pages 163 - 168)
12.	Proposal for Hunsbury Park SEND unit to operate in part from Chiltern Primary from October 2023 (Pages 169 - 180)
13.	Leisure Centre Procurement Approval (Pages 181 - 194)
14.	Northampton Towns Fund – 35-45 Abington Street asbestos removal and demolition (Pages 195 - 202)
15.	Sustainability Report 2022/23 (Pages 203 - 232)
16.	Assistive Technology Framework (Pages 233 - 260)
17.	Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (Pages 261 - 296)
18.	Variation of The Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) (Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking in Public Places) 2022 (Pages 297 - 518)
19.	The closure of Boniface House, Brixworth (Pages 519 - 572)
20.	Health Protection Service, Food & Feed Standards Service, Spray Paint Enforcement and the Tobacco Enforcement Plans 2023-24 (Pages 573 - 616)
21.	Procurement of WNC Security Services (Pages 617 - 622)

22.	Coroner’s Service contractual spend (Pages 623 - 628)
23.	<p>Exclusion of the Press and Public</p> <p>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”</p>
Private Session	

Catherine Whitehead
Proper Officer
11 September 2023

Cabinet Members:

Councillor Jonathan Nunn (Chair)	Councillor Adam Brown (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Fiona Baker	Councillor Rebecca Breese
Councillor Matt Golby	Councillor Mike Hallam
Councillor Phil Larratt	Councillor Daniel Lister
Councillor Malcolm Longley	Councillor David Smith

Information about this Agenda

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence and the appointment of substitute Members should be notified to democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk prior to the start of the meeting.

Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare interests at item 2 on the agenda or if arriving after the start of the meeting, at the start of the relevant agenda item

Local Government and Finance Act 1992 – Budget Setting, Contracts & Supplementary Estimates

Members are reminded that any member who is two months in arrears with Council Tax

must declare that fact and may speak but not vote on any decision which involves budget setting, extending or agreeing contracts or incurring expenditure not provided for in the agreed budget for a given year and could affect calculations on the level of Council Tax.

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Cabinet

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Council Chamber, The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester, NN12 6AD on Tuesday 11 July 2023 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Jonathan Nunn (Chair)
Councillor Adam Brown (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Fiona Baker
Councillor Rebecca Breese
Councillor Matt Golby
Councillor Mike Hallam
Councillor Phil Larratt
Councillor Daniel Lister
Councillor Malcolm Longley
Councillor David Smith

Also Present:

Councillor Sally Beardsworth
Councillor Andrew Grant
Councillor Jonathan Harris
Councillor Keith Holland-Delamere
Councillor Koulla Jolley
Councillor Peter Matten
Councillor Ian McCord
Councillor Bob Purser
Councillor Wendy Randall
Councillor Emma Roberts
Councillor Danielle Stone

Officers:

Rebecca Peck, Assistant Chief Executive
Catherine Whitehead, Director of Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer)
James Smith, Assistant Director - Finance (Strategy)
Stuart Lackenby, Executive Director - People Services & Deputy Chief Executive
Stuart Timmiss, Executive Director - Place, Economy and Environment
Rebecca Wilshire, Director of Children's Services
Sally Burns, Director of Public Health
Luiza Morris Warren, Assistant Director Customer and Corporate Services
Lisa Hyde, Acting Director of Communities and Opportunities
Paul Hanson, Head of Democratic & Elections
Kathryn Holton, Committee Officer
Gillian Baldock, Political Assistant to the Conservative Group
Josh West, Political Assistant to the Labour Group

14. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Mike Hallam declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 13 (Highways Maintenance Machinery) as JCB were a customer of his employer. He took no part in the debate or vote on the item.

15. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

16. **Chair's Announcements**

There were none.

17. **Reports from Overview and Scrutiny Committees**

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Modernising Systems

At the Chair's invitation Councillor McCord presented the report and outlined the findings and recommendations of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Thanks were expressed to Councillor Stone who had started the review and to all members of the committee and officers involved. There needed to be increased spending on ICT, a faster pace of transformation and co-ordination of IT packages.

Councillor Hallam advised that new hardware was being rolled out and members would be next to receive it. This would make it easier to hold paperless meetings.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet welcomed the recommendations of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to the spotlight review into Modernising Systems.

Children, Education and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee – West Northamptonshire Council Housing Allocation Scheme

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Grant presented the report and outlined the recommendations of the Children, Education and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to the proposed West Northamptonshire Housing Allocation Scheme. There had been a constructive discussion with the cabinet member and service managers.

Councillor Brown acknowledged the robust and thorough consideration of the policy and suggested that recommendations a) to e) be accepted, but not recommendation f) due to legal considerations relating to the go-live date.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet

- a) Agreed that the proposed non-qualifying criteria for the new West Northamptonshire Housing Allocation Scheme should not bar persons who have housing related debt but who are making reasonable efforts to pay it back.

- b) Agreed that the proposed non-qualifying criteria for the new West Northamptonshire Housing Allocation Scheme should deal robustly with persons who have damaged social rented housing let to them in the past.
- c) Agreed that an applicant who had at least one dependent child and was living in accommodation where the facilities were shared with others outside their own household should be placed in Band B not Band C of the proposed bands for assessing housing need within the new West Northamptonshire Housing Allocation Scheme.
- d) Agreed that the proposed bands for assessing housing need within the new West Northamptonshire Housing Allocation Scheme should include provision for an applicant who had a dependent child under 16 years old who was subject to a Child Protection Plan
- e) Agreed that clear information regarding the affordability of properties should be made available to applicants at an early stage in the bidding process within the new West Northamptonshire Housing Allocation Scheme, ideally including an affordability calculator tool.

18. **Provisional Outturn Report - Revenue**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Longley presented the report and summarised the salient points. There had been a small overspend of £320k and just under £0.25m carry-forward. The year had not been straightforward with an almost £12m overspend by the Children's Trust and an overspend by adults of £10.5m. In the current year spending was broadly on track with the exception of NCT. The HRA provisional outturn was balanced with a bad debt situation of only £400k.

Councillors made the following points:

- Some areas had delayed filling staff vacancies in order to defer spending to the current year, which had impacted services.
- An £18m uplift had been put into the current year's budget for contractual pressures. What were the effects of this so far (4 months into the year)?
- Contingency funds had been used to balance the budget.

Councillor Longley advised that the current year was similar to the previous year with pressures from Children's Services. He explained that contingency funds were put into the budget and used if required. This was not the same as using reserves – although £5m had been taken from general reserves last year.

The Chair noted that given the challenges faced, this had been a good result.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- a) Noted the provisional outturn position for 2022-23
- b) Noted the deliverability of West Northamptonshire Council savings requirement for 2022- 23 summarised in section 9 and detailed in Appendix B
- c) Approved the service carry forward requests in Appendix C
- d) Delegated authority to the Executive Director – Finance in consultation with the portfolio holder for finance to utilise any budget virements to effectively manage the overall budget
- e) Approved the agreed debt write-off requests that are greater than £25,000 as detailed in section 7 4.

19. **Provisional Outturn Report - Capital**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Longley presented the report and summarised the salient points.

Councillors made the following comments:

- There was a stark amount of rephasing. How confident were we that the capital would be used in the current financial year?
- Was work being done to evaluate capital projects carried over from legacy councils to see if they were still relevant?

Councillor Longley pointed out that a lot of rephasing had taken place, but once agreed there was no reason that it should not be spent.

When projects were agreed at the Capital Assets Board they were expected to go through and it was for partners to deliver. Legacy projects were more likely to be axed.

The Executive Director, Place advised that all projects had a grip on milestones and gateways and were reviewed regularly with RAG rating and monitoring.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet:

- a) Noted the 2022-23 provisional capital outturn position for the General Fund and HRA;
- b) Approved the proposed capital carry forwards for the General Fund capital programme which were required as a result of rephasing in the 2022-23 programme. These were detailed in appendix A;
- c) Approved the proposed capital carry forwards for the HRA capital programme which were required as a result of rephasing in the 2022-23 programme. These were detailed in appendix B;
- d) Noted the revised General Fund capital programme for 2023-27 (appendix C) including the new schemes which had been added to the programme since the 2023-24 budget was approved in February 2023.
- e) Noted the revised HRA capital programme for 2023-27 (appendix D) including the new schemes which had been added to the programme since the 2023-24 budget was approved in February 2023.

20. **SEND Strategy 2023-26**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Baker presented the report. She acknowledged that WNC had not delivered against its own expectations and explained that some issues were national and outside of the Council's direct control. Calls for her resignation were not helpful as they did not support the stability which was sought. Thanks were expressed to the hard-working SEND team. The new SEND strategy set out ambitions and aspirations for all children with SEND and demonstrated the improvements which needed to be made. It would not be perfect, but failings would be acknowledged and lessons learned.

An additional recommendation had been proposed and was circulated at the meeting.

Claire Baxter, Coordinator at Northants Parents Forum Group (NPFPG) was invited to address the Cabinet. She was pleased to see the SEND strategy and noted that there had been good co-production. Although things were not yet where they needed to be, the strategy provided support and constructive challenge to partners.

Councillors made the following comments:

- The additional recommendation was welcomed.
- A parental engagement strategy could be developed alongside NPFPG which would enable more voices to be heard.
- Engagement events needed to be continued so that people could respond to progress and delivery.
- The main focus should be the delivery rather than the strategy.
- It needed to be clear that learning had taken place following past mistakes.
- The report was good but outcomes needed to be delivered. Officers needed to be honest about the problems.
- More detail was needed regarding timelines and detailed plans.

The Chair reiterated the commitment to getting the strategy right in the face of increasing numbers of EHCPs. Councillor Baker's commitment to the role was acknowledged.

The Executive Director, People stated that difficult messages had needed to be conveyed and the team were committed to being transparent. The strategy set the tone but WNC needed to be in a position to deliver outcomes.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet adopted the co-produced Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Alternative Provision Strategy 2023-26. This Strategy included the new WNC Co-production Charter.

That alongside the annual report, a summary of the minutes from each meeting of the SEND Improvement Board be published on the Council's website.

21. **Towns Fund Leisure Project Business Case**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Lister presented the report and summarised the salient points.

Councillors made the following comments:

- The development and investment was welcomed. Did all the projects complement each other? Could better value be obtained?
- What effect would the project have on other areas of the town, for example ten pin bowling at Sixfields and other restaurants?
- How much disposable income did people currently have to spend on leisure?
- Had the police been informed of plans? The town centre had an unfortunate reputation on Friday and Saturday nights.
- The project needed to be looked at carefully. Experience with outside developers had not always been good in the past.

Councillor Lister stated that the site was currently empty and needed development. The developer had undertaken other projects which had worked well.

The Executive Director, Place advised that due diligence had been done and partners had been talked to. Other businesses would benefit from the development.

Councillor Smith pointed out that the challenge for any town was footfall, which would be provided by this project.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet:

- a) noted the update on delivery of the Northampton Towns Fund Leisure Project;
- b) noted the decisions taken by the Leader of the Council set out at Appendix A.

22. **Procurement of a new Strategic Transport Model**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Larratt presented the report. The Northamptonshire Strategic Transport Model needed to be rebuilt. The model provided a vital evidence base for transport policies, spatial strategies and major highway schemes. This would be undertaken in partnership with North Northamptonshire Council, with WNC being the lead procuring authority.

Councillors made the following comments:

- Previous models had been too car-based and road-centred. The requirements of pedestrians and cyclists needed to be built in.
- A focus on climate impact needed to be built into the model and net zero should be central.

Councillor Larratt noted the comments and advised that they would be taken on board.

Councillor Brown and Councillor Baker noted that there had been many requests for safer cycling routes to the nearest town.

Councillor Larratt agreed that there was work to be done on safe cycling routes. The model would help with building connections.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet:

- a) Agreed to working in partnership with North Northamptonshire Council to update and rebuild the Northamptonshire Strategic Transport Model
- b) Agreed to West Northamptonshire Council being the lead procuring authority. Agreed £78k of existing model fee income towards the development of the Northamptonshire Strategic Transport Model, alongside the £400k already set aside by both councils, and an equal contribution of £78,000 from North Northamptonshire Council.
- c) Agreed to delegate authority to Director of Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste, the S151 Officer, the Monitoring Officer and the Portfolio Holder for Finance, to take any further decisions and/or actions required in connection with the procurement and award of the Northamptonshire Strategic Transport Model contract, without the need to return to the Cabinet.

- d) Noted that West Northamptonshire Council will retain ownership and ongoing management of its own independent version of the Northamptonshire Strategic Transport Model.

23. **Home to School Transport Policy**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Larratt presented the report and explained that of the children under 16 who were entitled to free transport, relatively few would be impacted by this paper. The policy had not been reviewed for 10 years. This report summarised the outcome of the recent consultation and sought approval to implement the changes from September 2024.

Councillors made the following comments:

- Proposal 7 completely ignored the equality impact assessment and needed to be reconsidered. The change had been made so that the savings target would be achieved despite 73% of people objecting to it.
- The report should have included full anti-poverty mitigation statements.
- The report was based around budget considerations rather than the needs of children.
- There were safety issues around children walking along main roads to school.
- This was a tax on rural parents particularly - because there were no pavements on rural roads.
- The changes were contrary to the wellbeing and anti-poverty strategies and could lead to parents withdrawing their children from school.

Councillor Larratt advised that the changes only affected 168 young people. There had been a significant cost increase over the last decade since the rate had been agreed. There was a £5m home to school budget overspend which needed to be reduced. Appendix D set out the criteria for safer walking.

Councillor Brown acknowledged the mitigations built into the policy and advised that those children going to the geographically closest or associated school would get free transport. It was a tough choice, but the budget had to be balanced.

Councillor Baker asked for clarification as to whether children with SEND were affected. The Executive Director, Place advised that where pupils were unable to walk to their nearest suitable school the council would meet transport costs.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet:

- a) Approved the changes to the Home to School Transport Policy outlined in Part 6 of this report and the resulting new Policy and supporting documents.
- b) Approved the implementation of the changes proposed in Part 6 of the report and applied those changes from the beginning of the academic year starting in September 2024.
- c) Approved the list of 'Geographically Associated Schools' attached in Appendix B which will be used by the Council to determine entitlement to free home to school transport to schools which are not a child's nearest. The list will apply from the beginning of the academic year starting in September 2024.
- d) Provided delegated authority to the Executive Director of Place, Economy and Environment in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Transport,

Highways and Waste to make any adjustments to the policy which are necessary to ensure it remains compliant with legislation and Statutory Guidance issued by the Department for Education.

24. To agree the additional budget for the purchase of machinery to increase highways maintenance productivity

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Larratt presented the report and advised that two pieces of machinery had been ordered which would improve the efficiency and productivity of highways maintenance. Cabinet was asked to agree an increase to the capital budget to fund the purchases rather than reduce the capital programme.

Jean Lineker was invited to address the Cabinet. She had been waiting for a letter from the Assistant Director, Highways and Transport, which she had now received.

Councillors made the following comments:

- Why were the council buying equipment for Kier Highways to use?
- How did the machinery improve on the 50:50 ratio of recycled/reused material?
- There had been a lack of clarity around the machine. Repairs had been irregular and comments from residents showed it was not being monitored well.

Councillor Larratt explained that the council purchased equipment for use by the highways contractor although the asset remained with WNC. Councillor Longley advised that the payback for the machines was 1 year which was very good.

The Executive Director, Place made the following comments:

- The thermal machine took up the tarmac, recycled it and then added more material to fill the hole.
- Members would be able to visit Kier Highways to see the machines and ask technical questions.
- During mobilisation, monitoring issues had been identified but the latest monitoring showed that targets were being met.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet:

- a) Noted the contents of the report
- b) Endorsed the officer decision to purchase the additional highway maintenance machinery
- c) Agreed to allocate an additional capital budget of £450,000 to fund the purchase of the new machinery.

25. Library Service Strategy 2023-27

At the chair's invitation Councillor Brown presented the report. It was proposed that there would be an 8 week consultation and necessary amendments made before finalisation and formal adoption of the strategy. Tribute was paid to the volunteers in community libraries.

Councillors made the following comments:

- The strategy focussed on efficiencies. A more aspirational view of being real hubs and providing opportunities in communities was needed.

- Paper books were important as well as IT. Reading needed to be encouraged for all young people, not just under 5s. Reading could help with mental health issues.
- There were resourcing issues in libraries and an over-reliance on volunteers. The skills of qualified librarians were missing.
- Concern was expressed about the condition of some library buildings.
- Libraries were needed to educate people – for example in relation to climate change impacts and sustainability.
- Kingsthorpe library needed to be opened as soon as possible.

Councillor Brown responded as follows:

- The duty to inform and educate about climate change formed part of the library strategy.
- The books available in libraries should represent different views and ideas.
- Opportunities were being extended for older children. The aim was to support all ages.
- The strategy aimed to continue events in libraries and make the most of the spaces.
- The lease for Kingsthorpe Library was with the parish council for confirmation. It was hoped the library would be opened shortly.
- Everyone would have an opportunity to respond to the consultation.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet approved the adoption of the draft strategy for the library service subject to public and stakeholder consultation, to be reported back through the portfolio holder, with any amendments, prior to finalisation and formal adoption.

26. **West Northants Housing Allocations Policy**

At the chair's invitation Councillor Brown presented the report and summarised the salient points. It was important that tenants were targeted in the consultation.

Jean Lineker addressed the Cabinet and expressed concern about the situation of friends who had been issued with a Section 21 notice. She was advised that they would be offered temporary accommodation initially and then an assessment of need would be made. Councillor Brown agreed to speak with her outside the meeting.

Councillors made the following comments:

- The document was welcomed.
- Had any analysis been done on identifying those who would potentially be negatively impacted by the policy?
- Could analysis be done regarding overcrowding which did not meet the criteria? Would those people be more adversely impacted than other groups?
- Could clarity be provided on the 'effective date' on the register.
- How would it be ensured that the people most affected were able to engage?
- Would raising the bar to £60k in Northampton result in more people joining the register?
- Could a lounge be used as a bedroom under the new policy?

Councillor Brown advised as follows:

- Modelling would be done on the impact of the policy.
- Under the draft policy a lounge could not be used as a bedroom.
- The £60k earnings threshold was government guidance. It was not anticipated that too many would be added to the register as a result.
- Officers would be asked to provide clarity on the effective date.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet:

- a) Approved a ten-week public consultation period on the draft West Northamptonshire Housing Allocation Scheme
- b) Approved delegated authority to Portfolio Holder for any changes to the Scheme prior to the start of the consultation
- c) Noted that following the public and stakeholder consultation, a final West Northamptonshire Housing Allocation Scheme will be brought back to Cabinet for adoption.

27. **Anti-Poverty Strategy**

At the chair's invitation Councillor Golby presented the report. He expressed thanks to the anti-poverty oversight group. A productive collaboration had taken place with partners and officers and good progress had been made on the Year 1 'Must Do' actions.

Councillors made the following comments:

- Good progress had been made in this collaborative work, but more could be done.
- There was a commitment to paying the living wage to external partners but not steps as to how this would be done. Discussion with the Living Wage Foundation was suggested.
- All decisions of Council/Cabinet needed to be reviewed against the Anti-Poverty Strategy and mitigations put in place as required.
- The Anti-Poverty Strategy had been a powerful way of collaborating and people had been listened to. It would be good for all strategies to be developed in that way.
- Ameliorating poverty is important but preventing it is quite different. Money needed to be kept local to stimulate the local economy.
- The presentation to members from the Director of Public Health had been excellent.
- Work done on warm spaces and social isolation had been good and needed to be built on.

Councillor Hallam advised that very few councils had signed up to the Living Wage Foundation. WNC needed to build its own ambitions and extend this to suppliers.

The Executive Director, People noted that the focus in the second year needed to be on reducing poverty in the first place. Reliance on the household support fund needed to be reduced. There needed to be joined-up thinking – for example a reduction in youth offending would lead to increased opportunities going forward.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet:

- a) Noted that good progress had been made in Year 1
- b) Noted that the Anti-Poverty Strategy (APS) Oversight Board was committed to supporting a refreshed series of actions for year 2 – some of which were longer term, ambitious actions.

28. Energy Procurement Risk Management Strategy 2024-28

At the chair's invitation Councillor Longley presented the report and summarised the salient points.

In relation to point 5.3 a councillor asked for clarity regarding the purchase of 100% renewable electricity and gas, as gas was not green unless it was bio methane gas. The Executive Director, Place agreed to check this.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet:

- a) Approved the recommended energy procurement risk management strategy. Agreed that a procurement process should be commenced.
- b) Delegated the responsibility for the procurement of new energy contracts and delegated the responsibility for the award of contract to the Executive Director of Place in conjunction with the Portfolio holder for Assets.

29. Housing Acquisitions Programmes

At the chair's invitation Councillor Brown presented the report. If the first recommendation was agreed, this would need to go to full council to make the necessary changes to the budget.

Councillors made the following comments:

- Participation in the scheme was welcomed. Every opportunity was needed to bring new houses in.
- Were properties being bought former council housing stock?
- Was there any further news on the empty new-build houses on Welford Road?

Councillor Brown advised that WNC were working with housing developers to purchase housing close to completion in new developments but also other opportunities which might include former council housing stock. The Welford Road houses had frustratingly remained empty due to complications with a Section 278 agreement and financial failures on the part of a sub-contractor. WNC were working with Futures Housing to bring this to completion as soon as possible.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet:

- a) recommended to Full Council an increase in the capital programme of £10.907 million additional funding/borrowing in the Housing Revenue Account to deliver the LAHF R1 and R2 programmes.
- b) delegated authority to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture & Leisure to approve the procurement of services of a property purchasing and renovation company to accelerate delivery and provide the necessary capacity to deliver the different acquisition programmes by the required deadlines subject to full business case and financial appraisal.

- c) delegated authority to the Section 151 Officer to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with DLUHC relating to LAHF R2 upon confirmation that the Expression of Interest was accepted.

30. **HMO Working Group Report**

At the chair's invitation Councillor Brown presented the report. He thanked those on the working group who had put forward an Action Plan for implementation. It had never been the intention to end HMOs altogether as they had a place in the housing market. The Article 4 Direction had been having an effect and expansion of the licensing scheme was being considered.

Councillors made the following comments:

- The cross-party work was very welcome. It had taken a long time to get work done and further action needed to be taken. This had been important for some areas and was having an impact.
- Enforcement was welcomed but work needed to go beyond that to have a vision of how communities should operate. There was a lack of balance and cohesion.
- Families should not be housed in HMOs because of safeguarding issues.
- The number of HMOs meant there were very few large houses available for those with large families.

Councillor Brown agreed with the need for joined-up working. Planning law said that HMOs needed to be considered. Some people wanted to live in shared accommodation. Children in HMOs was not a widespread issue and should be reported if discovered because of safeguarding concerns.

Councillor Breese noted that this had been an excellent piece of work. The regulatory side had sought to boost enforcement activity but the planning side had been harder to resolve. HMOs were an important part of the housing mix.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet approved the Action Plan for implementation by Officers of the Council as identified on the Action Plan, subject to separate business cases as identified in the Action Plan.

31. **Disposal of Areas of WNC Land by Leasehold**

At the chair's invitation Councillor Longley presented the report which sought approval for three disposals of land by leasehold.

Councillor Baker noted that in the list of appendices on page 559, Appendix C was listed as 'Land off Manor Road, Brackley'. This should have been 'Land off Candleford Close, Brackley'. Councillor Baker declared an interest in this item and did not participate in the discussion.

Councillor Brown declared an interest in Appendix B – Delapre Abbey.

A councillor agreed that these were good news stories, although balancing commercial and community interests was difficult. Councillor Longley noted that the balance was as good as it would get.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet:

In relation to Becket's Park Pavilion:

- a) Authorised the Assistant Director Assets & Environment to grant the leases to the proposed tenants for the respective parts of the property broadly on the terms set out in the report.
- b) Noted and agreed to the proposed use being a part departure from the original proposal to use the whole of the building entirely for community type uses.

In relation to the 19th Century Stable Yard at Delapre Abbey:

- a) Authorised the Assistant Director Assets & Environment to grant extensions of the long stop date in the agreement for lease to:
 - 31st January 2024.
 - In consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, such later date is as reasonably necessary to support the restoration of the Stable Yard and it coming into productive use.

In relation to the land at Candleford Close, Brackley:

- a) Authorised the Assistant Director Assets & Environment to grant a lease at less than best consideration to Brackley Town Council (BTC) as if BTC was a VCS group within the meaning of the Policy on the Voluntary, Community, Social Enterprise, and Faith Group use of Property and it had submitted a successful expression of interest under that Policy.

The meeting closed at 9.50 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

7 MARCH 2023

**CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT CARE, WELLBEING, AND HEALTH
INTEGRATION: COUNCILLOR MATT GOLBY**
**CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION:
COUNCILLOR FIONA BAKER**

Report Title	Report of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee – scrutiny review of child and adolescent mental health and the risk of self-harm – ICB update
Report Author	Stuart Lackenby, Executive Director People stuart.lackenby@westnorthants.gov.uk

List of Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	30/08/2023
Chief Finance Officer (S.151)	Martin Henry	30/08/2023
Communications Lead/Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	30/08/2023

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Report of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutiny review of child and adolescent mental health and the risk of self-harm [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday 7th March 2023, 6.00 pm - West Northamptonshire Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The report presents to the Cabinet an update from Officers, the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and other partners on the 7 March 2023 report and recommendations of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutiny review of child and adolescent mental health and the risk of self-harm.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The People Overview and Scrutiny Committee established a task and finish panel to examine the provision in West Northamptonshire of services and support for children and young people who may be at risk of self-harm, which help people not to reach the point where they require specialist health services and which enable people to access those services when this is required.
- 2.2 The Task and Finish Panel presented its report to the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 February 2023. The final version of the report is set out at Appendix A. This report was presented to Cabinet on the 7th March 2023.
- 2.3 Following publication of the report, the Executive Director, People has worked with the ICB and other partners in order to provide the update detailed within this report against the recommendations of the Task and Finish Panel's review of child and adolescent mental health and the risk of self-harm.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:
 - a) Note the update provided by the Executive Director People
 - b) Support regular updates being provided to the West Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Board on improvements in child and adolescent mental health and the risk of self-harm.
 - c) Thanks the Chair of the Scrutiny task and Finish panel and its membership for it work to support better outcomes for children and young people.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 The recommendations resulting from the scrutiny review are intended to contribute to the provision of effective services and support for mental health and wellbeing amongst children and young people in West Northamptonshire. This reflects the Overview and Scrutiny function's role for the development and review of policy.
- 4.2 This report provides evidence of how the scrutiny review has been responded to by officers and system partners.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 The purpose of the scrutiny review was to examine the provision in West Northamptonshire of services and support for children and young people who may be at risk of self-harm, which help people not to reach the point where they require specialist health services and which enable people to access those services when this is required. The NHS website defines self-harm as "when somebody intentionally damages or injures their body."
- 5.2 The scope for the scrutiny review identified the following key lines of enquiry:

- What lower-level services and support are available to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people experiencing problems that might otherwise escalate to the point where they could lead to self-harm? Are the services and support provided by different organisations linked together effectively?
- What specialist health services are available to support children and young people who have a higher level of need? What are the routes into these services? How accessible and how quick to respond are they in practice?
- What is the extent of self-harm by children and young people in West Northamptonshire, given previous data showing that the number of 15-19 year olds hospitalised for self-harm in Northamptonshire was above the national average? How does the latest position compare to that in similar authorities and what are the reasons for any differences?
- What opportunities exist to strengthen existing provision, if this is necessary, taking account of the current context in which service providers in West Northamptonshire are operating?

5.3 The intended outcome of the scrutiny review was to make evidence-based recommendations to the West Northamptonshire Council Cabinet and/or other applicable decision-makers that are intended to contribute to the provision of effective services and support for mental health and wellbeing amongst children and young people in the area.

5.4 The recommendations below were put before cabinet for its consideration on the 7th March 2023. For each of the recommendations below this report provides an update on progress to date;

5.5 *Recommendation 1 - To seek a discussion with West Northamptonshire schools through the Schools Forum about contributing additional resources on a system-wide basis to support children and young people's mental health using a top slice from schools budgets.*

5.6 It is proposed that the consideration of this recommendation will be heard by the schools forum in October 2023.

5.7 *Recommendation 2 - To approach the f40 group of local authorities about making a collective case to the government about the need for additional resources to support children and young people's mental health and the impact of current pressures.*

5.8 The cabinet member for Children will take forward this action at the next meeting of the F40 group.

5.9 *Recommendation 3 - Commit to the development of a new Youth Strategy for West Northamptonshire that should set out how organised youth activities will contribute to supporting children and young people's mental health.*

5.10 The West Northants Youth offer Board is now established and is taking a programme of work forward that will see the creation of a Youth strategy that will include interventions that support activities that contribute to children's and young people's mental health. The

strategy will be delivered by our emerging Youth collaborative which we are currently developing with support of the National Youth Association. This work sits as part of our delivery of the “Best Start In Life” ambition for children and young people.

- 5.11 *Recommendation 4 - Agrees to consider reasonable opportunities to enable non-statutory organisations that provide services and support for children and young people’s mental health to make use of empty Council or commercial premises in West Northamptonshire and to work with commercial partners where necessary to facilitate this.*
- 5.12 Through the Youth Offer Board the Council is actively engaging with voluntary sector providers. This has supported two submissions for capital Youth Investment funding.
- 5.13 *Recommendation 5 - Supports the take up of mental health first aid training by community groups working with children and young people in West Northamptonshire.*
- 5.14 The Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism collaborative is actively promoting the take up of mental health first aid training.
- 5.15 The scrutiny review of child and adolescent mental health and the risk of self-harm identified specific recommendations for the ICB. The Executive Director People has actively engaged with the ICB and has received the following responses.
- 5.16 Whilst the Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board (the ICB) was not engaged in the review exercise, the ICB thanks the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee of West Northamptonshire Council for its interest in this area and welcomes the report into child and adolescent mental health, and their efforts in coordinating a broad view of children with mental health needs who may be at risk of self-harm. The ICB particularly extends its thanks to the young people taking time to share their experiences.
- 5.17 The report of the scrutiny committee sought to confer several actions onto the ICB. The ICB offers the following response to these actions:

Development of overall provision for children and young people’s mental health to respond to increasing demand.

The Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board to agree to develop and implement a long-term whole-system strategy to provide effective support for children and young people’s mental health in Northamptonshire which incorporates the following principles:

- *Local access to services throughout the authority*
- *No disparity between the services available or initiatives being trialled in West Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire when services are organised on a countywide basis*
- *Delivery of services from locations that encourage young people to use them*
- *Provision that enables service users to tell their story once rather than needing to do so repeatedly to different organisations*

- *Development and delivery of services to be informed by good intelligence about who is using them and potential barriers to access that may affect children and young people from different backgrounds or communities*
- *Effective oversight and leadership of an overall offer that involves a range of different service providers*

The ICB leads production of the Local Transformation Plan for Children and Young People's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing on behalf of Integrated Care Northamptonshire. This is an annual process culminating in a published plan to review previous year's performance and setting strategic objectives for the next year, based on Key Lines of Enquiry set by NHS England. The most recent publication includes a "youth friendly" version, developed by CYP, and an Easy Read version, which can be found on this web page: [Children and young people | Integrated Care Northamptonshire \(icnorthamptonshire.org.uk\)](https://icnorthamptonshire.org.uk)

The areas of focus and development for 2023/24 are included in the plan and devised by a multi-agency group of providers and commissioners, based on both national targets and the views and presenting needs of our population.

Plans are in development or are already underway to support the development of all of the above areas during 2023/24. Some of these are ICB-led, and some are led by system partner agencies.

The ICB would welcome the opportunity to contribute towards the development and implementation of a longer-term strategy for children and young people's mental health. However, it is imperative that this be developed and committed to as a system, through the appropriate Children's Transformation Programme, if it is to meet its aspirations in an effective and sustainable way.

The ICB mostly commissions services on a countywide basis. Where services are in place in only specific areas of the county, an EQIA is completed to recognise potential inequities. WNC will be pleased to know that the next two teams funded under the Mental Health in Schools Teams (MHST) programme will be within the West Northamptonshire area.

The ICB already commissions services which operate from a variety of locations. The ICB is supportive of using alternative community venues to host mental health services if this can be done so safely and practicably, however the additional financial costs of this may be prohibitive and actually reduce the number of children able to access support.

5.18 *The Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board to agree to develop and implement a plan for effective provision of the core CAMHS function, to include the following elements:*

- *Maximising capacity to meet future demand and to reduce waiting times to an acceptable level*
- *Organisation of CAMHS services to link up with Local Area Partnerships and to help build strong relationships with partners in local communities to encourage continuity of support for children and young people.*

The ICB has regular liaison with colleagues in NHFT responsible for the delivery of services for Children and Young People. The ICB is aware of the waiting list in CAMHS and the risks and challenges surrounding this, including a national lack of mental health workforce, but also understand the effort NHFT is going to, in order to improve this, and the processes in place to check in with children on their waiting list. Waiting times for assessment have reduced in recent months, and as of February 2023 stand at average of 9 weeks.

As part of the CYP MH funding available to NHFT in 23/24, the ICB is working with NHFT on a number of proposals which aim to reduce waiting times within the service, broaden their wider mental health service offer and ensure our children and young people with moderate to severe mental health needs receive their treatment in a timely manner. There will be close ongoing monitoring of any investments made to ensure a positive difference is made.

The ICB challenges the way the CAMHS data has been presented and interpreted within the report. The reported 180% increase in CAMHS demand is only possible by comparing the referrals into CAMHS during the initial Covid-19 lockdown period, when the main referral sources, GPs and education settings, were not able to deliver their services in the usual way, within their current level of referral activity. Had the ICB been involved in the preparation of this Report, its representatives would have been able to offer a wider range of data for comparative purposes. The Panel would likely have found the same increase for most local health services if the comparison was over the same period.

The ICB CAMHS commissioned service only provides mental health services to children with moderate to severe mental health presentations. Other services are available for children with mild to moderate mental health needs, and some of these are delivered by NHFT. One of the key factors in enabling CAMHS to future proof its services is to ensure there is a good range of preventative, early intervention and family support options available to ensure that our children and families are equipped with the skills they need to be resilient, know how to identify poor mental health and what to do about it. We look to our partners in WNC to work collaboratively with us, to ensure that a robust and equitable preventative and early help offer is in place for its population.

The ICB encourages its commissioned services to be well connected into their local areas to understand and engage with the local population. However, the ICB does not currently intend to alter the commissioning of CAMHS services, at this time, to align with the LAP model.

5.19 *The Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board to agree that all Local Area Partnerships in West Northamptonshire should include children and young people's mental health in their priorities*

Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board is committed to ensuring our children and young people receive the best start in life. The ICB believes that having a population of healthy, happy and resilient children and young people will enable them to maximise their outcomes during their life course. The ICB recognises that LAPs rightly have

autonomy in choosing their own areas of focus based on the need within their geographical area. And so whilst the ICB would encourage all LAPs to consider the mental health needs of children and young people in setting their priorities, it would not be appropriate for the ICB to seek to impose this as a priority across all LAPs.

- 5.20 *The Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board to agree to continue to pursue opportunities to provide additional capacity to support children and young people’s mental health and the “tier 2.5” level of provision, between targeted services such as youth offending teams, primary mental health workers and school youth counselling (tier 2) and specialist community CAMHS (tier 3).*

Northamptonshire ICB already commissions a range of services at the “tier 2.5” level of intervention. This is reflected in the Northamptonshire Local Transformation Plan for Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing.

The ICB is aiming to provide service stability using 2023/24 mental health funding and is continuing with the funding for all of the above listed services. In some cases, plans are being developed to expand the offer further, to reach more of our children. The ICB will be happy to share those plans with WNC.

Success of these services is contingent upon strong prevention services and family support offers which should, in time, reduce reliance on higher level support to manage issues which could have been avoided, or reduced, through timely prevention. The ICB will be happy to work collaboratively with WNC to ensure that a robust and equitable preventative and early help offer is in place for its population.

- 5.21 *The Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board to agree to work with the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and Northamptonshire Police to ensure that the police role is integrated effectively in a whole system strategy to provide support for children and young people’s mental health in West Northamptonshire.*

Colleagues within the ICB’s Safeguarding team already hold close working relationships with Northamptonshire Police to maintain the safety of children in Northamptonshire and work closely together to safeguard our young people when they are at risk.

Northamptonshire Police and the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner are also represented on the Children and Young People’s Transformation Board. The ICB acknowledges that improvements could be made to integrate our strategic approaches towards the mental health of children and young people in Northamptonshire and will continue to work with partners to progress this.

- 5.22 *The Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board to agree to investigate the feasibility of funding a school nurse and mental health first aider in all schools in West Northamptonshire*

This is out of the commissioning responsibilities of the Integrated Care Board. The commissioning of services for population health and prevention sits within the Public Health domain, located within West Northamptonshire Council. The ICB commissions a nursing offer for Special Schools.

- 5.23 *The Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board to agree to review information about support available for mental health and wellbeing produced for children, young people, parents and guardians in West Northamptonshire and to consider the potential for this information to be enhanced.*

The ICB acknowledges the importance of clear and accessible information for our children, young people, families and carers to increase awareness of services available for their mental health and emotional wellbeing, and how these can be accessed. The NHS providers commissioned by the ICB are required to meet the NHS Accessible Information Standard, which “*directs and defines a specific, consistent approach to identifying, recording, flagging, sharing and meeting the information and communication support needs of patients, service users, carers and parents, where those needs relate to a disability, impairment or sensory loss.*”

It has been recognised that the information provided to children, families, carers and professionals could be improved to help them navigate a complex health and care system. A number of the ICB’s commissioned providers, both NHS and VCSE, have either recently developed or are in the process of developing updated information material, using participation and co-production as far as possible to test the effectiveness of the material produced. Services available are also on the WNC Local Offer.

The ICB will always support its providers in the development and circulation of updated information through liaison with the Integrated Care Northamptonshire communications team, however it is incumbent upon commissioned providers to develop the materials to effectively communicate their offer.

- 5.24 Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board also offers the following wider comments on the report;

The ICB has received feedback from its commissioned providers that some of our children and young people struggle with social isolation, and there is a need for our children and young people to have more opportunities to take part in meaningful activity and social interactions, which are financially affordable, within a safe, youth work-led setting in their local area. We are pleased to see WNC acknowledging this gap in provision and look forward to seeing both their strategic ambitions and operational plan for how this will be improved.

The ICB agrees with the review’s findings that further investment is required for the mental health and emotional wellbeing of children aged under 11. Mental Health Support Teams are present in some primary schools across the county, and the ICB has invested in an u11 mental health service, delivered by Service Six, however the ICB would be keen to join with other system partners so that a joint, co-ordinated approach can be taken to the development of a sustainable offer, to meet the range of presenting needs of Northamptonshire’s younger children.

The ICB acknowledges Northamptonshire’s position as an outlier for hospital admissions as a result of self-harm, but also notes that the data provided in the report

shows an improving position. There is a multi-agency self-harm pathway in place, which details the process required should a child present at A&E due to self-harm. This pathway is currently undergoing revision.

Section 10.214 of the review comments that “more attention could be given to the role of parents in providing support for young people’s mental health and wellbeing”. The ICB agrees with this comment and would support WNC in developing a wider support package for parents as part of its children’s centre model.

5.25 Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board will take away the following actions:

- Explore the possibility of using alternative community venues to deliver children’s mental health services
- Form stronger links with Northamptonshire Police and the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner regarding the strategic approach to children and young people’s mental health
- Deploy effective monitoring of new funding initiatives to ensure a positive difference is made

6. Issues and Choices

6.1 The Cabinet is asked to consider the how the recommendations of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee have been responded to and if this provides assurance that suitable action has been taken forward.

6.2 The recommendations of this report suggest that oversight is passed to the health and wellbeing Board going however cabinet could ask the children and housing committee to consider further action as required.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

7.1.1 The responses to the recommendations resulting from the scrutiny review do not have any material impact on the financial resources of the council.

7.2 Legal

7.2.1 The role of Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to make recommendations to the Cabinet. The Cabinet will need to reach decisions based on the usual public decision-making criteria including that members consider relevant considerations and no irrelevant considerations.

The views of a relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported by evidence can be decided upon but Cabinet’s responsibility remains to ensure that it has sufficient information to make a decision including the financial and legal implications of the specific proposals presented.

7.3 Risk

7.3.1 The recommendations and responses resulting from the scrutiny review are intended to contribute to mitigating risks associated with children and young people's mental health.

7.4 **Consultation and Communications**

7.4.1 The Task and Finish Panel heard from a range of expert advisors when gathering information for the scrutiny review, as set out in the final report.

7.5 **Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

7.5.1 The responses to the recommendations will be discussed at the Children and Housing scrutiny committee following cabinet.

7.6 **Climate Impact**

7.6.1 None directly relating to this report.

7.7 **Community Impact**

7.7.1 The recommendations resulting from the scrutiny review are intended to have a positive impact on children and young people and their families in all areas of West Northamptonshire.

8. **Background Papers**

None



WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

19th September 2023

Councillor Jonathan Nunn, Leader

Report Title	Corporate Plan Performance Report – 2023-24 Q1
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Report Author	Richard Corless, Intelligence & Partnerships Manager richard.corless@westnorthants.gov.uk
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Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	30 August 2023
Chief Finance Officer (S.151)	Martin Henry	30 August 2023
Other Director	Chief Executive, Assistant Chief Executive and All Directors via EPB.	14 & 29 Aug 2023
Communications Lead/Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	30 August 2023

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Corporate Plan Report – 2023-24 Q1

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The attached appendix provides an update for the first quarter of 2023-24 to Cabinet on West Northamptonshire Council's (WNC) performance metrics for the current year and set against the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan.

2. Executive Summary

- 1.2. This report provides an overview of performance for West Northamptonshire Council for the period of April to June 2023 (Quarter 1) as well as providing details around end of year review of metrics and changes being made to what the council is including within the corporate scorecard.

- 1.3. There have been changes implemented by government departments in the past 12 months which impact a number of regulatory/ inspection regimes. These will change how we are inspected as well as create changes in data collection frameworks. In some cases these have entirely changed some of the national metrics that are collected and that local Authorities will report against.
- 1.4. In particular, by now providing greater detail of metrics around our adult social care and education services we will be in a position of being able to highlight those areas where we are strong but at the same time provide greater transparency by showing those areas that we have already identified require attention and importantly that we can demonstrate there is a robust plan to address any required improvements. .
- 1.5. The changes to the Corporate Performance scorecard followed a review undertaken in consultation with the members of Cabinet and senior officers , the outcome of this work is shown in the table below with the metrics which have either been removed from the corporate scorecard (these are still monitored through the relevant director scorecards) and those which have been included as new metrics this year.

Priority	Removals	Additions
1 – Clean and Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electric vehicle charging points on WNC Land. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electric vehicle charging points in West Northants (WN) area (including split to Fast and trickle chargers). Percentage of waste sent for re-use, recycling or composting Park Satisfaction Score (from quarterly survey)
2 – Improved Life Chances	<p>Adult Social Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People using social care who receive self-directed support People that return to their normal place of residence of discharge New requests for services where route of access was discharge from hospital that had a reablement service (SALT) <p>Public Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Covid Booster take-up Breastfeeding rate at 6-8 weeks School age children who receive weight management advice and support 1:1 	<p>Adult Social Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admission to residential and nursing care homes, per 100k (aged 18-64) Admission to residential and nursing care homes, per 100k (aged 65+) Conversation 1 Assessments that have no sequel of service after [12] months Care Act Assessments completed Carers assessments completed Concluded safeguarding enquiries where (MSP) questions were asked and outcomes were expressed and the desired outcomes fully or partially achieved Care Act reviews completed in past 12 months <p>Children Social Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of contacts in the MASH Number of contacts converted to referral (social care and EH)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of children supported by Early Help in NCT • Number of children open under Children in Need (CIN) • Number of children on a Child Protection Plan (CPP) • Number of children looked after • Number of children looked after who have previously been looked after. • Social Workers with case loads above the recommended target <p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Requests for EHCP Assessment • EHCPs completed within 20 Weeks (excluding and including exceptions) • Number of EHCPs • EHCP Annual Reviews within 12 months of previous review • Exclusions & Suspensions (primary / secondary split) • Open school applications outside 15 days statutory timescale <p>Public Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in-year eligible population who received an NHS Health Check • Successful completions of adult drug treatment - opiate users • Successful completions of adult alcohol treatment • People whose frailty has either not increased or has reduced • CYP who showed a maintained or improved CORE-YP score on completion of care (CYP Mental Health) • People with improvement on wellbeing score (WEMWBS) at 6 months • People in Weight Management service losing 5% weight • Rate of emergency department attendances for falls in those aged 65+
3 – Connected Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
4 – Thriving Towns and Villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning applications approved by committee as recommended 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major planning applications processed within 13 weeks

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-major planning applications processed within 8 weeks • Planning enforcement measure [TBC – from Q2] • Footfall measure – Major Towns (TBC – from Q2)
5 – Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
6 – Robust Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

1.6. There are also some metrics which, upon discussion and reflection, have been amended to be able to provide better context of performance, for example changing from a number of completions to showing as a proportion of caseload completions, where these changes have occurred the number will be provided within narrative to provide the context.

Priority	Amendments
1 – Clean and Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
2 – Improved Life Chances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeless preventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ change: to be shown as a proportion of cases. • Cases where homelessness was successfully relieved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ change: to be shown as a proportion of cases.
3 – Connected Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
4 – Thriving Towns and Villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitors to Libraries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ change: to be shown with a virtual and physical visit split
5 – Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
6 – Robust Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

1.7. There have been many changes to teams, services and systems as part of creating the new council and therefore some indicators will need to be developed in order to provide a complete unitary view and move away from the old district and borough boundaries. This is also exacerbated where we have different delivery vehicles or contracts for services, such as Northamptonshire Children’s Trust or Public Health contractual services that has the opposite affect of not being able to provide a West Northamptonshire only version of performance.

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet/Committee:

- a) Agree the changes to the performance metrics for 2023-24, and
- b) Note the content of the appendix covering the first quarter of 2023-24

- **Reason for Recommendations** It is important that the Council takes an annual view of metrics within the corporate scorecard to ensure that they remain reflective of the council's priorities. The changes proposed in the metrics this year are primarily new regulatory inspection and data collection frameworks being implemented by central government.
- The appendix provided with this report is for information purposes and discussion only, there are no direct decisions to be made following the report

4. Report Background

- 4.1 It is important that the Council is clear and transparent on its performance and that there are clear action plans where our performance falls below target or that of other benchmark authorities.
- 4.2 The council monitors performance across all services areas and against hundreds of national and contract metrics to ensure that services are performing well and identified priorities are monitored and delivered against. These are monitored within services and reported in line with national cycles or as required to Overview and Scrutiny, and other committees.
- 4.3 This performance report provides an overall high-level summary of the key metrics that underpin our stated corporate priorities and sets out proposed metrics that we will be developing and monitoring for this quarterly report in addition to the wider overall performance framework we have in place.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1 This is a report for information and discussion and therefore there are no choices to be made, as outlined in section 6.4, consultation and discussion around metrics has occurred with cabinet members in the leadup to this report.

6. Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Resources and Financial

- 6.1.1 There are no direct financial implications from the report. However, services need to consider the implications of under- or over-performance and identify what resources may need to be reallocated to address these.
- 6.1.2 Financial indicators included within the performance report can be found in greater detail within the finance reports that are presented to Cabinet.

6.2 Legal

- 6.2.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from the proposals.

6.3 Risk

- 6.3.1 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

6.4 Consultation and Communications

6.4.1 The metrics included in this report have been chosen based upon the priorities identified within the Corporate Plan and in consultation with members of Cabinet and senior officers. The Corporate Plan priorities and wider service objectives are underpinned by the Council's communications and consultation activities to keep the public, staff and stakeholders informed and engaged on what the council is doing and how it is performing. The inclusion of additional performance metrics further builds on the Council's communications principles of transparency and openness to inform and engage residents on its corporate priorities, objectives and outcomes.

6.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

6.5.1 Relevant performance data will be provided to Overview and Scrutiny Committees as required to support their agreed work plans.

6.6 Climate Impact

6.6.1 There are no direct implications on climate/environmental impact from this report, it does however provide an update on the delivery of the corporate plan which includes commitments to be Net Zero by 2030. This quarterly report will provide updates on the council's progress to this aim as appropriate.

6.7 Community Impact

6.7.1 Managing our performance is key to ensuring we are making a positive impact on our communities, celebrating our successes, and addressing our challenges.

7. Background Papers

7.1 The West Northamptonshire Council Corporate Plan 2021-25 provides the basis for the data and project updates that are provided within this quarterly report. The corporate plan can be found on our website - [Corporate Plan | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/corporate-plan)



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Corporate Plan 2022-23 Quarter 1 Report

April to June 2023

Last Updated: 30th August 2023



Welcome to the latest update on delivery of the West Northamptonshire Council Corporate Plan with data and project updates covering the first quarter of 2023-24 broken down into monthly information where that is available. The metrics included in this report have been chosen based upon the priorities identified within the corporate plan and consultation with both the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and Cabinet members.

The data elements that are provided in this report include a monthly breakdown of the current quarter, where the information is available to that level, as well as an overall quarterly position. In addition to this there is trend information for the current year and last year. Where there is externally published information available we have begun to add in benchmark data, covering national (normally England), regional (East Midlands) and where appropriate statistical neighbour groups (for Children's Services).

The report contains two main elements - a summary 'dashboard' type information on each page alongside a short narrative and also at the end of the report all indicators are available in a detailed scorecard view. Some of these areas are long term projects and therefore there will not always be an update to that narrative each quarter, we will provide an update each quarter assuming that there has been progress or something has changed since the previous report.

Green and Clean Environment & Wellbeing

1

- Net Zero by 2030
- Climate summit in first few months
- Increased wildlife species & more trees
- Increased electric charging & energy efficiency
- Vibrant towns & villages
- High quality parks
- Accessible green space for all

Thriving Villages & Towns Place shaping & Homes

4

- Regeneration of our core town centres
- Safer communities with less anti social behaviour
- Flourishing and supported small business
- Sustainable planning for growth
- Increased affordable housing & Council homes
- Raised standards of privately rented homes

Improved Life Chances Health, Social Care & Families

2

- Healthy, safe and protected Children
- Increased aspirations in young people
- Investment in new schools & provision
- Adults supported to live independently
- Care provided for those that need it
- Reduced hospital stays and delays
- Joined up and local services with health
- Safe and secure accommodation for all

Economic Development Growth & Prosperity

5

- Published west strategic infrastructure plan
- Framework for long term economic growth
- Increased inward investment
- Building on our rich heritage
- Increased visitors to our attractions
- Infrastructure benefits and investment through our role in regional forums and plans

Connected Communities Transport & Connectivity

3

- Improved road, rail and bus networks
- Completion of major roads projects
- Improved road quality
- Increased use of electric vehicles & charging points
- Enhanced broadband and mobile connectivity

Robust Resource Management Transparency & financial probity

6

- Council tax rises capped at £99 a year
- Stable finances and rainy day reserves
- Robust scrutiny of spending
- Open and transparent decision making
- Financial prudence underpinning long term decisions and plans
- Optimised debt management

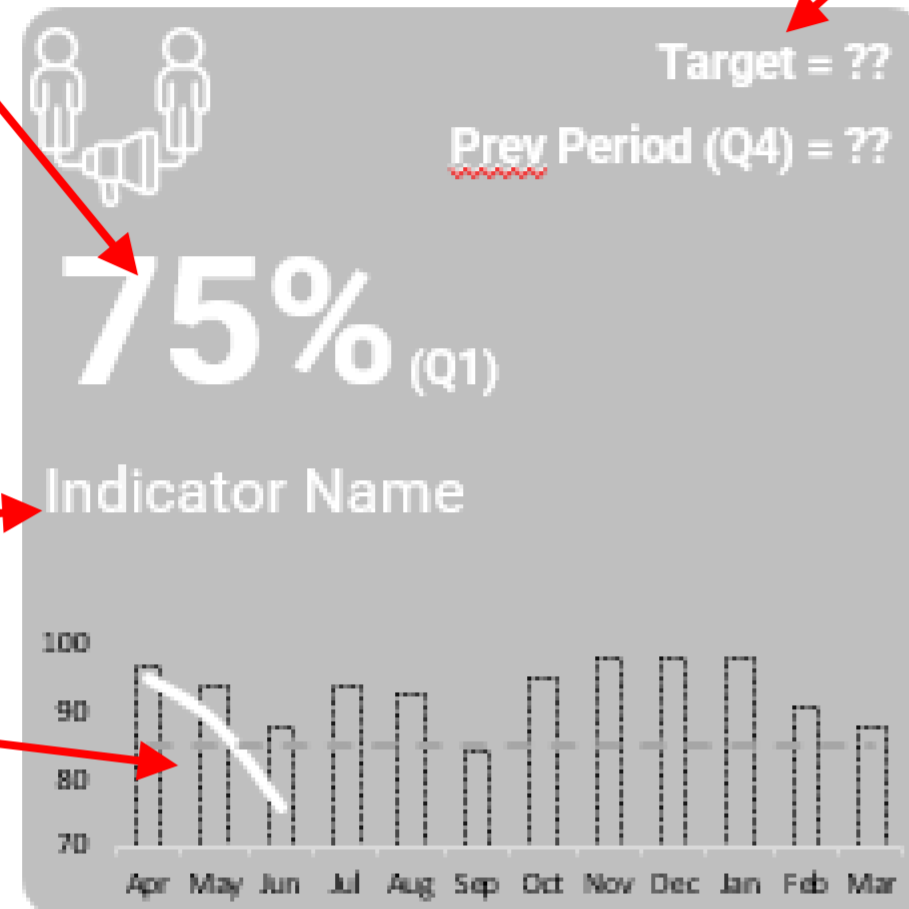
The below diagrams for the indicator dashboard pages and the detailed scorecards outline the data elements within them and how to interpret what is being shown.

The current performance.

This will be the period for the current report, unless otherwise stated next to it. The current period can always be found in the bottom left corner of each page.

The previous period's performance

The last period, will be stated if that is a quarter or a specific month.



Indicator Name

Indicator Name

Trend Chart

White Line: This will show the recent trend, either by month (if available) or by quarter

Dotted Line – this is the target

Bar chart – this is last years performance

Indicator details

This section includes the indicator name, the priority it is relevant to in the corporate plan, the lead directorate plus if it is better for the performance to be higher or lower.

Performance Data

This section includes the target and current performance data broken down to month where available, quarterly and year to date (YTD).

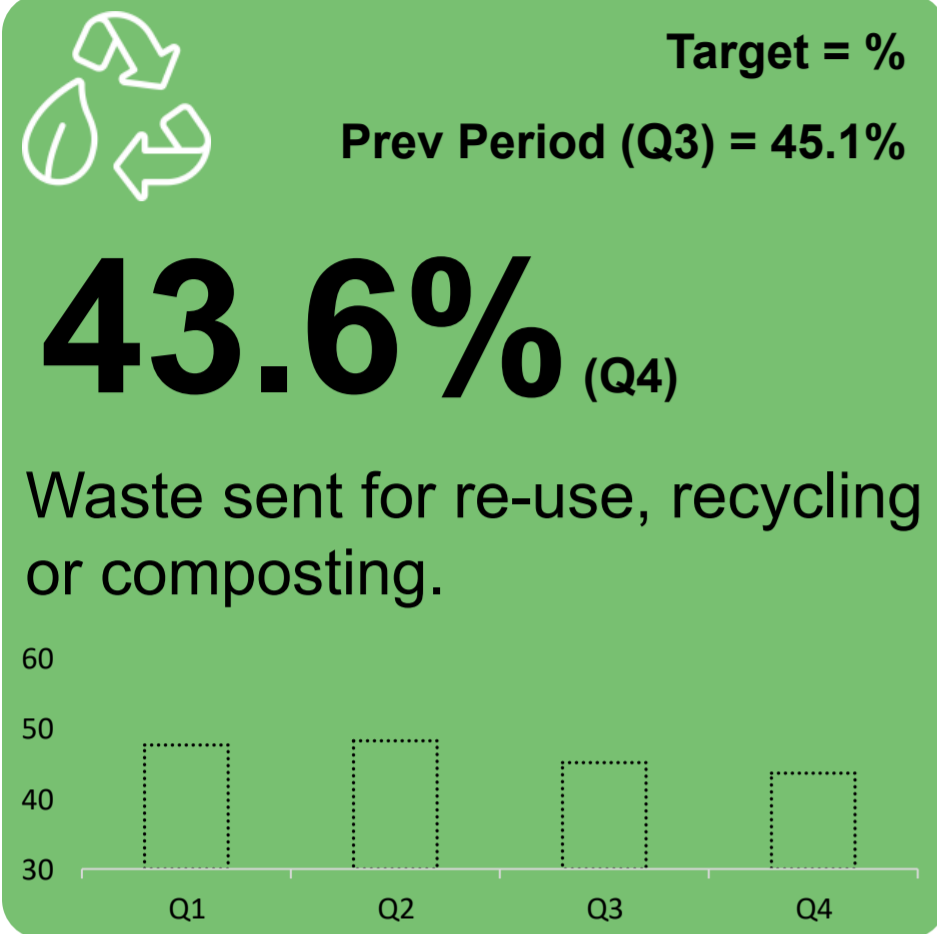
In addition benchmarking information is included on the right hand side covering regional, national and statistical neighbour groups. There are and will continue to be a number of indicators that have no published data in order to benchmark against.

Corp Ref:	Metrics (Number / Rates / Financial)	Priority	Directorate	Better to be?	Target	Apr	May	Jun	Q1	Jul	Aug	Sep	Q2	YTD	Regional	National
1.2	Percentage of household waste sent for re-use, recycling or composting	Green & Clean	Place & Economy	Higher		50.85%	52.32%	56.42%	53.33%					53.33%		
1.3	Percentage of waste from HWRCs diverted from landfill								71.50%							
1.4a	Net trees planted this year												-140	-91	n/a	n/a
1.5	Council vehicles that are electric or hybrid	1. Green & Clean	Place & Economy	Higher									22			
1.6	Council owned parks and green spaces that have Green Flag accreditation	1. Green & Clean	Place & Economy	Higher	10 in 5 years				5				5	5		

Temporary image as an example only

Priority 1 – Green and Clean

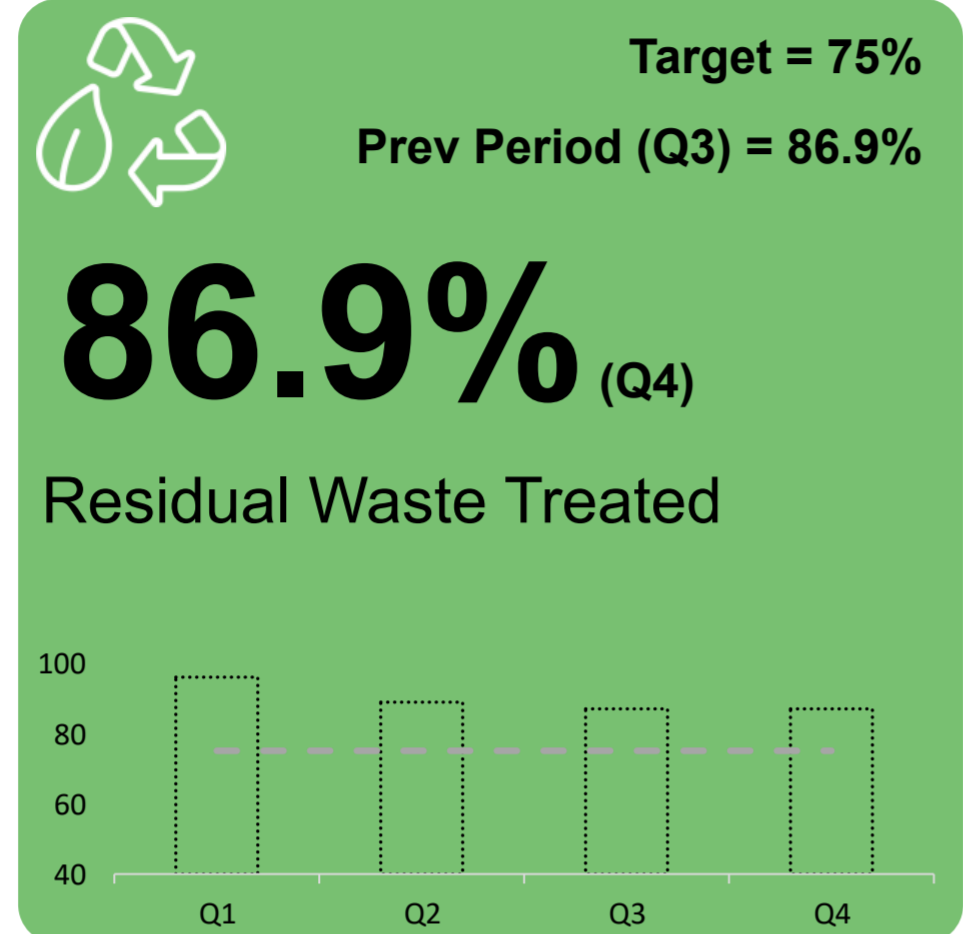
Environment & Wellbeing



This indicator measures household waste that is sent for re-use, recycling or composting across West Northants.

The performance for this measure remains relatively consistent across the year with some seasonal shifts in household recycling habits. This measure is reported a quarter in arrears due to reporting processes via WasteDataFlow and therefore this report shows performance for the latest quarter is Q4, for which 43.6% of waste was sent for re-use, recycling or composting.

The latest national average for unitary authorities is 42.2% for 2021-22 year.



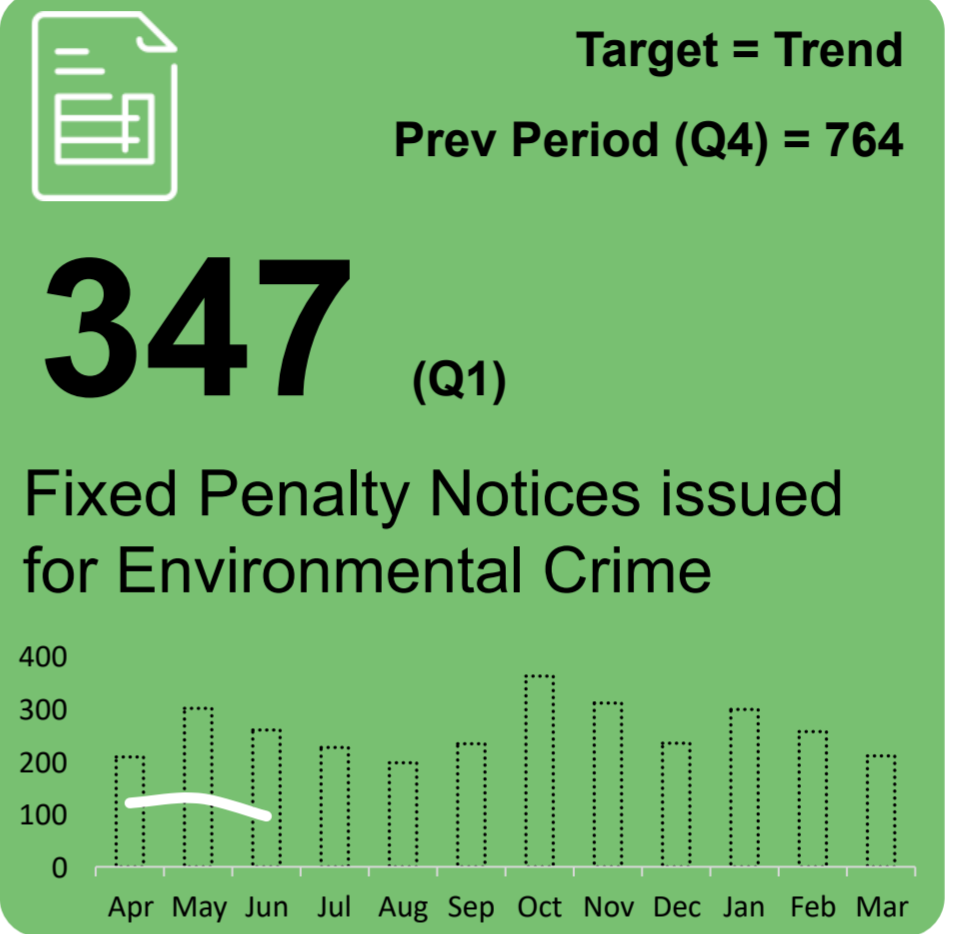
This indicator measures a combination of all waste types which go through some form of treatment process (i.e. do not go to landfill) and provides an overview of how waste is treated in West Northamptonshire.

This measure is reported a quarter in arrears due to reporting processes via WasteDataFlow and therefore this report shows the performance for Q4 of 2022-23. The latest data for the first 3 months of 2023 shows that performance has remained the same as the previous period with 86.9% of residual waste treated. This metric is affected by seasonal fluctuations in waste habits and despite the reduction current performance remains above the target set for the year.



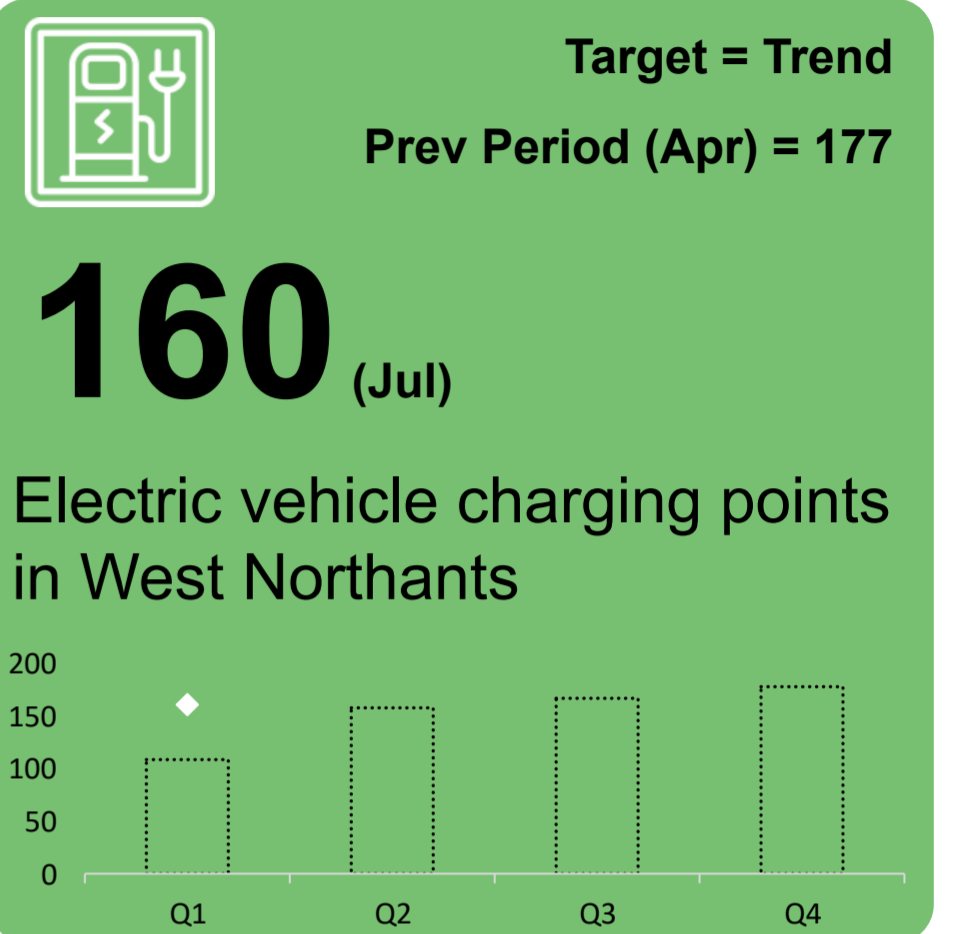
Fly-tipping is illegal dumping of liquid or solid waste on land or in water. The waste is usually dumped to avoid disposal costs or for convenience. Should the fly-tipping occur on public land it falls to the Local Authority to clear the rubbish away, the cost of disposal then falls on the LA.

The first quarter this year has seen a reduction in the number of fly-tips cleared, down from 4,806 to 4,103 for the first quarter of the year. This quarter compared to last year has seen a rise from the 3,980 recorded in Q1 last year.



This measure reports against those fixed penalty notices (FPNs) which have been issued on behalf of WNC for environmental crime, this would include those fines issued for fly-tipping.

Across the first quarter this year 347 FPNs have been issued, a significant decrease from the 764 issued in the previous quarter, and also significantly lower than the 767 recorded in the same period last year.



The total publicly accessible charging points for West Northamptonshire as at July 2023 shows that there are 160 public charging devices, a decrease of 17 since April, of these 17 removals 10 of them are defined as rapid charging devices bringing the total number to 56 publicly accessible rapid charging devices.

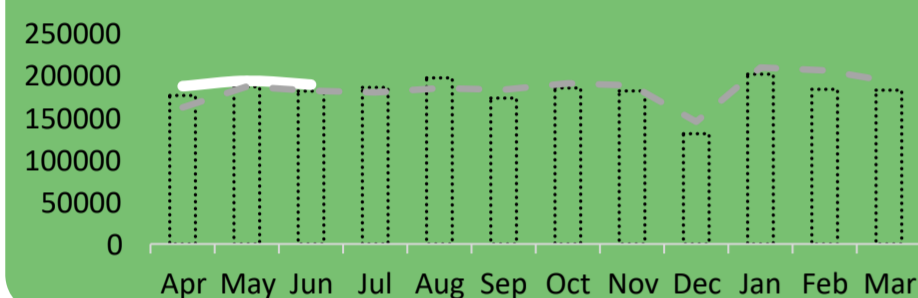
The West Northamptonshire area has 37.5 charging points per 100,000 population (down from 41.5 at Apr 2023). This is lower than the East Midlands (42.8) and also the England (66.7) average.



Q4 Target = 529,006
 Prev Period (Q4) = 565,831

568,471 (Q1)

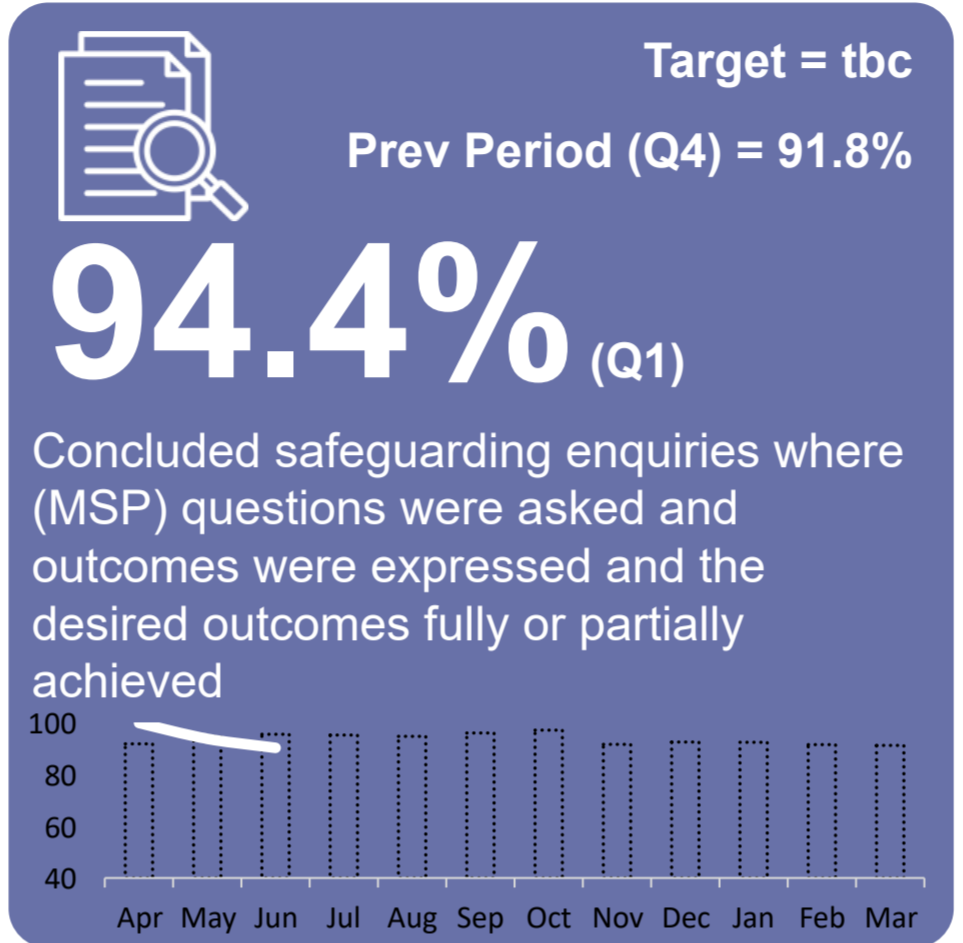
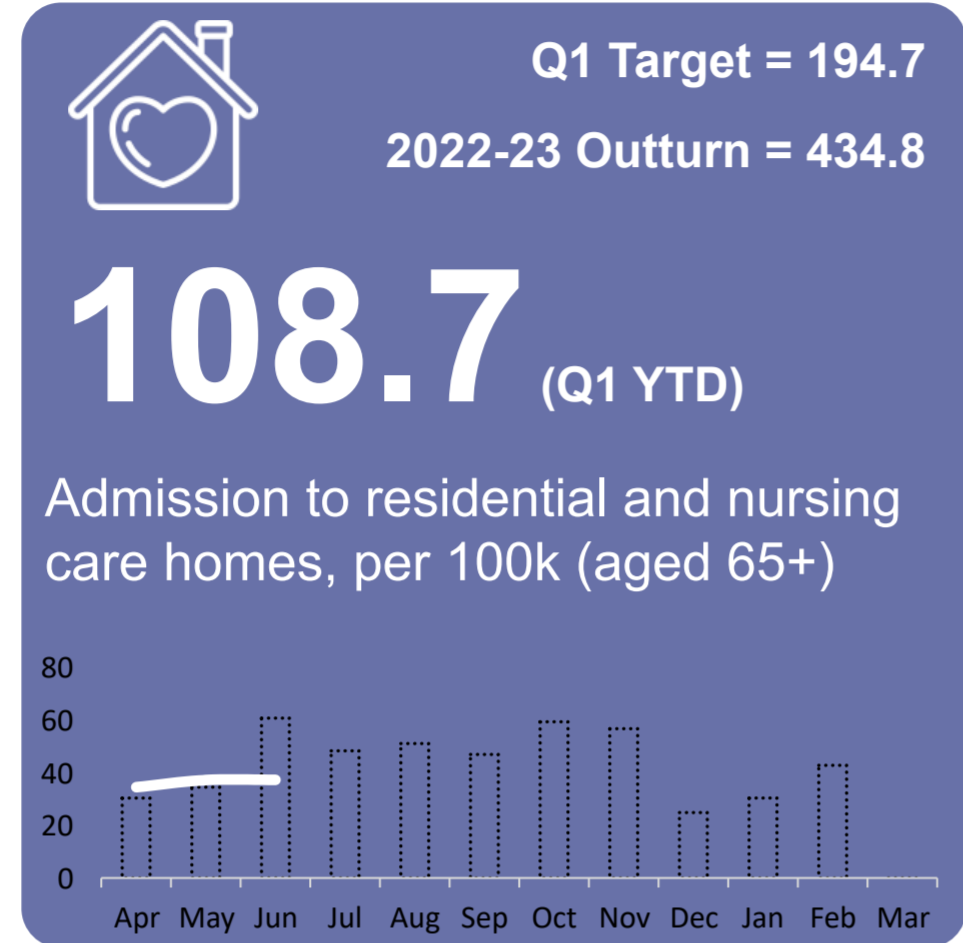
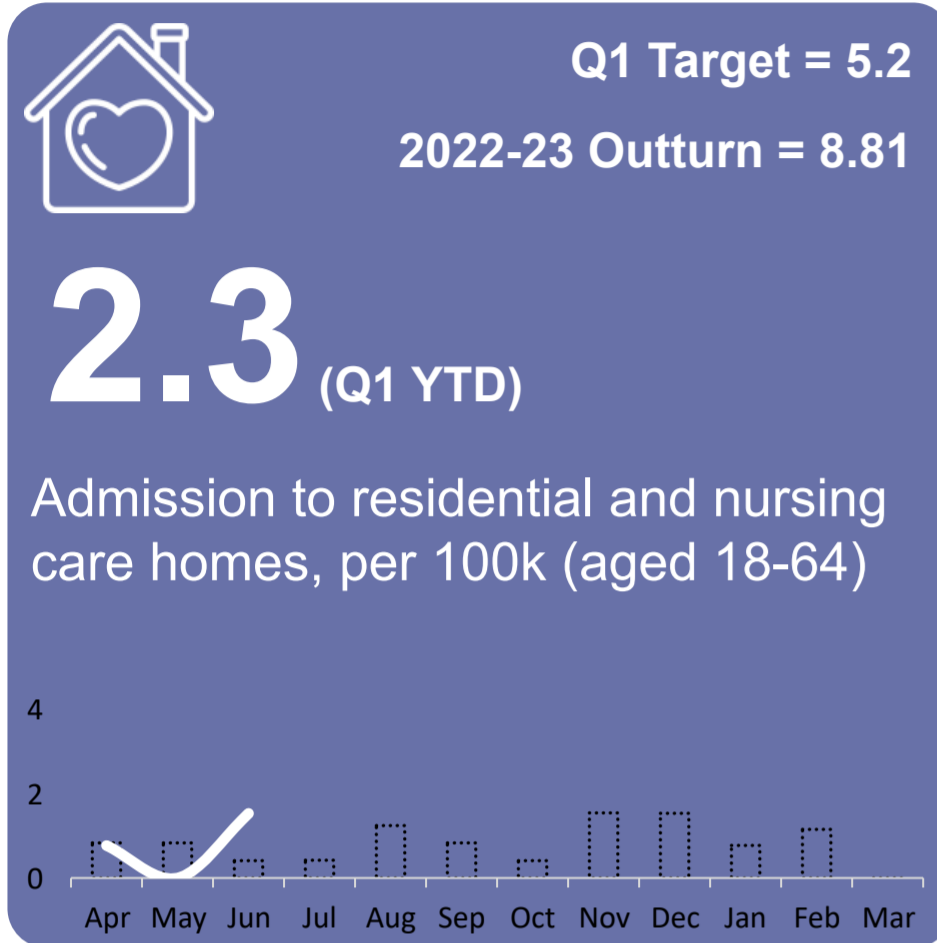
Visitors to Leisure Centres



This measure counts the number of visitors to leisure centres that are ran by West Northamptonshire Council.

Overall numbers each month remain consistently above the forecast target but are lower that they could be due to a period of pool closures.

The Q1 performance is above the target set for that period and is similar to the visitor numbers recorded in the previous period. When comparing to the same period last year there is an increase of 24,000 visitors to leisure centres.



Avoiding permanent placements in residential and nursing care homes is a national best practice of delaying dependency and research suggests that, where possible, people prefer to stay in their own home rather than move into residential care. However, it is acknowledged that for some people admission to residential or nursing care homes can represent an improvement in their situation.

Admissions for those aged 18-64
To the end of the first quarter there has been 2.3 people per 100,000 population admitted to residential or nursing homes, this relates to 4 individuals. This is an increase on the same point last year when 2.07 people had been admitted.

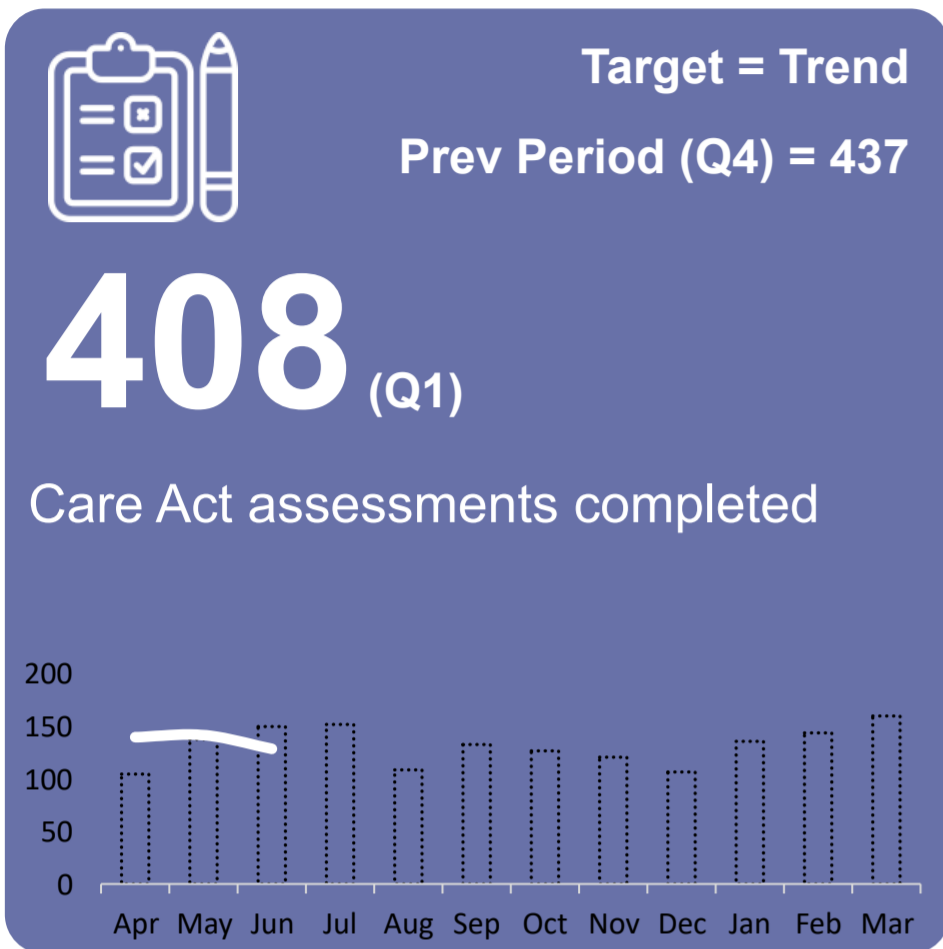
Admissions for those aged 65+
To the end of the first quarter there has been 108.7 people per 100,000 population admitted to residential or nursing homes, this relates to 76 individuals. This is a decrease on the same point last year when 125.17 people had been admitted.

Both of these indicators perform well against our regional and national comparators, our outturn last year for the 18-64 cohort was 8.81 vs a 13.9 latest national average, similarly in the over 65 aged group our outturn was 434.8 vs a 538.5 latest national average. Continually in recent years we have reduced admission to long-term support via residential and nursing home provision.

This indicator measures the effectiveness of outcomes from safeguarding enquires where Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) question and if outcomes were fully or partially achieved.

Performance in this area has been good over the past 15 months since collection began with monthly performance regularly being above 90% every month, with April 2023 having 100% of enquires with outcomes achieved.

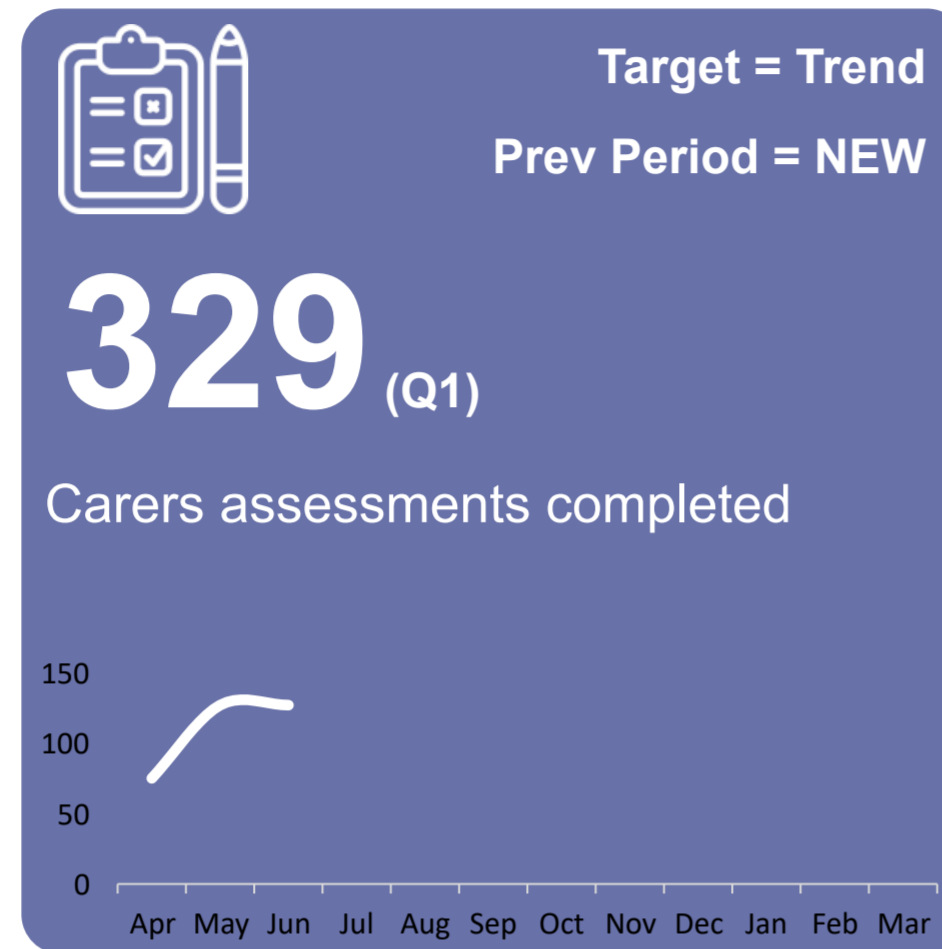
The outturn for quarter 4 is 94.4%, which is based upon 197 enquires with 186 having outcomes achieved either fully or partly and represents an increase of 2.6% from the previous quarter.



Care Act assessments are undertaken to determine if a person is eligible and their needs have a significant impact on their lives that would require long term support from social care.

In the first 3 months of this year we have completed 408 assessments, this is a reduction of 29 from the previous quarter and compares to the 390 completed in the same period last year.

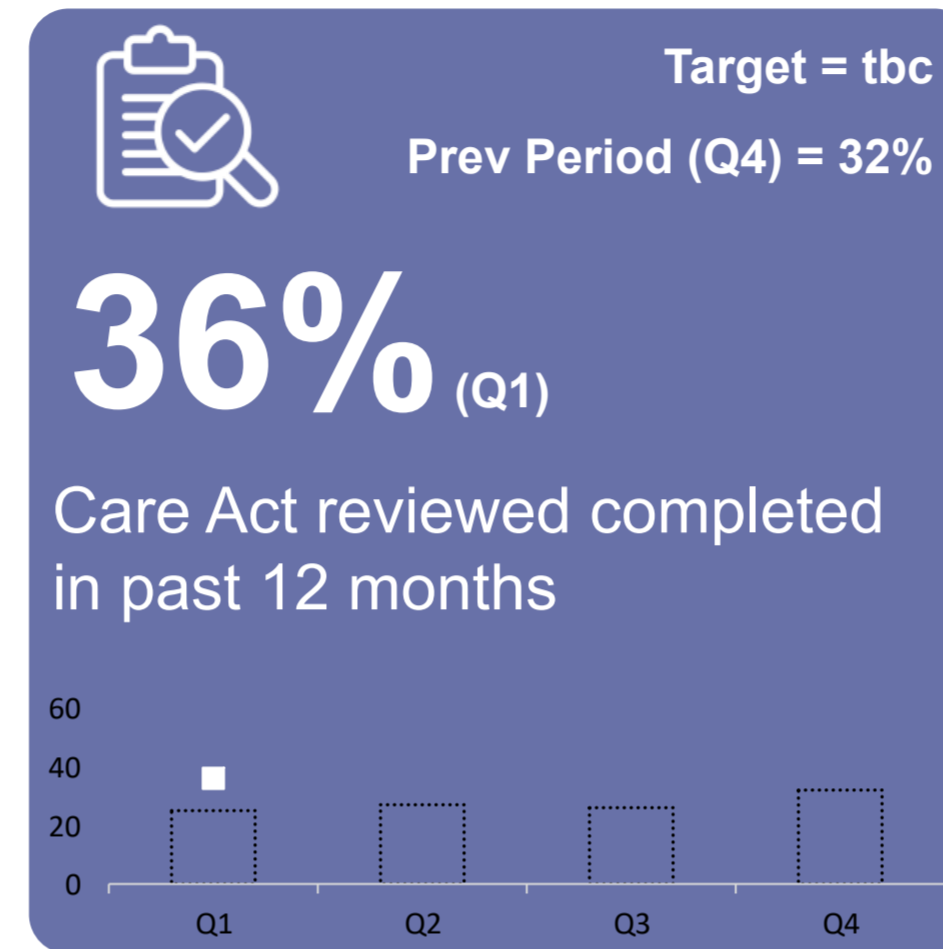
Of the 408 Care Act assessments, 355 of these had an outcome where the person is eligible for a service provision.



Carers assessments are undertaken to determine if a carer is eligible to receive services to support them in their caring role. These assessments are completed by Northamptonshire Carers on our behalf.

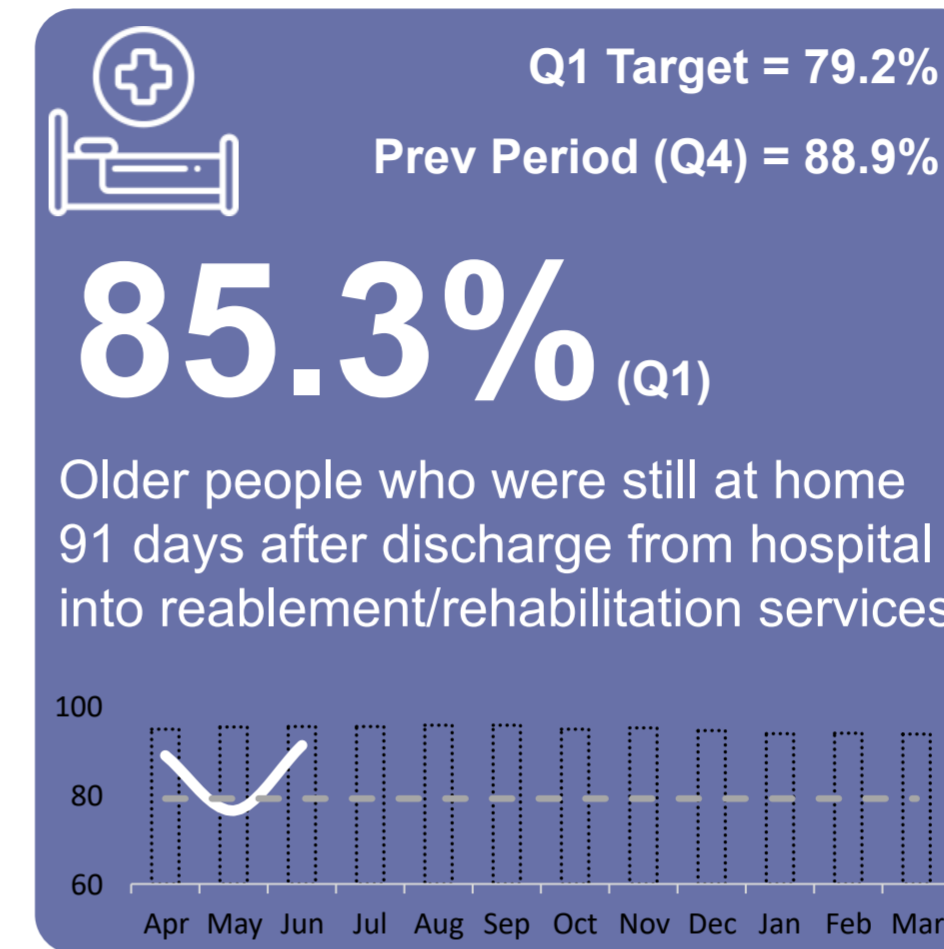
Changes to the collection frameworks this year mean that the current year is the first year where we are able to show assessments separate from reviews, previously the data showed a combination of both.

The first quarter this year has had 329 carers assessments completed, all of these assessments resulted carers receiving services to support them in their caring role.



This indicator looks to monitor the timeliness of reviews for those people who are in receipt of a long term service for 12 months or more following a Care Act assessment.

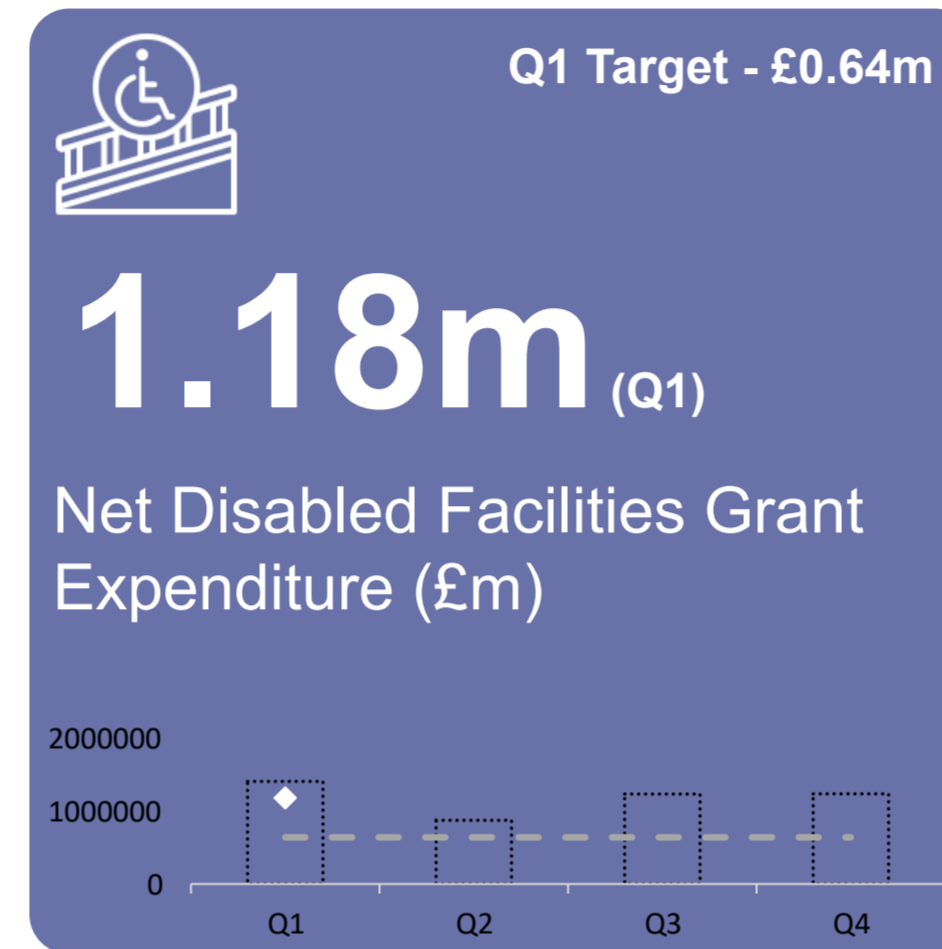
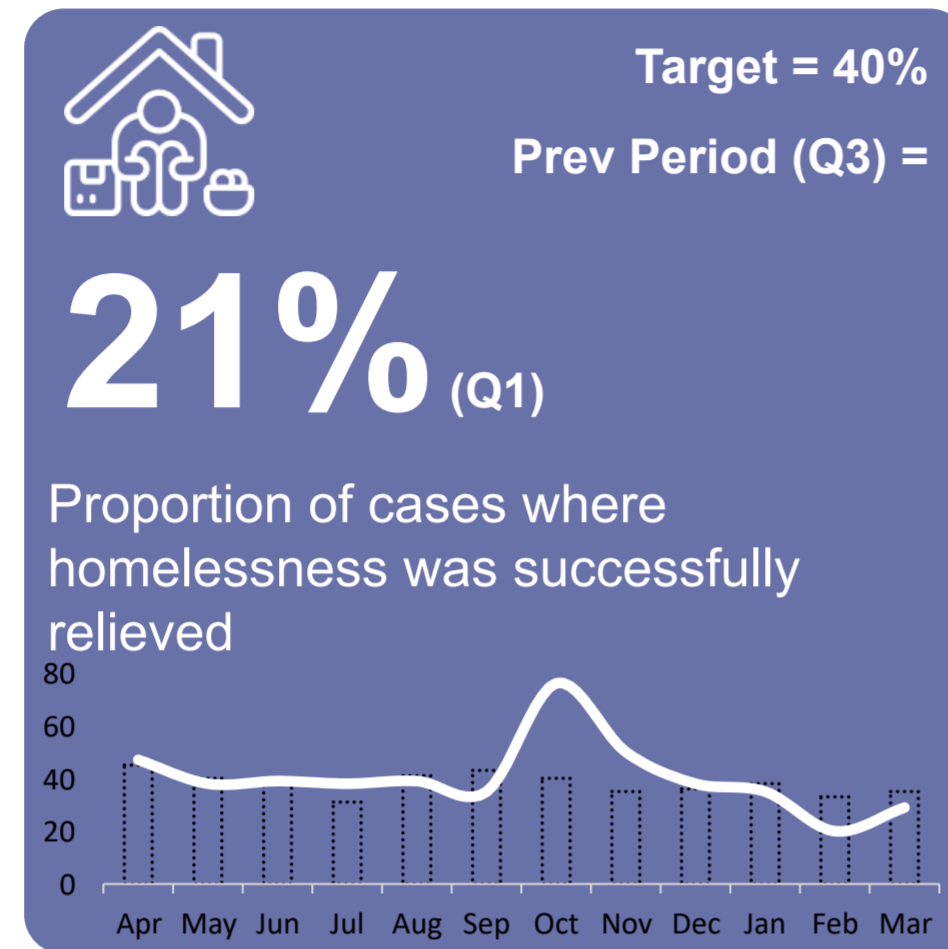
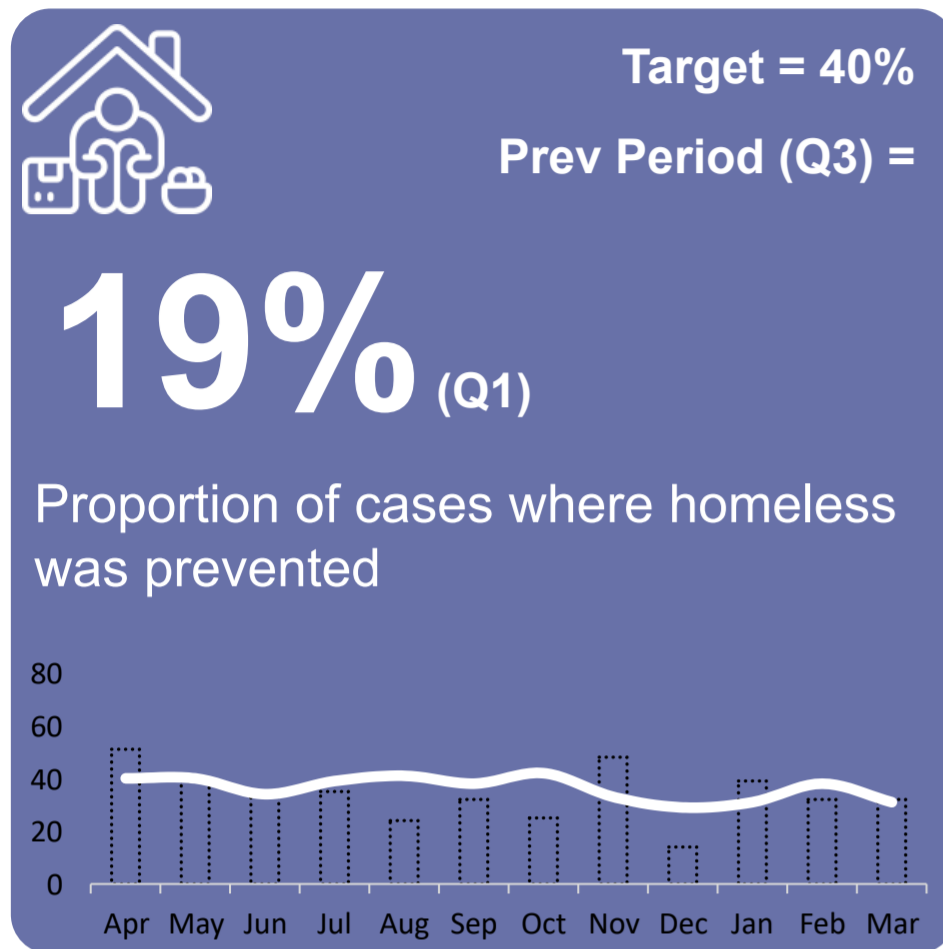
Although this indicator is not currently in the position we would like it to be there has been improvement actions underway this has resulted in the performance of this indicator increasing from 25% in Q1 of last year to 36% at the end of the current period, this has resulted in 421 more people having had a review within 12 months.



This indicator looks to measure the proportion of older people who were still at home 91 days after they had been discharged from hospital and into reablement or rehab services.

Date for this indicator at local authority level is available from the NHS Digital Secondary Uses Service (SUS) database. The SUS database is a repository for healthcare data in England which supports the NHS in the delivery of healthcare services.

The first quarter of the year has seen a reduction in the level of people return to their normal place of residence as the previous quarter (-3.6%), with current 85.3%. We perform well against the latest England average of 81.8%.



The council has a duty to support people and families from becoming homeless.

During the Prevention Duty we must take reasonable steps to prevent any eligible applicant from becoming homeless, regardless of priority need status, intentionality and whether they have a local connection. This can involve assisting you to stay in your current accommodation or helping you to find a new place to live. Under this part of our duty we have had successful preventions in 19% of the cases this quarter.

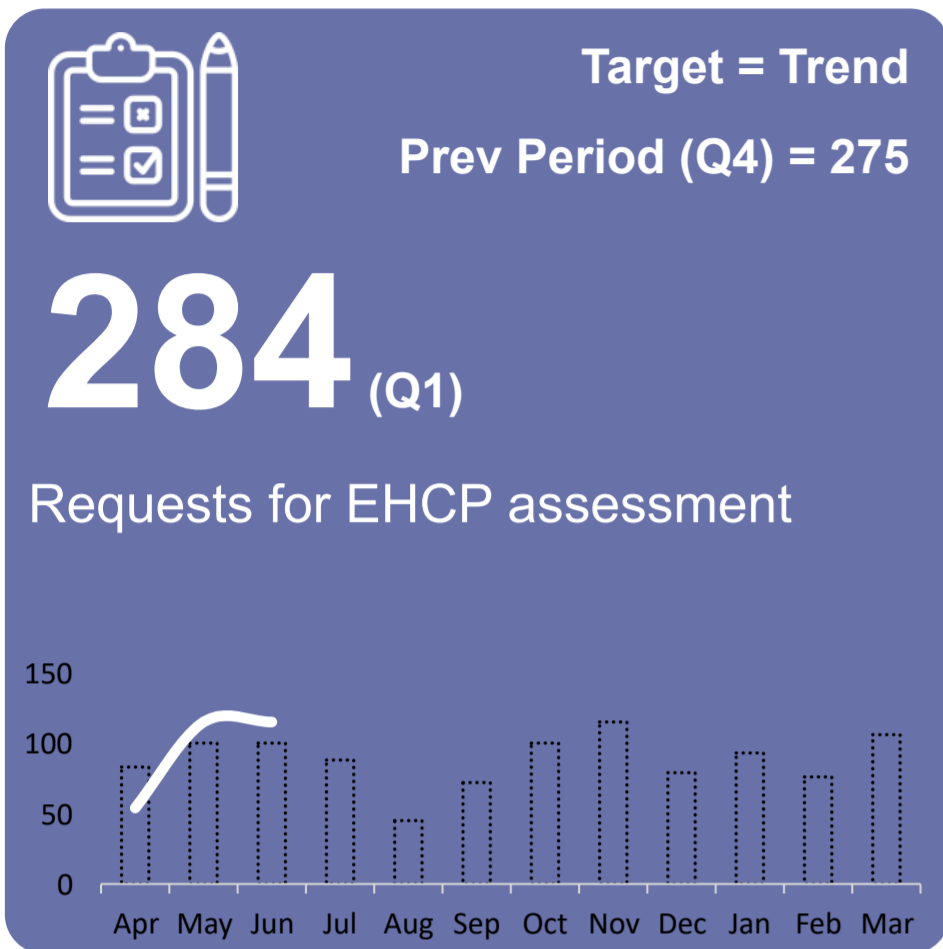
If we have not been able to prevent you from becoming homeless under the Prevention Duty, you will be owed the Relief Duty. During the Relief Duty we must take reasonable steps to help you to secure suitable accommodation. The Relief Duty lasts for up to 56 days and is available to all households who are homeless and eligible, regardless of whether they have a priority need. Under this part of our duties we have had successful preventions in 21% of cases this quarter.

There has been an increase of relief cases towards the end of the quarter which is positive despite the increased cost of living and the ability to prevent a household from becoming homeless. With the work being undertaken with the Prevention tools, this will enable Officers to provide good outcomes for our residents.

A Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is a grant administered by the local council available to fund a range of work that will help a disabled person remain in their home. It has to be supported by an occupational therapist recommendation. The maximum amount per grant is £30,000.

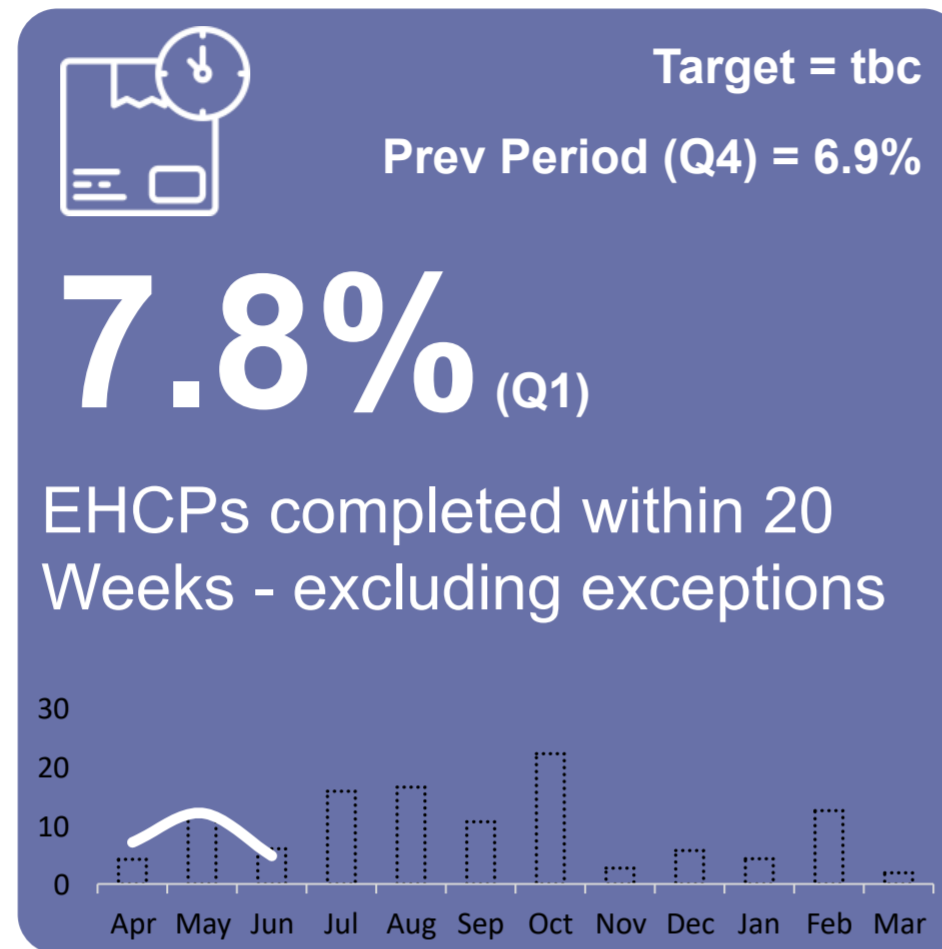
This measure seeks to monitor the expenditure against the DFG sum that the authority has to spend, we currently have underspend from the Covid period which is now being utilised.

The Q1 position Prep shows the total amount which includes committed spend, some of this may not be realised due to clients withdrawing from the grant approval or works being delayed into the next financial year.



Requests for statutory assessments have continued to rise since the covid-19 pandemic and shows no sign of slowing at the current time. Assessments can come from schools, other professionals, parents or a child and are made if a child's needs are beyond what the school can provide.

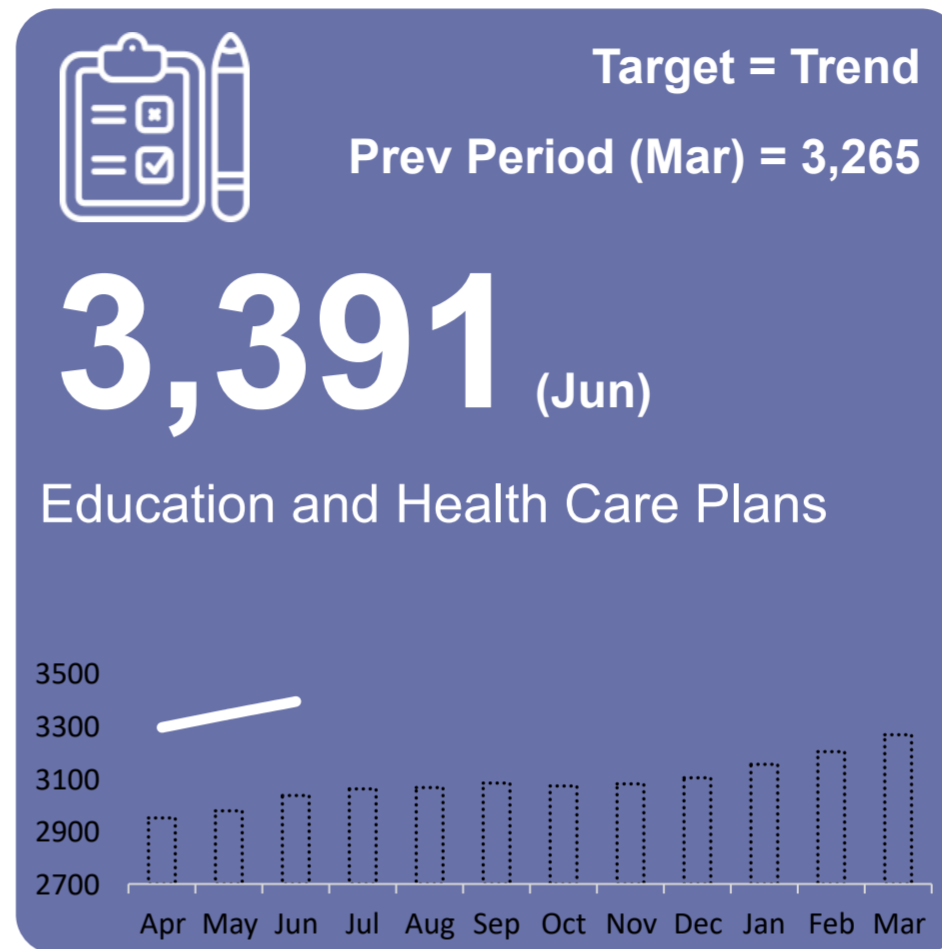
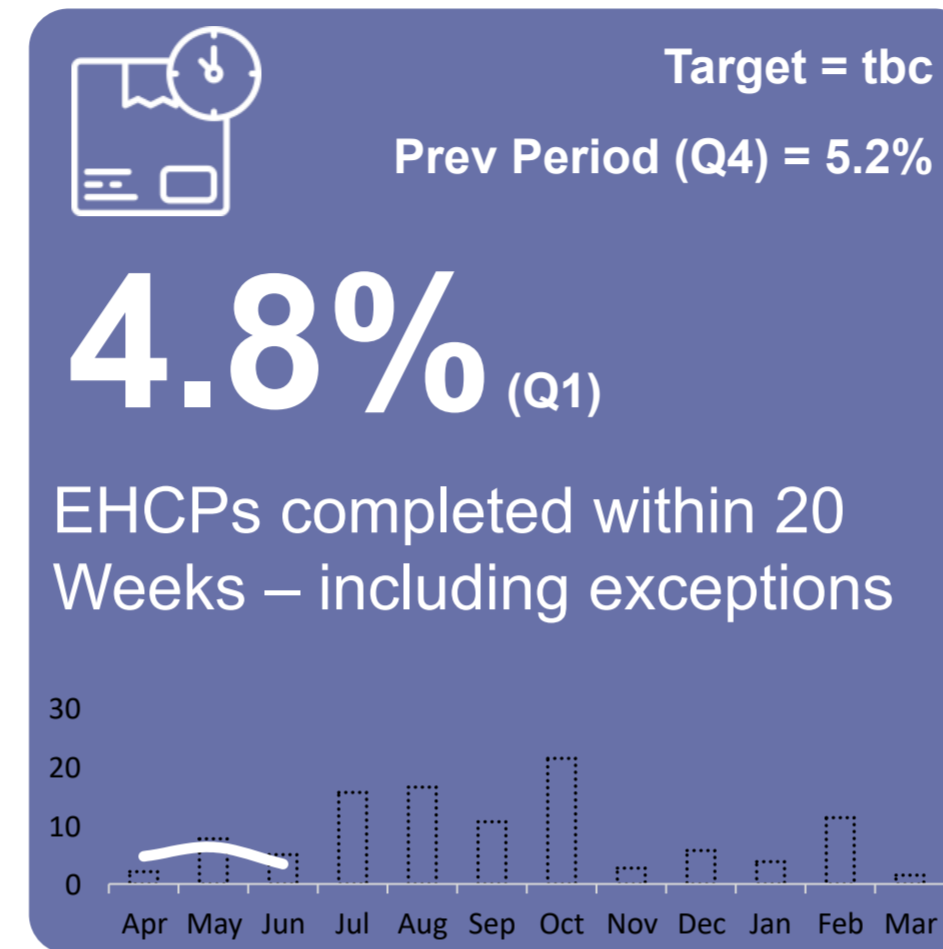
Last year the authority received 1,057 requests for assessment with the first 3 months of the current year having 284 new requests for assessments. The vast majority of requests for assessments are accepted.



These two measures demonstrate performance between a request being received and Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) being completed, the national timeframe for this process is 20 weeks and the measure is split to show all assessments (including exceptions) and a separate measure that shows performance if those with exceptions are excluded from the calculation.

Performance in this area is affected by a number of different factors that contribute to the process of completing a EHCP, information is required from partner organisations as well as advices being received from professionals. In quarter 1 we issued 165 EHCPs, of these 62 had exceptions. The resulting performance against these two indicators was 8 plans being completed within the 20 week timeframe.

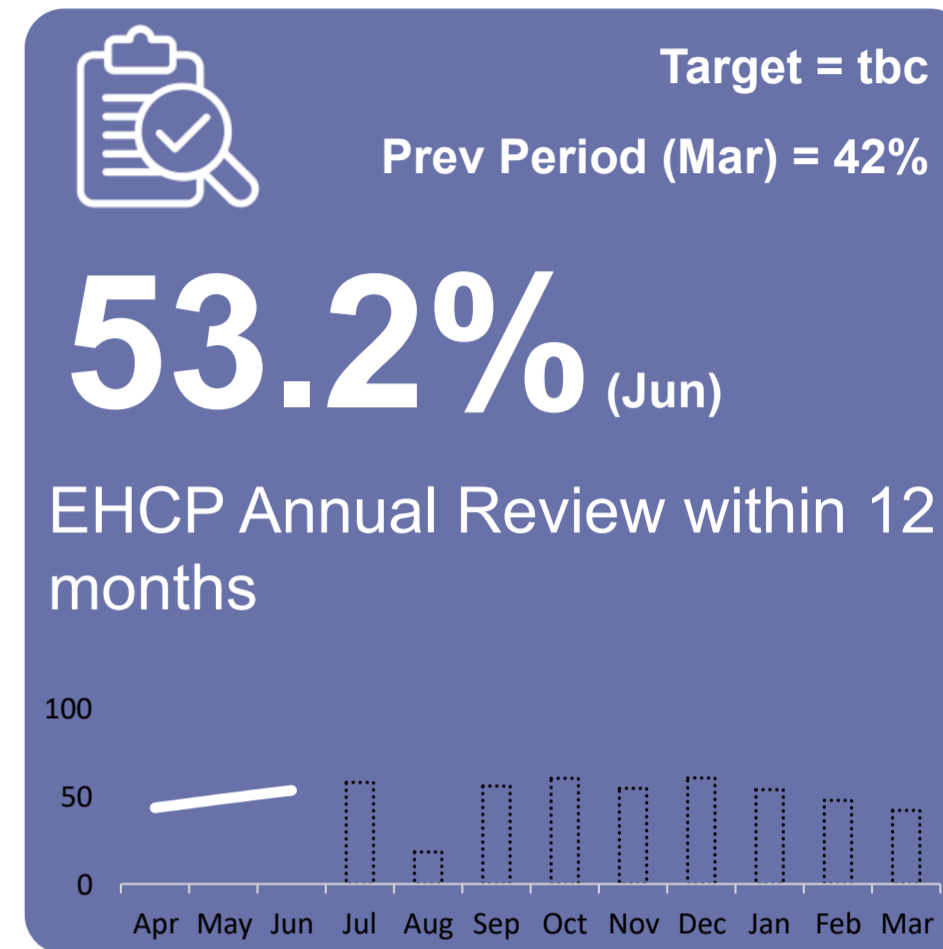
WNC has seen a significant increase in requests for EHCPs which is above the national increase. The main reason that EHCP's cannot be completed on time, is that professional advices are not received on time. This includes Educational Psychology assessments, social care assessments and specialist health assessments. The Council has commissioned additional EP capacity, and is reviewing the efficiency of internal processes to help to address this issue.



An education, health and care plan (EHCP) is for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through special educational needs support.

EHCPs identify educational, health and social needs and set out the additional support to meet those needs.

The number of children on EHCPs has continued to rise locally and nationally over recent years, the current number who are on a plan in West Northants is 3,391, this is an increase of 356 from the same point last year.

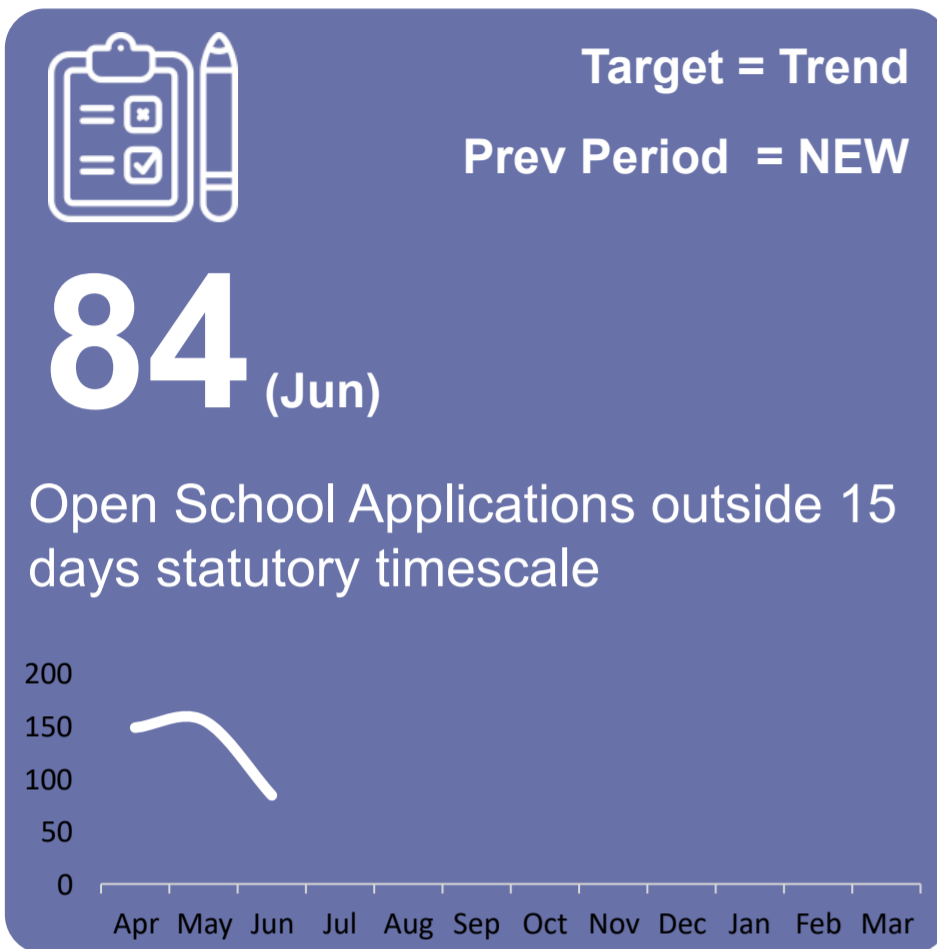


This indicator monitors our performance of our duty to complete an annual review of every EHCP within a year of either

- the last review being concluded; or
- the issue of the plan for the first time

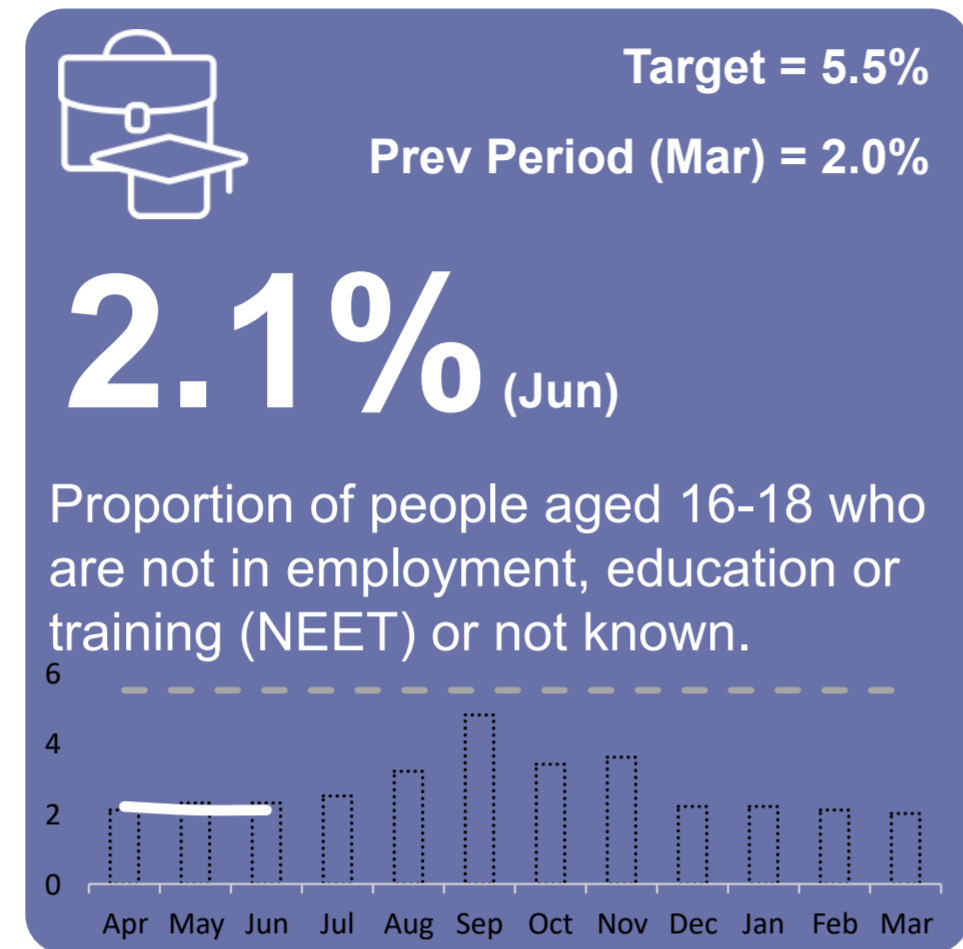
The increasing number of EHCPs in place increases pressure on the service to undertake reviews within appropriate timescales, despite the additional demand of increasing EHCPs performance of this measure is stable, although we would like to see this area improve the current performance is 53.2% of reviews at end of June were completed on time.

Additionally at the end of June 72.7% of children due a review had had one in the past 12 months



This measure reports against those school applications which are currently open and are outside of the 15 days statutory timescale for placement. This data does not include the normal Reception and Year 7 in-take application period. This indicator is impacted by two things, the volume of applications received and being processed and secondly the availability of school places to meet the in-year demand.

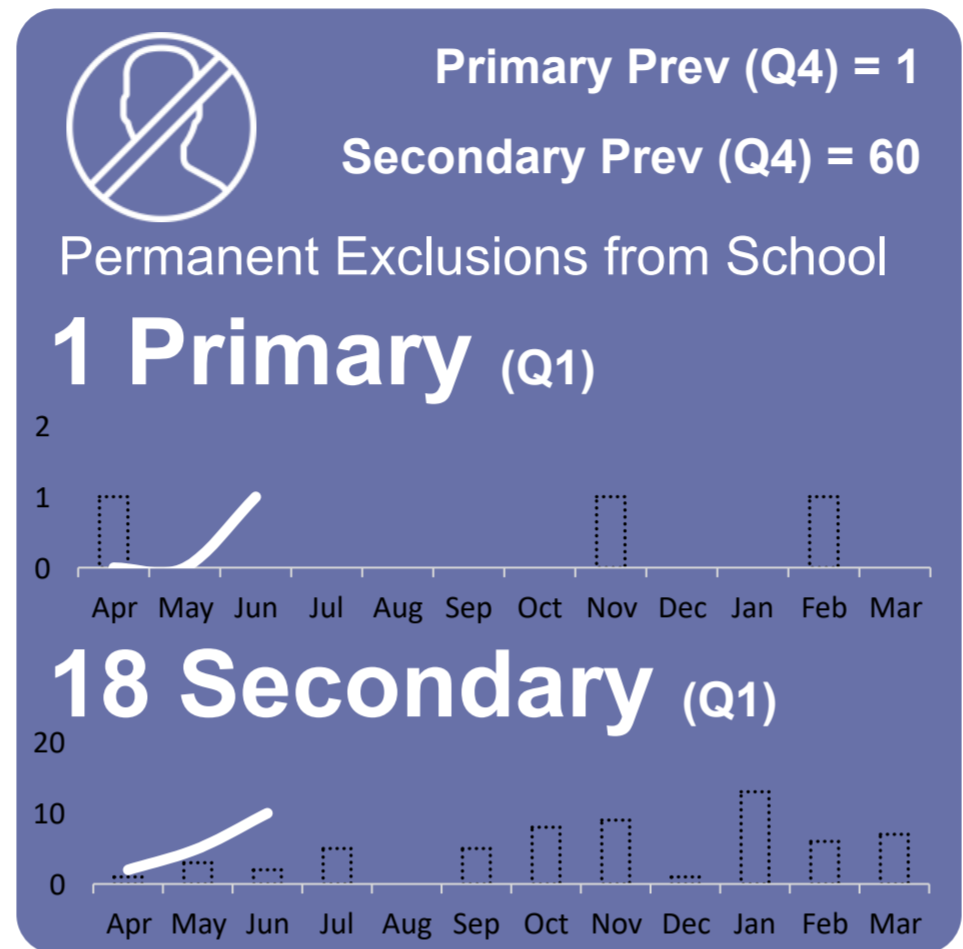
This first quarter of the year has seen change in the volumes outstanding with the position at the end of June with 84 applications outside the timeframe. As of the end of August the majority of cases have been worked through and places allocated with the position now at 9 applications outside the timeframe.



This indicator is showing the proportion of young people (aged 16-18) who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) or their status is 'not known'.

The latest position at the end of June shows that 2.0% of young people are either NEET or not known, this is a small increase of 0.1% from the last month. Overall this academic year has seen a reduction from the 4.8% high point recorded at the end of September and Prep the 2.2% reported at end of December.

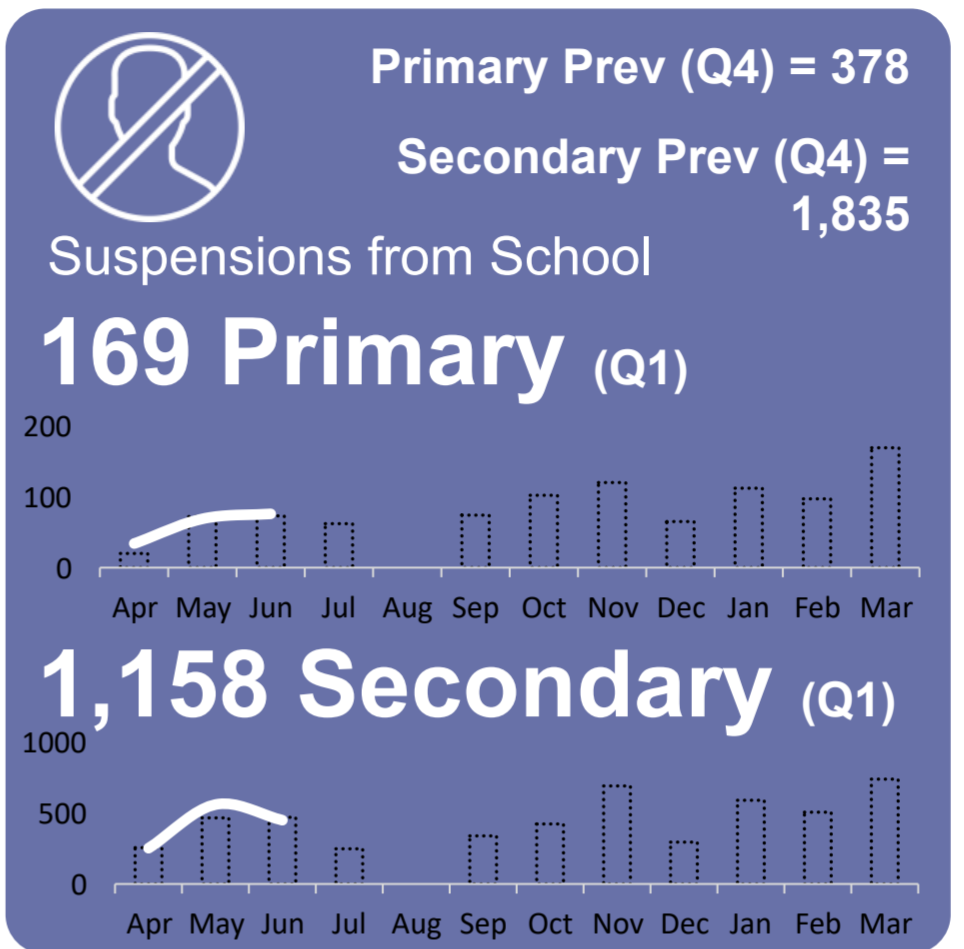
The high point recorded in September is a normal seasonal high due to a brand new cohort and initial reporting having to be collected from schools in Sept.



These metrics are providing an overview of exclusions and suspensions across both the primary and secondary phases of education. For both measures it is normal that secondary phases result in a greater number of exclusions and suspensions. The data being presented here is draft information covering April to June and is subject to change in October when the school census data with this information is received.

Exclusions: The first quarter this year has resulted in 1 primary (0.002 per 100 pupils) and 18 secondary (0.06 per 100 pupils) exclusions. Latest comparator information available for the 2022-23 Autumn and Spring term shows that national rate per 100 pupils for exclusions is 0.01 (primary) and 0.16 (secondary).

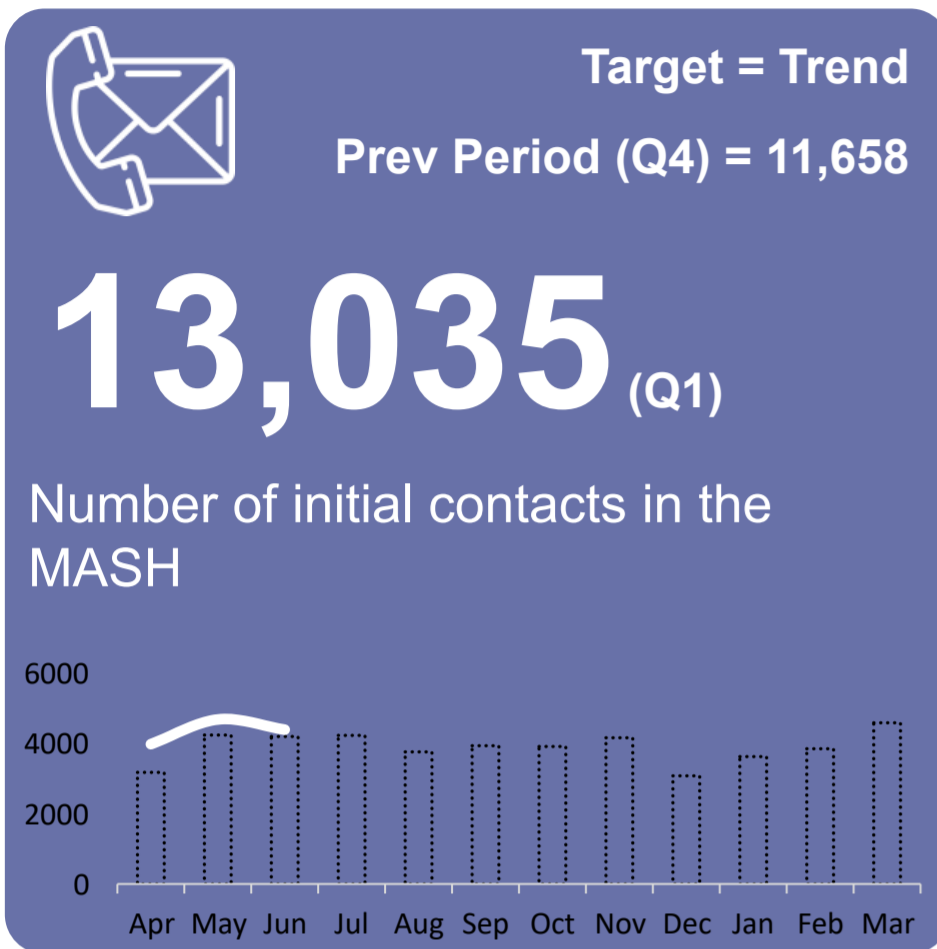
Suspensions: the first quarter this year has seen 169 suspensions in primary (0.46 per 100 pupils), resulting in 306 days of education lost and 1,158 suspensions in secondary (4.25 per 100 pupils), resulting in 2,107 days of education lost. The most common reasons for suspensions this quarter was disruptive behaviour which accounted for 655 suspensions. Latest comparator information available for the 2022-23 Autumn and Spring term shows that national rate per 100 pupils for suspensions is 1.71 (primary) and 11.37 (secondary).



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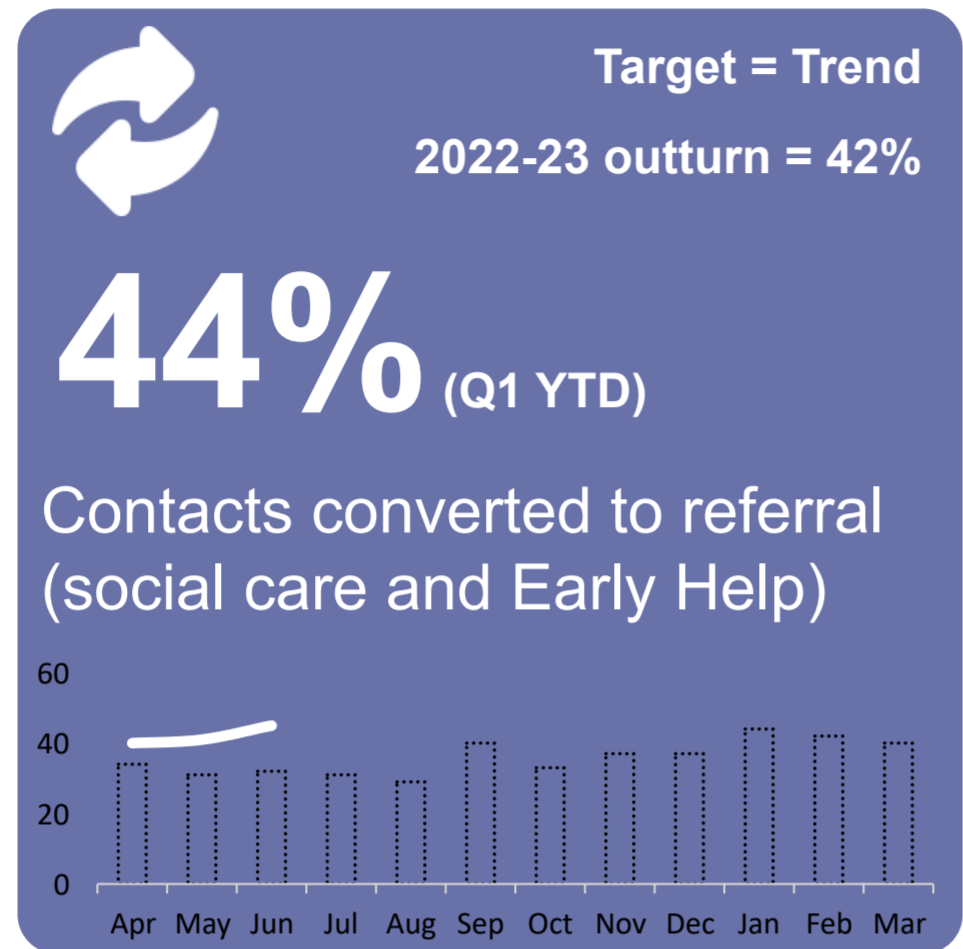
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This indicator monitors the volume of contacts that are received in the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

Contacts continue to be high with 13,035 contacts received in quarter 1, an increase of 1,400 from the previous quarter and also an increase from the same period last year (11,586).

Of the contacts received in the MASH the majority of these continue to have no further action (NFA) as the outcome, 56% of the contacts across the first quarter of the year.

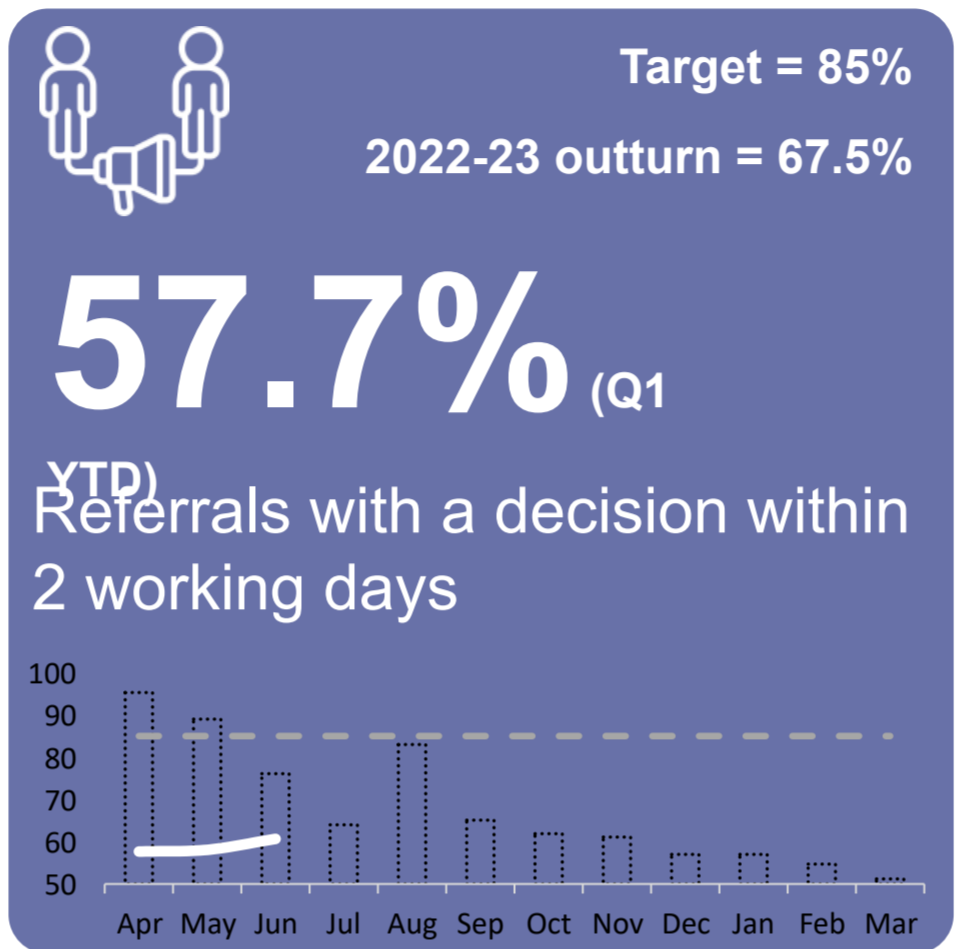


This measure shows the proportion of initial contacts that are converted to a referral to either social care or early help.

Social Care
From the 13,035 initial contacts received in the first quarter of the year 19% of those have been converted to a referral to social care, this relates to 2,467 referrals.

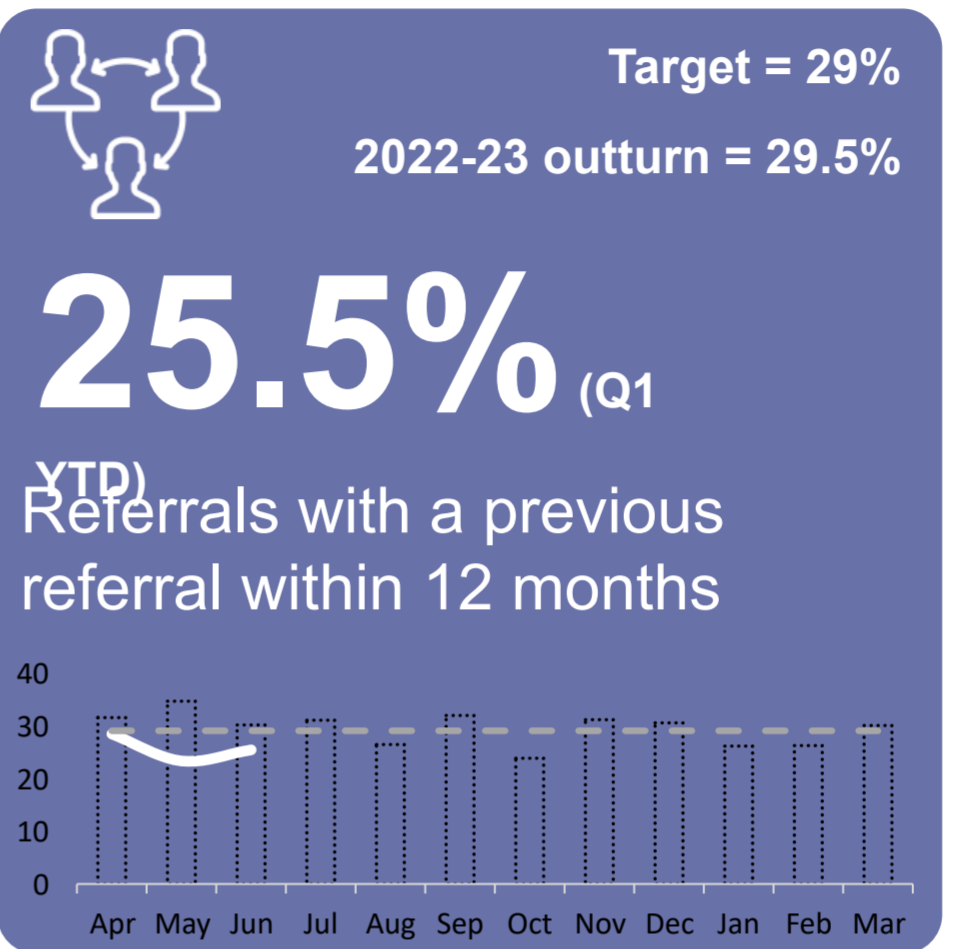
Early Help
25% of initial contacts from the first quarter resulted in a referral to Early Help.

Combined the two areas increased the conversion rate by 2% from the previous quarter.



A referral is a request for assessment/ social care service and a contact is information given to social care about a situation which does not meet the threshold for referral, for example notifying that the child has gone missing or domestic violence notifications from police if a child was present. Contacts are logged to give a complete history for the child but only count as a referral where they have resulted in an assessment.

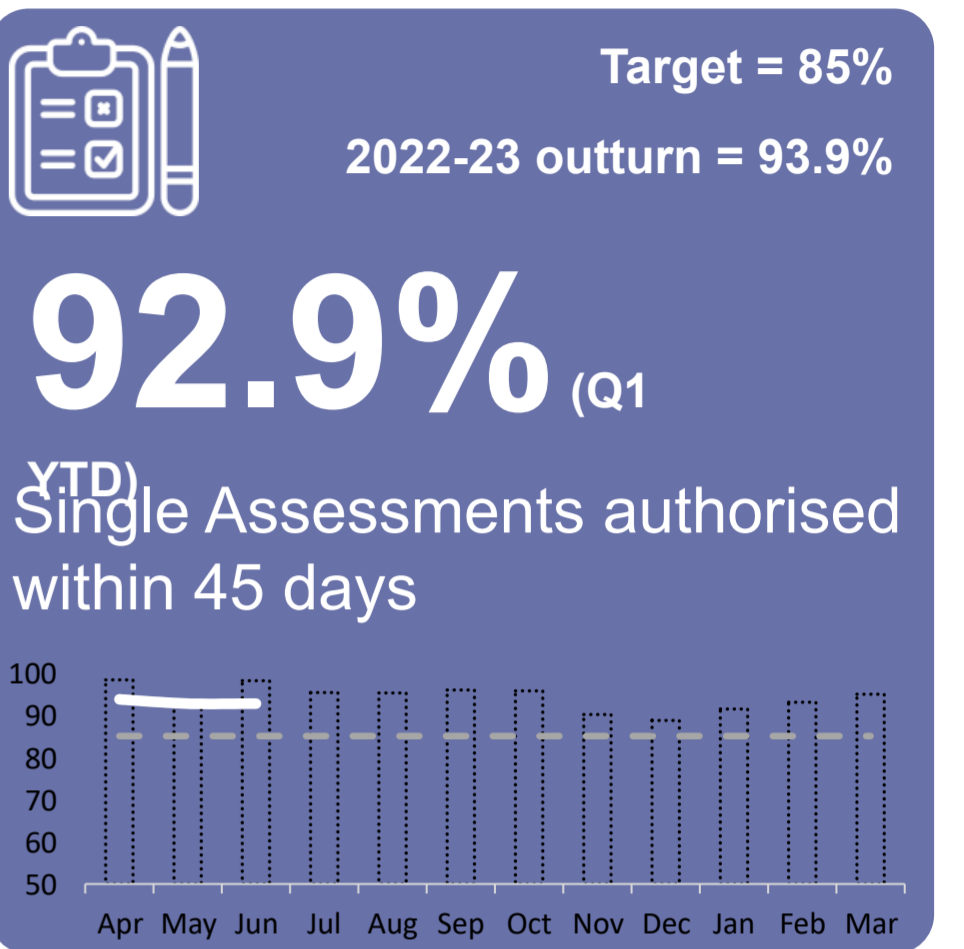
Performance has improved in the final month of the quarter, although still below where we would like. A recovery/action plan is in place and we are beginning to see the impact. Cases that are rag rated RED continue to be prioritised and decisions made within 1 day.



Re-referrals have improved this quarter and remain better than target. It remains an area of ongoing focus with audit and review for learning.

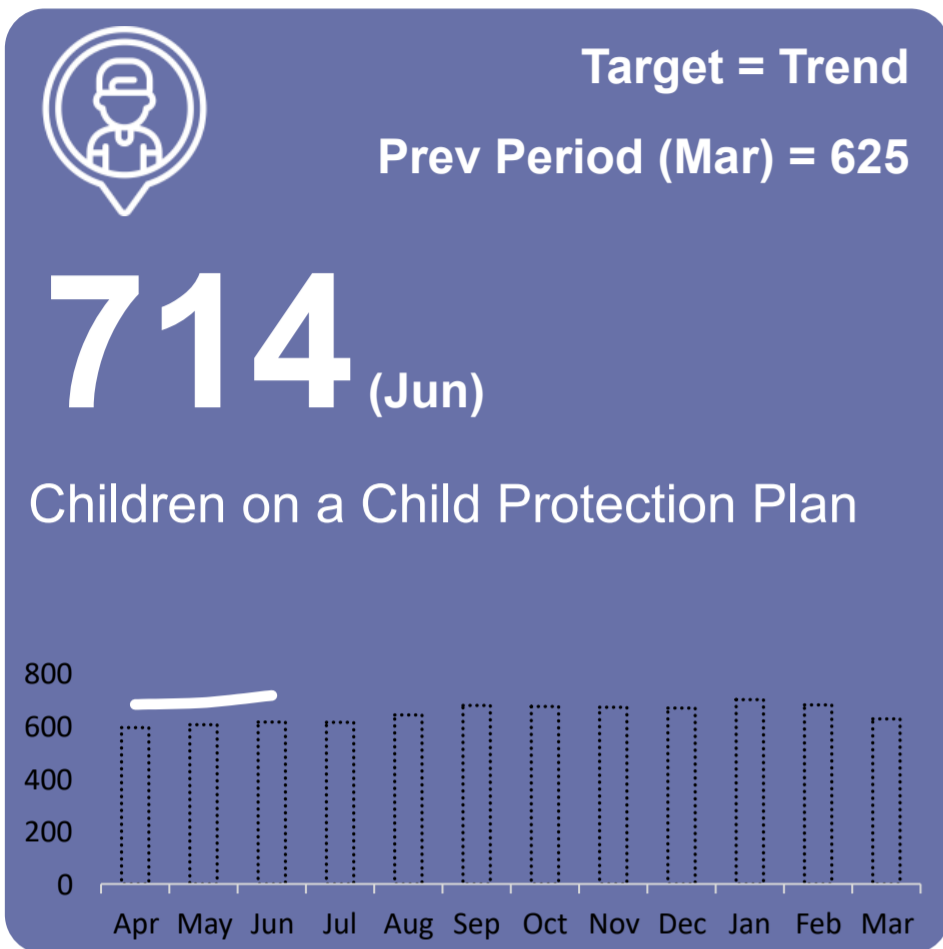
The dedicated education roles in MASH are working positively with schools to ensure appropriate referrals and compliments from schools about their roles are increasing. Work with all partners continues to ensure appropriate and robust application of thresholds.

Steps have been taken to strengthen the Early Help partnerships with Partnership Support Team (Early Help MASH) being placed in the MASH pods and a leaner step down process.



Assessment timescales remain consistently above target and national average, the end of this period reporting 92.9% authorised within 45 days.

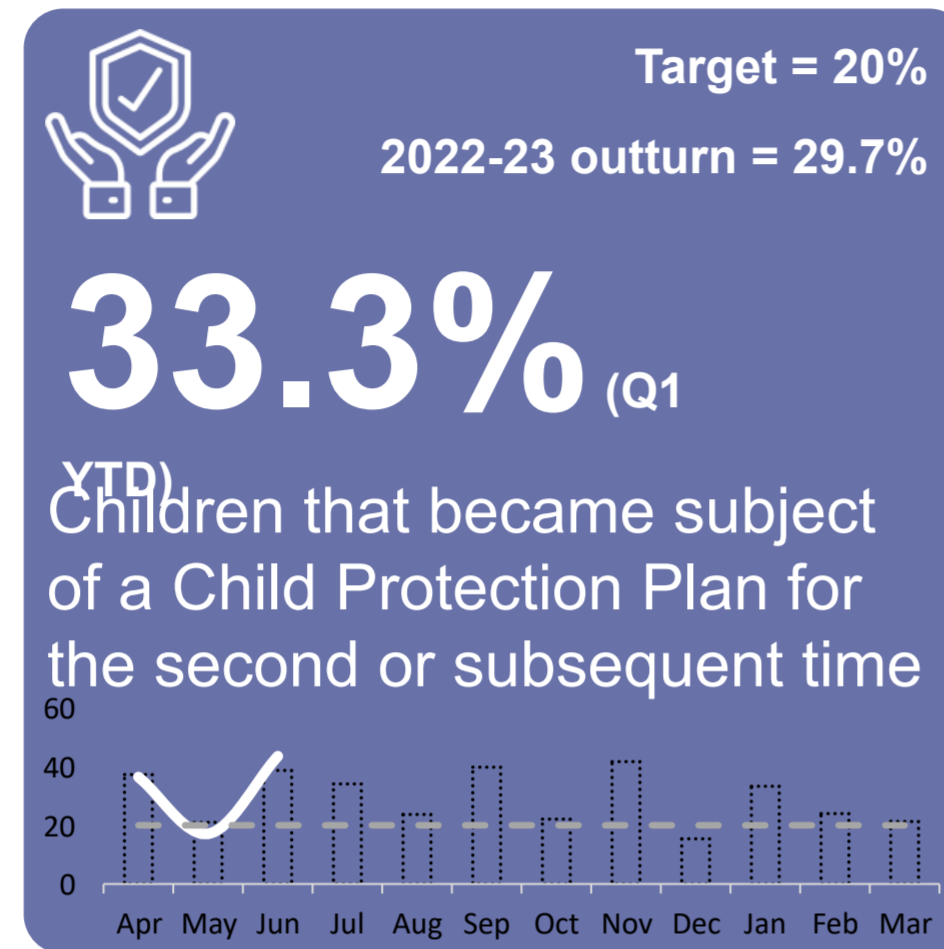
All managers monitor this very closely via daily reports. A narrative is provided for cases that go beyond 45 days and this remains a very small minority. Whilst staffing has presented challenges due to vacancies and staff performance issues in DAAT, there is now a positive move towards more appropriate staffing levels being achieved and sustained.



The purpose of a child protection plan is to facilitate and make explicit a co-ordinated approach to:

- Ensure that each child in the household is safe and prevent them from suffering further harm;
- Promote the child's welfare, health and development;
- Provided it is in the best interests of the child, to support the family and wider family members to safeguard and promote the welfare of their child.

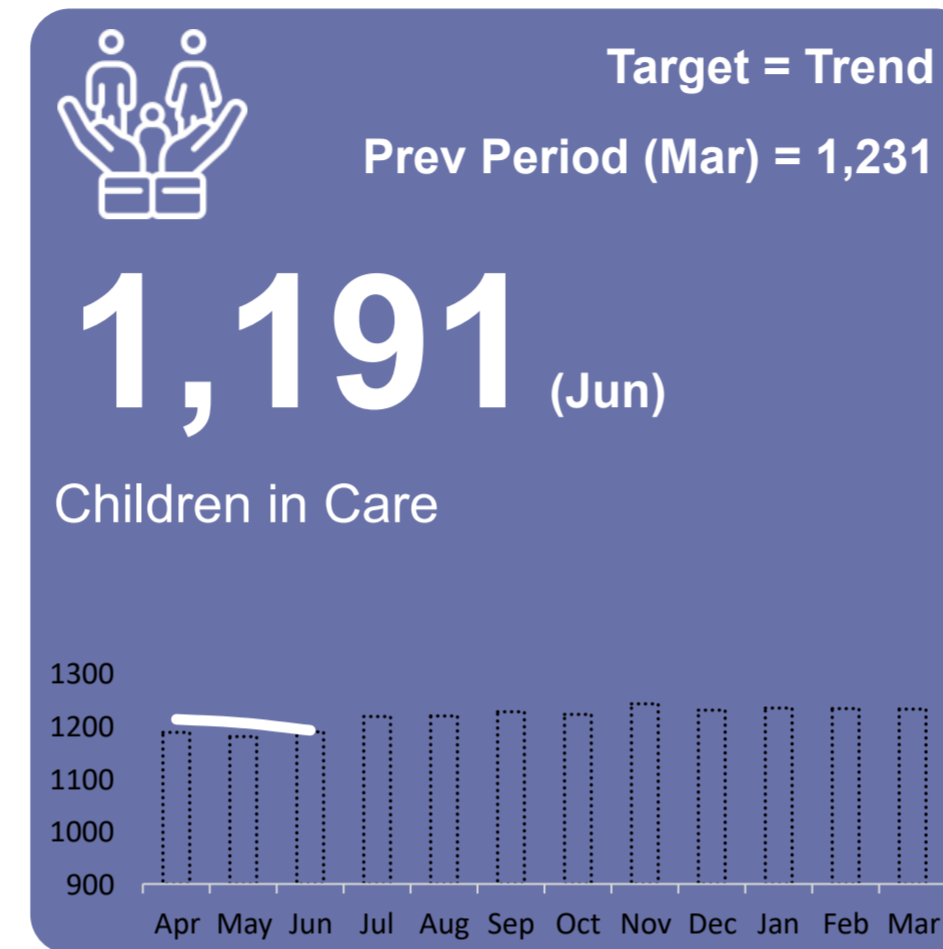
The number of children on a plan has continued to rise over the past 12 months, currently there are 714 children on a plan, which is an increase of 101 children from the same point last year.



This measure continues to be variable and, on occasion, too high. 41 of 94 plans starting in June are for children who had been on a plan before, 21 families. 8 families ended plans within the last year, 5 within 2 years and 8 ended 2+ years ago. If looking at children repeating within 2 years, the figure is 25.5%. The majority from 2+ years ago had emotional abuse as the reason for their previous plan.

Requests for a second or subsequent CP plan is overseen by Service Managers to ensure the right intervention for the child/family.

We are completing a more detailed review to understand this further including step down practice.



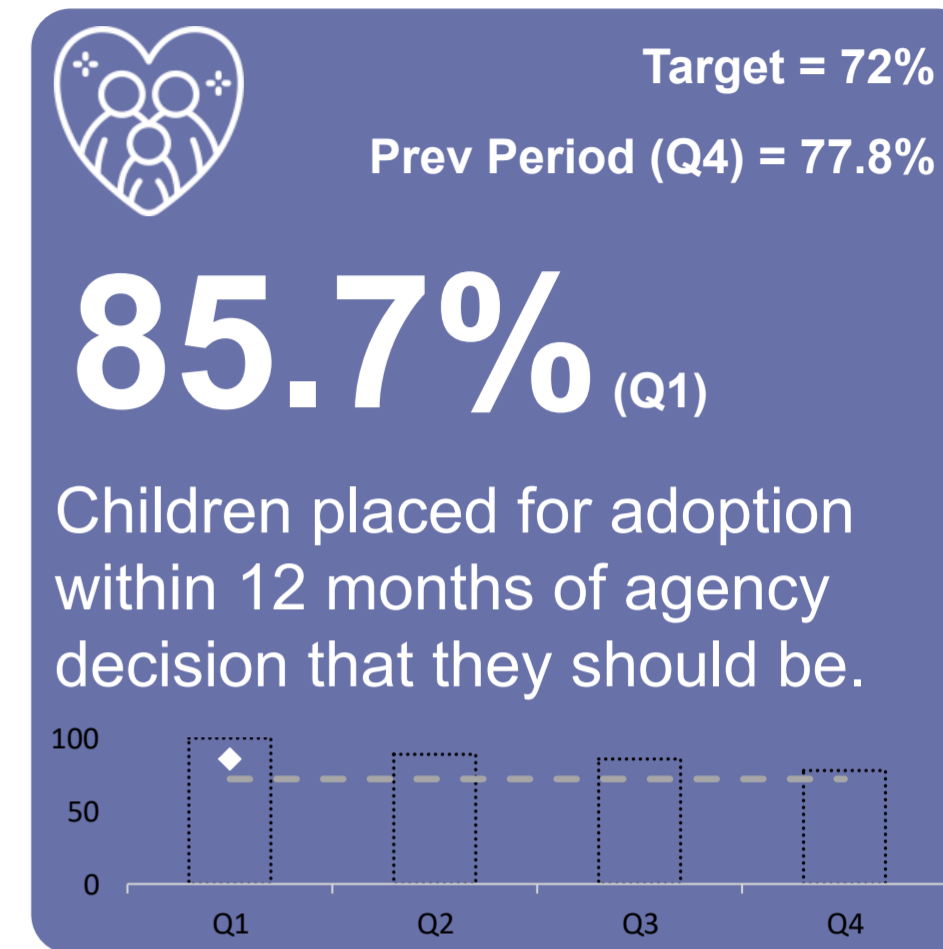
This measures monitors the number of children currently in care of the authority.

At the end of June there were 1,191 children in care, which is as similar number as 12 months ago (1,188) and a reduction from a high point of 1,233 at the end of January.

When looking at the current number of children in care as a rate of the population, for Northamptonshire, at the end of June this is 69.7 per 10,000 population, this compares similarly to the national average of 70 per 10,000.

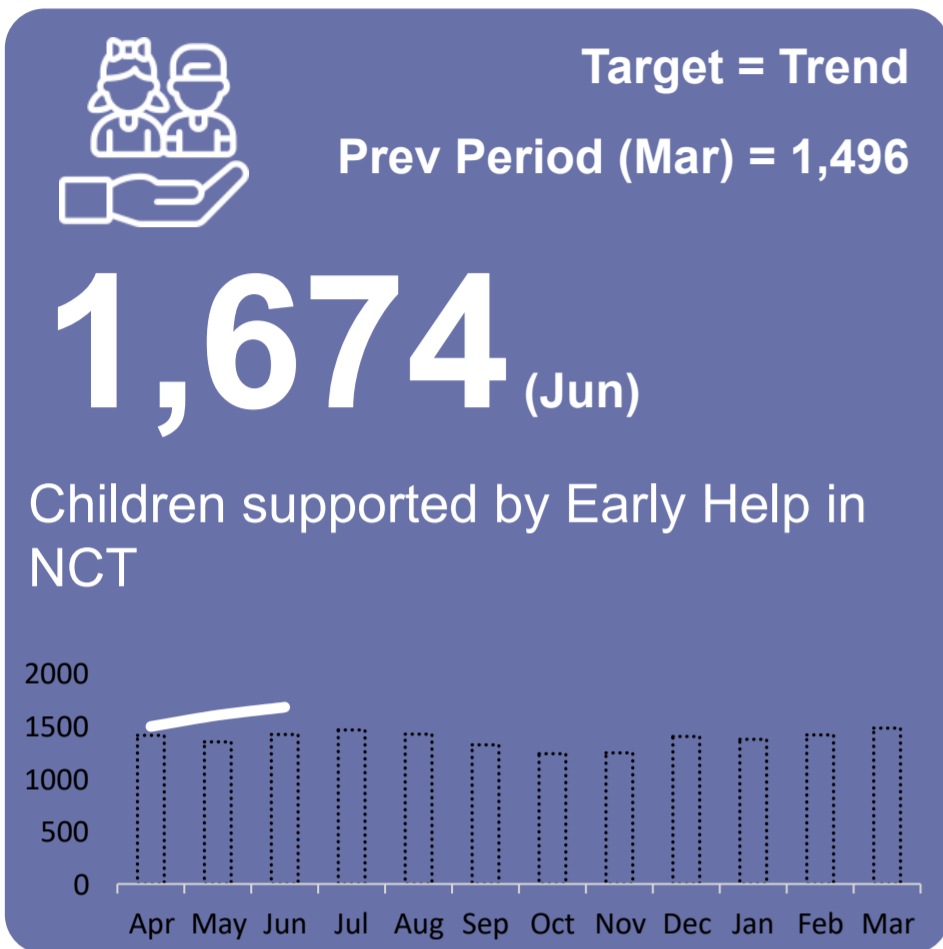
Number of Children in Care who have previously been looked after.

This is a new measure for inclusion in this years scorecard. The data flow need to be setup in order to be able to report this from Quarter 2 onwards.



Strengthened family finding and matching processes have been implemented which alongside improved permanency tracking arrangements have supported timely decision making adoption process and ability to progress adoption placements. The use of foster to adopt placements have also positively influenced this performance indicator.

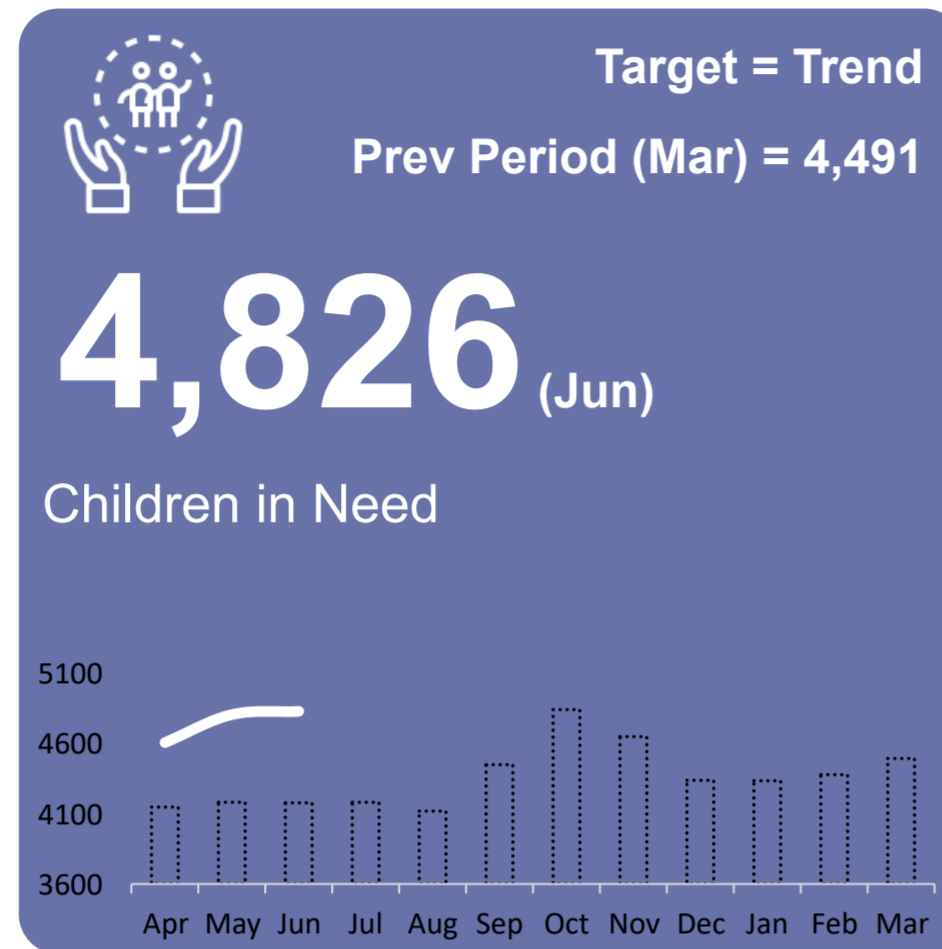
Performance of this indicator can fluctuate considerably from period to period due to small numbers. This quarters performance relates to 7 children who have been placed for adoption.



This measure is in place to monitor the number of children being supported by Early Help service provision in NCT. Early help is in place to ensure that the right help and support is available to families as soon as it is needed, it is open and accessible to families with children and young people of any age.

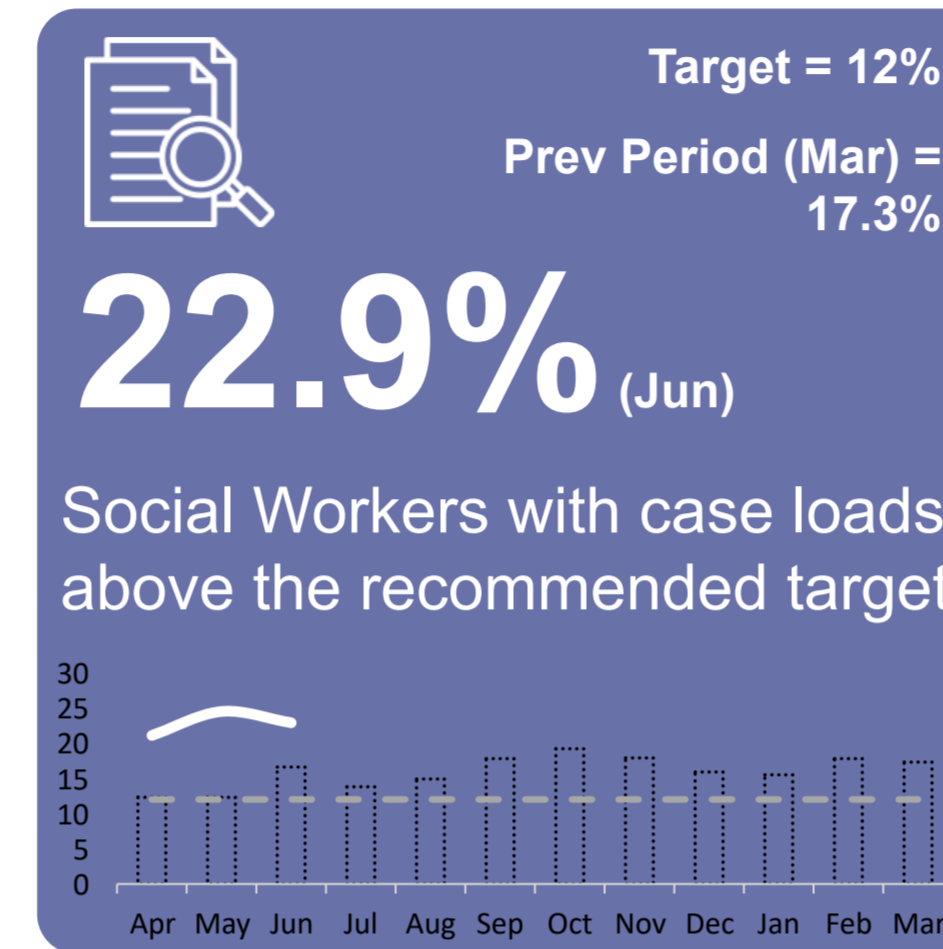
The number in the caseload has fluctuated over the past 12 months but has remained with a similar range.

At the end of June 1,674 children were being supported, which is the highest number in the last year.



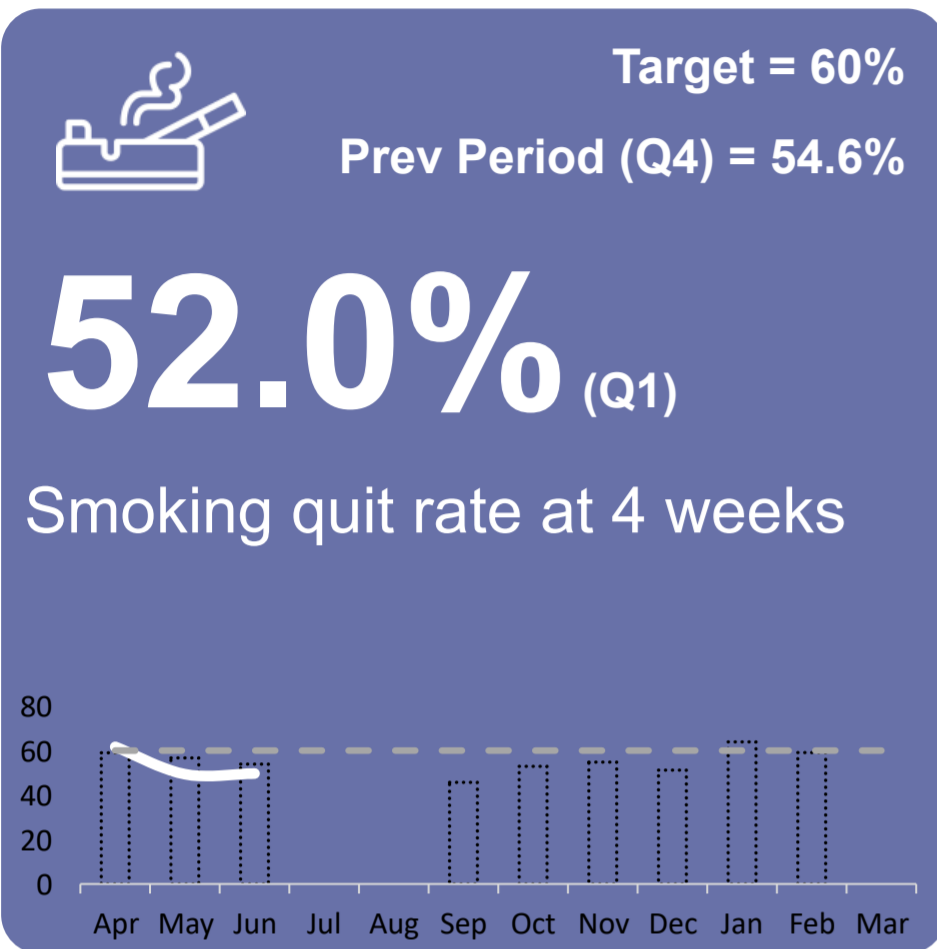
Children in Need are those assessed as needing help and protection as a result of risks to their development or health. This group includes children on child in need plans, children on child protection plans, children looked after by local authorities, care leavers and disabled children. Children in need include young people aged 18 or over who continue to receive care, accommodation or support from children’s services and unborn children.

The current number of children in need in Northamptonshire is 4,826, an increase from the previous quarter of 335 and also from the same point last year when the CIN number was 4,176.



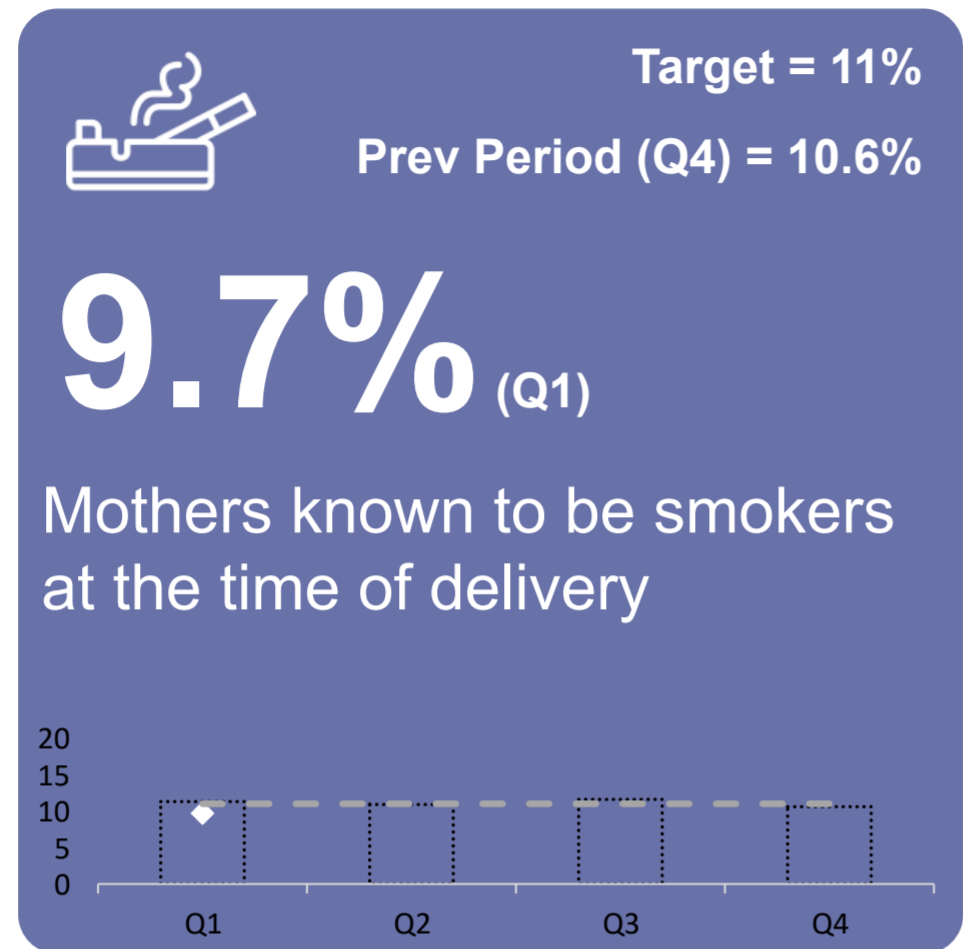
June sees an decrease in workers with caseloads above target to 22.9%. Two managed teams provide additional capacity in managing the cases open to the Safeguarding service and a 3rd managed team operates in DAAT to support business needs and ensure manageable caseloads, however, the pressure remains high.

The recruitment drive remains central to implementation of the workforce strategy. The increase this month is largely due to increases in safeguarding where recruitment has been an issue in recent months.



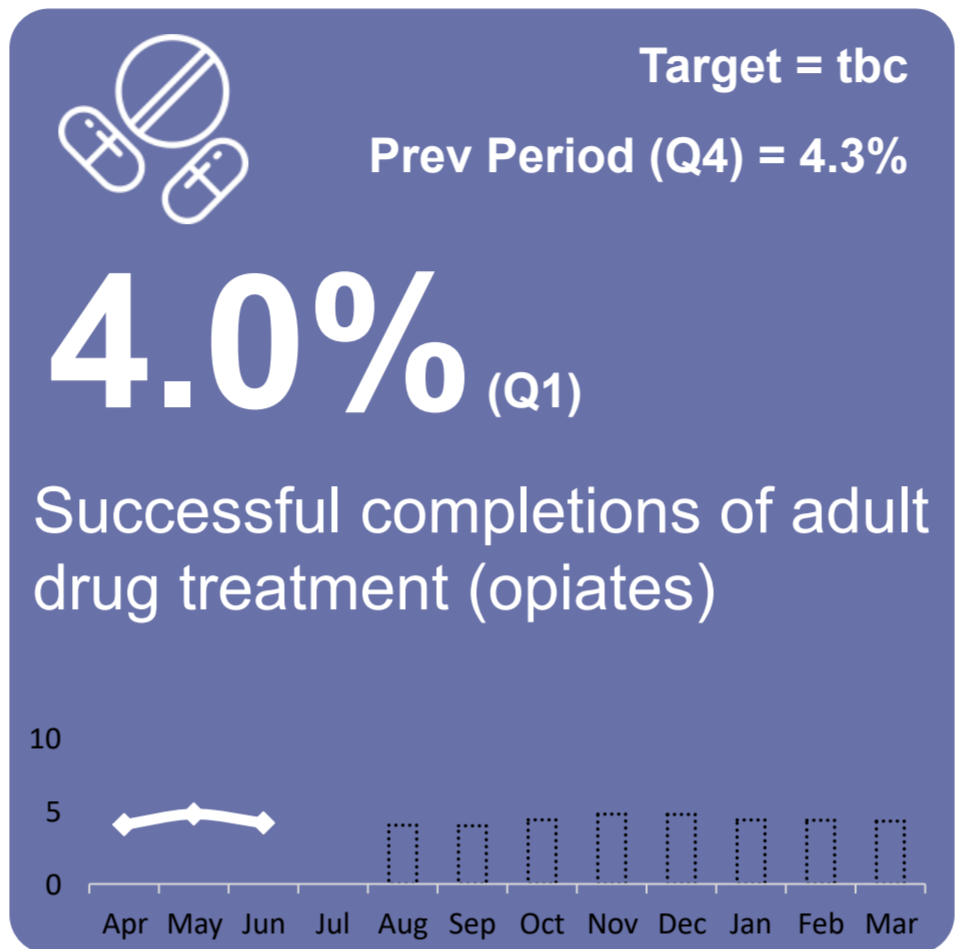
Our local performance data shows that 52.0% of clients who set a quit date have successfully quit at 4 weeks in the first quarter of this year. Looking back over the previous 12 months this compares under recent performance in quarter 4 of 54.6% and also below the same period last year of 57%

In comparison to the national quit rate for 2019-20 of 51% (latest available) West Northamptonshire is above the national average for those that quit smoking through the local service offer.



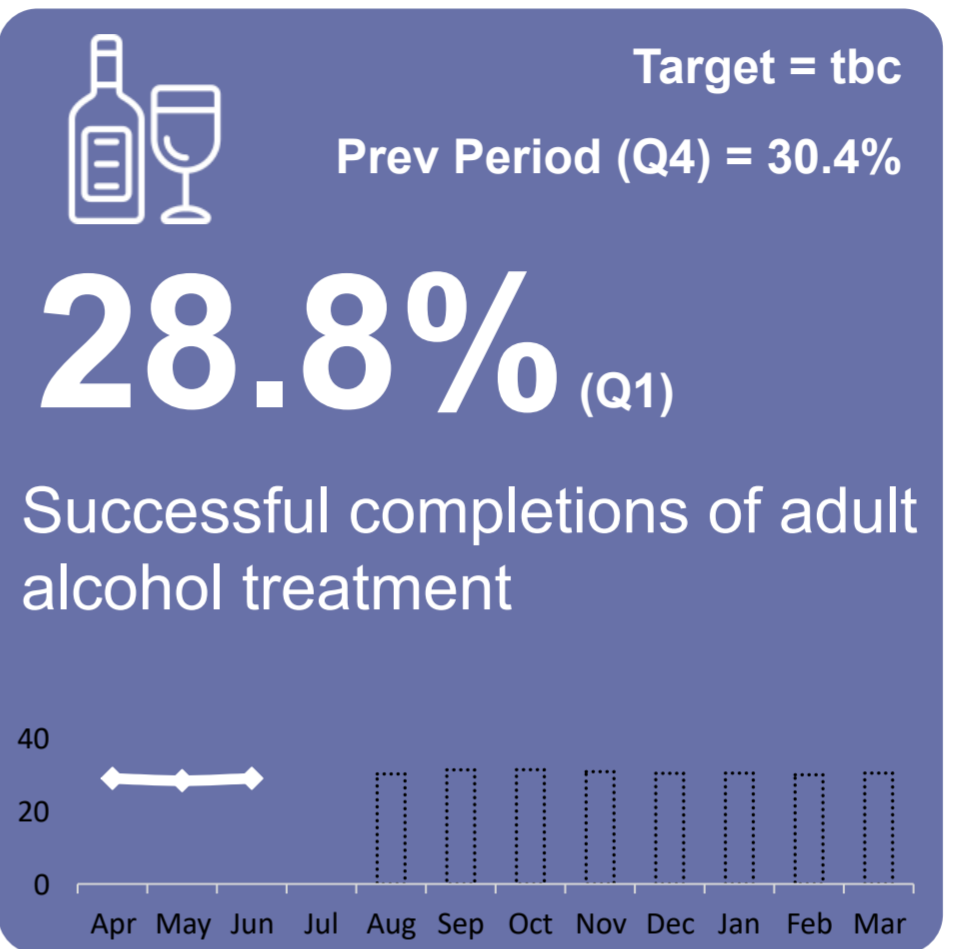
Smoking in pregnancy has well known detrimental effects for the growth and development of the baby and health of the mother. On average, smokers have more complications during pregnancy and labour, including bleeding during pregnancy, placental abruption and premature rupture of membranes.

Of the births this quarter 9.7% of mothers are known to be smokers at the time of birth, this is 0.9% lower than the performance in the previous quarter and compares with a latest (2021-22) regional average of 11.8% and England average of 9.1%.



This indicator shows the percentage of opiate drug users that left drug treatment successfully and did not re-present to treatment within six months. Individuals achieving this outcome demonstrate a significant improvement in health and well-being in terms of increased longevity, reduced blood-borne virus transmission, improved parenting skills and improved physical and psychological health.

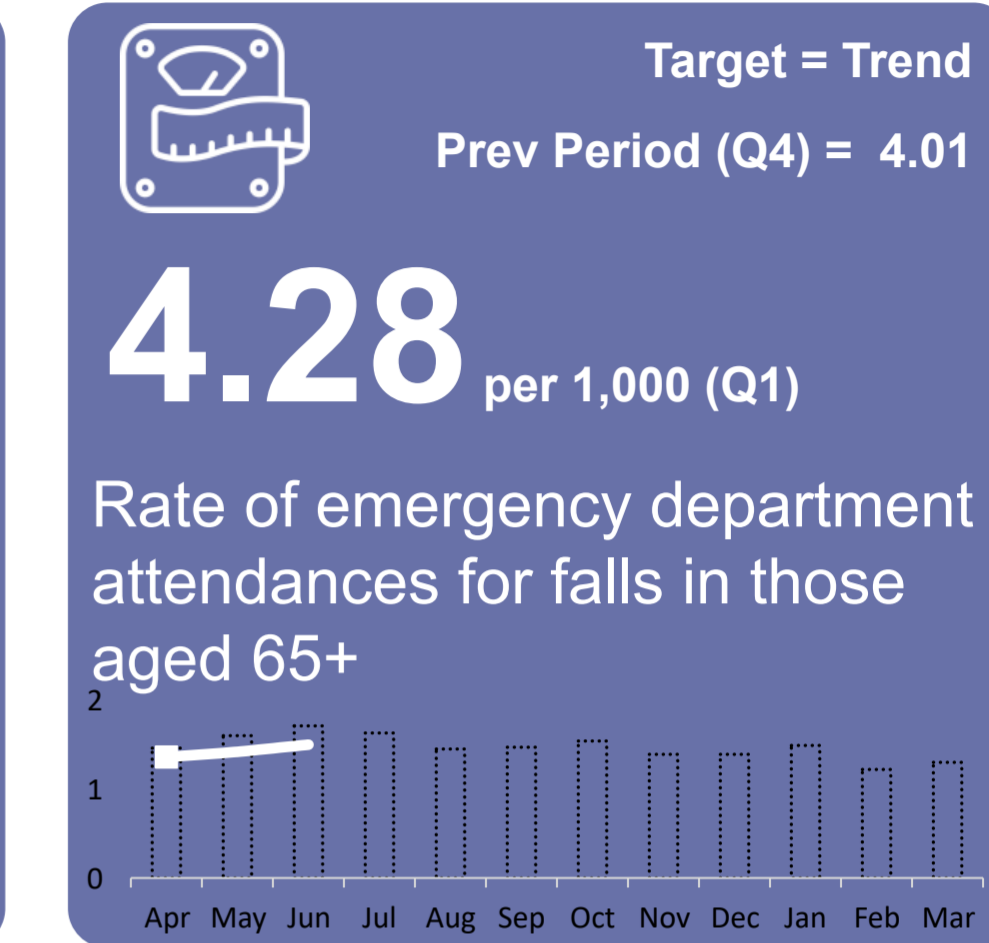
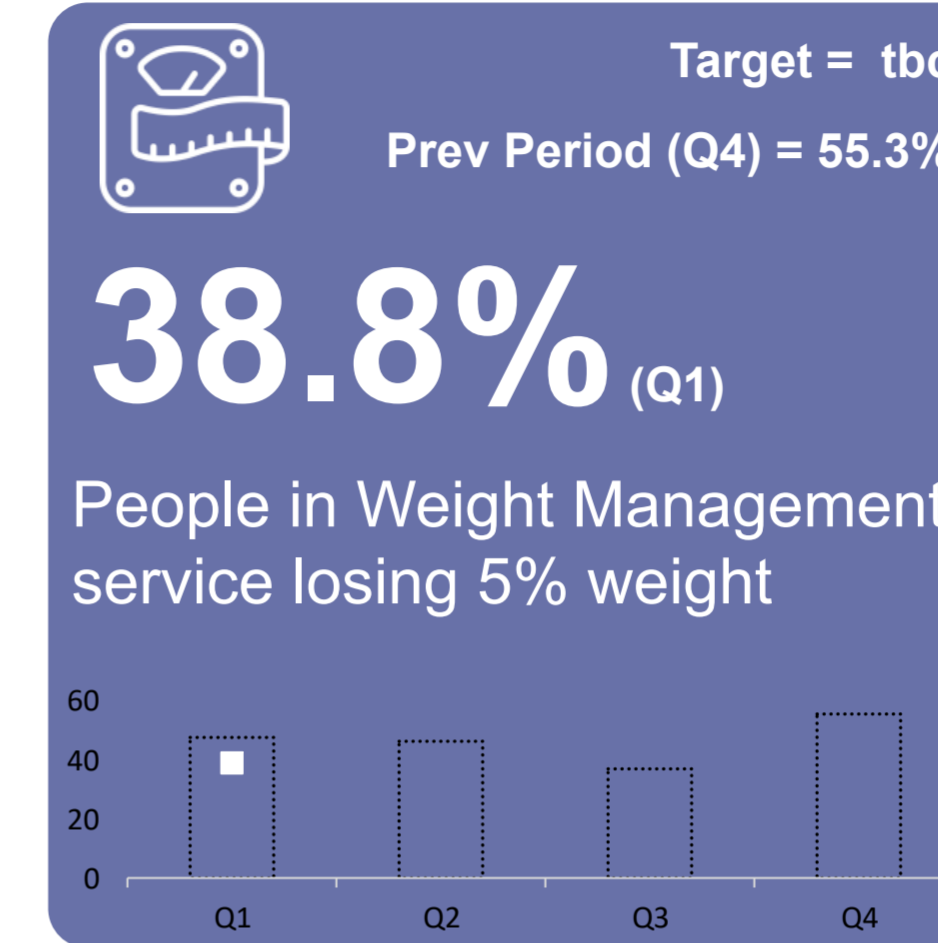
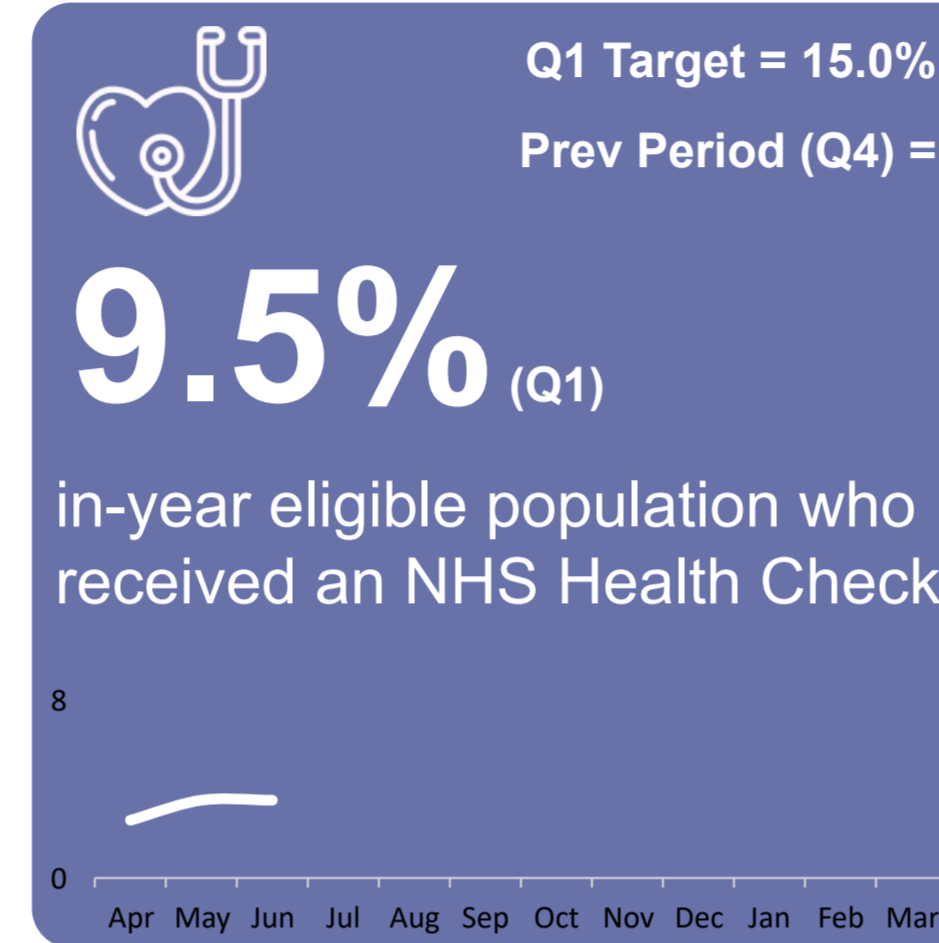
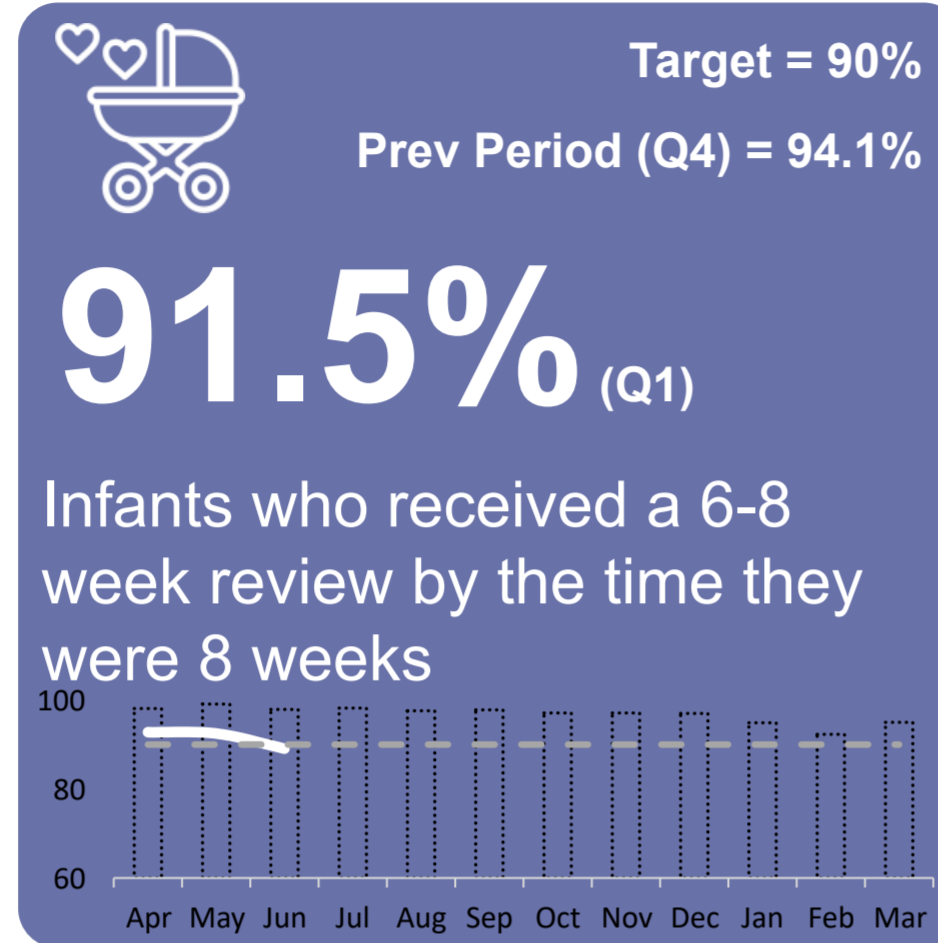
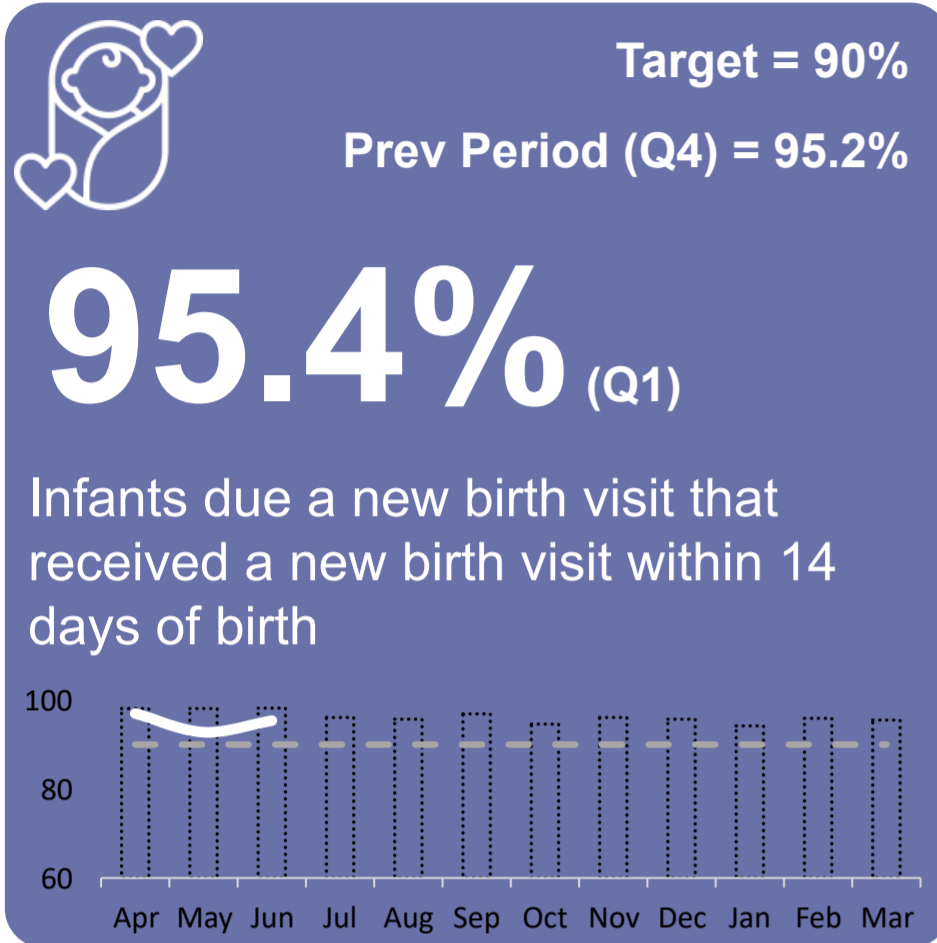
The current quarter's performance is 4% completions, this relates to 32 people who were successfully discharged and did not return to services within six months. This is a reduction from last quarter and reflects lower against a national average of 4.97%.



This indicator demonstrates the percentage of adults that successfully complete structured treatment for alcohol dependence in a year and who do not re-present to treatment within six months.

The latest published data shows that 28.8% of adults who received treatment were successfully discharged and did not return to services within six months, this relates to 151 clients treated in the reported period.

The national average for the same period is 35.1% successfully discharged and not return to services within 6 months.



The health visiting service leads on the delivery of the Healthy Child Programme (HCP), which was set up to improve the health and wellbeing of children aged 0 to 5 years. This is achieved through health and development reviews, health promotion, parenting support, and screening and immunisation programmes.

The health visiting service consists of specialist community public health nurses and teams who provide expert information, assessments and interventions for babies, children and families, including first time mothers and fathers with complex needs. The indicators included here are for both new birth assessments and the check at 6-8 weeks.

There is good performance in both of the measures reported here in the latest quarter with the new birth visits completed within 14 days reporting at 95.4% for quarter 14, a increase from 95.2% reported in quarter 4. The 8 week reviews completed measure has decreased in performance from 94.1% in quarter 4 to 91.5% in this quarter.

Both of these indicators perform well in comparison to national averages of 82.7% for 14 day visits and 81.6% for the 8 week visits and are above our local target of 90% for each indicator.

The NHS Health Check is a health check-up for adults in England aged 40-74. It's designed to spot early signs of stroke risk, kidney disease, heart disease, type 2 diabetes or dementia.

The performance of this indicator is looked at as a whole year and this number will grow as the year continues. The target for this year is 60% of the eligible in-year population have received a health check, the target has been profiles to 15% per quarter. The performance for the first quarter shows that 9.5% of eligible population have received their health check in this period.

Being overweight there is a higher risk of heart disease; stroke; type 2 diabetes; some types of cancer; arthritis and back pain and losing weight has many health benefits.

The current quarter has seen 174 people who are being supported by the weight management service losing at least 5% of their starting body weight.

This is a drop from the performance in the previous quarter, which was an abnormally high performing period for this service where 55.3% of those starting achieved at least 5% weight loss.

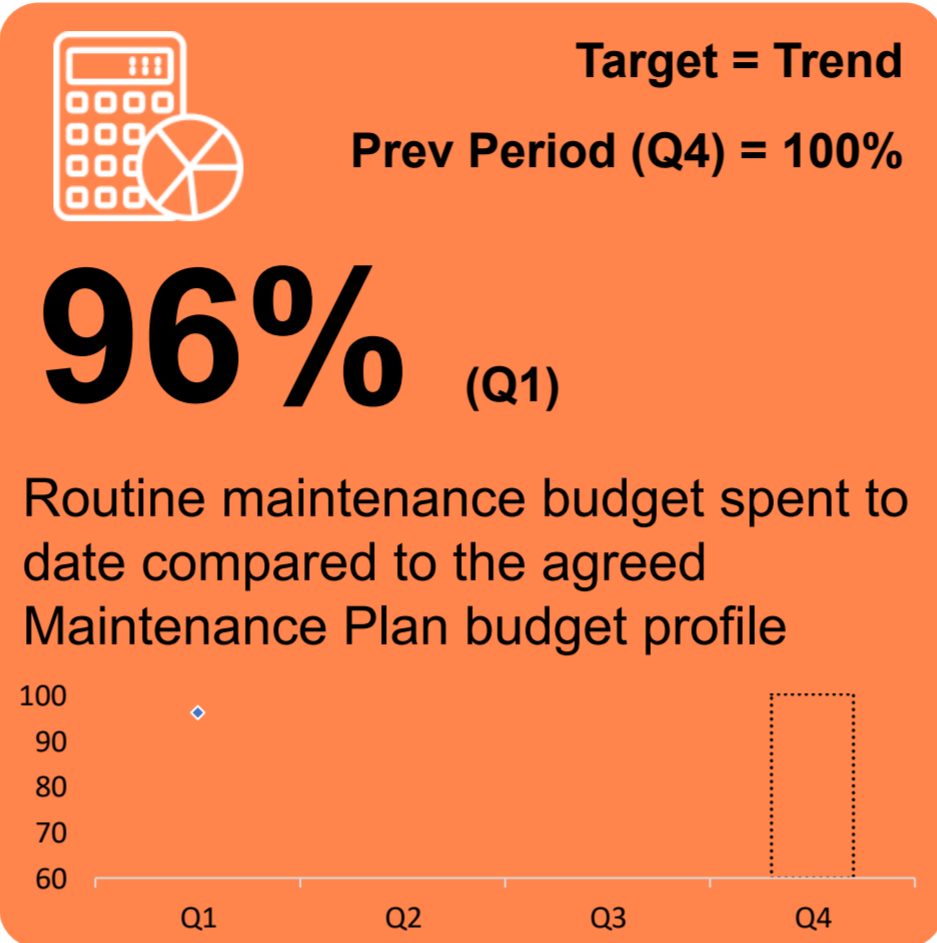
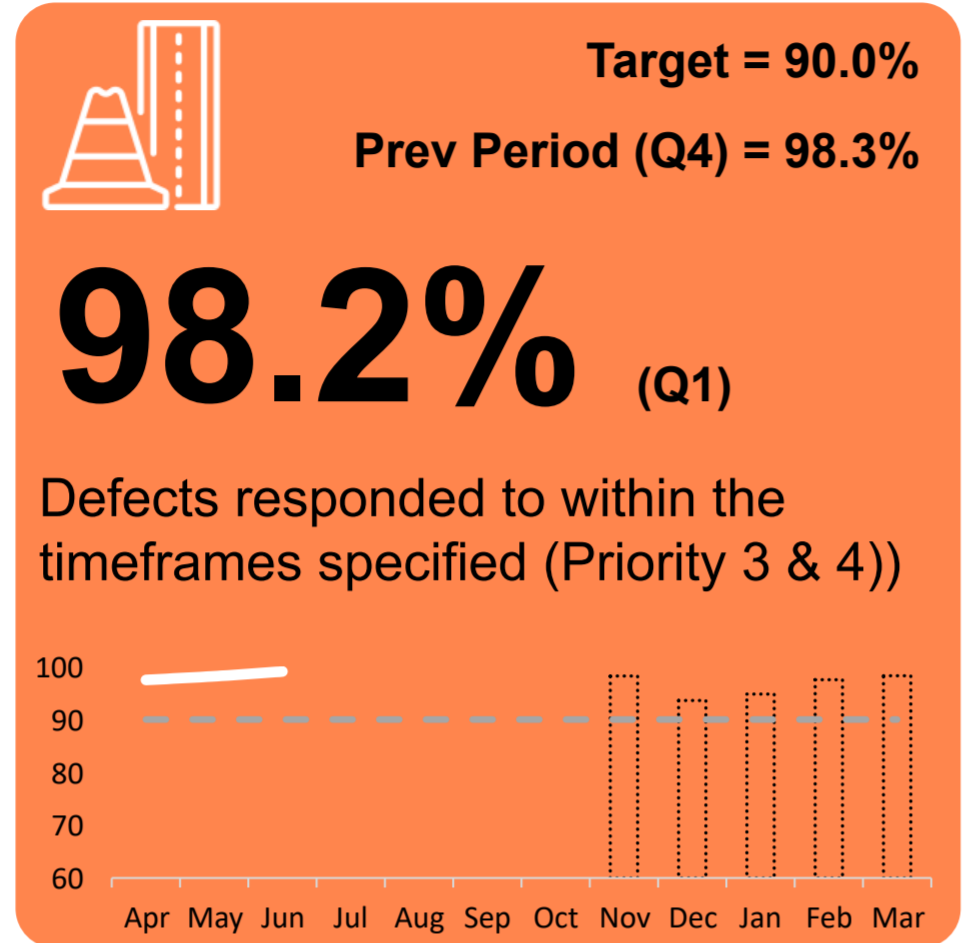
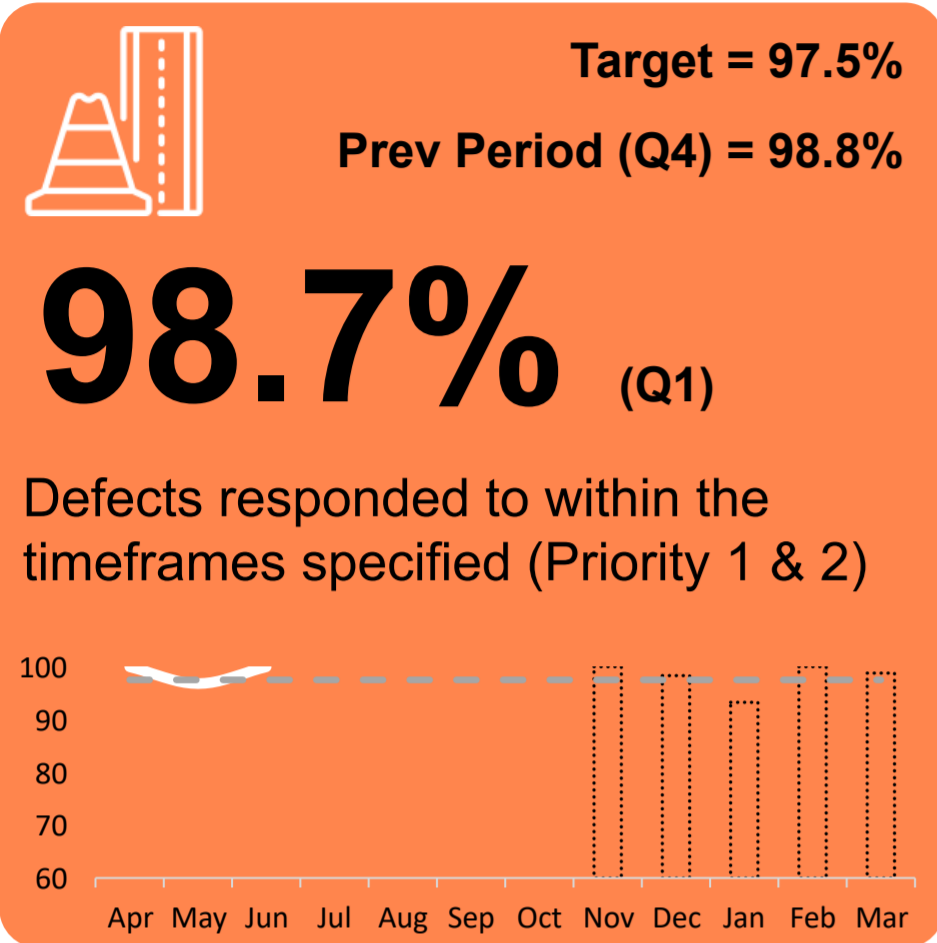
This indicator is calculated by the Northamptonshire ICB and based upon emergency hospital admissions for the relevant primary diagnosis codes for falls and the patients home address being in West Northants.

This quarter has 325 emergency admissions for falls resulting in a rate of 4.28 per 1,000 population (aged 65+).

This is an increase from the 305 admissions in the previous quarter, but is reduction from the 363 admissions for the same period last year.

Priority 3 – Connected Communities

Transport & Connectivity



Highways defects are split into 4 separate categories, depending on their severity, each of these categories has a different timescale for repair from the most severe (P1) to the least severe (P4). These indicators are split into two separate measures to report against the more and less severe repairs.

Data collection for these indicators commenced as part of the new highways contract for West Northamptonshire Council in November 2022, therefore trend information is not available for comparison prior to that period.

Performance data shows that for the two indicators in the period are performing well against the targets that have been set as part of the contract in each month of this quarter, broken down we can see the monthly trend against these two indicators as follows;

- P1/ P2 repairs achieved 100% in April, 96.8% in May and 100% in June.
- P3/ P4 repairs achieved 97.5% in April, 98.2% in May and 99.1% in June.
- Both of the indicators continue to perform well and are above target and similar to the previous reporting period

The final measure above shows the percentage of the routine maintenance budget that has been spent to date compared to the agreed budget profile, currently at the end of June this is reporting as 96% of the budget profile has been spent.

Priority 3 – Connected Communities

Transport & Connectivity

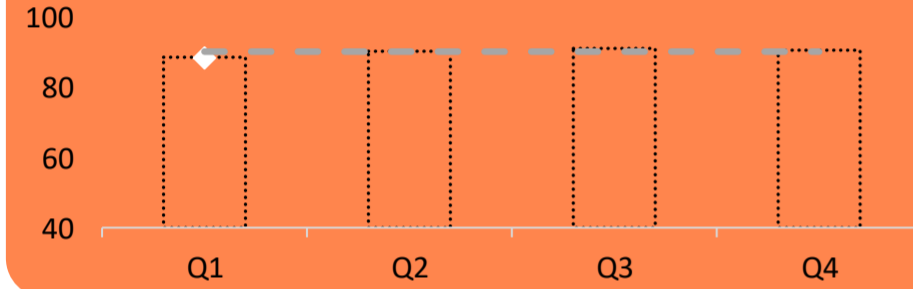


Target = 90%

Prev Period (Q4) = 90.4%

88.2% (Q1)

Customers who are quite or extremely satisfied with service from the Customer Services



This indicator reflects the levels of satisfaction from residents who interact with our Customer Services function.

Performance for this indicators is broadly consistent since collection began 15 months ago and within tolerances of the 90% target.

Quarter 4 has seen 357 people respond to the survey when asked how satisfied they were with the service received, of these 315 were satisfied with the service they received. This is a decrease or 2.2% when compared to the previous quarter and similar to the same period last year (88.4%)

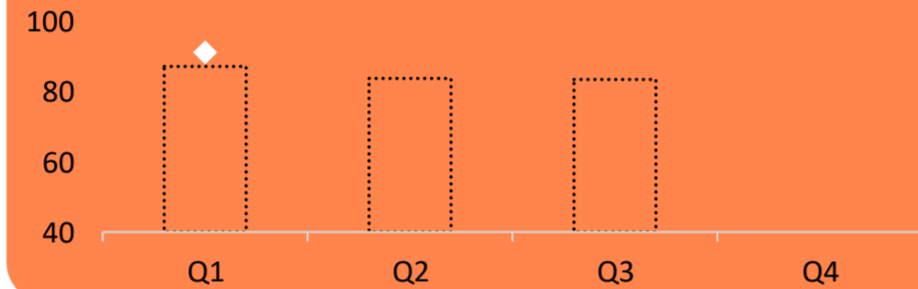


Target = Trend

Prev Period (Q4) = -

91.0% (Q1)

Unavoidable contacts received in Customer Services



This indicator shows the percentage of unavoidable contacts received. The remaining proportion are repeat contacts, for example following-up on a previous request made to the council, or requests which could have easily been resolved through self-service.

This measure is trend-based, and we would like the vast majority of contacts into the Council to be unavoidable.

The current quarter reports 91% of calls being unavoidable int the CSC, this is an increase on any period in last year, the highest previously recorded was 87%.

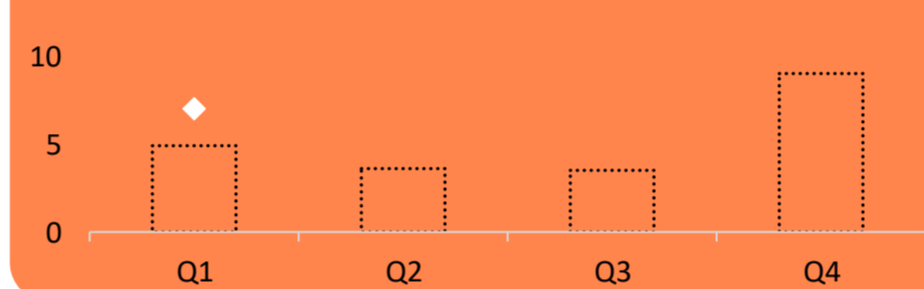


Target = TBC

Prev Period (Q4) = 9%

7% (Q1)

Proportion of complaints escalated



These two measures look to capture complaints which are escalated to stage 2 and also a trend based measure to monitor and record the proportion of complaints which are upheld, the later is a newly recorded measure which has no previous trend at this time.

The first quarter of the year has seen 820 complaints received into the corporate complaints team, an increase from the previous quarters complaints (564). The majority of complaints are around delays in actioning repairs (via NPH), communication around homeless applications, issues relating to temporary accommodation, road conditions and refuse collection issues.

- 60 complaints escalated to stage 2 within the quarter this represents a small percentage of the overall complaints received in the period.
- Based upon complaints closed within quarter 1 the proportion of complaints either fully or partially upheld is 54%.
- Additionally 76% of complaints closed in the period were done so within agreed timescales.

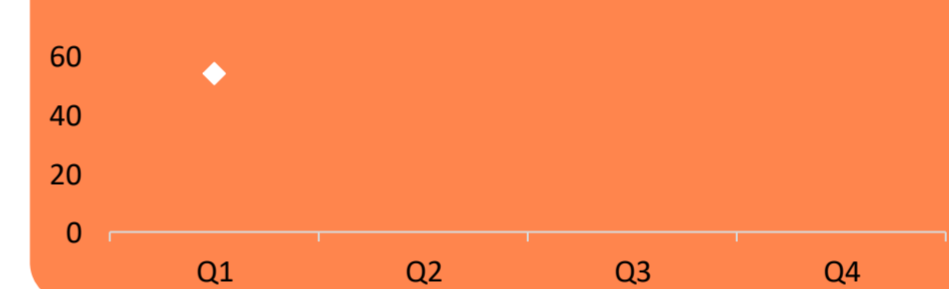


Target = Trend

Prev Period (Q4) = NEW

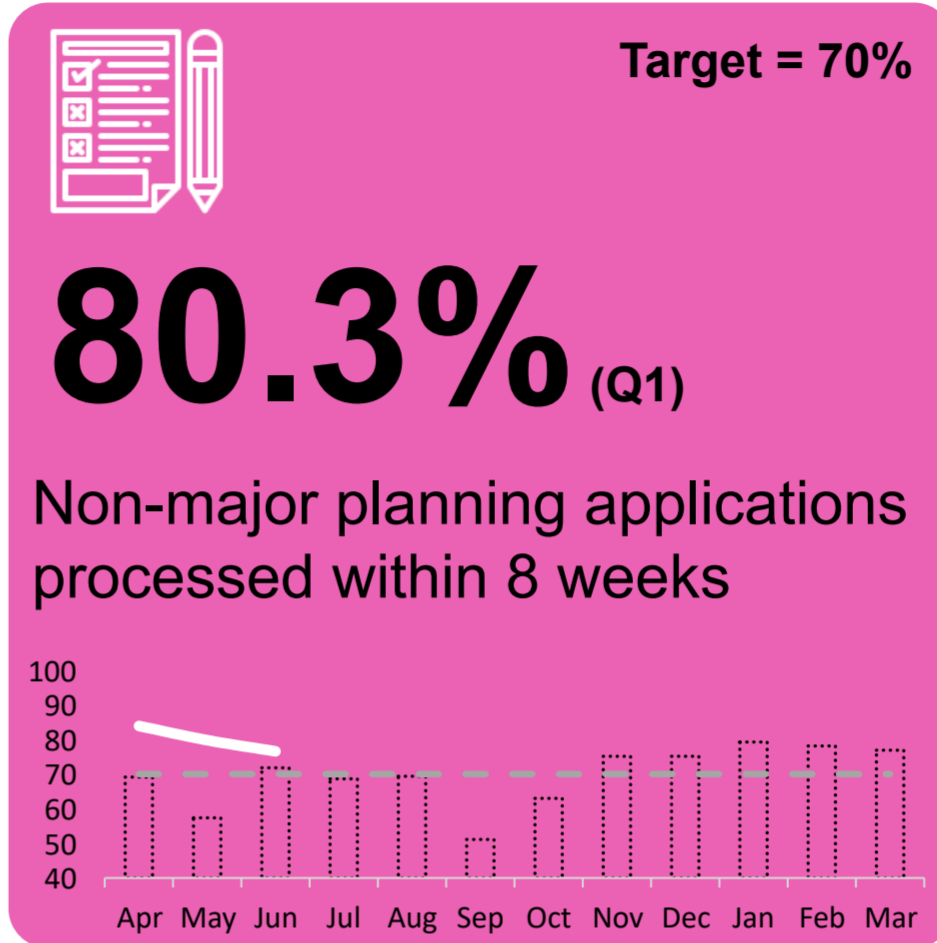
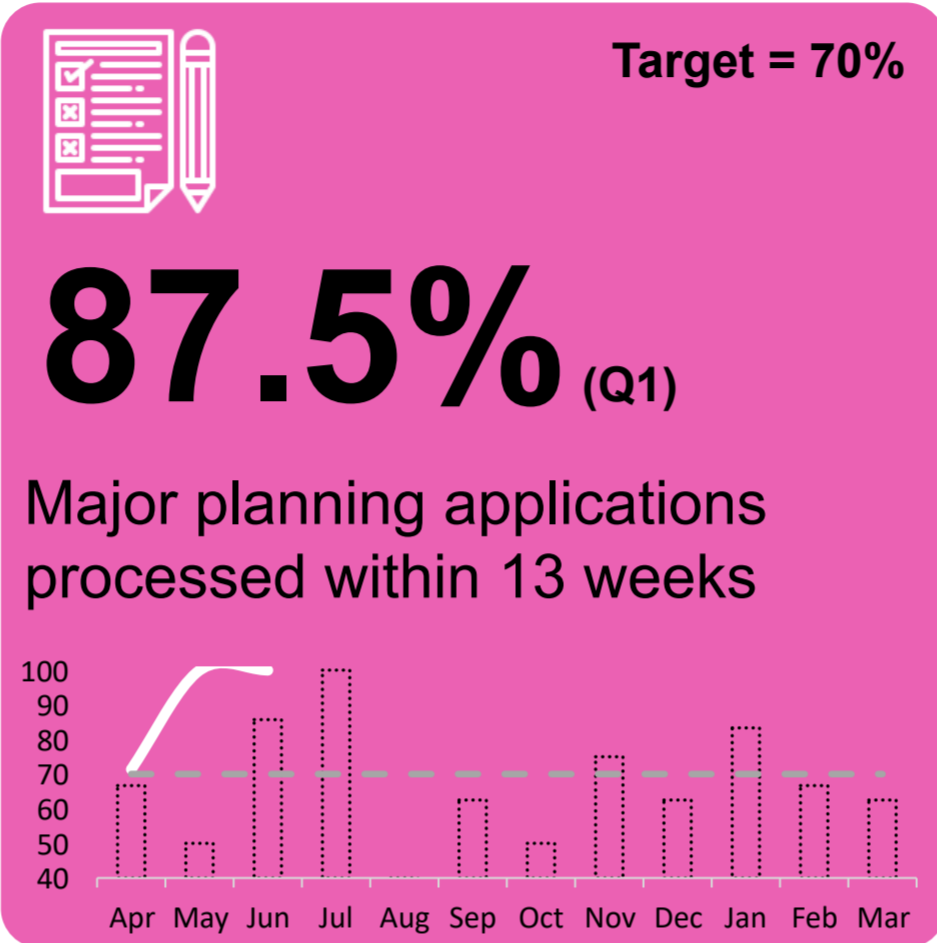
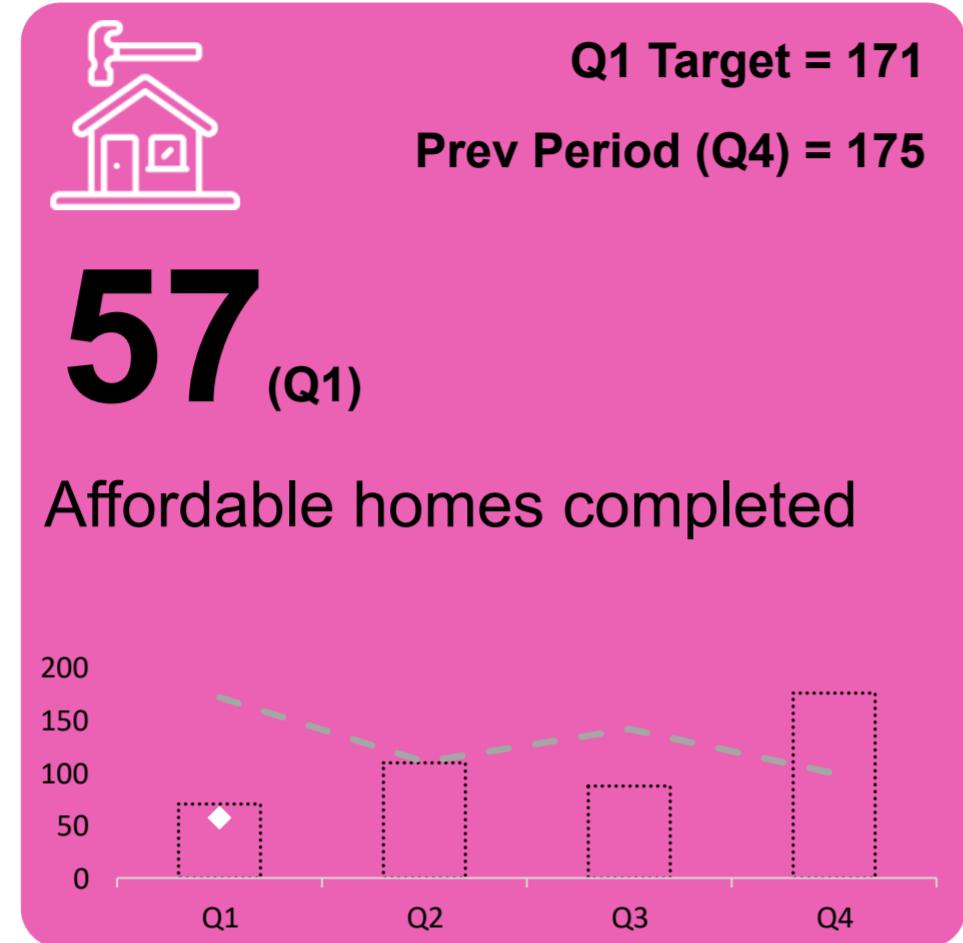
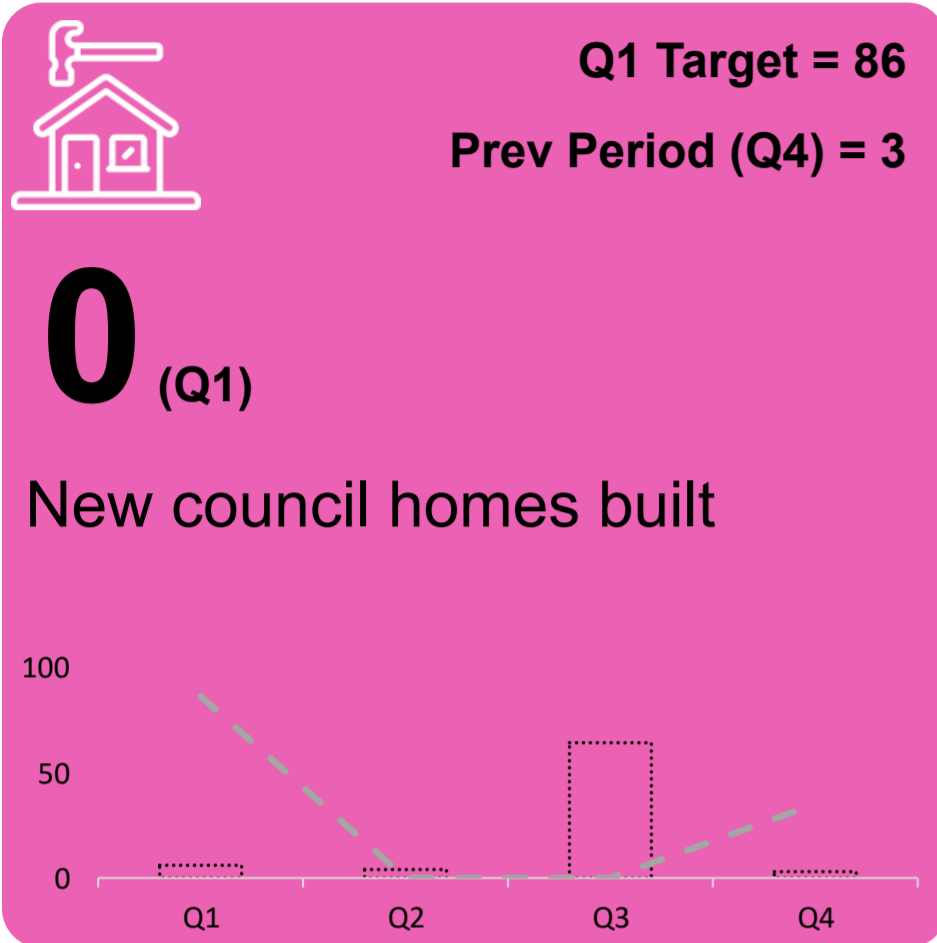
54% (Q1)

Proportion of complaints upheld



Priority 4 – Thriving Villages & Towns

Place Shaping & Homes



The West Northamptonshire Council corporate plan commits to build 500 council homes over the lifespan of the current corporate plan. Currently in West Northamptonshire only Northamptonshire Partnership Homes (NPH) are the only builder of council homes that is contributing to this indicator.

In the first quarter of there were 86 council homes there were due for completion. There has been a slight delay in construction at Riverside House (60 flats), Dover Court (10 flats), Swale Drive (6 houses) and Woodstock (10 flats). All these properties are now expected to be completed during July 2022.

In addition to council homes we have also seen 57 affordable homes were delivered although 171 were expected. Delays on sites at Collingtree and Hardingstone are due to ongoing issues of materials and labour shortages. There were also construction problems at the beginning of the build at Upton Park which the developer has been unable to make up time on.

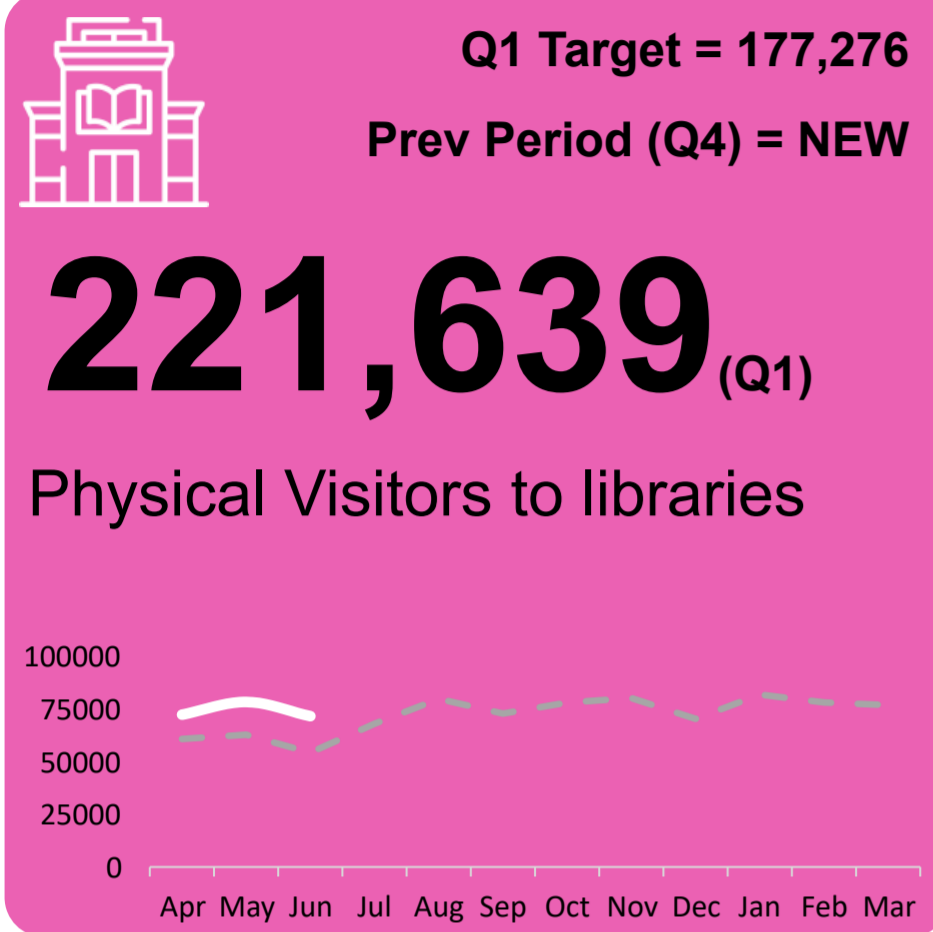
Planning applications of an area of current key focus for the authority, as we look to improve on the timeframe that we are processing decisions within, the two measures will show how we are performing against the two key measures that central government will judge our performance against, these are around processing of planning applications for both major and non-major applications.

- There were 16 major planning applications processed in the first quarter of this year, of these 14 were processed within the timeframe
- There were 583 non-major planning applications processed in the first quarter of this year, of these 468 were processed within the timeframe.

Both these measures have improved performance over the last quarters outturn and have continually shown an improving trajectory over the past 9 months.

Priority 4 – Thriving Villages & Towns

Place Shaping & Homes



This measure counts the number of visitors, but physical visitors and virtual visitors into our libraries across West Northamptonshire.

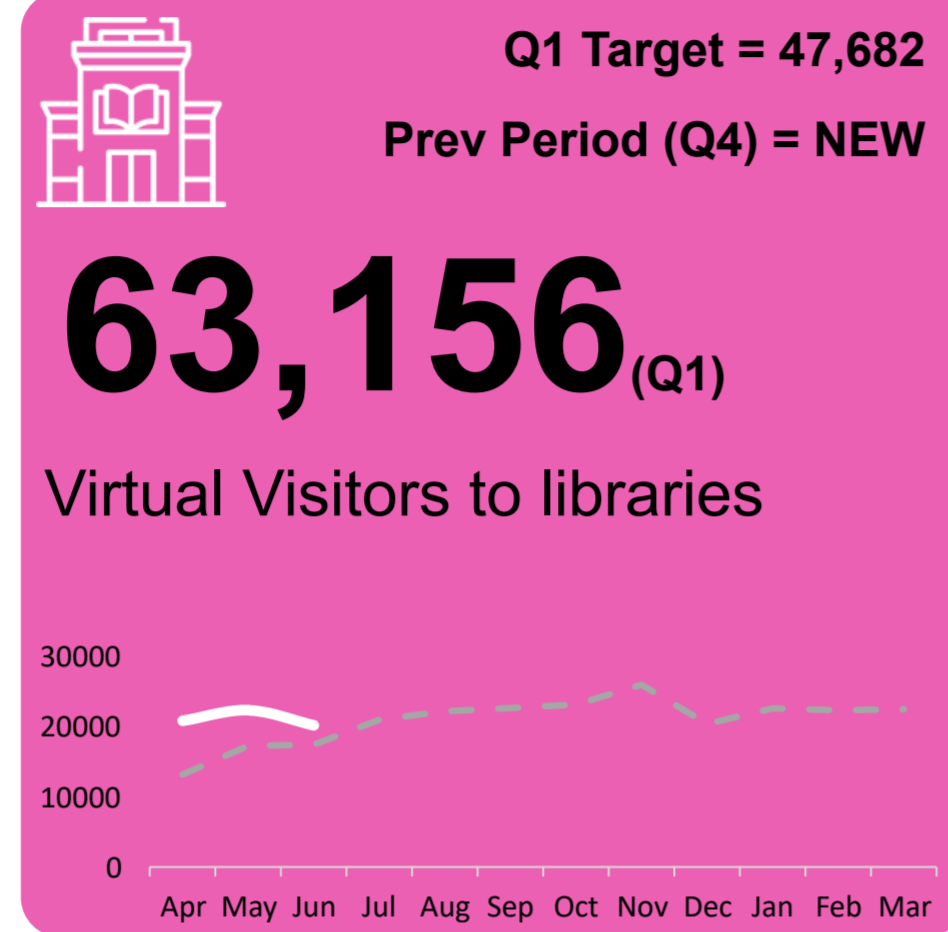
The data for last year was collected and reported as a combined measure, for comparison purposes the combined number for Q4 last year was 235,684 and the 1st quarter this year total across both measures is 284,795 which shows more visitors in the spring months, which might be expected as physical visitor numbers are impacted by seasonal weather patterns.

Physical Visitors

Due to seasonal fluctuations we would expect to be at 20.6% of our annual target at this point in the year. However, we are currently showing at 26% of the annual target thanks to good footfall across the spring months.

Virtual Visitors

This year is a baseline year for collection and monitoring of virtual visitors, the first few months of the year were above the target that was profiled, this is continuing to be monitored to ensure that targeting is suitable for this measures.



This metric covers two sites, the Northampton Museum & Art Gallery and the Abington Park Museum.

Visitor figures are 17% over target for the YTD. June saw the opening of The BFG and Lego Brick Wonders exhibitions at NMAG and Transport Day at Abington Park Museum attracted over 5,100 visitors.

The first quarter of the current year exceeded the performance from Q4 by 11,000 visitors but was 5,000 below the same period last year.



West Northamptonshire Council have been supporting people from the Ukraine and Afghan countries via hotel accommodation and also placing in households who are able to support. The two measures reported this year against this area of work have shifted from last years indicators that showed resettled and supported families to show those assisted to move onto find their own accommodation and where risk of homelessness was prevented.

- Through the Afghan relocations and assistance policy (ARAP) and Afghan citizens resettlement scheme (ACRS) we have supported 5 households this quarter to move on into their own accommodation either in West Northants or further afield.
- The team worked with 13 households over the course of the first quarter were there was a risk of homelessness, in all cases prevention was success through either continuing with current arrangements, supporting into private sector housing, through mediation or re-matching



Supporting the Local Visitor Economy

The Economic Growth and Inward Investment (EGII) Team have partnered with North Northamptonshire Council to develop a Tourism Strategy for the County to combine the strengths of the two areas and plan activities to increase visitor numbers and spend, as well as enhancing the reputation of Northamptonshire as a destination to visit. The strategy has been drafted following robust analysis, consultation and engagement from stakeholders and partners across the tourism industry and the County to ensure the Tourism Strategy is ambitious, innovative and capitalises on the existing strengths within the area whilst planning for largescale future growth. Themes within the Tourism Strategy include sporting excellence, the natural offer, heritage and more. The Northamptonshire Strategy will be presented for adoption later this year, once the draft has been endorsed by the visitor economy industry and partners.

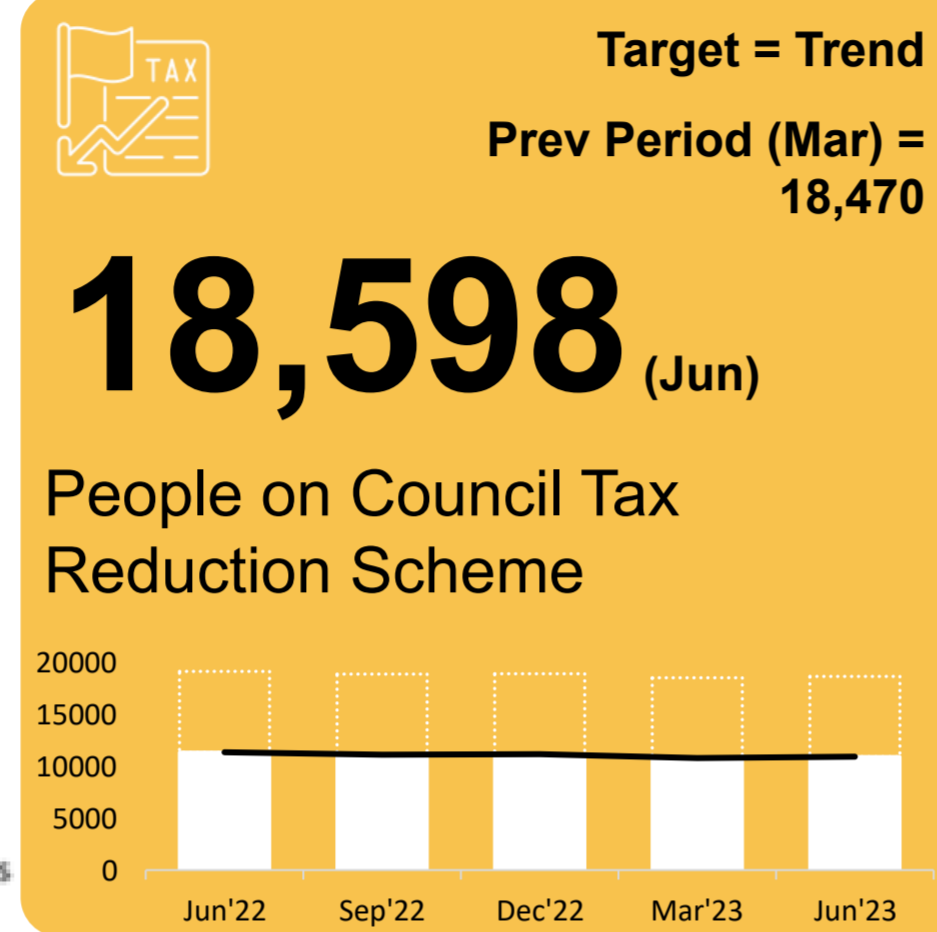
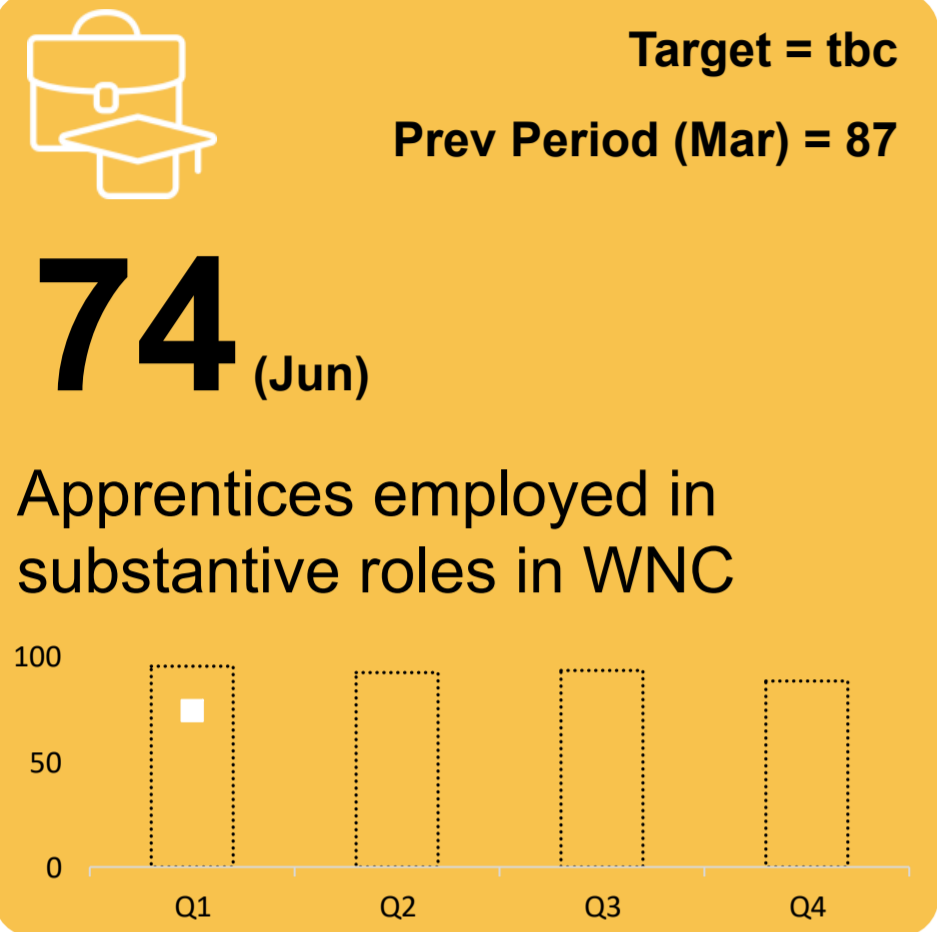
As well as planning the strategic direction for this industry, the two Councils have partnered to deliver a largescale marketing campaign for the Summer, Autumn and Winter to promote Northamptonshire as an attractive destination to visit from visitors far and wide. The campaign is being delivered by local organisation Northamptonshire Surprise and includes marketing resources across numerous platforms, targeted activities and showcases the vast offer of the region. Attractions and businesses have been engaged with to be involved in the campaign and work in partnership to benefit the industry and the region; already this scheme has been very successful in raising awareness of the local offer and altering the perception that there isn't an extraordinary offer already in this area.

Planning for Heritage Open Days later this year, the EGII Team have been engaging heritage attractions across West Northamptonshire to participate in the initiative taking place in September. This has included ongoing marketing and engagement for tourism partners to collaborate and showcase the unique strength this area boasts in terms of heritage and culture. Information on this event can be found on the below link.

[Heritage Open Days | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/heritage-open-days)

Priority 5 – Economic Development

Growth & Prosperity



The government introduced a number of changes to encourage employers to offer more apprenticeship opportunities to both their current employees and to new staff joining their organisations. The council currently supports a variety of different apprenticeship schemes in order to offer opportunity and development to new and existing members of staff.

At the end of March West Northamptonshire Council had 74 apprentices employed within the authority that are undertaking the following levels of qualifications: 3 x Level 2, 22 x Level 3, 12 x Level 4, 9 x Level 5, 19 x Level 6 and 9 x Level 7.

Workforce headcount for WNC at end of June 2023 is 2,706 employees (not including agency or relief) which gives a percentage of apprentices employed of 2.7%. Up to April 2022 the Government target was 2.3% of the workforce, which equates to 62 apprentices.

In addition to this there have been 2,150 new apprenticeship starts in the period August to April 2023 (latest data available) and 730 people have completed their apprenticeship in this period.

Each Local Authority is required to agree a Council Tax Reduction Scheme each year. The scheme applies only to working age claimants as the government provides a prescribed scheme for those of pension age.

As the scheme is a local one there is a financial impact to the authority and moving forward, we plan to report on the number of both working age and pension claims to enable us to forecast any possible impact.

As of June'23 the number of LCTRS working age claimants was 10,891, an increase 133 from the 10,758 claimants at the end of March 2023. There are currently 7,707 pensioner claims and again this figure has decreased from the end of March (7,712).

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

In addition to the internal projects already taking place, it has been agreed to fund two new initiatives:

- Careers Hub Partnership – Partnering with the South East Midlands Careers Hub to enhance the bridge between employment and education and further support local schools and businesses. Having worked closely with the Careers Hub/Careers & Enterprise Company for numerous years, this initiative achieves numerous priorities in terms of supporting the future workforce, raising aspirations for career opportunities, supporting employers and raising the profile of West Northamptonshire as an area to work, live, learn and thrive.
- Vulcan Works Creative Entrepreneurial Scheme – Building on the robust offer being delivered within our Vulcan Works by Oxford Innovation, funding has been allocated from UKSPF to expand the Vulcan Works Creative Entrepreneurial Scheme to provide kickstart grants to start-up businesses. This funding will add to the non-financial support being delivered at Vulcan Works for numerous cohorts of entrepreneurs to start businesses locally and utilise Vulcan Works as a prime location for their business.

Numerous funds will be tendered to create opportunities for local partners and experts to benefit from the UKSPF and deliver initiatives on our behalf to support and grow local businesses, addressing decarbonisation and scaling up business growth locally. Information on live projects and funding allocations can be found on our dedicated webpage

[Funding and allocations | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/funding-and-allocations)

Rural England Prosperity Fund

Year one funding of the REPF has now been received and delivery approaches have been discussed internally to align the capital grants for eligible rural businesses and transport organisations with existing funds. It is anticipated that the business funding will be added to from UKSPF to provide capital grants and non-financial support to eligible rural businesses with 25% of the funds being utilised this financial year and 75% in 2024/25. The Economic Growth & Inward Investment Team are beginning to liaise with stakeholders/partners relevant to this type of funding to ensure it is delivered in the most beneficial way to support eligible rural businesses.

The capital grants to address rural transportation will be explored in terms of impact, community need and consideration of the Local Area Partnerships. Working with the Community Engagement and Highways Teams, this will be explored to have the greatest level of benefit to the individual communities eligible for this funding within West Northamptonshire

Supporting West Northamptonshire Businesses

The Economic Growth and Inward Investment Team (EGII) continue to support local employers to start, scale and succeed in West Northants. The Team were thrilled to celebrate the two West Northants winners of the 2023 King's Awards for Enterprise, both based in Daventry – Viridian Nutrition Ltd and Brian James Trailers Ltd. On the topic of celebrating local employers, the Northamptonshire Chamber Business Awards were launched which include two categories sponsored by the EGII Team – West Northants Business of the Year and Sustainable Business of the Year. The winners of all of the awards will be announced in November. Last year's first ever winner of our West Northants Business of the Year category was won by Pilkington Communications Ltd.

Direct engagement with employers and business support providers is a top priority for the EGII Team to remain engaged with the local business community and champion our free support offer. This quarter the Team have directly responded to over 50 business enquiries and attended events such as the new Northants International Trade Forum and the launch of the Vulcan Works.

Colleagues have been involved with the development of the new We Are Northampton brand and engagement with the Northampton Forward Board to discuss capitalising on Northampton's strengths and how employers in Northampton and the wider West Northants can grow locally, delivering economic prosperity within the region. The EGII Team are also delivering the Northampton Social Enterprise Fund to support social enterprises and social activity within Northampton to benefit the local community.

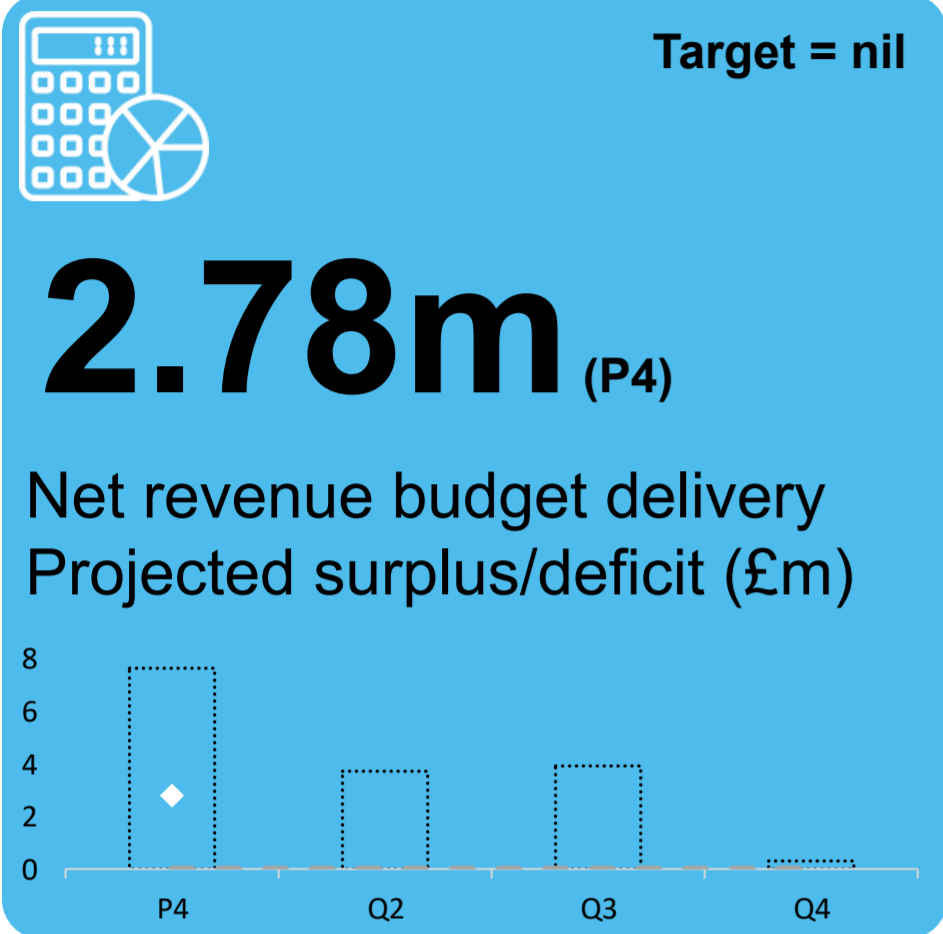
Supporting Local Employment

The EGII Team are exploring the expansion of the West Northamptonshire Employment Support Service (WNESS) by working with colleagues such as Public Health, Community Engagement, Safety and Resettlement, Anti-Poverty and others, including the Local Area Partnerships. The services of the WNESS, delivered by external organisations completely free to all residents in the areas, are available to upskill residents and enable them to secure local, sustainable employment. The EGII Team also support employers through the WNESS to publicise vacancies and utilise the skilled local labour market for recruitment.

This quarter the EGII Team brought all of the partners of the WNESS together to ascertain opportunities, challenges and innovative ways of delivering support and reaching different demographics, particularly residents that are economically inactive and not accessing Universal Credit. The EGII Team will continue to develop the WNESS, utilising funds from S106 and UK Shared Prosperity Fund to have the greatest level of impact to the community within West Northamptonshire. In partnership with the Careers Hub and Prospects, the EGII Team supported an event for those already or at risk of becoming Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET), including parents and carers to showcase opportunities to upskill or secure employment, benefiting local residents at risk of becoming vulnerable. The team have also directly responded to over 30 direct enquiries for employment support, including CV support and starting new businesses within the area.

Priority 6 – Robust Resource Management

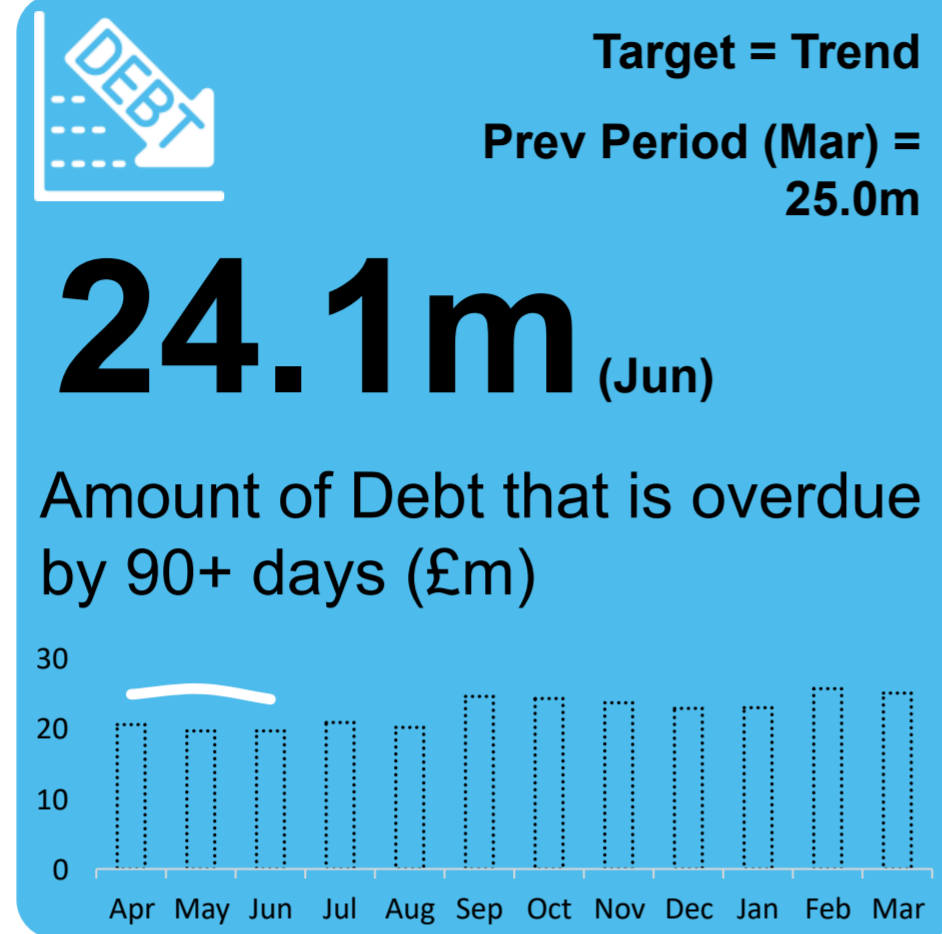
Transparency & Financial Probity



The forecast outturn position for 2023-24 is an overspend of £2.8m after use of £8.2m of budget contingencies, which were set aside in the budget for risks that may crystallise in the current financial year.

The main reasons for the underlying pressures which directorates are seeking to mitigate are as follows:

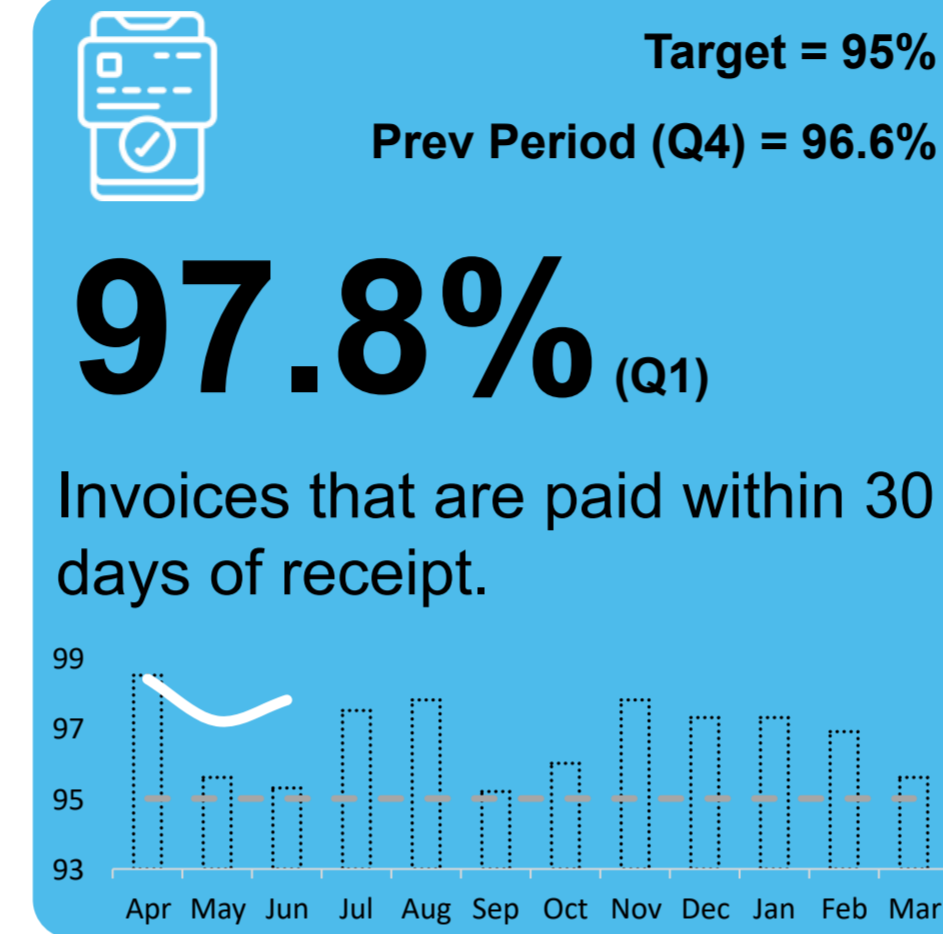
- Continued demand and cost pressures within the Children's Trust contract.
- Pressures within housing and temporary accommodation.
- Demand and cost pressure on Adult Social Care independent care budgets.
- The cost of the 2023-24 pay award being greater than forecast at the time of setting the budget.



The latest performance of this metric shows that £24.1m of debt owed to the authority is currently overdue by at least 90 days.

This represents a decrease from the £25.0m reported at the end of March.

To provide context against previous year the position at the end of June 2022 showed that aged debt outstanding stood at £19.6m, this increase is partly due the increased revenue raised during 2022/23 which was £62m higher than the previous year, proportionately against the revenue raised the aged debt position is lower than at the same point last year.

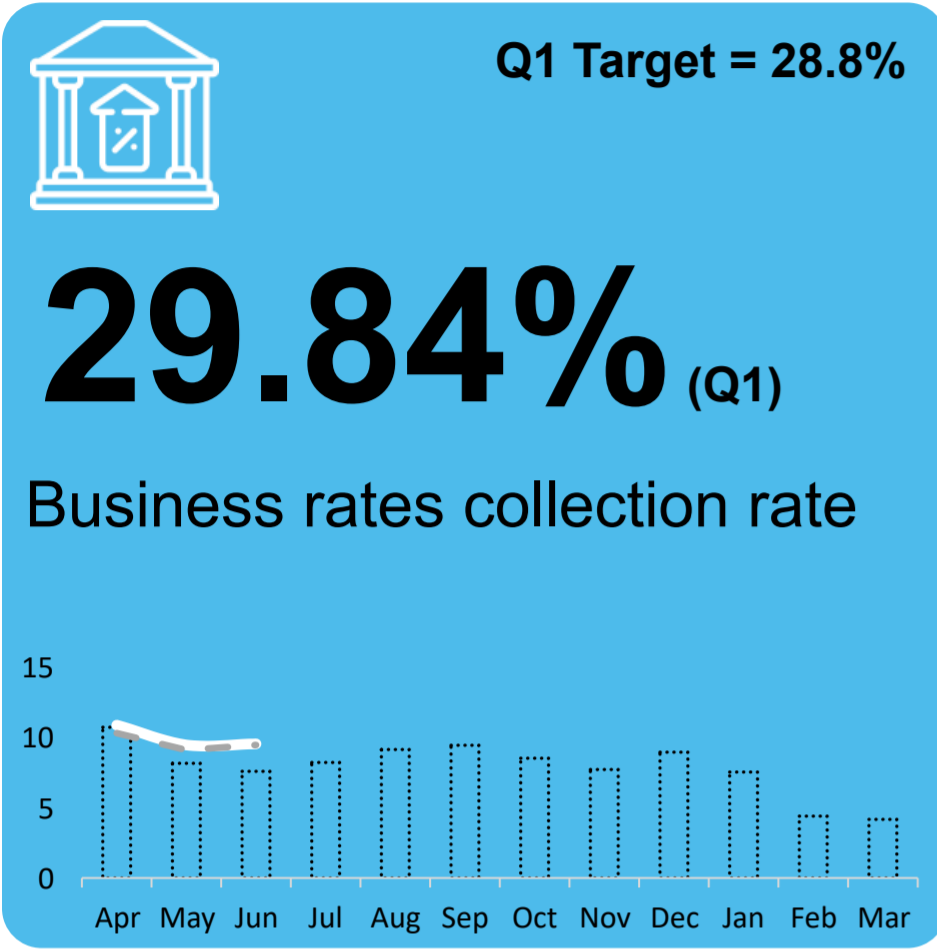


5,584 of the 5,710 invoices paid during the first quarter this year were processed within 30 days resulting in an outturn of 97.8% of this quarter. April was a particularly high performing month with just 32 invoices paid beyond the 30 day timeframe.

Performance improved over the last 12 months as staff are now more used to a new system in which to raise Purchase Orders and pay invoices. This is evident with every month over the past 2 years has been above the 95% target.

Priority 6 – Robust Resource Management

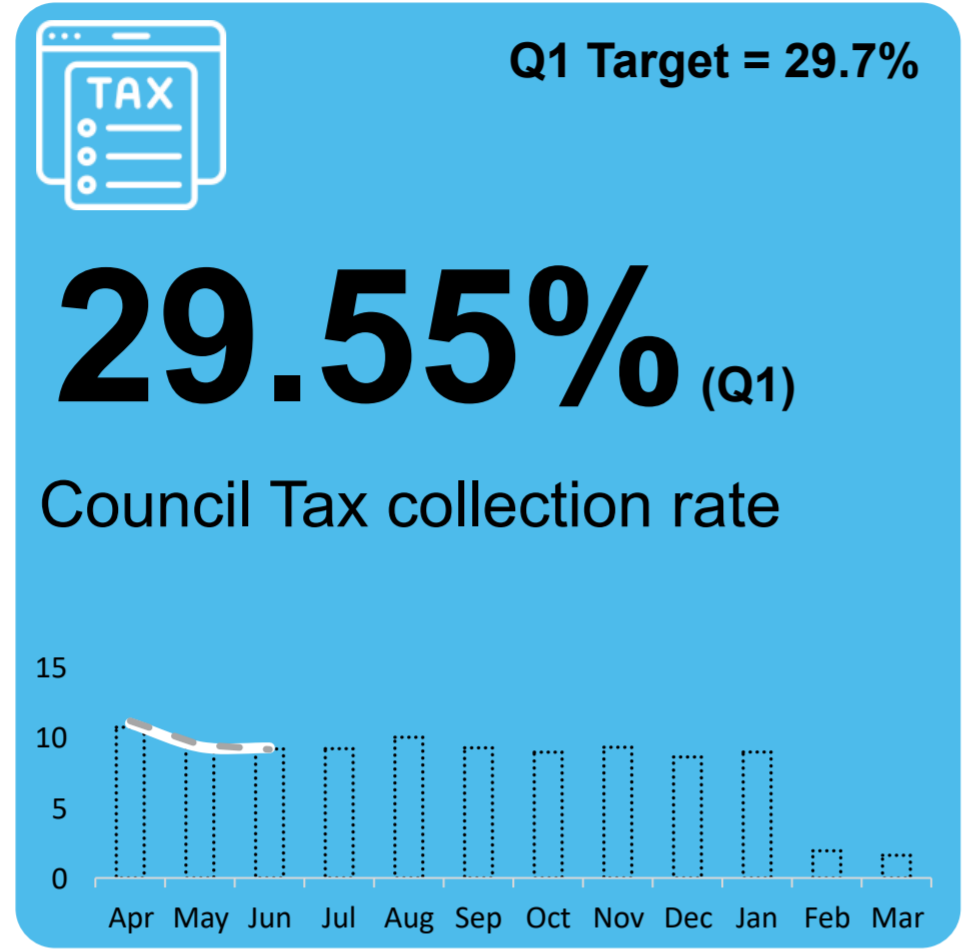
Transparency & Financial Probity



Collection for the first quarter of this year is 29.84% against a profiled target of 28.8%.

This reflects a positive variance of 1.04% which in monetary terms is £2,074,757.

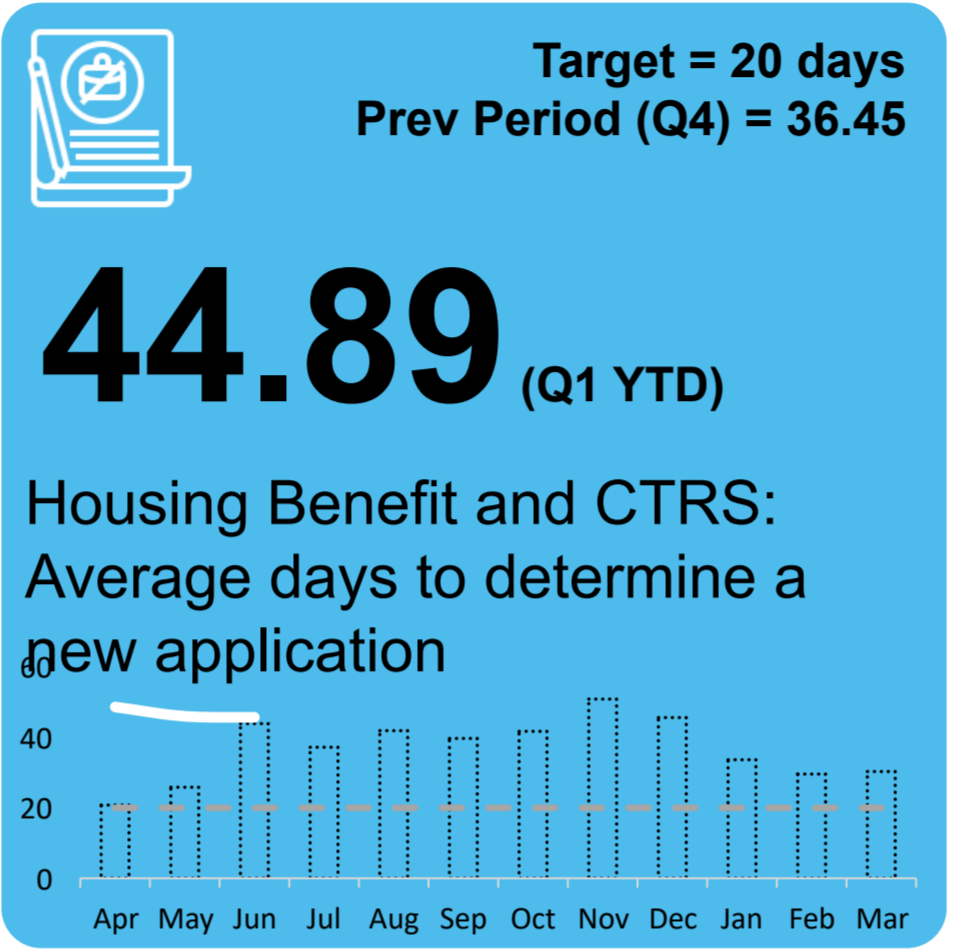
This is an excellent performance for the first quarter of 23-24 and is similar when compared to the same point last year where 30.09% of business rates had been collected at the end of June.



Council tax collection rates for the first quarter this year are 29.55% against a profiled target of 29.7%.

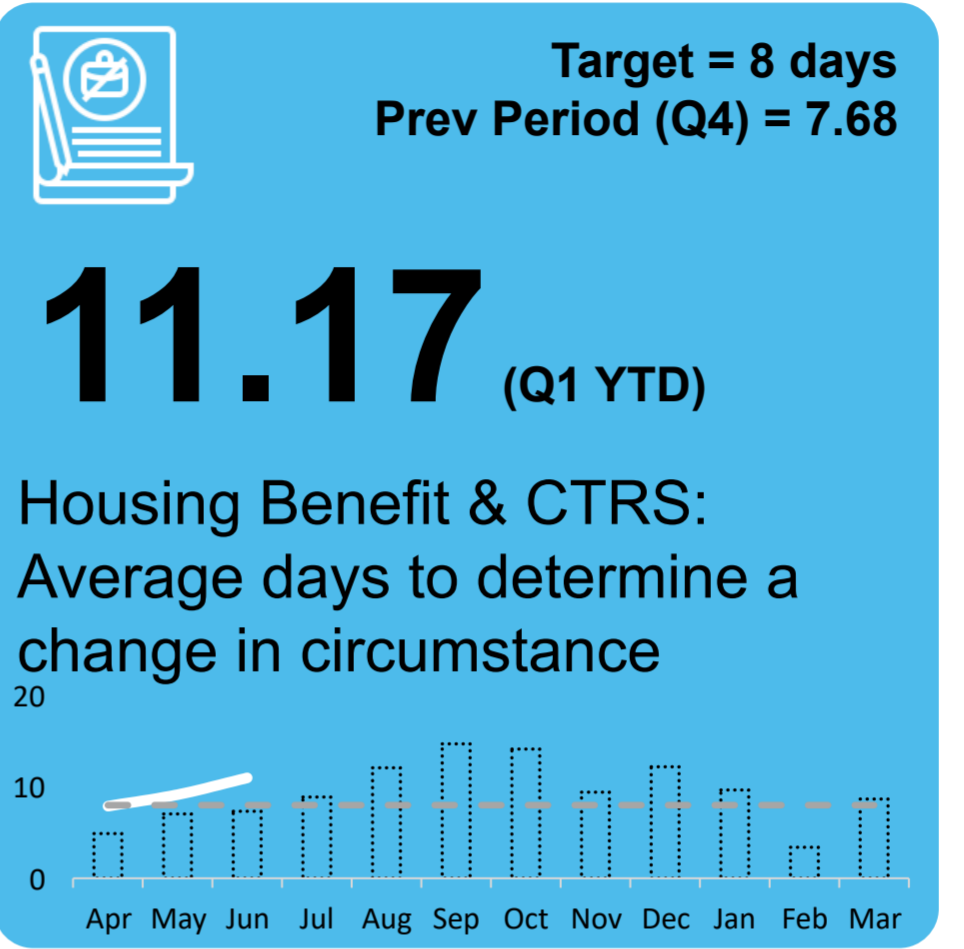
The current performance is slightly under target. The team are undertaking more proactive recovery work including negotiating with the Courts to take more cases which will in turn help recovery.

This continues to be a strong performance in the current economic climate and when compared to the same point last year the collection rates for council tax was 29.28%.



In the first quarter of this year the time taken to determine a new application is 44.89days to the end of June. This is against a target of 20 days and a national average of 22 days.

The current performance against target of 20 days is below target and we have a new workplan in place to tackle the older work and to prepare for the introduction of the new single system. This does have an impact on the average time taken to assess claims as the older work is cleared.

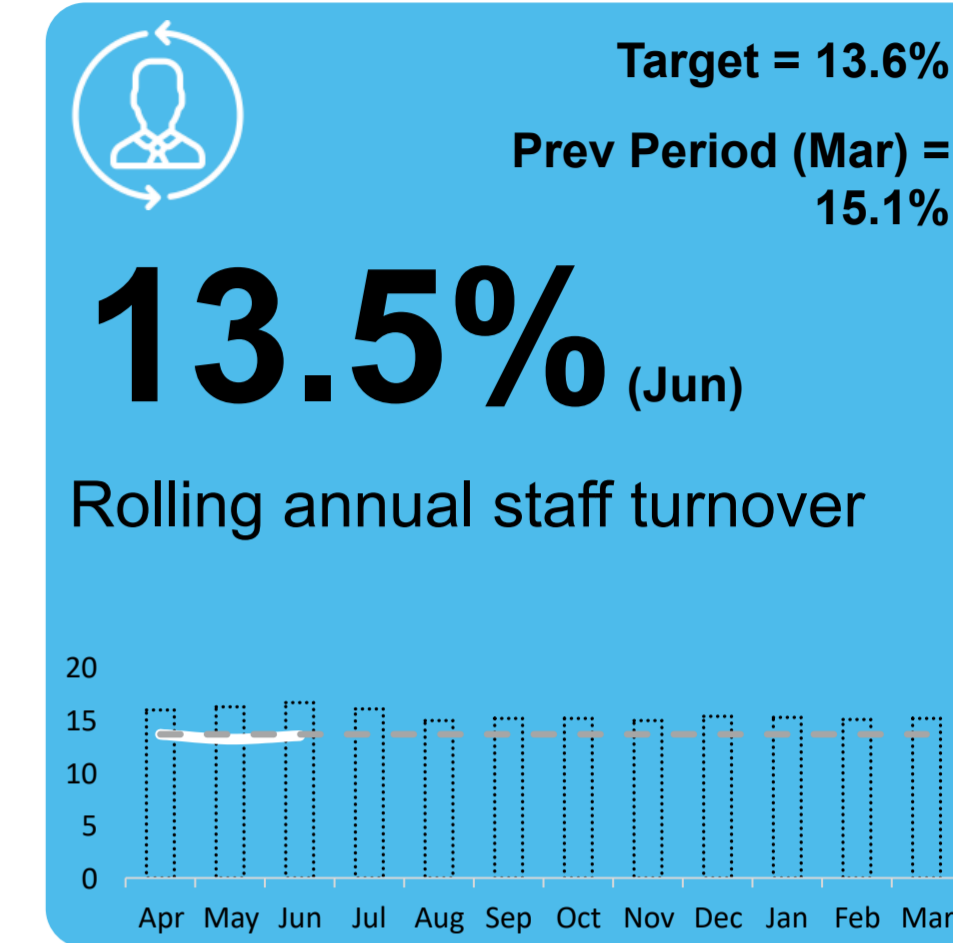
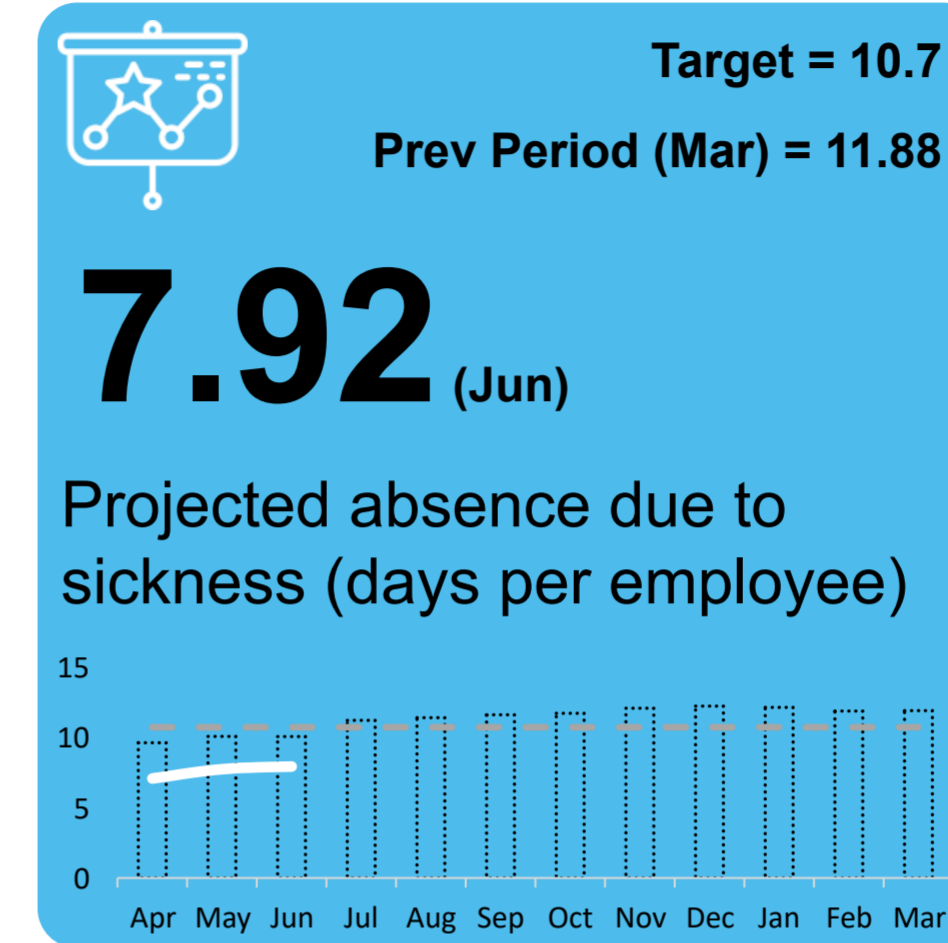
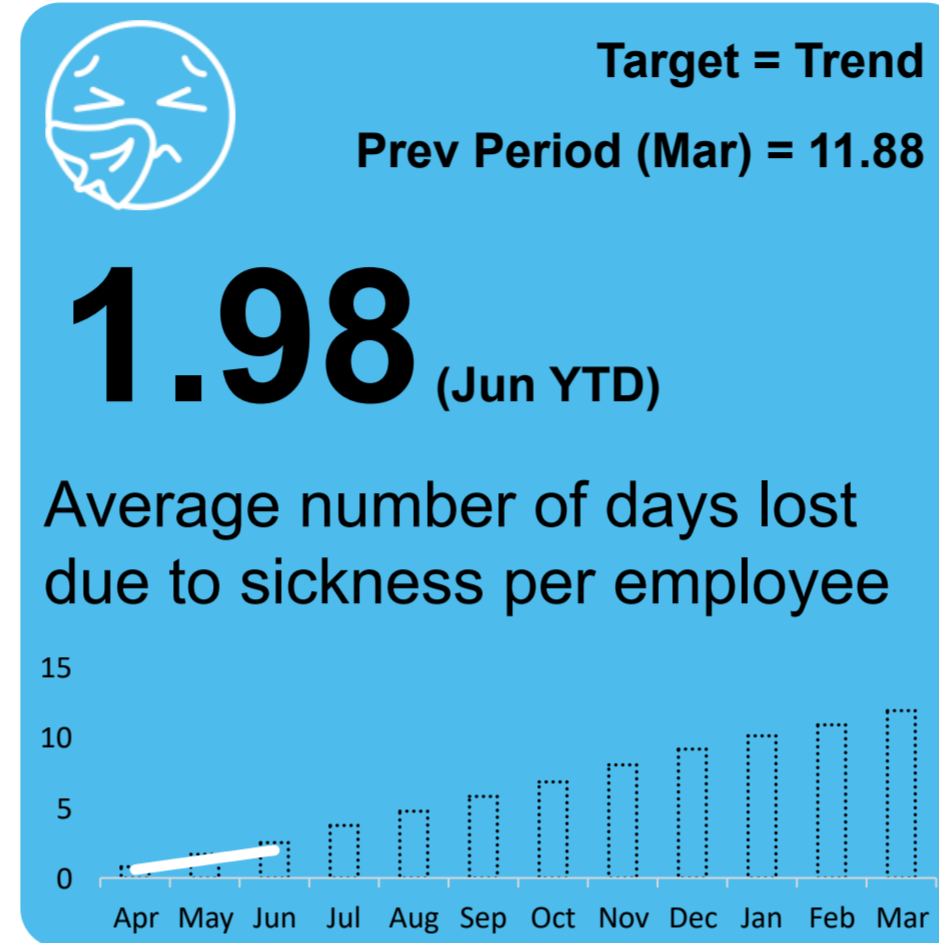
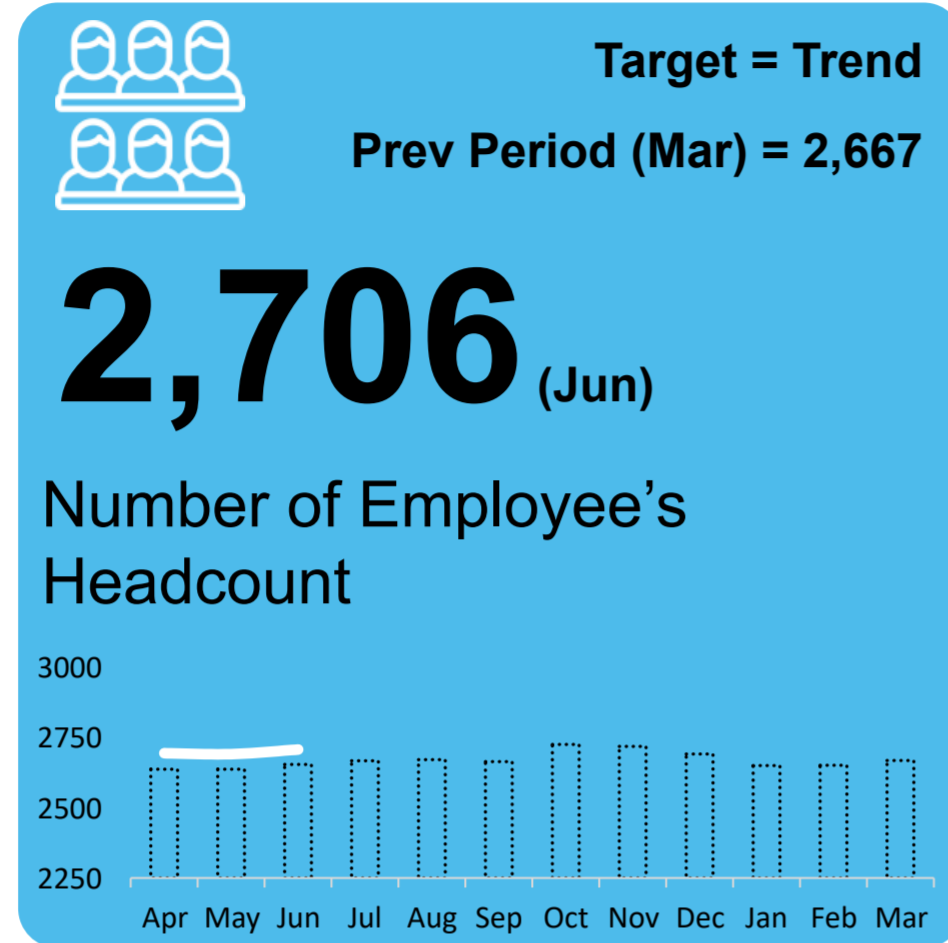
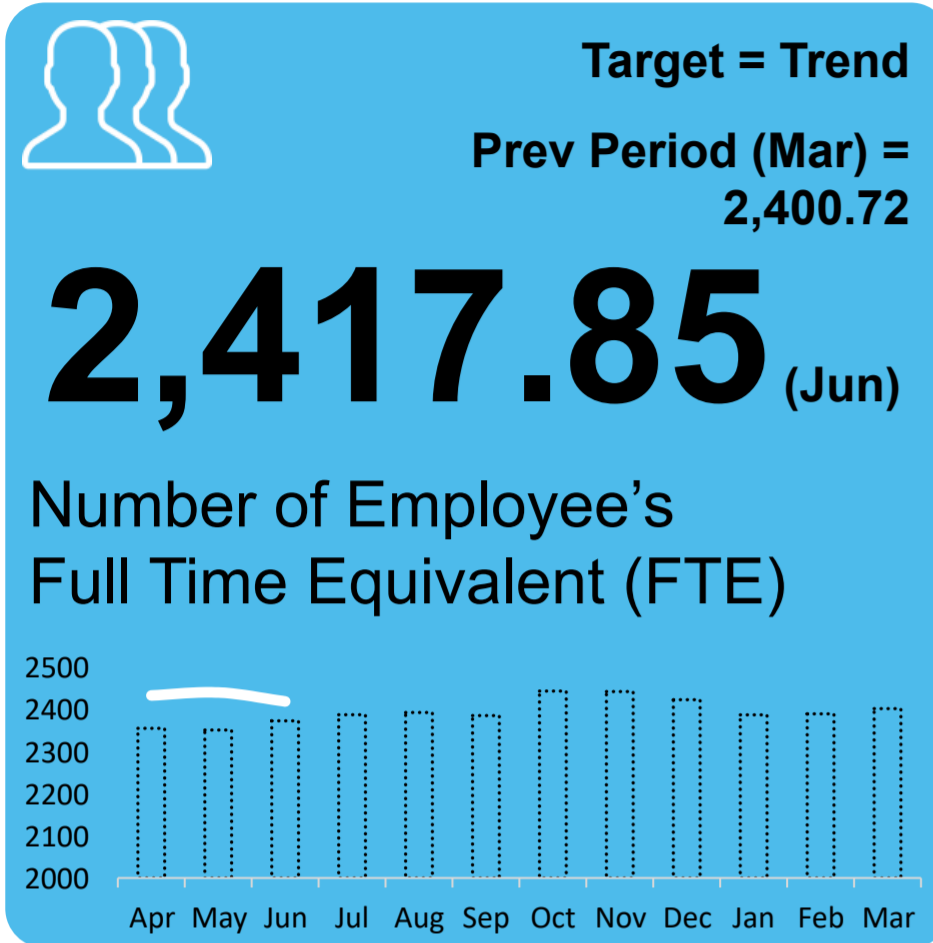


This quarter the team has processed 20,451 changes to circumstances and for these the average number of days to deal with changes in circumstances in the first quarter of this year is 11.17 days.

This is a decrease in performance compared to the end of March (7.68days) and at the same point last year the performance in this area was 7.33 days on average to process a change.

Priority 6 – Robust Resource Management

Transparency & Financial Probity



These two indicators provide detail on the number of employee's within the council, both individual people (headcount) and the full time equivalent, which for West Northamptonshire Council refers to 37 hours per week.

The current establishment shows 2,706 employee's at the end of June 2023, an increase of 41 when compared to the position reported at the end of March (2,667), there is a similar trend in the number of FTEs with an increase to 2,417.85 at the end of June 2023.

Comparing the position at the end of June last year we employ 53 more people now that we did at the same point last year, this also resulted in an increase in the full time equivalent of 46. Over the course of the last 12 months there have been numerous service disaggregation's from NNC resulting in a rising headcount alongside a greater success in filling some vacancies in a difficult employment market

These two indicators provide both an actual absence average per month across the year and the second indicator is the projected absence due to sickness by the end of the year, each of these indicators is an average per employee.

Current sickness absence from work continue to be impacted by Covid-19 which will be directly impacting ability to attend work in parts of the organisation, typically those front line services. But also the current working arrangements with office based staff continuing to work from home for at least part of the week is likely to be resulting in less staff absence in parts of the organisation.

The average number of days lost due to sickness at the end of the year is 7.92 days per employee, which represents a reduction when compared to the outturn from last year of 11.88 days per employee. Sickness reporting currently looks low when compared to last year and work is being undertaken to ensure that all sickness absence is being recorded on ERP as would be expected.

Sickness trigger reporting takes place monthly within HR and managers are then contacted and supported in managing sickness absence cases to support individuals to return to work.

It is healthy for any organisation to have a level of staff turnover through staff moving on to other organisation and the council attracting new staff into the organisation.

The latest figures show that in the past 12 months there has been a turnover figure of 13.5% a reduction of 1.6% from the position at the end of March and also a decrease 3.1% when compared to the same point last year.

The reduction is expected because we are seeing a less buoyant recruitment market than we had coming out of the pandemic and this may also be some evidence of WNC starting to establish its culture and values and people are opting to remain with us.

Appendix – Scorecard Detail

Ref	Metric Title	Priority	Lead Directorate	Better to be?	2022-23 Q4	2023-23 Outturn	Q1 Target	Apr	May	Jun	Q1	Stat Neighbour	Regional	National	Comparator Period
WAS-01	Percentage of waste sent for re-use, recycling or composting.	1. Green & Clean	Place	Higher	43.6%			Quartly in Arrears - Q4 is current					42.2%	42.5%	2021-22
WAS-02	Percentage of residual waste treated	1. Green & Clean	Place	Higher	86.9%			Quartly in Arrears - Q4 is current							
WAS-04a	Fly-tips cleared	1. Green & Clean	Place	Higher	4,806	17,301	Trend				4,103				
EC-01	Fixed Penalty Notices issued for Environmental Crime	1. Green & Clean	Place	No Tolerance	764	3,092	Trend	121	130	96	347				
C&O-42	Number of visitors to leisure centres	1. Green & Clean	Communities & Opportunities	Higher	565,831	2,158,761	529,006	186,761	193,040	188,670	568,471				
1.4a	Number of Council Homes with improved energy efficiency	1. Green & Clean	Communities & Opportunities	Higher	-	-		CHECK - is this							
1.5a	Park Satisfaction Score (from quarterly survey)	1. Green & Clean	Place	Higher	-	-		Indicator not available in quarter 1							
3.5a	Number of charging points - WN area (all)	1. Green & Clean	Place	Higher	177	177					160		2,090	37,717	Jul-23
3.5b	Number of charging points - WN area (Fast Chargers)	1. Green & Clean	Place	Higher	66	66					56		627	6,974	Jul-23
3.5c	Charging Points per 100,000 population - WN area	1. Green & Clean	Place	Higher	41.5	41.5					37.5		42.8	66.7	Jul-23
ASCOF-2D-CLD	Older people (65+) who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Adult Social Care	Higher	88.9%	88.9%	79.2%	88.9%	76.5%	91.2%	85.3%		82.0%	81.8%	2021-22
ASCOF-04-SALT	Admission to residential and nursing care homes, per 100k (aged 18-64)	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Adult Social Care	Higher	-	8.8	5.2	0.8	0.8	2.3	2.3		18.4	13.9	2021-22
ASCOF-06-SALT	Admission to residential and nursing care homes, per 100k (aged 65+)	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Adult Social Care	Higher	-	434.8	194.7	34.4	37.1	37.2	108.7		562.0	538.5	2021-22
CORP-01	Conversation 1 Assessments that have no sequel of service after [12] months	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Adult Social Care	Higher	New	New	-	Method to be confirmed and reporting from quarter 2							
CORP-02	Care Act Assessments completed	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Adult Social Care	Higher				139	141	128	408				
CORP-03	Carers assessments completed	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Adult Social Care	Higher				75	127	127	329				
CORP-04	Concluded safeguarding enquiries where (MSP) questions were asked and outcomes were expressed	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Adult Social Care	Higher	91.3%	-	tbc	100.0%	93.9%	90.4%	94.4%				
CORP-05	Care Act reviews completed in past 12 months	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Adult Social Care	Higher	32.0%	32.0%	tbc				36.0%		65.0%		2022-23 Q4

Appendix – Scorecard Detail

Ref	Metric Title	Priority	Lead Directorate	Better to be?	2022-23 Q4	2023-23 Outturn	Q1 Target	Apr	May	Jun	Q1	Stat Neighbor	Regiona	Nationa	Comparator Period
2.2a	Percentage of all referrals with a decision within 2 working days	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Children Social Care	Higher	-	67.5%	85.0%	57.7%	58.1%	60.7%	57.7%	-	-	-	-
2.2b	Percentage of referrals with a previous referral within 12 months	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Children Social Care	Lower	-	29.5%	29.0%	28.4%	23.3%	25.4%	25.5%	22.0%	23.1%	21.5%	2021-22
2.2c	Percentage of Single Assessments authorised within 45 days	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Children Social Care	Higher	-	93.9%	85.0%	93.7%	92.7%	92.7%	92.9%	85.8%	92.3%	84.5%	2021-22
2.2d	Percentage of children that became the subject of a Child Protection Plan for the second or subsequent	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Children Social Care	Lower	-	29.7%	20.0%	36.5%	17.1%	43.6%	33.3%	23.3%	26.9%	23.3%	2021-22
2.2e	Percentage of children in care who were placed for adoption within 12 months of an agency decision that	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Children Social Care	Higher	77.8%	86.7%	72.0%				85.7%	72.5%	-	74.0%	2020
2.2f	Number of contacts in the MASH	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Children Social Care	No Tolerance	11,658	46,624	Trend	3,974	4,675	4,386	13,035				
2.2g	Contacts converted to referral (social care and Early Help)	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Children Social Care	Higher	-	-	-	40%	41%	45%	44%				
2.2h	Number of children supported by Early Help in NCT	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Children Social Care	No Tolerance	-	1,475		1,492	1,598	1,674	-				
2.2i	Number of children open under Children in Need (CIN)	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Children Social Care	No Tolerance	-	4,491	Trend	4,604	4,803	4,826	-	294.7 per 10,000	285.9 per 10,000	334.3 per 10,000	2021-22
2.2j	Number of children on a Child Protection Plan (CPP)	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Children Social Care	No Tolerance	-	625	Trend	680	687	714	-	35.04 per 10,000	43.0 per 10,000	42.1 per 10,000	2021-22
2.2k	Number of children looked after	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Children Social Care	No Tolerance	-	1,231	Trend	1,212	1,205	1,191	-	63.4 per 10,000	65.0 per 10,000	70.0 per 10,000	2021-22
2.2l	Number of children looked after who have previously been looked after.	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Children Social Care	Lower	-	-		New measure, not currently in the NCT scorecard							
2.2m	Social Workers with case loads above the recommended target	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Children Social Care	Lower	-	17.3%	12.0%	21.1%	24.5%	22.9%	-				
2.2n	Proportion of young people (aged 16-18) who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) or Not	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Education	Lower	-	2.0%	5.5%	2.2%	2.1%	2.1%	-	5.6%	4.5%	4.8%	2022
Attain	West Northants Attainment Summary - All Phases	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Education	-	-	-	-	Annual - reported in Q2							
SEN2	Number of Requests for EHCP Assessment	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Education	No Tolerance	275	1,057	Trend	54	115	115	284				
SEN1	EHCPs completed within 20 Weeks - excluding exceptions	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Education	Higher	6.9%	10.2%		7.1%	12.1%	4.8%	7.8%	44.8%	32.1%	50.7%	2022
SEN1a	EHCPs completed within 20 Weeks - including exceptions	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Education	Higher	5.2%	9.1%		4.7%	6.3%	3.4%	4.8%	44.3%	31.8%	49.1%	2022

Appendix – Scorecard Detail

Ref	Metric Title	Priority	Lead Directorate	Better to be?	2022-23 Q4	2023-23 Outturn	Q1 Target	Apr	May	Jun	Q1	Stat Neighbour	Regiona	Nationa	Comparator Period
SEN0	Number of EHCPs	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Education	No Tolerance	-	3,265	Trend	3,293	3,343	3,391	-				
SEN1f	EHCP Annual Reviews within 12 months of previous review	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Education	Higher	-	42.0%		43.3%	48.4%	53.2%	-				
NI114e	Number of Exclusions - Primary Phase	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Education	Lower	1	3	Trend	0	0	1	1				
NI114f	Number of Exclusions - Secondary Phase	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Education	Lower	60	26	Trend	2	5	11	18				
LS6	Number of Suspensions - Primary Phase	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Education	Lower	378	966	Trend	36	73	60	169				
LS7	Number of Suspensions - Secondary Phase	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Education	Lower	1,835	5,023	Trend	258	572	328	1,158				
2.2o	Open school applications outside 15 days statutory timescale	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Education	Lower	-			148	155	84	-				
2.2p	Number of children without a school place (both CME who are without a place & those on admissions)	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Education	Lower	-			188	218	248	-				
PH8	Percentage Smoking quit rate at 4 weeks	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Public Health	Higher	54.6%	-	60.0%	61.7%	49.4%	49.7%	52.0%			-	-
PH9	Percentage of mothers known to be smokers at the time of delivery	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Public Health	Lower	10.6%	-	11.0%	-	-	-	9.7%		11.8%	9.1%	2021-22
PH1	Infants due a new birth visit that received a new birth visit within 14 days of birth	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Public Health	Higher	95.2%	-	90.0%	99.1%	97.0%	92.8%	95.4%			82.7%	2021-22
PH2	Infants who received a 6-8 week review by the time they were 8 weeks	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Public Health	Higher	94.1%	-	90.0%	92.8%	92.5%	89.1%	91.5%			81.6%	2021-22
PH3	in-year eligible population who received an NHS Health Check	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Public Health	Higher			15.0%	2.6%	3.5%	3.5%	9.5%			2.3%	2022-23 Q4
PH11	People whose frailty has either not increased or has reduced	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Public Health	Higher	New	New	tbc	Method to be confirmed and reporting from quarter 2						-	-
PH4	People with improvement on wellbeing score (WEMWBS) at 6 months	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Public Health	0	New	Nw	tbc	Method to be confirmed and reporting from quarter 2						-	-
PH10	People in Weight Management service losing 5% weight	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Public Health	Higher	55.3%		unknown?				38.8%			-	-
PH5	CYP who showed a maintained or improved CORE-YP score on completion of care (CYP Mental Health)	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Public Health	Higher				Method to be confirmed and reporting from quarter 2						-	-

Appendix – Scorecard Detail

Ref	Metric Title	Priority	Lead Directorate	Better to be?	2022-23 Q4	2023-23 Outturn	Q1 Target	Apr	May	Jun	Q1	Stat Neighbour	Regiona	Nationa	Comparator Period
PH6	Successful completions of adult drug treatment - opiate users	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Public Health	Higher				4.1%	3.8%	4.2%	4.0%			4.9%	2023-24 Q1
PH7	Successful completions of adult alcohol treatment	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Public Health	Higher				29.0%	28.3%	29.0%	28.8%			35.2%	2023-24 Q1
PH12	Rate of emergency department attendances for falls in those aged 65+	2. Improved Life Chances	People - Public Health	No Tolerance	4.01		Trend	1.36	1.42	1.50	4.28				
C&O-11	Proportion of cases where homeless was prevented	2. Improved Life Chances	Communities & Opportunities	Higher			40.0%	26.0%	14.0%	17.0%	19.0%				
C&O-12	Proportion of cases where homelessness was successfully relieved	2. Improved Life Chances	Communities & Opportunities	Higher			40.0%	24.0%	17.0%	20.0%	21.0%				
C&O-01	Net Disabled Facilities Grant Expenditure	2. Improved Life Chances	Communities & Opportunities	Higher	1,236,454	4,750,175	639,735	274,087	645,317	261,001	1,180,405				
HW-04	Percentage of routine maintenance budget spent to date compared to the agreed Maintenance Plan	3. Connected Communities	Place	Higher	-	-		-	-	-	96.0%				
HW-07	Percentage of defects responded to within the timeframes specified (Priority 1 & 2)	3. Connected Communities	Place	Higher	98.8%	-	97.5%	100.0%	96.8%	100.0%	98.7%				
HW-08	Percentage of defects responded to within the timeframes specified (Priority 3 & 4)	3. Connected Communities	Place	Higher	98.3%	-	90.0%	97.5%	98.2%	99.1%	98.2%				
3.1a	Percentage of customers who are quite satisfied and extremely satisfied with the service received from	3. Connected Communities	Corporate Services	Higher	90.4%	90.7%	90.0%				88.2%				
3.1b	Percentage of contacts received within Customer Services for the first time (unavoidable contacts)	3. Connected Communities	Corporate Services	Higher			Trend				91.0%				
3.1c	Proportion of complaints escalated	3. Connected Communities	Corporate Services	Lower	9.0%	-	tbc	-	-	-	7.0%				
3.1d	Proportion of complaints that are upheld	3. Connected Communities	Corporate Services	Lower	New	New	Trend	-	-	-	54.0%				
C&O-25	Number of new council homes built	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	Place	Higher	3	77	0	-	-	-	0				
C&O-21	Number of affordable homes completed	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	Place	Higher	175	441	78	-	-	-	57				
Econ1	Visitor Economy (Narrative update)	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	Place	-	-	-		No indicator - Narrative only							
C&O-43	Visitors to libraries - Physical Visitors	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	Communities & Opportunities	Higher	New	New	177,276	72,094	78,151	71,394	221,639				
C&O-44	Visitors to libraries - Virtual Visitors	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	Communities & Opportunities	Higher	New	New	47,682	20,765	22,270	20,121	63,156				

Appendix – Scorecard Detail

Ref	Metric Title	Priority	Lead Directorate	Better to be?	2022-23 Q4	2023-23 Outturn	Q1 Target	Apr	May	Jun	Q1	Stat Neighbour	Regiona	Nationa	Comparator Period
C&O-47	Visitors to Museums	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	Communities & Opportunities	Higher	27,362	138,114	33,038	13,412	10,991	13,773	38,176				
C&O-36	ARAP / ACRS: number of households assisted to move on to find their own accommodation	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	Communities & Opportunities	Higher	New	New	6	2	1	2	5				
C&O-35	Homes for Ukraine: percentage of hosting breakdowns where homelessness is prevented	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	Communities & Opportunities	Higher	New	New	tbc	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%					
DM-01	Percentage of major planning applications processed within 13 weeks	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	Place	Higher	79.0%	-	70.0%	71.4%	100.0%	100.0%	87.5%		92.0%	92.0%	2022-23 Q4
DM-02	Percentage of non-major planning applications processed within 8 weeks	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	Place	Higher	64.0%	-	70.0%	83.9%	79.8%	76.6%	80.3%		83.0%	87.0%	2022-23 Q4
TBC1	Planning enforcement Measure (TBC)	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	Place	0	-	-	-	Measure to be confirmed and reporting from quarter 2							
TBC2	Footfall in Major Towns (TBC - from Q2)	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	Place	Higher	-	-	-	Method to be confirmed and reporting from quarter 2							
Econ2	Support to local businesses (Narrative Updated)	5. Economic Development	Place	-											
5.4a	Total number of people on Council Tax Reduction Scheme	5. Economic Development	Finance	Lower	-	18,470	Trend				18,598				
5.4b	Pensioners on Council Tax Reduction Scheme	5. Economic Development	Finance	Lower	-	7,712	Trend				7,707				
5.4c	Working age people on Council Tax Reduction Scheme	5. Economic Development	Finance	Lower	-	10,758	Trend				10,891				
5.5a	Apprentices employed in substantive roles by WNC	5. Economic Development	Corporate Services	Higher	-	87	-	-	-	-	74				
5.5b	Apprenticeships starts in West Northants	5. Economic Development	Corporate Services	Higher	-	950	Trend	-	-	-	2,150				

Appendix – Scorecard Detail

Ref	Metric Title	Priority	Lead Directorate	Better to be?	2022-23 Q4	2023-23 Outturn	Q1 Target	Apr	May	Jun	Q1	Stat Neighbour	Regiona	Nationa	Comparator Period
6.1	Net Revenue budget delivery - Projected surplus/ deficit (£m)	6. Robust Resource Management	Finance	Lower			0.00	Data available until c24th Aug							
6.2	Council Tax collection rate	6. Robust Resource Management	Finance	Higher	-	96.97%	29.73%				29.55%			96.0%	2022-23
6.3	Business Rates collection rate	6. Robust Resource Management	Finance	Higher	-	98.02%	28.80%				29.84%			96.8%	2022-23
6.4	Amount of debt owed to the council that is overdue by at least 90 days (£m)	6. Robust Resource Management	Finance	Lower	-	25	Trend	24.80	25.60	24.06					
6.5	Percentage of invoices that are paid within 30 days of receipt	6. Robust Resource Management	Finance	Higher	96.6%	96.7%	95.0%	98.4%	97.2%	97.8%	97.8%				
6.6a	Housing Benefit & CTRS - time to determine new applications	6. Robust Resource Management	Finance	Lower	-	36.45	20.00								
6.6b	Housing Benefit & CTRS - time to determine change in circumstances	6. Robust Resource Management	Finance	Lower	-	7.68	8.00								
6.7a	Number of Employee's - Full Time Equivalent (FTE)	6. Robust Resource Management	Corporate Services	No Tolerance	-	2400.72	Trend	2,432.01	2,439.22	2,417.85					
6.7b	Number of Employee's - Headcount	6. Robust Resource Management	Corporate Services	No Tolerance	-	2,667	Trend	2,693	2,690	2,706					
6.7c	Average number of days lost due to sickness	6. Robust Resource Management	Corporate Services	Lower	-	11.88		0.59	1.29	1.98					
6.7d	Projected sickness	6. Robust Resource Management	Corporate Services	Lower	-	11.88		7.07	7.73	7.92					
6.7e	Rolling Annual Staff Turnover	6. Robust Resource Management	Corporate Services	No Tolerance	-	15.1%	Trend	13.6%	13.1%	13.5%					

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

19 September 2023

CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR FINANCE: COUNCILLOR MALCOLM LONGLEY

Report Title	Revenue Monitoring Period 4 - Financial Year 2023-24
Report Author	Martin Henry, Executive Director (Finance) Martin.Henry@westnorthants.gov.uk

1 List of Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	30/08/2023
Chief Finance Officer (S.151)	Martin Henry	07/09/2023
Communications Lead/Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	30/08/2023

List of Appendices

Appendix A – 2023-24 Revenue Forecast Outturn by Directorate as at Period 4

Appendix B – Budget Savings Tracker

Appendix C – Treasury Management Update

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The report provides an assessment of the Council's financial performance against its approved 2023-24 budget, incorporating key financial risks, issues and opportunities identified since 1st April 2023 for General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. West Northamptonshire Council provides a range of services to residents and businesses across the area including care to vulnerable adults and children, education, the collection and disposal of waste, household waste recycling, leisure and community wellbeing, highways, planning, economic development, collection of council tax and business rates, housing benefit, council tax support, housing and support for the homeless.
- 2.2. During 2022-23 the Council alongside all other local authorities across the nation, continued to experience significant increases in the cost of service provision, as a result of external factors beyond its control. These cost pressures include increasing inflationary and cost of living rises, with rates hitting a 40 year high in October 2022 of 11.1% (CPI), significant pressure on demand led services such as Children's and Adults Social Care, and increasing demand for temporary accommodation placements.
- 2.3. Due to the Council's swift response to these financial challenges, and with the focus of Directorate Management Teams on reducing the cost of service delivery, the Council mainly contained these pressures, reporting only a small overspend within the provisional outturn report presented to Cabinet in July 2023.
- 2.4. Now in its third year of operation the Council continues to drive forward the delivery of the Council plan and its key corporate priorities, against the continuation into 2023-24 of a challenging local, national and global economy, both within the current financial year and the medium term horizon. The latest assessment of pressures include:
- Inflationary and cost of living pressures impacting on the cost of providing services, with inflation reducing at a slower pace than nationally forecast.
 - Demand led and cost pressures within the Children's Trust.
 - Demand led and cost pressures within Adult Social Care.
 - Continued high costs and demand for temporary accommodation.
 - Cost of living pay award greater than the amount included at the time of setting the budget.
- 2.5. Table one summarises the revenue forecast currently being estimated for this financial year.

Table One - Forecast Outturn 2023-24 by Directorate

Directorate	Net Budget £'000	Forecast Net Spend £'000	P4 Outturn Forecast Variance £'000	Forecast Variance against budget
Corporate Services	17,816	17,913	97	0.5%
Chief Executive Office	2,822	2,822	0	0.0%
Education Services	5,223	5,236	13	0.2%
Children's Trust	81,861	95,821	13,960	17.1%
Communities and Opportunities	14,190	16,444	2,254	15.9%
Adults, Communities & Wellbeing	128,882	130,006	1,124	0.9%
Place and Economy	92,853	92,853	0	0.0%
Finance Directorate	10,815	10,815	0	0.0%
Cost of services	354,462	371,910	17,448	4.9%
Technical / Centrally Controlled Budgets	29,055	17,544	(11,511)	-39.6%
Total budgeted expenditure	383,517	389,455	5,938	1.5%
Less funding	(383,517)	(386,667)	(3,150)	0.8%
Net Position 2023-24	0	2,788	2,788	

Technical / Centrally controlled includes use of unallocated general contingency of £8.2m

- 2.6. The forecast outturn position for 2023-24 is an overspend of £2.8m after the use of £8.2m of budget contingencies, which were set aside in the budget for risks that may crystallise in the current financial year. This equates to a variance of less than 1% of the net budget (0.7%). The detailed forecast variations against budget are set out in section 6.
- 2.7. The main reasons for the underlying pressures which Directorates are seeking to mitigate are as follows:
- Continued demand and cost pressures within the Children's Trust contract.
 - Pressures within housing and temporary accommodation.
 - Demand and cost pressure on Adult Social Care independent care budgets.
 - The cost of the 2023-24 pay award being greater than forecast at the time of setting the budget.

Housing Revenue Account

- 2.8. The Housing Revenue Account is a ring-fenced account used to manage the Council's housing stock. The costs of managing and maintaining the properties, collecting rents and meeting the interest cost of monies borrowed to pay for investment in the housing stock are all charged to the housing revenue account.

2.9. Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH) are an arms-length management organisation and manage the Council's housing stock on its behalf, and is responsible for the delivery of the following services:

- Allocations and lettings
- Repairs and maintenance
- Housing management, including dealing with anti-social behaviour
- Tenancy support
- Tenant involvement

2.10. The financial reporting of service delivery for these areas is also supplied by NPH and are incorporated in the Councils HRA's financial position for the current year.

Table Two: HRA Forecast Outturn 2023-24 by Activity

Retained WNC Budgets	Net Budget	Period 4 Forecast Outturn	Period 4 Forecast Variance	Period 4 Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
Dwelling Rents	(57,181)	(57,016)	165	-0.3%
Non-Dwelling Rents	(1,094)	(1,061)	33	-3.0%
Other Charges for Services	(2,906)	(3,067)	(160)	5.5%
Contributions towards Expenditure	(9)	(14)	(5)	60.5%
General Management	1,835	1,830	(5)	-0.3%
Special Services	51	51	0	0.0%
Rent, Rates, Taxes & Other	302	302	0	0.0%
Provision for Bad Debts	400	350	(50)	-12.5%
General Fund Recharges	2,820	2,820	0	0.0%
Interest Capital Financing Charges	8,770	8,800	31	0.4%
Depreciation (MRA)	13,699	13,699	0	0.0%
Voluntary Repayment Contributions	-	509	509	-
Revenue Contributions to Capital	517	0	(517)	-100.0%
Contributions to/from Reserves	0	0	0	100.0%
Total Retained Budgets	(32,795)	(32,795)	0	0.0%
Budgets Managed by NPH				
Repairs & Maintenance	17,964	17,964	0	0.0%
General Management	8,793	8,793	0	0.0%
Special Services	6,038	6,038	0	0.0%
Total Managed Budgets	32,795	32,795	0	0.0%
Net Position	0	0	0	0.0%

- 2.11. The HRA is reporting a balanced position against the original budget. However, key variances are explained below.
- 2.12. The shortfall in rental income is due to new build properties coming online slower than expected, which is broadly offset by additional service charge income.
- 2.13. The bad debt provision is forecast to be lower than budget and in line with last year's spend, and the capital finance charges are higher than budget due to the new planned capital investment for resettlement schemes.
- 2.14. The council has introduced a Voluntary Revenue Provision for repayment of debt in year which provides for the repayment of borrowing taken out to fund the capital programme. The forecast revenue surplus, (Revenue Contributions to Capital), is redirected to provide for this VRP going forward based on a robust calculation of repayments on an annuity basis, much like a mortgage.

Dedicated Schools Grant

- 2.15. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is a ring-fenced specific grant allocated to the Local Authority (LA) by the Government to support a range of education related services.
- 2.16. The Department for Education (DfE) currently operate a four-block funding model for funding schools and pre-16 education including early years as set out in the following table:

Dedicated Schools Grant			
Schools Block	Early Years Block	High Needs Block	Central Schools Services Block (CSSB)

- 2.17. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) forecast at the end of Period 4 is as follows:

Table Three – DSG

DSG Block	Gross Expenditure Budget £'000	Recoupment £'000	Net Expenditure Budget £'000	Forecast Net Spend £'000	Period 4 Variance £'000
Schools	341,995	(273,243)	68,752	68,752	0
Early Years Provision	28,151	0	28,151	28,013	(138)
High Needs	71,245	(17,233)	54,012	55,624	1,612
Central Schools Services Block	3,791	0	3,791	4,229	437
TOTAL	445,182	-290,476	154,706	156,618	1,911

- 2.18. The DSG is currently forecasting an overspend of £1.91m.

High Needs Block

- 2.19. The forecast pressure in the high needs block totalling £1.61m overspend is due to increased demand for out of county placements provision for pupils with SEND. This is especially for young people with social, emotional and mental health needs alongside other needs such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and learning difficulties. Independent special school placements have increased by 34 pupils by the end of July whereas the increase for the whole of 2022-23 was 52. The cost of placements has also increased from an annual average of £50k to £55k which is a combination of increased need but also inflation on the costs being charged.

Central Schools Services Block (CSSB)

- 2.20. The CSSB forecast overspend totals £0.4m which is largely made up of historical pensions costs above budgeted levels, due to index linked inflationary uplifts in payments to the teachers pensions company for previously centrally employed teachers pensions.

Early Years Block

- 2.21. The early years block is forecast to underspend by £0.14m on central expenditure due to staffing vacancies. The service continues to recruit to centrally funded posts to offer the sector advice, support and guidance around quality first teaching, safeguarding, SEND specialist support, transitions, funding and any other areas of need.

Public Health Grant

- 2.22. The Public Health Grant for 2023-24 is £19.7m and is a ring-fenced grant for use on public health functions.

Table Four – Public Health

	2023-24 Budget £'000	Period 4 Forecast £'000	Variance £'000
Health Protection and Healthcare Public Health	2,809	2,709	(100)
Wider Determinants	3,480	3,480	0
Health Improvement and Communities	1,226	1,212	(14)
People & Wellbeing and Commissioning	8,334	8,500	166
Management and Admin	4,034	3,982	(53)
Public Health Grant	(19,730)	(19,730)	0
General Fund (for Healthwatch)	153	153	0

- 2.23. Although there are some underlying staffing pressures due to the cost of disaggregation and project delivery, these are currently mitigated through reductions in non-statutory expenditure and planned use of the Public Health reserve.

3 Recommendations

3.1. It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- a) Note the forecast outturn position for 2023-24 and associated risks
- b) Note the deliverability assessment of West Northamptonshire Council savings requirement for 2023-24 summarised in section 7 and detailed in Appendix B
- c) Delegate authority to the Executive Director – Finance in consultation with the portfolio holder for finance to apply any budget virements required to effectively manage the overall budget.
- d) Note the Treasury Management update in Appendix C.

4 Reason for Recommendations

- *To update members on the financial position of the Council and ensure that the Authority complies with its financial regulations*

5 Report Background

5.1 The Council's budget for 2023-24 is £383.5m and was approved on 24 February 2023 by Full Council, the budget includes £32m of savings proposals. This report includes an analysis of the deliverability of these efficiency and income proposals, and the in-year variations to budgeted assumptions.

6 Financial Overview by Directorate

6.1 This section of the report provides an update on the forecast variations against the 2023-24 budget. A more detailed breakdown of the 2023-24 forecast is included in Appendix A.

Corporate Services

Net Budget £17.8m

Forecast Outturn £17.9m

Forecast overspend £0.1m

Variance percentage 0.5%

6.2 The Corporate Services Directorate delivers services including human resources, customer services, Digital Technology, and Innovation (DTI), legal, democratic and transformation services.

6.3 The Directorate is reporting an overspend of £0.1m, with a significant proportion of the net pressure being experienced within the DTI service budget, this is due to the additionality of cost for existing and new IT contracts, which has been partially offset by savings through contract rationalising, review of cost recharging model to partners and savings on staffing due to delays in recruitment.

- 6.4 Within the reported position, Corporate Services Management Team have also identified a further mitigations of £1.3m to contribute towards offsetting the Corporate Services budget pressures.

Chief Executive Services

Net Budget £2.8m
Forecast Outturn £2.8m
Forecast underspend 0.0m
Variance percentage 0.0%

- 6.5 Chief Executive Office includes the Chief Executive, Assistant Chief Executive, Communications Business Intelligence Services, and Sustainability team.
- 6.6 The Directorate is reporting an overall balanced position.

Education Services

Net Budget £5.2m
Forecast Outturn £5.2m
Forecast overspend £0.0m
Variance percentage 0.2%

- 6.7 Education Services is made up of Council services which deliver statutory education functions against approximately 200 duties as set out in various Education and Children Acts, and regulations including, but not limited to, school quality assurance and intervention, pupil place planning and admissions, early years and special educational needs.
- 6.8 The Directorate is reporting a forecast overspend of £0.01m.
- 6.9 This is made up of a combination of the forecast non-delivery of savings totalling £0.13m along with minor overspends across the directorate which are offset in full.
- 6.10 Forecast non delivery of savings of £0.13m is across two savings proposals with non-delivery being primarily mitigated by forecast staffing underspends.
- 6.11 Educational Psychology income is forecast to fall short of the target by £0.3m due to the continued focus on statutory work and difficulties in recruiting to vacant posts. This in turn has driven the majority of forecast underspends in the Directorate across staffing due to vacancies totalling £0.36m.
- 6.12 Additional capacity is being commissioned on a fixed term basis, funded by one off resources, to provide the statutory assessments needed and significantly improve the current performance while enabling the current service to continue to recruit permanent staff and complete new assessments.

Northamptonshire Children's Trust

Net Budget £81.9m

Forecast Outturn £95.9m

Forecast overspend £14.0m

Variance percentage 17.1%

- 6.13 The contract for Northamptonshire Children's Trust provides children's social care services across both West and North Northamptonshire Councils.
- 6.14 Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT) are reporting a total forecast demand led pressure of £22.186m against a contract sum of £150.938m which is representative of a challenging national context relating to the cost of children's services. The WNC share of this based on the disaggregated contract sum split is £12.389m.
- 6.15 Forecast pressures across children's placements make up £20.230m of the total with £11.296m attributable to WNC. The total across both Councils includes approximately £9m relating to a structural deficit due to additional demand and increased average placement costs since the setting of the contract sum in November 2022. Placements savings proposals totalling £1.3m are forecast as undeliverable this year whilst plans are fully developed and implemented. The remainder is due to a combination of forecast demographic growth, complexity of need driving higher average placement costs and average price increases above budgeted growth and inflation.
- 6.16 Staffing costs are forecast to overspend by a total of £1.299m (£0.725m WNC share). This includes £1m forecast for the preferred in year pay award which is still subject to approval. The NCT offer ensures that the lowest paid receive a higher percentage increase in recognition of the increased impacts of the cost of living and will assist in the recruitment and retention of key staff in hard to recruit areas. The remaining forecast overspend is due to continued pressure on recruitment and use of agency staff.
- 6.17 Legal costs, transport and expenditure in children's homes make up a total of £0.800m (£0.447m WNC) forecast overspends which are mainly due to increased demand and inflation above budgeted levels. Forecast underspends of £0.143m (£0.08m) across other non-placement related care expenditure mitigates this in part.
- 6.18 Forecasting is challenging given the current pressures on placement provision through demand and complexity. Combined with inflationary pressures on these demand led budgets and social work recruitment, these factors present a risk to year end projections. For example, the demand led nature and lack of sufficiency of suitable placements around residential provision means that an individual placement can cost in excess of half a million per annum.
- 6.19 In addition to their reported forecast, NCT have outlined material financial risks which they are still working through in detail relating to joint funding of complex care packages, continuation of managed teams due to pressures in recruitment and retention of staff in hard to recruit to areas and placement demand.

- 6.20 In taking a prudent approach to forecasting WNC have provided for a sum of £1.6m in relation to these risks on top of the NCT reported position, bringing the total forecast overspend to £14.0m.

Communities and Opportunities

Net Budget £14.2m

Forecast Outturn £16.4m

Forecast overspend £2.3m

Variance percentage 15.9%

- 6.21 The Communities and Opportunities Directorate includes Housing, Leisure, Libraries, Economic Development, Regeneration and Community Safety & Engagement.
- 6.22 The Directorate is forecasting an overspend of £2.3m, which in the main is driven by pressures on both temporary and supported accommodation.
- 6.23 Service Project groups are working on a number of key initiatives to address prevention and supply options which should bring down costs over time.
- 6.24 Overspends are also forecast within the museum service due to pressure on both commercial income and staffing budgets, with increased movement due to factors beyond the control of the service in relation to the allocation of Non-Domestic Rates at Abington park Museum from 2017 to 2023-24.
- 6.25 These pressures are offset by various underspends across the directorate which include better than expected recovery of Leisure Contract Management Fees, along with other savings which include staff savings.

Adult Social Care

Net Budget £128.9m

Forecast Outturn £130.0m

Forecast overspend £1.1m

Variance percentage 0.9%

- 6.26 The Adult Social Care Directorate consists of services that provides support to older people or those living with disabilities or with mental or physical illness under the Care Act, to promote their independence and improve their well-being. This support enables them to manage their needs and live life to the fullest regardless of the challenges they may face as a result of their circumstances. The Directorate also has responsibility for Public Health.
- 6.27 Adult Social Care had significant net growth added into the budget for 2023-24 of £24m, that included proposals to bring the independent care budget in line with forecast demand and to respond to be both inflationary pressure and increases in national minimum wage. However, demand through both hospitals and the community, since setting the budget, continue to increase contributing to pressure on independent care. These pressures are consistent with those seen nationally. The service has implemented a number of planned mitigations that will need to be monitored closely throughout the year given this increased demand and the volatility we see through winter.

- 6.28 The Directorate is reporting a £1.1m pressure. This is despite £10.1m of savings being largely on track for delivery in full as detailed in table at 7.1 of this report.
- 6.29 Other pressures across Adult Services relates to transport costs of £0.3m based on journeys recharged year to date through the Place Directorate. A project team has been set up to review transport requirements for the Directorate and explore other transport options for service users.
- 6.30 Within Health & Reablement, £0.2m of pressure relates to the residual cost of Spinney fields Care home. Spinneyfields Specialist Care Centre was closed in January 2023 and at present is still unoccupied. As a consequence, WNC are still incurring utility and business rate costs. Work is underway at a system level to identify an alternate use.
- 6.31 Across Safeguarding and Wellbeing, there is net underspend of £0.5m, despite staffing overspends within the Longlands Specialist Care Centre of £0.5m (primarily driven by the inability to recruit to permanent staff and having to employ agency staff). This is offset by underspends across Provider Services with staffing underspends and reduced property costs of £0.7m. Prevention and Assistive Technology are forecasting an underspend from increased sales of equipment (£0.2m) and other minor underspends across Call Care, Quality & Performance and DoLs (£0.1m).

Place and Economy

Net Budget £92.9m

Forecast Outturn £92.9m

Forecast underspend £0.0m

Variance percentage 0.0%

- 6.32 The Place Directorate delivers services including Waste Management, Highways and Transportation, (including Home to School Transport), Asset Management (including car parking), Environment Services, Regulatory Services & Planning.
- 6.33 The Directorate is reporting an overall nil variance to budget in 2023-24, however, within this position, there is pressure of £0.9m on savings delivery and in year pressures of £1.3m, both of which are fully mitigated by further underspends identified by the Directorate Management Team.
- 6.34 Of the £0.9m budgets savings delivery identified, approximately £0.4m is due to in year implementation delays on several proposals. There is approximately £0.5m of undeliverable budget savings proposals, these are primarily pending the outcome of the Waste Strategy Review.
- 6.35 In Assets and Environment in year pressures of £0.8m have been identified, mainly consisting of; £0.3m pressure on utilities due to inflation being higher than budgeted, £0.2m base inflation pressure on the Northampton Schools PFI contract, and £0.3m in relation to pressures on service charge income and office optimisation. Within Highways and Transport there are also inflationary pressures in relation to the Streetlighting PFI Contract of £0.1m.
- 6.36 Waste Services have identified further in year pressures consisting of £0.2m.

- 6.37 These pressures are being offset within the Directorate by £0.4m business rates savings across property estates, car parks and market due to revaluations. In addition, Car Park and CCTV income/recharges are currently forecast higher than budget by £0.2m. Legal costs of £0.08m will be recovered during 2023-24 following successful outcome of a Judicial review.
- 6.38 Highways and Transport have identified £0.1m specific mitigations to offset the non-delivery of the Home to School Transport Policy changes which will not be implemented until September 2024.
- 6.39 Within Waste Services pressures are being offset by in-year savings on refuse and recycling, fuel deflation, and a net underspend on garden waste subscriptions totalling £0.5m. Additional income is forecast at household waste recycling centres £0.1m.
- 6.40 In year savings have been identified relating to reduced costs for concessionary fares £0.25m (passenger numbers below pre-COVID levels), and additional income due to the high volume of road closures £0.25m.

Finance

Net Budget £10.8m

Forecast Outturn £10.8m

Forecast underspend £0.0m

Variance percentage 0.0%

- 6.41 The Finance Directorate services include strategic finance, accountancy, revenue and benefits, procurement, and internal audit services.
- 6.42 The Directorate is reporting a balanced position.

Technical/Centrally Held Items

Net Budget £29.1m

Forecast Outturn £17.5m

Forecast underspend £11.5m

Variance percentage -39.6%

- 6.43 Technical and centrally controlled budgets include the treasury budgets, pension deficit contribution payments for West Northants and the contingency budgets. This area will also reflect any council wide corporate cross cutting issues or opportunities. The Technical and Centrally Controlled Directorate are forecasting an overall underspend of £11.5m against budget for 2023-24.
- 6.44 A council wide contingency budget is managed within the centrally controlled budget which at the start of the year stood at £19.0m. This consisted of a disaggregation budget of £0.5m brought forward from 2022-23, pay inflation £7.6m and a general contingency of £10.9m.
- 6.45 A summary of commitments against the general contingency is shown below:

	£m
2023-24 Opening Contingency Budget	19.0
Pay Inflation	(7.6)
Disaggregation contingency allocation to Corporate Services	(0.5)
General Contingency Balance	10.9
Agreed transfers	
Pay award (addition due to local agreement)	(1.2)
Cultural events	(0.2)
Bus subsidies	(0.2)
Forecast Commitments	(1.1)
Remaining balance	8.2

6.46 There is a forecast underspend of £3.3m within treasury management. This is driven in the main by improved position on investment income due to higher interest rate yields and newly negotiated rate of returns on pooled cash held with the Council's corporate bank in June. A comprehensive update on Treasury Management is included in Appendix C.

Funding

6.47 The Council's net service budget is funded from the following areas: Council Tax income, Business Rates income, Government grants, one off COVID funding and reserves. A breakdown of the funding budget is detailed below in Table Five.

Table Five

Funding	Net Budget
	£'000
Council Tax income	(244,908)
Business Rates income (including S31 Grant)	(90,839)
Adult Social Care Grants	(33,855)
Transfer from Reserves	(7,939)
New Homes Bonus	(3,510)
Services Grant 23-24	(2,028)
Other Government Grants	(438)
Total Funding	(383,517)

6.48 The Period 4 position includes forecast additional business rates income of £3.1m. The 2023-24 budget includes the Council's known funding assumptions at a point in time and this increase reflects the current position and additional income identified surplus to the balance reported within the NNDR return.

7. Summary of savings delivery 2023-24

7.1 The Council has a savings requirement within its 2023-24 budget of £32m. Service Directors have undertaken a review of savings deliverability, with the summary forecast position reported in table six.

Table six

	Budgeted saving	Blue	Green	Amber	Red	Expected saving
Adult Social Care	(10,110)	(4,021)	(4,109)	(1,819)	(161)	(10,110)
Centrally Controlled Budgets	(7,563)	0	(7,515)	0	(48)	(7,563)
Chief Executive Office	(636)	(263)	(359)	0	(14)	(636)
Communities and Opportunities	(1,737)	0	(1,035)	(106)	(595)	(1,736)
Corporate Services	(5,440)	(2,900)	(1,781)	(575)	(184)	(5,440)
Education Services	(530)	(160)	(166)	(75)	(129)	(530)
Finance	(714)	(90)	(624)	0	0	(714)
Place and Economy	(5,248)	(358)	(2,992)	(1,039)	(859)	(5,248)
Total	(31,977)	(7,792)	(18,581)	(3,614)	(1,990)	(31,977)
% Total		24%	58%	11%	6%	

Blue = Delivered and Confirmed

Green = Deliverable, on target

Amber = Deliverable, with risks

Red = Unlikely to be delivered

- 7.2 Overall, there are twenty one savings (£2.0m) flagged as 'red' which are unlikely to be delivered and twenty five savings (£3.6m) flagged as 'amber' which are deliverable but have risks. These pressures are set out in the directorate section and included in the budget monitoring figures contained in the report. A detailed assessment of the individual savings proposals is set out in Appendix B.

8. Implications (including financial implications)

Resources and Financial

- 8.1 The resource and financial implications for West Northamptonshire Council are set out in the body of, and appendices to, this report.

Legal

- 8.2 There are no legal implications arising from the proposals. The report has been cleared by Legal Services.

Risk

- 8.3 This report sets out the financial forecast for this financial year. The key risks associated with this report relate to the continued challenging economic conditions being experienced, slower than forecast reductions in inflationary pressures alongside demand led pressures on both social care and housing services potentially driving further financial pressures over and above the pressures already identified. These risks were identified earlier in the report.

Consultation

- 8.4 The Council carries out public consultation and communications on its annual budget proposals. These activities took place in the months prior to the budgets being approved by Full Council in February 2023 for the 2023-24 budget.
- 8.5 Any management interventions that require a policy change will be subject to a consultation before any decision is taken.
- 8.6 Where consultation is necessary, full details will be presented to Cabinet separately. Cabinet can only make a decision after taking careful account of the results of such consultation in order to reach an informed decision.

Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

- 8.7 All 2023-24 budget proposals were consulted on prior to the budget being approved by Full Council in February 2023. Any management interventions that require a policy change will be subject to a consultation before any decision is taken. Where consultation is necessary, full details will be presented to Cabinet separately.

Climate Impact

- 8.8 All management interventions and mitigations identified within this report will be reviewed on an individual basis for any environmental impact.

Community Impact

- 8.9 This report will have a positive impact on the community by providing scrutiny on how public funds are being used to fund services for local residents in 2023-24.

Communications

- 8.10 Communication will continue with service directors to seek to deliver a balanced budget in 2023-24.

9. Background Papers

- 9.1 The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report:
- 9.2 Final Budget Report and Medium Term Financial Plan, meeting of Council, 22 February 2023
<https://westnorthants.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s10478/2023-24%20Final%20Budget%20Report%20-%20Full%20Council.pdf>

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Directorate	Appendix A -2023-24 Forecast Outturn position by Directorate	Period 4 £'000
Corporate Services	Savings Delivery Pressure:	
	Election Services savings - pressure on the printing budget	11
	Pressure on the Target Operating Model savings target	173
		184
	In-Year Budget Variations – Overspends:	
	DTI contract budget shortfall	2,400
	Staffing pressures within Digital	165
	Coroners - reduced income	59
	Electoral Services - reduction in grant income	45
	Other minor variances	79
	2,748	
In-Year Budget Variations – Underspends:		
Contract rationalisation savings identified through targeted review of DTI contract spend	(1,329)	
Democratic Services - savings on staffing and additional income	(83)	
Elections - Savings on staffing alongside additional grant income	(33)	
Increased forecast OPUS dividend	(8)	
Additional income in Customer Services, over and above budget	(53)	
	(1,506)	
Management Actions:		
Mitigating actions identified across the Directorate	(1,329)	
Net Position – Corporate Services	97	
Chief Executive Services	Savings Delivery Pressure:	
	Pressure on subscriptions budget due to 12 month notice period required	14
		14
	In-Year Budget Variations – Overspends:	
	Minor Variances	5
		5
	In Year Budget Variations – Underspends:	
	Staffing underspends across the directorate	(19)
	(19)	
Management Actions:		
No reported variances	0	
	0	
Net Position – Chief Executive Services	0	
Education Services	Savings Delivery Pressure:	
	Part year slippage in implementation of the consolidation of commissioning and business intelligence services in Children's and Public Health	100
	Reversal of savings proposal to capitalise resource costs following further review in line with capital guidance	29
		129
	In-Year Budget Variations – Overspends:	
	Forecast income shortfall in Education Psychology due to focus on statutory work	299
	Education Commissioning post disaggregation pressure	65
	Unfunded historical pension strain costs	61
		425
	In Year Budget Variations – Underspends:	
Aggregate staffing underspends across the Directorate, mainly in Education Psychology due to difficulty in recruiting to vacant posts	(357)	
Income received from non attendance fines	(55)	
	(412)	

Directorate	Appendix A -2023-24 Forecast Outturn position by Directorate	Period 4 £'000
	Management Actions: Mitigating actions identified across the Directorate Net Position – Education Services	 (129) (129) 13
Children's Trust	Savings Delivery Pressure: No reported variances In-Year Budget Variations – Overspends: WNC share of the Northamptonshire Children's Trust forecast overspend of £25m In Year Budget Variations – Underspends: No variances to report Management Actions: No variances to report Net Position – Children's Trust	 0 0 13,960 13,960 0 0 0 0 13,960
Communities and Opportunities	Savings Delivery Pressure: Undeliverable Temporary Accommodation savings Museum under-achievement of commercial income In year variations - overspend: Housing forecast exceeds budget due to continued high demand for temporary accommodation and limited low cost accommodation and Housing Subsidy loss pressure Forecast increase in contribution required to the bad debt provision Museums budget pressure including staffing costs and backdated non domestic rates charges Updated recharges to HRA post 2022-23 review Agency cost pressures Pressure in legal fees for Private Sector Housing Enforcement Other Minor Variances In year variations - underspend: Leisure Contract Management Fees additional income forecast above budget alongside staffing costs savings plus other minor variances Libraries various savings and additional income Regeneration staffing costs savings Minor Underspends Management Actions: No variances to report Net Position – Communities and Opportunities	 500 95 595 1,486 250 125 116 83 52 42 2,154 (379) (60) (42) (14) (495) 0 0 2,254

Directorate	Appendix A -2023-24 Forecast Outturn position by Directorate	Period 4 £'000
Adult Social Care	Savings Delivery Pressure:	
	Reduction in WNC Service Provision to non WNC Residents -Spinneyfields Specialist care centre no longer operational but incurring utilities & business rate costs	161
		161
	In-Year Budget Variations – Overspends:	
	Forecast pressure on independent care budgets driven by the number of hospital discharge placements that are no longer funded through the hospital discharge fund. A dedicated team is undergoing care assessments of all individuals that remain in these short term placements	4,189
	Longlands care home budget pressure mainly driven by agency staff usage	536
	A year to date pressure on Client Transport has been identified, reflecting a historic shortfall in budget from a number of prior years where fuel costs have increased. A project is underway to look at how the service can provided more efficiently	329
	PFI Unitary charge pressure due to indexation continuing to rise after budget setting	95
	Learning Disability Property voids	84
		5,233
	In Year Budget Variations – Underspends:	
	Provider Services underspend driven by staffing vacancies and reduced property costs	(685)
	Prevention & Occupational Therapy, increased sales of equipment	(218)
	Staffing vacancies across Care Management and H&R teams	(66)
Call Care team minor underspend against budget	(65)	
Minor Variances	(94)	
	(1,128)	
Management Actions:		
Mitigating action plan to offset budget savings delivery and in year pressures.	(3,142)	
	(3,142)	
Net Position – Adults	1,124	

Directorate	Appendix A -2023-24 Forecast Outturn position by Directorate	Period 4 £'000
Place and Economy	Savings Delivery Pressure:	
	Partial non delivery of Facilities Management savings proposal	102
	Slippage in delivery of Parking Team Restructure savings proposal due to timing and complexities of team restructure	48
	Timing of Property and Estates Management Asset Disposal Fees proposal - income required can only be achieved on completion of sale	50
	Pressure on efficiency savings within waste services as part of development of new Waste Strategy for West Northants	200
	Pressure on efficiencies in HWRC operations, as part of the wider development of the WNC waste strategy which will consider how many sites are required to serve the residents of WNC and where they should be located	100
	Partial slippage on savings proposal to encourage residents to use separate food waste collection, leading to reduced amount of waste in residual bins and therefore reduced treatment costs	33
	Pressure on proposal to confirm external contributions to Street Cleaning within Northampton Town Centre	65
	Pressure on proposal to introduce a contribution towards the delivery of replacement bins to households where bins are repeatedly lost or damaged	25
	Pressure on savings proposal for an Air Quality Officer to develop action plans and grant funded work	100
	Partial Non delivery of Regulatory Services savings proposal. Additional income is unlikely to be achieved due to pressures resulting from the economic climate	60
	Home to School Policy Change savings proposal, Legal advice is to not introduce any policy changes until September 2024 so the new policy can be considered when parents are choosing schools, therefore the saving will not be achieved this financial year	76
		859
	In year variations - overspend:	
	Utilities inflationary pressure	283
	Northampton Schools PFI - base inflation pressure.	195
	Income pressure on historic service charge income budgets and pressure on investment properties income.	190
	Income risk due to timing of planning income	120
	Office optimisation income pressure offset by additional income.	114
	Streetlighting PFI - pressure mainly due to shortfall in inflation	118
	Technical adjustment in relation to the re-classification of a lease	98
	Staff catering facilities pressure due to low occupancy in office areas - not returned to pre-Covid levels	40
	Net overspend on waste collection and disposal due to under accrual from 2022-23 and increased prices.	60
	Minor Variances	134
		1,352

Directorate	Appendix A -2023-24 Forecast Outturn position by Directorate	Period 4 £'000
	<p>In year variations - underspend: Business rate saving due to revaluations Concessionary Fares - saving due to passenger numbers below pre Covid levels - budget is based on pre-Covid passenger numbers Additional income due to high volumes of road closures Car Park and CCTV income - Additional car parking income based on activity trends for Q1 Net underspend on staffing costs taking into account vacancy factor, agency staff spend and increased pension costs Net underspend on garden waste costs and income Underspend on fuel due to current prices Deflation saving on Northampton refuse and recycling budgets Additional recycle income at household waste recycling centres One off recovery of legal costs Minor Variances across the directorate</p> <p>Management Actions: Mitigating action plan to offset budget savings delivery and in year pressures</p> <p>Net Position – Place</p>	(401) (242) (221) (212) (99) (191) (144) (112) (103) (80) (329) (2,134) (76) (76) 0
Finance Directorate	<p>Savings Delivery Pressure: No reported variances</p> <p>In year variations - overspend: Staffing pressures</p> <p>In year variations - underspend: Staff savings on vacant posts Net underspends reported on Shared Services Savings on professional services budget</p> <p>Management mitigation: Service will look to reduce expenditure in year through management actions or this will be managed across the Directorate.</p> <p>Net Position – Finance Directorate</p>	 0 0 104 104 (54) (36) (10) (100) (4) (4) 0
	Cost of services	17,448

Directorate	Appendix A -2023-24 Forecast Outturn position by Directorate	Period 4 £'000
Technical / Centrally Held Budgets	Savings Delivery Pressure:	
	Grant income forecast to be lower than budgeted	48
		48
	In year variations - overspend:	
	2020-21 Housing Benefits Audit cost pressure	19
	Other minor variances	13
		32
	In year variations - underspend:	
	Treasury forecasting an improved average interest rate yield on investment and more surplus cash for investment.	(3,300)
	Other minor variances	(88)
	(3,388)	
Management Actions:		
No reported variances	0	
	0	
Net Position – Technical/ Centrally held budgets	(3,309)	
Funding	In year variations - underspend:	
	Business rates income - Surplus funding available over and above that declared in the MTFP	(3,150)
	Total Funding	(3,150)
Total WNC:		10,989
	<i>Use of balance of general contingency funding to contribute towards the position.</i>	(8,201)
	Overall Net Outturn Forecast 2023-24	2,788

West Northamptonshire Council - Budget Proposals 2023-24

Blue = Delivered and Confirmed

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2023-24 Delivery RAG Rating

Proposal ref	Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description	2023-24 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
2324-B4-001	Adult Social Care	Optimisation of WNC Adult Social Care in-house provision	A full review of WNC's in house services to ensure optimal usage.	(70)		(70)		
2324-B4-002	Adult Social Care	Additional Client Contributions	Alignment of client contributions budget with actual income being invoiced in 22-23. This corresponds with the increased number of active clients.	(500)			(500)	
2324-B4-003	Adult Social Care	External Funding Review by Adult Social Care	Maximise external funding opportunities across the Directorate.	(1,000)	(820)		(180)	
2324-B4-004	Adult Social Care	Progression and improvement of independent outcomes across Learning Disability services	Progression and Improving independent outcomes within Learning Disability services. This will result in individuals receiving the care that they need.	(1,000)	(983)	(17)		
2324-B4-005	Adult Social Care	Optimise use of single handed care	Further drive on reducing the need for two carers via use of Assistive Technology.	(1,000)	(405)	(595)		
2324-B4-006	Adult Social Care	Strength Based Working Reablement West	Restructure of the service has increased the number of people who will benefit from reablement and therapeutic intervention reducing the need for long term care spend.	(1,666)	(176)	(1,490)		
2324-B4-007	Adult Social Care	Domiciliary Care Redesign	Domiciliary care aligned to Local Area Partnerships (LAP) to reduce travel time and more efficient deployment of staff alongside the introduction of electronic call monitoring.	(1,500)		(1,500)		
2324-B4-008	Adult Social Care	Optimisation of WNC in house provision	Full review of WNC's day service offer to ensure optimal use.	(500)	(268)	(232)		
2324-B4-009	Adult Social Care	Positive Living Outcomes	Implementation of a four year Supported Accommodation Strategy that will provide people with care and support needs with sustainable support and housing options.	(660)	(469)	(191)		
2324-B4-010	Adult Social Care	Alignment of external funding to the base budget for Adult Social Care	This aligns the base budgets within Adult Social Care to a number of external funding sources	(700)	(700)			

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2023-24 Delivery RAG Rating

Proposal ref	Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description	2023-24 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
2324-B4-011	Adult Social Care	Reduction in WNC Service Provision to non WNC Residents	Reduction in WNC service provision to non WNC residents following disaggregation of the county council.	(1,000)	(200)		(639)	(161)
2324-B4-012	Adult Social Care	Winter planning project	Mitigation of winter pressures through whole system working.	(500)			(500)	
2324-B4-013	Centrally Controlled Budgets	Overhead Recovery	Recognition that as a new unitary authority, there is an increasing cost of supporting the various services we support outside of the Council Tax funded budgets	(73)		(73)		
2324-B4-014	Centrally Controlled Budgets	Increase in Grant Income	Forecast increase in central grant income	(266)		(218)		(48)
2324-B4-016	Centrally Controlled Budgets	Pension Contribution adjustment	Following the receipt of the Councils Pension Funds Triannual valuation and actuarial advice, a much improved funding position means that the council is able to reduced its contribution rate by 3% to ensure an optimum level of resources are invested in the fund.	(2,000)		(2,000)		
2324-B4-017	Centrally Controlled Budgets	Treasury Management - Additional Investment Returns	Realigned investment income budget including additional investment returns due to rising interest rates	(3,224)		(3,224)		
2324-B4-018	Chief Executive Office	Executive Support - Consultancy Budget	Consultancy budget from Executive Support no longer required for future years.	(54)		(54)		
2324-B4-019	Chief Executive Office	Removal of corporate CLA licence (photocopying of journals etc)	A recent review of Copyright Licensing Agency (CLA) licence used across all directorates has concluded it is not required and removal would have minimal impact on the Comms service or wider service areas	(17)		(17)		
2324-B4-020	Chief Executive Office	Income generation with external partners	Provide video and photographic services for partners and external organisations	(12)		(12)		
2324-B4-021	Chief Executive Office	Income generation with external partners	Provide consultation and engagement services for partner organisations	(5)		(5)		
2324-B4-022	Chief Executive Office	Chief Executive Services Restructuring	Chief Executive Services restructuring.	(453)	(263)	(190)		
2324-B4-025	Communities and Opportunities	Introduction of charging for viability assessments relating to affordable housing delivery.	Charges for the team that carry out in-house viability assessments to determine the % of affordable housing that can be delivered on a development site.	(10)		(10)		

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2023-24 Delivery RAG Rating

Proposal ref	Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description	2023-24 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
2324-B4-026	Communities and Opportunities	Housing Need Surveys	Charging for the completion of housing need surveys to determine housing need in parishes across West Northants.	(5)		(5)		
2324-B4-027	Communities and Opportunities	Economic Development budget rightsizing	Legacy budget further reviewed and no longer required - no service impact	(1)		(1)		
2324-B4-029	Communities and Opportunities	Temporary Accommodation: reduction in the gardening/landscaping budget	Service can be delivered on a marginally smaller budget for council owned temporary accommodation (held in the General Fund).	(1)		(1)		
2324-B4-030	Communities and Opportunities	Printing and photocopying legacy budget no longer required in Economic Development	Remove these costs from Economic Development budget as no longer required - limited impact as very little spend historically.	(2)		(2)		
2324-B4-031	Communities and Opportunities	Car Mileage and furniture budgets reduced to reflect WNC ways of working	Reduction in car mileage and furniture budgets across the whole directorate	(8)		(8)		
2324-B4-032	Communities and Opportunities	Reduction in base budget consultancy for Leisure services	50% reduction of 'consultancy' budget assigned to support services to older people.	(5)		(5)		
2324-B4-033	Communities and Opportunities	Inflationary Increase in Library charges for Learning Resources for Education	Increase income by increasing charges and reorganisation of staffing. Library education service to ensure it remains self funding from income	(5)		(5)		
2324-B4-034	Communities and Opportunities	Reduction in equipment budget	No new equipment can be purchased	(5)		(5)		
2324-B4-035	Communities and Opportunities	Consolidation of contracts for recycled furniture provision for temporary accommodation.	Consolidation of duplicate contracts/funding from legacy district/borough councils towards recycled furniture provision for temporary accommodation.	(5)		(5)		
2324-B4-036	Communities and Opportunities	Consolidation of Out of Hours Service contracts	Contracts between legacy district/borough councils and Call Care Out of Hours Service to be aggregated.	(5)		(5)		
2324-B4-037	Communities and Opportunities	Libraries Inflationary increases in printing charges and room hire	Increase income by increasing printing charges , room hire.	(6)		(6)		
2324-B4-038	Communities and Opportunities	SLA payment to NLT (health walks and street games)	Reduce legacy grant fund payment by 50%	(10)		(10)		
2324-B4-039	Communities and Opportunities	Reduce base budget for consultancy fees in Economic Development	Reduction in base budget	(10)		(10)		
2324-B4-040	Communities and Opportunities	Reduce spend on hire of facilities/venues for sports & leisure activities.	The school holiday activity programme has been redesigned. The new format reduces hire costs.	(10)		(10)		

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Proposal ref	Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description	2023-24 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
2324-B4-041	Communities and Opportunities	Reshaping of funding to Nsport	Reduce general funding provided to NSport.	(10)		(10)		
2324-B4-042	Communities and Opportunities	Home Adaptations cost claim to Better Care Fund (BCF)	Ensuring effective claiming of the 15% policy agreed discretionary works charge to the BCF Grant Fund. Reliant on spending 100% of the BCF budget annually	(10)		(10)		
2324-B4-043	Communities and Opportunities	Reduction in funding to Royal & Derngate for storage	Offering excess budget previously allocated to Royal and Derngate for storage purposes. Annual grant of £300,000 will remain.	(10)		(10)		
2324-B4-044	Communities and Opportunities	Reduce spend on agency staff for Sport & Leisure	Reduce budget for agency staff, deliverable due to holiday activity programme redesign.	(12)		(12)		
2324-B4-045	Communities and Opportunities	Budget savings from Buildings Repair and Maintenance budget	Reduction of Building repair and maintenance budget as not used - no service impact	(13)		(13)		
2324-B4-046	Communities and Opportunities	Predecessor authority wellbeing budget	Remove budget as staff wellbeing is funded corporately through HR. Impact on service mitigated through on-going involvement in working group.	(15)		(15)		
2324-B4-047	Communities and Opportunities	Changes to HMO Licence Fees	Removal of early bird discount for new HMO licences, and reduction of early bird discount for renewal HMO licences.	(20)		(20)		
2324-B4-048	Communities and Opportunities	Aggregation of Private Sector Housing Teams	Aggregation of Private Sector Housing functions from the three sovereign District Council services	(20)		(20)		
2324-B4-049	Communities and Opportunities	Appropriate allocation of staff time to resettlement programmes	Time Interim Head of Service spent on resettlement work recharged to grant aided resettlement programmes.	(21)		(21)		
2324-B4-050	Communities and Opportunities	Changes to provision of furniture in temporary accommodation.	Reduction of furniture budget by utilising donations and low cost pre-loved items.	(25)		(25)		
2324-B4-051	Communities and Opportunities	Unallocated community grants.	Reduction in legacy grant arrangements from district/borough councils.	(27)		(27)		
2324-B4-052	Communities and Opportunities	Community centre funding	Release unused grant for community centres as facilities/assets have been transferred to Community Spaces Northampton	(28)		(28)		
2324-B4-053	Communities and Opportunities	Recharging of staff time to resettlement programmes	Time Resettlement Manager spent on resettlement work recharged to grant aided resettlement programmes	(31)		(31)		

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2023-24 Delivery RAG Rating

Proposal ref	Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description	2023-24 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
2324-B4-054	Communities and Opportunities	Increased income generation through museum service	Increase in income generation through greater room hire at main museum as well as redeveloping and relaunching the wedding offer for Abington Park Museum to offer a select range of ceremony and reception packages, and increasing school sessions.	(47)			(6)	(41)
2324-B4-055	Communities and Opportunities	Safe Accommodation funding	Legacy councils grants to domestic abuse refuge providers consolidated service arrangements.	(35)		(35)		
2324-B4-056	Communities and Opportunities	Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Coordinator	Use of grant funding to fund this post.	(45)		(45)		
2324-B4-057	Communities and Opportunities	Economic Development Budget savings due to aggregation	Review of unused budget for Economic Development.	(48)		(48)		
2324-B4-059	Communities and Opportunities	Increase income from retail sales at Northampton Museum	Further development and promotion of retail offer and selling gallery.	(54)				(54)
2324-B4-060	Communities and Opportunities	Budget savings from Economic Development	Consultancy budget can be reduced.	(60)		(60)		
2324-B4-061	Communities and Opportunities	Sport Leisure Management (SLM) contract payment	Contract amended and this budget no longer required.	(120)		(120)		
2324-B4-062	Communities and Opportunities	Regeneration Service - Reduction in professional fees budget	Reduce consultancy feasibility spend on projects.	(80)		(80)		
2324-B4-063	Communities and Opportunities	Recharging of staff time to resettlement programmes	Senior management time spent on resettlement work recharged to grant aided resettlement programmes.	(5)		(5)		
2324-B4-066	Communities and Opportunities	Changes to Housing Civil Penalty Notices	Removal of early payment discount of 20% for civil penalty notices issued by Private Sector Housing.	(10)		(10)		
2324-B4-067	Communities and Opportunities	Travellers site management changes	Costs of travellers site management offset by additional income.	(100)		(100)		
2324-B4-068	Communities and Opportunities	Temporary Accommodation (TA) prevention and management plan savings	Reduction in TA spend through improved move on and reduced use of expensive nightly purchased accommodation.	(500)				(500)
2324-B4-069	Communities and Opportunities	Increase in management recharges to the Housing Revenue Account	Review of service reflects true cost of providing support to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).	(100)			(100)	
2324-B4-070	Communities and Opportunities	Alternative funding sources for Community Funding Programme	Use of external funding to support community funding	(50)		(50)		

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Proposal ref	Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description	2023-24 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
2324-B4-071	Communities and Opportunities	Libraries reduction to book fund	Reduce book fund by £45K which will be a £22.5k saving for each authority	(22)		(22)		
2324-B4-072	Communities and	Council owned temporary	Current practices of renewing flooring between temporary	(21)		(21)		
2324-B4-073	Corporate Services	Budget realignment	Following a detailed review of Corporate Services, the budget can be amended to more accurately reflect likely spend.	(184)		(173)		(11)
2324-B4-074	Corporate Services	Registrars income generation	Additional income from the Registrars Service.	(72)		(72)		
2324-B4-075	Corporate Services	Revisited charging model for the Leys	Charging Northampton and Kettering General Hospital for storage	(18)			(18)	
2324-B4-076	Corporate Services	Dividend Income	Opus dividends	(30)		(30)		
2324-B4-077	Corporate Services	Contract Rationalisation	IT Contract rationalisation and review.	(507)			(507)	
2324-B4-078	Corporate Services	In House Legal Services	The creation of an in house Legal Service results in a reduced cost base compared to the current externalised arrangement.	(500)		(500)		
2324-B4-079	Corporate Services	Corporate Services Target Operating Model	Implementation of New Corporate Target Operating Model.	(1,000)		(827)		(173)
2324-B4-080	Corporate Services	Customer Services review	Customer Services review of current services.	(100)		(100)		
2324-B4-084	Education Services	Capitalisation of salaries	Capitalisation of staff salaries due to extensive SEND expansion programme	(29)				(29)
2324-B4-086	Education Services	Consolidation of services	Consolidation of commissioning and business intelligence within Children's Service with Public Health.	(266)		(166)		(100)
2324-B4-087	Education Services	SEND improvement	SEND improvement (investment from DSG) to improve processes and reduce number of cases going to tribunal and therefore legal costs	(75)			(75)	
2324-B4-089	Finance	Revenues and Benefits budget	Reduction in training budget	(10)	(10)			
2324-B4-090	Finance	Procurement budget realignment	Budget realignment within Procurement	(25)		(25)		
2324-B4-091	Finance	Strategic Finance budget review	Reconfiguration of strategic financial support	(25)		(25)		

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Proposal ref	Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description	2023-24 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
2324-B4-092	Finance	Customer Engagement restructure	Review of Performance and Governance Service	(50)		(50)		
2324-B4-093	Finance	Audit and Risk budget realignment	Budget realignment within Audit and Risk Management following the in-house team being in place since April 2022.	(31)		(31)		
2324-B4-094	Finance	Procurement Budget realignment	Staffing Budget realignment	(34)		(34)		
2324-B4-095	Finance	Revenues and Benefits staffing	Revenues and Benefits - Staffing Budget realignment	(80)	(80)			
2324-B4-097	Finance	Audit and Risk Management staffing	Audit and Risk Management Staffing review to deliver efficiencies	(109)		(109)		
2324-B4-098	Finance	Accountancy Budget review	The legacy Statement of Accounts are complete therefore this budget will no longer be required.	(250)		(250)		
2324-B4-100	Place and Economy	Office Rationalisation	Office rationalisation and intensifying accommodation use.	(655)	0	(624)	(31)	0
2324-B4-101	Place and Economy	Rectifying Northampton Estate	A review of the Northampton estate could lead to increased rental income	(100)	0	(100)	0	0
2324-B4-102	Place and Economy	Events to Northampton Town Council	As previously agreed Northampton Town Council will deliver these services in future. There will be a staged transfer of costs.	(107)	(106)	0	0	0
2324-B4-103	Place and Economy	Parking Payments	Council's parking payment systems being changed to remove the need for physical tickets and provide easier payment options for the larger car parks.	(55)	0	(55)	0	0
2324-B4-104	Place and Economy	Regulatory Services	Income from discretionary services within environmental health, trading standards and licensing	(80)	0	0	(20)	(60)
2324-B4-105	Place and Economy	Street lighting	Revenue savings resulting from Street Lighting capital investment	(194)	0	0	(194)	0
2324-B4-106	Place and Economy	More effective fixed penalty notices	Increased income from more effective use of fixed penalty notices in environmental crime.	(50)	0	(30)	(20)	0

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Amber = Deliverable, with risks

Red = Unlikely to be delivered

2023-24 Delivery RAG Rating

Proposal ref	Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description	2023-24 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
2324-B4-107	Place and Economy	Concessionary fares	Removal of surplus budget for Concessionary Fares based on updated passenger number forecasts.	(132)	0	(132)	0	0
2324-B4-108	Place and Economy	Home to school travel assistance - Policy Change	Savings associated with proposed changes to policies.	(76)	0	0	0	(76)
2324-B4-109	Corporate Services	Document Storage	Savings from reducing need for document storage contract	(50)			(50)	
2324-B4-110	Place and Economy	Air Quality Officer to increase grants	Employment of a specialist air quality officer to focus on development of action plans and development of grant funded work	(100)	0	0	0	(100)
2324-B4-111	Place and Economy	Network management income	Additional income to be generated through traffic offences, bus lane enforcement and parking enforcement.	(230)	0	0	(230)	0
2324-B4-112	Place and Economy	Garden Waste Subscriptions	Increase Green Waste to an annual charge of £55.00 for residents.	(726)	0	(726)	0	0
2324-B4-113	Place and Economy	Environmental Health	Realignment of budget following reorganisation within the service	(5)	0	(5)	0	0
2324-B4-114	Place and Economy	Regulatory Services	Realignment of budget following reorganisation within the service	(5)	0	(5)	0	0
2324-B4-115	Place and Economy	Increase Commercial Waste Collections	Increased Commercial Waste Collections across the area	(12)	0	(12)	0	0
2324-B4-116	Place and Economy	Miscellaneous additional small income opportunities	Increased income from fixed penalty notices from abandoned vehicles	(10)	0	0	(10)	0
2324-B4-117	Place and Economy	Remove recycling bring bank service in Northampton	Remove the remaining bring banks in Northampton since a comprehensive kerbside recycling service is available.	(14)	0	(14)	0	0
2324-B4-118	Place and Economy	Expand pest control service	Promote existing pest control service to seek additional commercial opportunities	(15)	0	0	(15)	0
2324-B4-119	Place and Economy	Charges for bulky waste collection	Increase charges for bulky waste collection to £30 for 3 items and £50 for 6 items	(18)	0	0	(18)	0

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2023-24 Delivery RAG Rating

Proposal ref	Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description	2023-24 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
2324-B4-120	Place and Economy	Standby payments	Previous out of hours standby arrangements which were only in place in one predecessor area have been removed, staff previously undertaking service have been paid transitional tapering payment during 22/23, this will cease by April 23	(20)	(20)	0	0	0
2324-B4-121	Place and Economy	Multi Storey Car Park (MSCP) cleaning contract	Do not renew the MSCP cleaning contract. The restructured parking team alongside working collaboratively with the Market Operatives to undertake the cleaning functions at MSCP sites.	(26)	(26)	0	0	0
2324-B4-122	Place and Economy	Facilities Management	Rationalisation of Facilities Management contracts across the Council's office buildings.	(238)	0	(136)	0	(102)
2324-B4-123	Place and Economy	Miscellaneous underspends	Aggregation of small unspent or underspent budgets	(40)	0	(40)	0	0
2324-B4-124	Place and Economy	Commercial waste income	Increase commercial waste fees and charges	(49)	0	0	(49)	0
2324-B4-125	Place and Economy	Asset Disposal Fees	Dependent on asset disposals and amount each year will be variable.	(125)	0	0	(75)	(50)
2324-B4-126	Place and Economy	Parking Team Restructure	Restructure CCTV & Transport Facilities team to improve efficiencies in operation.	(128)	(80)	0	0	(48)
2324-B4-127	Place and Economy	Regulatory Services Amalgamation	Manager post to be deleted as part of service restructure	(62)	(62)	0	0	0
2324-B4-129	Place and Economy	Charge for replacement bins	Introduce a contribution towards the delivery of replacement bins to households where bins are repeatedly lost or damaged	(25)	0	0	0	(25)
2324-B4-130	Place and Economy	Increase New Roads & Street Works Act (NRSWA) income.	Recruit resources to generate additional income (over and above their costs).	(35)	0	0	(35)	0
2324-B4-131	Place and Economy	Targeted Food Waste Campaign	To encourage residents to use separate food waste collection, leading to reduced amount of waste in residual bins and therefore reduced treatment costs	(100)	0	0	(67)	(33)

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2023-24 Delivery RAG Rating

Proposal ref	Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description	2023-24 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
2324-B4-132	Place and Economy	Planning restructure	Savings to be achieved through staff restructure, consultancy budget review and additional income initiatives.	(360)	0	(120)	(240)	0
2324-B4-133	Place and Economy	Capitalise bin budget	Currently bins are purchased from revenue	(47)	(47)	0	0	0
2324-B4-135	Place and Economy	Refuse Collections	Achieve efficiency savings within waste services and review waste collection arrangements as part of development of new Waste Strategy for West Northants	(200)	0	0	0	(200)
2324-B4-136	Place and Economy	Car Parking Charges	General uplift in existing car parking charges	(450)	0	(450)	0	0
2324-B4-137	Place and Economy	Car Parking Charges	Applying a flat charge of £2 all day on Sundays.	(50)	0	(50)	0	0
2324-B4-138	Chief Executive Office	Subscription Budget	Reduction in subscriptions budget	(31)		(17)	0	(14)
2324-B4-139	Chief Executive Office	Review Publication Costs	Review all printed publications across the organisation and determine if they are all still required and what the best format for is for publication.	(64)		(64)	0	
2324-B4-140	Place and Economy	Household Waste Recycling Centres	Efficiencies in HWRC operations, as part of the wider development of the WNC waste strategy which will consider how many sites are required to serve the residents of WNC and where they should be located	(100)	0	0	0	(100)
2324-B4-141	Place and Economy	Street cleansing	Seek external contributions to Street Cleaning within Northampton Town Centre	(65)	0	0	0	(65)
2324-B4-142	Place and Economy	Car Parks	Mayorhold Car Park is significantly under utilised and could use other under utilised car parks in the town. Closing the car park will lead to reduced costs and therefore greater efficiency of the Council's resources.	(40)	(17)	(8)	(15)	0
2324-B4-143	Place and Economy	Car Parking Charges	Parking tariffs at country parks to be harmonised and also introduce new parking access equipment to improve service quality and allow more flexible pricing.	(100)	0	(100)	0	0

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2023-24 Delivery RAG Rating

Proposal ref	Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description	2023-24 £k	Blue	Green	Amber	Red
2324-B4-144	Place and Economy	Off street Parking Charges	Increase car park enforcement	(20)	0	0	(20)	0
2324-B4-146	Place and Economy	Home to school travel assistance - transformation	Increased operational efficiency and consistency with policies.	(375)	0	(375)	0	0
2324-B4-147	Corporate Services	Review of Fees and Charges	Land Charges additional income following annual review of fees and charges.	(29)		(29)	0	
2324-B4-148	Adult Social Care	Review of Fees and Charges	Call Care additional income from annual review of fees and charges.	(14)		(14)	0	
2324-B4-149	Place and Economy	Review of Fees and Charges	Additional income generation from service annual review of fees and charges.	(9)	0	(10)	0	0
2324-B4-151	Corporate Services	Democratic and Elections Restructure	Aggregation restructure in Democratic & Elections Services	(50)		(50)		
2324-B4-081	Corporate Services	Transformation Team	Transformation Team - removal of initial funding. Funding of the team beyond 2022/23 will be through the Future Use of Capital Receipts policy that we have.	(2,900)	(2,900)			
2324-B4-015	Centrally Controlled Budgets	Treasury growth realigned	Removal of legacy and future predicted Treasury costs, with more specific revised Treasury forecasts provided.	(2,000)		(2,000)		
2324-B4-083	Education Services	Corporate Overheads review	Review of inflationary rate applied to corporate overheads chargeable to the central schools services block (CSSB) of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)	(160)	(160)			
2324-B4-023	Communities and Opportunities	Enterprise Zone Admin Budget Changes	Recalculation of budgets, funded from increased Business Rates income via the Enterprise Zone Reserve. Alongside ensuring recharging of resource time to reflect current support.	(110)		(110)		
2324-B4-096	Finance	Revenues and Benefits Bad Debt review	Reduction in bad debt provision can lead to a one year release of excess bad debt provision.	(100)		(100)		
			Net Position	(31,977)	(7,792)	(18,581)	(3,614)	(1,990)

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Treasury Management Update 2023-24 – Period 4

1. Report Background

- 1.1 The report sets out the treasury management activity covering the following topics:
- Economic update
 - Interest rate forecast
 - Update on treasury activity covering:
 - Treasury portfolio
 - Borrowing & Investments
 - Treasury Management budget performance
 - Compliance update on TMSS approved, prudential and treasury limits

2. Introduction

Capital Strategy

- 2.1 In December 2021, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), issued revised Prudential and Treasury Management Codes. These require all local authorities to prepare a Capital Strategy which is to provide the following:
- a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of services.
 - an overview of how the associated risk is managed.
 - the implications for future financial sustainability.

Treasury management

- 2.2 The Council operates a balanced budget, which broadly means cash raised during the year will meet its cash expenditure. Part of the treasury management operations ensure this cash flow is adequately planned, with surplus monies being invested in low-risk counterparties, providing adequate liquidity initially before considering optimising investment return.
- 2.3 The second main function of the treasury management service is the funding of the Council's capital plans. These capital plans provide a guide to the borrowing need of the Council, the longer-term cash flow planning to ensure the Council can meet its capital spending operations. This management of longer-term cash may involve arranging long or short-term loans, or using longer term cash flow surpluses, and on occasion any debt previously drawn may be restructured to meet Council risk or cost objectives.
- 2.4 Accordingly, treasury management is defined as: "The management of the local authority's borrowing, investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market

transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.”

2.5 The CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management recommends that members be updated on treasury management activities regularly (annual, mid-year or quarterly reports). This report, therefore, ensures this Council is implementing best practice in accordance with the Code and it covers:

- An economic update to the period to July 2023 updated to reflect the most recent developments in the economy.
- The Council’s capital expenditure, as set out in the Capital Strategy, and prudential indicators.
- A review of the Council’s investment portfolio for 2023-24.
- A review of the Council’s borrowing strategy for 2023-24.
- An update of any debt rescheduling undertaken during this reporting period.
- A review of compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits for 2023-24

3. Economics summary update

3.1 This period to July of 2023-24 saw:

- A 0.2% month on month (m/m) rise in GDP till May, with an increase of 0.5% in June.
- Core CPI inflation fall to 6.8% by the end of July.
- A tighter labour market in April, as the 3myy growth of average earnings rose from 6.1% to 6.5%.
- Interest rates rise by a further 75bps over the quarter, taking Bank Rate from 4.25% to 5.00% in June where it remained for July.
- 10-year gilt yields nearing the “mini-Budget” peaks, as inflation surprised to the upside.

MPC Meetings

3.2 On 11th May, the Bank of England’s Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) increased Bank Rate by twenty-five basis points to 4.50%, and on 22nd June moved rates up a further 50 basis points to 5.00%. Both increases reflected a split vote – seven members voting for an increase and two for none.

3.3 Nonetheless, with UK inflation significantly higher than in other G7 countries, the MPC will have a challenging task in convincing investors that they will be able to dampen inflation pressures anytime soon. Talk of the Bank’s inflation models being “broken” is another reason why gilt investors are demanding a premium relative to US and Euro-zone bonds, for example.

4. Interest rate forecasts

- 4.1 The Council has appointed Link Group as its treasury advisors and part of their service is to assist the Council to formulate a view on interest rates.
- 4.2 The last forecast for this period made on 26th June, sets out a view that both short and long-dated interest rates will be elevated for some little while, as the Bank of England seeks to squeeze inflation out of the economy, against a backdrop of a stubbornly robust economy and a tight labour market.
- 4.3 Note that Link's forecasts have steadily increased during the quarter as the data continued to spring upside surprises, and the Bank of England continued to under-estimate how prevalent inflation is, and how tight the labour market is. The Government has also noted that despite immigration increasing markedly, high levels of ill-health amongst the workforce has led to wage demands remaining strong until such time as there is a loosening in demand for business services
- 4.4 Link Group's current (at 26 June) and previous PWLB rate forecasts below are based on the Certainty Rate (the standard rate minus 20 bps) which has been accessible to most authorities since 1st November 2012.

Link Group Interest Rate View		26.06.23											
	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26
BANK RATE	5.00	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.25	4.75	4.25	3.75	3.25	2.75	2.75	2.50	2.50
3 month ave earnings	5.30	5.60	5.50	5.30	5.00	4.50	4.00	3.50	3.00	2.70	2.60	2.50	2.50
6 month ave earnings	5.80	5.90	5.70	5.50	5.10	4.60	4.00	3.50	3.00	2.70	2.60	2.60	2.60
12 month ave earnings	6.30	6.20	6.00	5.70	5.30	4.80	4.10	3.60	3.10	2.80	2.70	2.70	2.70
5 yr PWLB	5.50	5.60	5.30	5.10	4.80	4.50	4.20	3.90	3.60	3.40	3.30	3.30	3.20
10 yr PWLB	5.10	5.20	5.00	4.90	4.70	4.40	4.20	3.90	3.70	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.40
25 yr PWLB	5.30	5.40	5.20	5.10	4.90	4.70	4.50	4.20	4.00	3.90	3.80	3.80	3.70
50 yr PWLB	5.00	5.10	5.00	4.90	4.70	4.50	4.30	4.00	3.80	3.60	3.60	3.50	3.50

Link Group Interest Rate View		24.05.23											
	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26
BANK RATE	4.75	5.00	5.00	4.75	4.50	4.00	3.50	3.25	2.75	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50
3 month ave earnings	4.80	5.00	5.00	4.80	4.50	4.00	3.50	3.30	2.80	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50
6 month ave earnings	5.10	5.20	5.10	4.90	4.50	3.90	3.40	3.20	2.90	2.60	2.60	2.60	2.60
12 month ave earnings	5.40	5.40	5.30	5.00	4.50	3.90	3.40	3.20	2.90	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.70
5 yr PWLB	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.80	4.50	4.10	3.70	3.50	3.30	3.20	3.20	3.10	3.10
10 yr PWLB	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.80	4.40	4.10	3.80	3.60	3.50	3.40	3.30	3.30	3.30
25 yr PWLB	5.30	5.30	5.20	5.10	4.80	4.50	4.20	4.00	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.60	3.60
50 yr PWLB	5.10	5.10	5.00	4.90	4.60	4.30	4.00	3.80	3.60	3.50	3.40	3.40	3.40

Link Group Interest Rate View		27.03.23											
	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	
BANK RATE	4.50	4.50	4.25	4.00	3.50	3.25	3.00	2.75	2.75	2.50	2.50	2.50	
3 month ave earnings	4.50	4.50	4.30	4.00	3.50	3.30	3.00	2.80	2.80	2.50	2.50	2.50	
6 month ave earnings	4.50	4.40	4.20	3.90	3.40	3.20	2.90	2.80	2.80	2.60	2.60	2.60	
12 month ave earnings	4.50	4.40	4.20	3.80	3.30	3.10	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.70	
5 yr PWLB	4.10	4.10	3.90	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.50	3.40	3.30	3.20	3.20	3.10	
10 yr PWLB	4.20	4.20	4.00	3.90	3.80	3.70	3.50	3.50	3.40	3.30	3.30	3.20	
25 yr PWLB	4.60	4.50	4.40	4.20	4.10	4.00	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.50	3.50	3.40	
50 yr PWLB	4.30	4.20	4.10	3.90	3.80	3.70	3.50	3.50	3.30	3.20	3.20	3.10	

LIBOR and LIBID rates ceased at the end of 2021. In a continuation of our previous forecasts, our money market yield forecasts are based on expected average earnings by local authorities for 3 to 12 months.

Link's forecasts for average earnings are averages i.e., rates offered by individual banks may differ significantly from these averages, reflecting their different needs for borrowing short-term cash at any one point in time.

5. Summary WNC Treasury Portfolio Position

5.1 The highlight for the treasury portfolio position for the period to July 2023 is the council is forecasting a net borrowing position of £357m.

Table 1

West Northamptonshire Council 2023-24				
TREASURY PORTFOLIO 23-24				
	Period to date		Forecast out-turn	
	31-Jul-23		31-Mar-24	
Treasury investments	£000	%	£000	%
Total managed in house	128,295	94%	119,949	93%
Total managed externally	8,545	6%	8,545	7%
Total treasury investments	136,840	100%	128,494	100%
Third party loans	36,841		36,179	
Treasury external borrowing				
PWLB	454,082	86%	447,842	86%
Market, LOBO & other loans	75,602	14%	73,980	14%
Total external borrowing	529,684	100%	521,821	100%
Net treasury investments / (borrowing)	(356,003)		(357,148)	

5.2 The council has made £0.774m of loan repayments up until the reporting period to date of the year. The details are below:

- Partial principal repayment of just over £0.716m on PWLB loans.
- Full repayment of £0.058m on Growing Places Fund loan back in June 2023.

5.3 The forecast position on total external borrowing is £521.8m by the end of the financial year the council does not anticipate any further borrowing for the rest of the year.

6. Borrowing

- 6.1 The need for further borrowing will be reviewed in line with the capital programme delivery schedule, but as highlighted above we don't anticipate any new requirement to take out any loans. Table 2 below sets out the maturity profile of the Council's borrowing portfolio at the end of Period 4 of £529.6m

Table 3

Term Remaining	Borrowing		Limits
	£m	%	%
Under 12 months	8.6	2%	80%
1-2 years	16.4	3%	50%
2-5 years	34.1	6%	50%
5-10 years	5.0	1%	50%
10-20 years	19.4	4%	100%
20-30 years	70.6	13%	100%
30-40 years	218.5	41%	100%
40-50 years	137.0	26%	100%
Over 50 years	20.0	4%	100%
TOTAL	529.6	100%	

7. Borrowing Restructuring

- 7.1 Rescheduling opportunities have been limited in the current economic climate. No debt rescheduling has therefore been undertaken in the current financial year. Officers continue to monitor the position regularly.

8. Investments

- 8.1 The Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) for 2023-24, which includes the Annual Investment Strategy, was approved by the Council on 22 February 2023. In accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice, it sets out the Council's investment priorities as being:

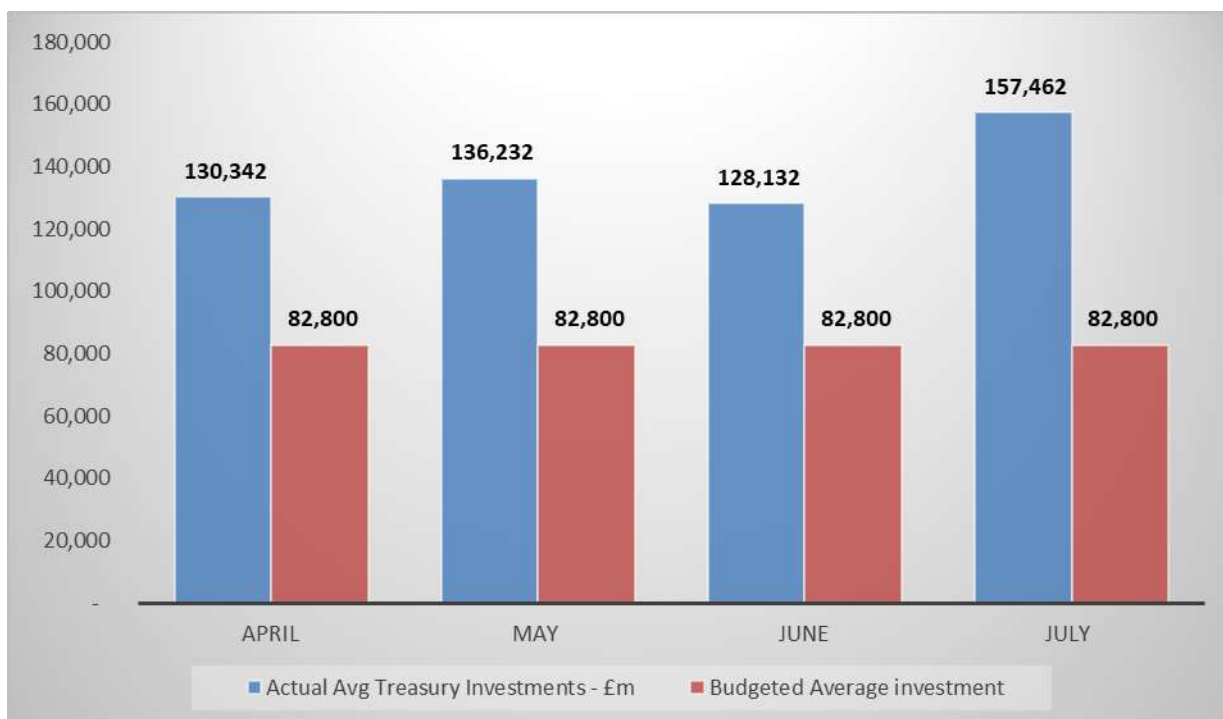
- Security of capital
- Liquidity
- Yield

- 8.2 The Council will aim to achieve the optimum return (yield) on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity and within the Council's risk appetite. In the current economic climate, it is considered appropriate to keep investments short-term to cover cash flow

needs, but also to seek out value available in periods up to 12 months with high credit rated financial institutions, using the Link suggested creditworthiness approach, including a minimum sovereign credit rating and Credit Default Swap (CDS) overlay information.

8.3 The average level of funds available for investment purposes during this period to July 2023 was £138m as shown in the table below. These funds were available on a temporary basis, and the level of funds available was dependent on the timing of payments, receipt of grants and other income. At the end of the period the Council held £38m of liquid cash balances and £100m of short terms investments expected to mature within the financial year.

	April	May	June	July	For the period to date
Average treasury investments - £m	130,342	136,232	128,132	157,462	138,186



9. Investment performance year to date as of 31st July 2023

9.1 Below is SONIA (Sterling Overnight Index Averages) indicators based on a backward look showing the performance of the market when investments were made in the past.

FINANCIAL YEAR TO QUARTER 31/7/2023 (SONIA - Backward Looking)						
	Bank Rate	SONIA	1 month	3 months	6 months	12 months
Bank Rate	4.25%	4.37%	4.27%	4.11%	3.74%	2.7%
Councils Performance			5.11%	4.44%	n/a	n/a
(Under)/Outperforming SONIA			0.84%	0.33%		

9.2 As illustrated above, the Council outperformed the benchmark by thirty-three basis point for the reporting period. The Council's budgeted investment return for 2023-24 assumed an average of 3.5% return based on the timing of placed and future short-term investment following budgets preparations, the Council has outperformed the budget assumption to date. The improved return is reflected in the amount interest receivable in the section 14.2 below.

10. Treasury Management budget

10.1 Outlined below is the Treasury budget performance for the period to July 2023. The net costs have varied significantly to budget as shown in the forecast out-turn with an improvement of £3.3m.

Table 3

Treasury revenue budget	TMSS Budget Approved	Forecast -out-turn	Variance
	£'m	£'m	£'m
Net financing costs -	14.27	14.27	0.00
Interest receivable on investments	(2.80)	(6.10)	(3.30)
Total	11.47	8.17	(3.30)

10.2 The key explanation for variance to the budgets are:

- **Interest receivable on investments** – we are expecting a better yield performance of £3.3m due to increased interest rates and more liquid cash being available for investment in comparison to the budget assumptions highlighted in paragraph 13 above.

11. Approved Limits

11.1 Officers can confirm that the none of the approved limits within the Annual Investment Strategy were breached during the period ended 31st July 2023.

12. Compliance with Treasury & Prudential limits

12.1 It is a statutory duty for the Council to determine and keep under review the affordable borrowing limits. During this period ending 31st July 2023, the Council has operated within

the treasury and prudential indicators set out in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2023-24.

12.1.1 The Director of Finance reports that there are no difficulties expected for the current or future years in complying with these indicators.

12.1.2 All treasury management operations have been conducted in full compliance with the Council's Treasury Management Practices.

Treasury and Prudential Indicators

Prudential Indicator	2023-24 Indicator	2023-24 - Period 4
Authorised limit for external debt <i>[Excluding PFI and Finance Lease Liabilities]</i>	----- £850.0m -----	
Operational boundary for external debt <i>[Excluding PFI and Finance Lease Liabilities]</i>	----- £800.0m -----	
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) <i>[Excluding PFI and Finance Lease Liabilities]</i>	£935m	TBC
Ratio of financing costs to net revenue streams	1.6%	TBC
Principal sums invested > 365 days <i>[Excluding third party loans]</i>	£20m	£nil
Maturity structure of borrowing limits: -		
Under 12 months	Max. 80% Min. 0%	2%
12 months to 2 years	Max. 50% Min. 0%	3%
2 years to 5 years	Max. 50% Min. 0%	6%
5 years to 10 years	Max. 50% Min. 0%	1%
10 years and above	Max. 100% Min. 0%	88%

Approved countries for investments as of 31st July 2023

Based on lowest available rating

AAA

- Australia
- Denmark
- Germany
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Singapore
- Sweden
- Switzerland

AA+

- Canada
- Finland
- U.S.A.

AA

- France
- Abu Dhabi (UAE)

AA-

- Belgium
- Qatar
- U.K.

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

19 September 2023

**CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR FINANCE: CLLR MALCOLM
LONGLEY**

Report Title	Period 4 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Monitoring Report 2023-24
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Report Author	Martin Henry, Executive Director (Finance) Martin.Henry@westnorthants.gov.uk
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Communications	Becky Hutson	30/08/2023

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Revised General Fund capital programme

Appendix B – Assets and Environment proposed virement and reprofiling

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The report sets out the latest General Fund and HRA capital programme monitoring positions for 2023-27 for West Northamptonshire Council, and identifies new schemes which have been approved for submission into the capital programme since the last update to Cabinet in July 2023.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- a) Note the latest capital monitoring position for the General Fund and HRA.
- b) Note the new capital schemes and changes to the Capital Programme since the report that was considered by Cabinet in July 2023.
- c) Approve the proposed budget virements and reprofiling outlined in section 9 and detailed in Appendix B.

3. Reason for recommendations

In order to continue to ensure sound management of the council's finances.

4. Report Background

4.1 The General Fund and HRA Capital budgets were approved by Full Council in February 2023 as part of the authority's budget-setting process.

4.2 In February 2023, Full Council gave delegated authority to the Executive Director - Finance in consultation with the portfolio holder for Finance to amend the capital programme for 2023-24 going forward so that it accurately reflects issues such as rephasing, any amendments made to existing capital programmes, adjustments to accommodate any future use of capital receipts policy and for any other reason where the capital programme needs to be adjusted.

4.3 The approvals for in year changes to the Capital programme are set out below:

- the Executive Director – Finance can approve new schemes estimated to cost less than £100k and fully funded schemes.
- Cabinet can approve new schemes under £500k
- Full Council must approve schemes over £500k.

4.4 This report sets out the latest capital programme for the General Fund and HRA since the previously reported position to Cabinet in July 2023. It provides an update on new capital schemes, the latest monitoring position and any other technical issues that need to be raised.

5. Governance and process

5.1 The Council maintains a well-established robust approval and monitoring process for the capital programme. This governance ensures the Council has financial rigour and strict management controls in place to manage the programme effectively.

5.2 The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and the Capital and Assets Board (CAB) are key elements of the governance process.

Executive Leadership Team (ELT)

- ELT will have first sight of all budget proposals / capital bids and will undertake a review in order to gain support, before any schemes are submitted to the Capital and Assets Board for consideration (see below).

Capital and Assets Board (CAB)

- This is an officer and councillor group, chaired by the S151 Officer. The purpose of this Board is to review and challenge capital schemes. The group will also monitor and challenge active projects, holding project managers to account for specific project performance.

5.3 All elements of proposed, and active schemes are robustly challenged and monitored throughout the project lifetime, and in some cases will be subject to a ‘lessons learned’ review on completion.

5.4 All schemes will be in line with Council objectives, and must have clear, measurable deliverables or outcomes. Applications must show how projects will deliver value for money, meet council priorities, assess and mitigate risk, and manage resource capacity issues.

6. Monitoring of the General Fund Capital Programme 2023-2027

6.1 Since the update provided on the revised 2023-24 general fund capital programme at July Cabinet, there have been several changes to the capital programme. These changes are outlined below and reflect changes up until the end of July:

Table 1 – Changes to the General Fund capital programme since July Cabinet.

Scheme		2023-24 £k	2024-25 £k	2025-26 £k	2026-27 £k	Total £k	Funding Source
<u>New Schemes</u>							
New scheme - PFI Lifecycle Works endorsed by CAB 26/01/23 and approved by Full Council 23/03/23	Assets and Environment Capital	1,100				1,100	Borrowing
New scheme - Billing Brook School - S106 improvement project endorsed by CAB 17/05/23 and approved by S151	Children’s	171				171	S106
New scheme - Moulton School & Science College Capacity Capital Funding endorsed by CAB 17/05/23 and approved by S151	Children’s	364				364	Grant
New scheme - Sponne School - S106 improvement project endorsed by CAB 17/05/23 and approved by S151	Children’s	648				648	S106

New scheme - Purple Oaks Academy - SEND Capital Funding endorsed by CAB 13/06/23 and approved by S151	Children's	800				800	Grant
New scheme - Remote Monitoring for Adult Social Care endorsed by CAB 13/06/23 and approved by S151	Adults, Housing & Communities	49				49	External/Revenue
New scheme - Northampton Free School - S106 improvement project endorsed by CAB 11/07/23 and approved by S151	Children's	52				52	S106
New scheme - Moulton School & Science College - SEND Capital Funding endorsed by CAB 11/07/23 and approved by S151	Children's	1,350				1,350	Grant
New scheme - Abbeyfield School Capacity Capital Funding endorsed by CAB 11/07/23 and approved by S151	Children's	286				286	Grant
New scheme - Northgate School Arts College - SEND Capital Funding endorsed by CAB 11/07/23 and approved by S151	Children's	3,565				3,565	Grant
New scheme - Gateway School and Technology College - SEND Capital Funding endorsed by CAB 11/07/23 and approved by S151	Children's	3,991				3,991	Grant
New scheme - Ecton Brook Community Centre endorsed by CAB 11/07/23 and approved by S151	Economic Growth & Regeneration	23	23			45	Grant
New scheme - Grants for Decarbonisation for Businesses endorsed by CAB 11/07/23 and approved by S151	Economic Growth & Regeneration	50	50			100	Grant

New scheme - Property Access Control System endorsed by CAB 12/04/22 and approved by Cabinet 14/06/22	Assets and Environment Capital	80				80	Borrowing
New scheme - Pothole Machinery endorsed by CAB 11/07/23 and approved by Cabinet 11/07/23	Highways and Waste Capital	450				450	Borrowing
Total New Schemes		12,979	73			13,052	
<u>Changes to existing schemes</u>							
Budget removed as no longer required - Homelessness Reduction Act	Adults, Housing & Communities	-10				-10	Internal Borrowing
Budget removed as no longer required - Choice Based letting	Adults, Housing & Communities	-5	-5			-10	Internal Borrowing
Budget removed as no longer required - Express Signature Verification Software	Corporate	-6	-6			-12	Internal Borrowing
Budget removed as funding no longer available - Play Equipment at Children's Centres	Assets and Environment Capital	-60				-60	Grant
Addition to existing budget - Kingsthorpe College Capacity Capital Funding endorsed by CAB 17/05/23 and approved by S151	Children's	100				100	Grant
Addition to existing budget - Old Black Lion endorsed by CAB 13/06/23 and approved by S151	Economic Growth & Regeneration	20				20	S106
Addition to existing budget - Marefare Heritage Gateway endorsed by CAB 13/06/23 and approved by S151	Economic Growth & Regeneration	427				427	S106

Addition to existing budget - Extension of 78 Derngate endorsed by CAB 11/07/23 and approved by S151	Economic Growth & Regeneration	50				50	S106
Budget variation - Active Travel Enhancements endorsed by CAB 11/07/23 and approved by S151	Highways and Waste Capital	-34	-34			-69	Grant
Reduced budget based on final 22/23 outturn - Disabled Facilities Grant Northampton	Adults, Housing & Communities	-134				-134	Grant
Reduced budget based on final 22/23 outturn - PC Equipment Hardware Refresh	Corporate	-343				-343	Borrowing
Budget removed as project now complete - Community Library Prog - Brackley Library	Adults, Housing & Communities	-5				-5	Borrowing
Budget removed following review with Service to allow repurpose of grant to other specific schemes - Northampton Secondary School Capacity	Children's	-167				-167	Grant
Budget removed as project covered within budgets elsewhere - Walgrave Primary School - SEND Capital Funding	Children's	-5				-5	Grant
Total changes to existing schemes		-172	-45			-218	
Total		12,807	28			12,834	

7. Summary of Changes and Revised 2023-27 Capital Programme – General Fund

7.1 The full updated capital programme is shown in Appendix A. Summary information is shown in the tables below.

Table 2 – Period 4 Revisions to the General Fund Capital Programme

West Northants GF Capital Budget	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	Total
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	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k
Approved Budget 2023-24	185,860	62,340	20,423	10,224	278,847
New scheme approvals	12,979	73	0	0	13,052
Changes to existing scheme budgets	-172	-45	0	0	-218
Total	198,666	62,368	20,423	10,224	291,681
Movement from July 2023 Cabinet report	12,807	28	0	0	12,834

Table 3 - Revised WNC capital programme by Directorate

Revised WN Capital Programme as at July 23	Approved Capital Programme	New scheme approvals	Changes to existing scheme budgets	Total 2023-24 to 2026-27
	£k	£k	£k	£k
Adults, Housing & Communities	33,646	49	-159	33,536
Assets and Environment Capital	58,342	80	-60	58,362
Children's	43,589	13,327	-72	55,844
Children's Trust	3,514	0	0	3,514
Corporate	13,607	0	-354	13,253
Economic Growth & Regeneration	44,627	145	497	45,269
Finance	2,314	0	0	2,314
Highways and Waste Capital	79,208	450	-69	79,589
Total	278,847	13,052	-218	291,681

The funding table has been updated to reflect the latest position.

Table 4 - Funding for the revised WNC capital programme

WN Revised Capital Financing	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Total
	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k
Capital receipts	2,070	85	0	0	2,155
Prudential Borrowing	67,076	24,102	14,098	4,674	109,950
Internal Borrowing	575	205	0	0	780
S106**	13,829	3,750	0	0	17,579
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**	20,957	1,000	393	0	22,350
Grant Funding	87,517	22,926	2,632	2,250	115,325
Funded from Reserve	347	0	0	0	347
Revenue Funding	563	0	0	0	563
External Funding	5,733	10,300	3,300	3,300	22,633
Total Funding	198,666	62,368	20,423	10,224	291,681

** Some of the s.106 and CIL funding will be received several years after the completion of the project in some cases. Those schemes will be forward funded with Discretionary funding, which will be repaid when the relevant CIL and s.106 are received. The funding table shows the eventual funding source for these, rather than the forward funding.

8. Latest Forecasts on the GF Capital Programme

8.1 Through the forecasting process, a number of schemes have identified potential carry forwards from 23/24 into 24/25. These are only forecasts at this stage, so have not been included in the updated capital programme, but are summarised below for information.

Table 5 – Latest Forecasts for the GF Capital Programme

Directorate	Budget 2023-24 £k	23-24 Forecast spend in year £k	Forecast Carry Forward Budget into 24-25 £k	Forecast Under / overspend 23-24 £k
Adults, Housing & Communities	11,583	11,583	0	0
Assets & Environment Capital	38,071	38,071	0	0
Children's	46,738	46,738	0	0
Children's Trust	3,010	3,010	0	0
Corporate	5,597	5,597	0	0
Economic Growth & Regeneration	36,146	36,146	0	0
Finance	1,624	1,085	539	0
Highways and Waste Capital	55,898	51,294	4,579	25*
Total	198,666	193,523	5,118	25

*Anticipated overspend is to be funded from Integrated Transport Block Grant funding

8.2 As stated above, these forecasts are not yet included in the capital programme. As part of the 24/25 budget setting process, these will be reviewed in more detail and the official capital programme can be reprofiled accordingly prior to December Cabinet.

8.3 The largest of these forecast changes are outlined below.

- Northampton Growth Management Scheme - £3.7m is being forecast to slip to better reflect a realistic spend profile on the project. A Cabinet report is being drawn up which is looking at increasing the budget and scope of this project, and as part of that there will be a large reprofiling exercise.
- IFRS16 Lease Right of Use Assets - £539k is being forecast to slip. This is associated with the implementation of a new technical accounting standard which is now not being adopted until 24/25.

9. Approval of Budget Virements and Budget Reprofile

9.1 As part of the ongoing work to refine the capital programme, a piece of work has been undertaken to repurpose and reprofile some capital budgets within the Assets & Environment

directorate. It is requested that Cabinet approve the budget virements and reprofiling of budgets as set out appendix B.

10. Monitoring of the HRA Capital Programme 2023-2027

10.1 The Council's Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme is mainly managed by Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH) under the management agreement. NPH are responsible for the new build programme along with the major repairs and Improvement programme for existing HRA stock. The only element of the programme not managed by NPH is the buy-back and acquisitions budget.

10.2 Since the report to Cabinet in July 2023 there have been several changes to the capital programme. These changes are outlined below.

Table 6 – Changes to the HRA capital programme since July 23 Cabinet. **

Scheme	2023-24 £k	2024-25 £k	2025-26 £k	2026-27 £k	2027-28 £k	Total £k	Funding Source
<u>New Schemes</u>							
External Improvements	436	806	0	0	0	1,242	Grants/ Borrowing
Acquisitions, LAHF 1 & 2, NSAP, RSAP 1 & 2 *	10,907	0	0	0	0	10,907	Grants / Borrowing
Total New Schemes	11,343	806	0	0	0	12,149	
<u>Changes to existing schemes</u>							
New Build	(9,350)	21,255	(4,509)	(7,315)	(185)	(104)	Receipts / Grants / Borrowing
Retained Programme	0	0	0	0	0	0	Receipts / Grants / Borrowing
External Improvements	(416)	452	0	(709)	0	(673)	Receipts / Grants / Borrowing
Energy Efficiency	0	0	0	0	0	0	Receipts / Grants / Borrowing
Internal Works	1361	(215)	(215)	(215)	(215)	502	Receipts / Grants / Borrowing
Structural Works and Compliance	661	(36)	(36)	(36)	(36)	517	Receipts / Grants / Borrowing
Disabled Adaptations	0	0	0	0	0	0	Receipts / Grants / Borrowing
Environmental Improvements	(1,324)	(13)	331	331	331	(344)	Receipts / Grants / Borrowing
Major Disabled Adaptions	0	0	0	0	0	0	Receipts / Grants / Borrowing
IT Development	(112)	213	0	0	0	102	Receipts / Grants / Borrowing
Total changes to existing schemes	(9,181)	21,656	(4,429)	(7,943)	(104)	0	
Total	2,162	22,462	(4,429)	(7,943)	(104)	12,149	

* LAHF = Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF), NSAP = Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP), RASP = Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme (RSAP)

** The starting point picks up rephasing by NPH of the Capital programme since February Budget setting.

Additional Schemes

- 10.2.1 External Improvements - the council has been successful in being awarded Wave 2.1 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund with allocations covering a two year period totalling £1.242m
- 10.2.2 Acquisitions funding under the Local Authority Housing Fund scheme have been awarded by DLUCH totalling £5.051m in grant to acquire homes to support Ukraine and Afghan scheme families. The council has provided match funding of £5.856m as part of the grant conditions following a robust due diligence process.

New Build and Major Repairs and Maintenance of existing stock

- 10.2.3 The new build programme has been subject to a review by the council and NPH resulting in a re-phasing of a few of the significant sized projects which include Berkeley and St Mary's, Belgrave House and Avenue Campus.
- 10.2.4 The Internal Works programme on existing stock and the Environmental Works programme are being rephased over the MTP due to changes in need and requirements based on latest stock information. Some of the work around compliance both within the internal works programme and Structural works programmes are being accelerated therefore budget being brought forward from future years.

11. Summary of Changes and Revised 2023-27 Capital Programme – HRA

11.1 The HRA capital programme is summarised in the tables below.

Table 7 - Period 4 Revisions to the HRA Capital Programme

West Northants HRA Capital Budget	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	Total
	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k
Approved Budget 2023-24	71,296	59,393	73,650	46,360	44,144	294,842
New scheme approvals	11,343	806	0	0	0	12,149
Changes to existing scheme budgets	(9,181)	21,656	(4,429)	(7,943)	(104)	0
Total	73,458	81,855	69,221	38,416	44,040	306,990
Movement from P1 Cabinet report	2,162	22,462	(4,429)	(7,943)	(104)	12,149

Table 8 - Revised HRA capital programme by scheme

Revised HRA Capital Programme as at July 23	Approved Capital Programme plus Carry Forwards	New scheme approvals	Changes to existing scheme budgets	Total 2023-24 to 2027-28
	£k	£k	£k	£k

External Improvements	51,473	1,242	(673)	52,042
Internal Works	9,392	0	502	9,894
Structural Works and Compliance	5,593	0	517	6,110
Disabled Adaptations	11,510	0	0	11,510
Environmental Improvements	15,968	0	(344)	15,624
IT Development	2,340	0	101	2,440
New Build/Major Projects	145,872	0	(103)	145,769
Buybacks and Spot Purchases	37,694	10,907	0	48,601
Energy Efficiency	15,000	0	0	15,000
Total	294,842	12,149	0	306,990

The funding table has been updated to reflect the latest position.

Table 9 - Funding for the revised WNC capital programme

HRA Revised Capital Financing	2023/24 £k	2024/25 £k	2025/26 £k	2026/27 £k	2027/28 £k	Total £k
Major Repairs Reserve/Depreciation	13,699	13,585	13,494	13,726	14,180	68,685
Capital Receipts - (not restricted)	2,265	3,288	3,333	3,378	3,424	15,689
Capital Receipts - RTB 1-4-1 Receipts	6,544	10,891	7,506	4,071	4,112	33,123
Grant Funding	16,979	806	0	0	0	17,785
Revenue Contributions Earmarked Reserve	0	2,686	2,822	3,923	6,436	15,867
Borrowing / CFR	33,970	50,600	42,066	13,319	15,886	155,841
Total	73,458	81,855	69,221	38,418	44,038	306,990

12. Implications (including financial implications)

12.1 Resources and Financial

- This report informs Cabinet of the latest capital position for 2023-24 and for the medium term. The capital programme outlined in this report is fully funded, either through borrowing, internal resources or external funding arrangements. Ongoing expenditure relating to these projects will continue to be robustly challenged and monitored by budget managers, Finance and the Capital and Assets Board.

12.2 Legal

- There are no legal implications arising directly from the recommendations of this report.

12.3 Risk

- There are a number of processes in place to robustly challenge new schemes and progress for existing schemes such as through the Executive Leadership Team, the Capital and Assets Board and in reports to Cabinet. Funding for all capital schemes has been identified, and progress against budgets will be closely monitored to Cabinet on a regular basis

12.4 Consultation

- There has been no consultation in relation to this report.

12.5 Climate impact

- There is no direct climate impact in relation to this report.

12.6 Community impact

- All capital programme schemes are assessed for their impact on the community and individual Project Boards liaise with relevant community group.

13. Background Papers

- Provisional Outturn 2022-23 and Revised Capital Programme for 2023-27 – July 2023 report

WNC GF Capital Programme	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Total 2022/23 - 2026/27
Adults, Housing & Communities					
Disabled Facilities Grant South Northants	990,183	0	0	0	990,183
Disabled Facilities Grant Northampton	3,112,475	0	0	0	3,112,475
Disabled Facilities Grant Daventry	486,118	2,589,981	2,250,000	2,250,000	7,576,099
Community Equipment	4,700,000	4,700,000	4,700,000	4,700,000	18,800,000
Remote Monitoring for Adult Social Care	48,716	0	0	0	48,716
A45/Ecton Lane Fencing	150,000	0	0	0	150,000
Ecton Lane Site Improvements	500,000	500,000	0	0	1,000,000
Grants to aid voluntary servies	239,150	0	0	0	239,150
Improvements to Sports Centre Facilities	200,000	0	0	0	200,000
Home Repair Assistance Grants	420,218	155,000	0	0	575,218
Discretionary Grants - Emergency Assistance	50,000	0	0	0	50,000
Grants - Community & District Initiatives	300,449	85,000	0	0	385,449
Leisure Facilities Contract	20,769	22,500	0	0	43,269
Improvements to Athletics Facilities at Stefan Hill Sports Park	20,110	0	0	0	20,110
Adult Social Care Cygnum Replacement	34,123	0	0	0	34,123
Northamptonshire Libraries Self Service Terminals	40,000	0	0	0	40,000
Community Library Prog - Roade	96,069	0	0	0	96,069
Community Library Prog - Brackley Library	0	0	0	0	0
Doddridge Centre	967	0	0	0	967
Library Management System Replacement	173,952	0	0	0	173,952
Adults, Housing & Communities	11,583,298	8,052,481	6,950,000	6,950,000	33,535,779
Children					
Towcester South Primary School	627,143	0	0	0	627,143
Northampton School for Girls Extension	2,750,000	0	0	0	2,750,000
Magdalen College School Expansion	271,136	0	0	0	271,136
Moulton School and Science College Expansion	67,016	0	0	0	67,016
Schools Minor Works 22-23	689,526	0	0	0	689,526
Guilsborough School	32,313	0	0	0	32,313
Campion School Improvements	14,605	0	0	0	14,605
Northampton Secondary School Capacity	0	0	0	0	0
Northampton Capacity - Duston School bulge	490,912	0	0	0	490,912
Malcolm Arnold S106 Works	26,151	0	0	0	26,151
Northampton Secondary Schools Capacity – Northampton School for Girls Bulge Capacity	320,715	0	0	0	320,715
Northampton Secondary School Capacity - Kingsthorpe College Bulge	58,880	0	0	0	58,880
Northampton Schools PFI Wave 2 Lifecycle Funding	365,644	373,688	381,909	0	1,121,241
PFI Lifecycle Works	1,100,000	0	0	0	1,100,000
Provision of Primary SEND places	647,102	0	0	0	647,102
Provision of Secondary SEND places	3,266,468	0	0	0	3,266,468
Provision of All Through SEND places	795,861	0	0	0	795,861
Wootton Park Free School Temporary Bulge Capacity	101,369	0	0	0	101,369
Sponne School	58,240	0	0	0	58,240
The Grange School	74,166	0	0	0	74,166
Barrack Road Educational Facilities	43,340	0	0	0	43,340
East Hunsbury Primary School - S106 improvement project	198,669	0	0	0	198,669
Harlestone Primary School - S106 improvement project	18,358	0	0	0	18,358
Kingsthorpe College - S106 improvement project	189,362	0	0	0	189,362

Billing Brook School - S106 improvement project	170,509	0	0	0	170,509
Sponne School - S106 improvement project	648,000	0	0	0	648,000
Northampton Free School - S106 improvement project	51,882	0	0	0	51,882
Tiffield SEND School	18,348,386	4,600,000	0	0	22,948,386
Northampton School for Boys Capacity Capital Funding	100,000	0	0	0	100,000
Kingsthorpe College Capacity Capital Funding	300,000	0	0	0	300,000
Moulton School & Science College Capacity Capital Funding	364,000	0	0	0	364,000
Abbeyfield School Capacity Capital Funding	286,140	0	0	0	286,140
Walgrave Primary School - SEND Capital Funding	0	0	0	0	0
Purple Oaks Academy - SEND Capital Funding	800,000	0	0	0	800,000
Moulton School & Science College - SEND Capital Funding	1,350,000	0	0	0	1,350,000
Northgate School Arts College - SEND Capital Funding	3,565,284	0	0	0	3,565,284
Gateway School and Technology College - SEND Capital Funding	3,990,776	0	0	0	3,990,776
Temporary bulge capacity at Malcolm Arnold Academy	400,000	0	0	0	400,000
Overstone Leys	4,156,314	3,750,000	0	0	7,906,314
Total Children	46,738,267	8,723,688	381,909	0	55,843,864
Children's Trust					
Refurbishment of John Greenwood Shipman	1,172,000	0	0	0	1,172,000
New residential 4 bed home	1,142,792	0	0	0	1,142,792
Independent Fostering and Adoption IT system	300,000	0	0	0	300,000
Homes to support fostering	192,576	168,000	168,000	168,000	696,576
Homes 2 Inspire - Childrens Homes	202,191	0	0	0	202,191
Total Children's Trust	3,009,559	168,000	168,000	168,000	3,513,559
Corporate					
Social Care system replacement	896,077	0	0	0	896,077
IT Transition	102,560	0	0	0	102,560
IT Security Solutions	85,000	0	0	0	85,000
Office365 Implementation	77,018	0	0	0	77,018
Sharepoint 2007 Migration	79,000	0	0	0	79,000
Low Code Platform	180,000	0	0	0	180,000
DTI Minor works	100,000	50,000	50,000	0	200,000
Future IT Infrastructure Discovery Work	160,000	0	0	0	160,000
PC Equipment Hardware Refresh	1,866,419	1,185,000	1,185,000	1,185,000	5,421,419
WNC Share of Shared Service Road Maps	469,000	4,000,000	0	0	4,469,000
Service Management Solution	128,570	0	0	0	128,570
Telephony & Contact Centre Replacement	793,552	0	0	0	793,552
SIEM Solution & Cybersecurity tools	350,000	0	0	0	350,000
Identity and Access Management	150,000	0	0	0	150,000
Replacement of End of Life Local Area Network equipment	160,000	0	0	0	160,000
Total Corporate	5,597,196	5,235,000	1,235,000	1,185,000	13,252,196
Finance					
IFRS16 Lease Right of Use Assets	538,663	0	0	0	538,663
Revenues and Benefits Capital Investments	765,239	0	0	0	765,239
Asset Management System	100,000	0	0	0	100,000
Capital Salaries	220,000	225,000	230,000	235,000	910,000
Total Finance	1,623,902	225,000	230,000	235,000	2,313,902
Highways and Waste Capital					
Northampton North West Relief Road	23,051,040	1,000,000	2,343,000	0	26,394,040

DfT Highway Maintenance Needs Block 22/23	918,467	0	0	0	918,467
DfT Pothole Fund 22/23	906,724	0	0	0	906,724
LTP Integrated Transport Block 2022-23	1,588,869	0	0	0	1,588,869
DfT Highway Maintenance Needs Block 23/24	4,742,000	0	0	0	4,742,000
DfT Highway Maintenance Incentive Block 23/24	1,185,000	0	0	0	1,185,000
DfT Pothole Fund 23/24	4,742,000	0	0	0	4,742,000
LTP Integrated Transport Block 2023-24	1,550,000	0	0	0	1,550,000
DfT Highway Maintenance Needs Block 24/25	0	4,742,000	0	0	4,742,000
DfT Highway Maintenance Incentive Block 24/25	0	1,185,000	0	0	1,185,000
DfT Pothole Fund 24/25	0	4,742,000	0	0	4,742,000
LTP Integrated Transport Block 2024-25	0	1,550,000	0	0	1,550,000
Pothole Machinery	450,000	0	0	0	450,000
Northampton Growth Management Scheme Phase 1	4,206,011	0	0	0	4,206,011
A45 Daventry Development Link Road	894,307	0	0	0	894,307
Active travel scheme tranche 2	1,062,671	0	0	0	1,062,671
Active Travel Enhancements	136,966	655,881	0	0	792,847
Rural Traffic Calming	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	800,000
National Productivity Investment Fund(NPIF) - Cliftonville	25,218	0	0	0	25,218
LTP Integrated Transport Block 2021-22	215,276	0	0	0	215,276
Vehicle Replacement Programme	502,130	600,000	1,045,000	0	2,147,130
HS2 Road Safety Fund	145,259	0	0	0	145,259
S106 Former Timken, Main Rd Duston, Northampton	454,249	0	0	0	454,249
S106 - Silverstone Circuit Silverstone (file 264)	415,852	0	0	0	415,852
Environmental Services Contract [NBC]	1,215,075	262,154	190,787	678,876	2,346,892
s106 Buckton Fields Northampton	311,206	0	0	0	311,206
A43 Moulton Phase 2	455,875	0	0	0	455,875
s106 Wood Burcote Court Towcester	255,118	0	0	0	255,118
S106 Monksmoor Daventry	242,521	0	0	0	242,521
UU Sailsbury Landscape Boughton Road Moulton	205,800	0	0	0	205,800
Household Waste Recycling Centres Sinking Fund	36,087	36,087	0	0	72,174
HCA Upton Remedial Works	621,179	100,000	0	0	721,179
Street Lighting Upgrade (ex- NCC assets)	2,713,723	3,025,090	754,161	0	6,492,974
S106 Flore Traffic Calming	66,610	0	0	0	66,610
S106 - Wootton Fields Ph3 (file 449)	133,803	0	0	0	133,803
S106 Radstone Fields, Brackley	132,282	0	0	0	132,282
S106 Harlestone Rd Northampton	130,794	0	0	0	130,794
S106 Overstone Leys	120,420	0	0	0	120,420
S106 West Station Rd Long Buck	115,584	0	0	0	115,584
S106 land at Brackmills (Bedford Rd Roxhill) Npt	101,535	0	0	0	101,535
Smart Commuters	91,471	0	0	0	91,471
Installation of Bin Holders in Laybys	74,000	0	0	0	74,000
S106 Buckton Fields West	73,340	0	0	0	73,340
S106 Apex Park	72,570	0	0	0	72,570
S106 - Bective Sch Whiston Rd, Kingsthorpe Npt (file 431)	67,253	0	0	0	67,253
S106 Cary Close Moulton (DWH)	55,473	0	0	0	55,473
s106 Ashton Road (pianoforte) Roade	61,978	0	0	0	61,978
A43 Northampton to Kettering Phase 1b	410,000	0	0	0	410,000
s106 Booth Rise North Npt	40,712	0	0	0	40,712
Wheelie Bins	40,000	40,000	0	0	80,000
Capitalisation of Bin Replacements	47,520	47,520	47,520	47,520	190,080
S106 Camp Hill Bugbrooke	39,589	0	0	0	39,589
s106 Overstone Leys (SUE) Overstone	0	0	0	0	0
S106 Overthorpe Rd M40 Banbury	32,575	0	0	0	32,575
S106 Foxhills Brackley	31,207	0	0	0	31,207
S106 Towcester Vale SUE	30,648	0	0	0	30,648
S106 Emmanuel Church Sc. Site, Billing Brook Road	29,717	0	0	0	29,717
S106 Chaplins Yd Stratford Road Roade	29,069	0	0	0	29,069
s106 Wootton Fields Northampton (335)	26,272	0	0	0	26,272
S106 - Peace Hill Bugbrooke (file 343)	26,095	0	0	0	26,095
S106 Summerhouse Rd Moulton Park	24,500	0	0	0	24,500

S106 Old Greens Norton Rd Tow	23,919	0	0	0	23,919
s106 Nth of Ford - Royal Oak Way South, Daventry	20,097	0	0	0	20,097
S106 Npt Lane Moulton	15,000	0	0	0	15,000
S106 Site 7 Edgar Mobbs Npt	14,910	0	0	0	14,910
S106 Watford Lodge Watford	14,700	0	0	0	14,700
DCOb DIRFT 3, Hilmorton	10,456	0	0	0	10,456
S106 Towcester Rd Old Stratford	10,359	0	0	0	10,359
S106 Banbury Lane KingsSutton	5,871	0	0	0	5,871
S106 Former Allotments N-P Rd	5,916	0	0	0	5,916
S106 Dockham Way Crick	5,650	0	0	0	5,650
s106 Byfield Road, Woodford Halse (306)	5,297	0	0	0	5,297
S106 Danes Camp Way Northampton	4,976	0	0	0	4,976
S106 65 Byfield Rd Woodford Ha	2,571	0	0	0	2,571
S106 GlebeFm Yelvertoft WindFm	1,979	0	0	0	1,979
S106 Grose QueensPark Kingsth	1,542	0	0	0	1,542
Northampton Gateway	200,000	0	0	0	200,000
Total Highways and Waste Capital	55,896,886	18,185,732	4,580,468	926,396	79,589,482
Economic Growth & Regeneration					
Northampton Market Square	11,372,255	0	0	0	11,372,255
Northamptonshire Superfast Broadband	3,963,285	0	0	0	3,963,285
Vulcan works	201,464	0	0	0	201,464
Abington Street Redevelopments	5,595,486	1,047,000	0	0	6,642,486
Watermeadows	10,000	0	0	0	10,000
Northampton Bike Park	91,517	0	0	0	91,517
Ecton Brook Community Centre	22,500	22,500	0	0	45,000
Grants for Decarbonisation for Businesses	50,000	50,000	0	0	100,000
Old Black Lion	360,683	0	0	0	360,683
Extension of 78 Derngate	90,000	0	0	0	90,000
24 Guildhall Road Block	2,867,626	100,000	0	0	2,967,626
Capital Improvements - Regeneration Areas	50,000	0	0	0	50,000
Heritage Gateway	12,751	0	0	0	12,751
Sponne Arcade	378,239	0	0	0	378,239
Market Walk	3,103,365	903,364	0	0	4,006,729
Four Waterside	1,500,000	7,000,000	0	0	8,500,000
Marefare Heritage Gateway	2,297,750	0	0	0	2,297,750
Northampton Town Centre Public Realm	4,179,486	0	0	0	4,179,486
Total Economic Growth & Regeneration	36,146,406	9,122,864	0	0	45,269,270
Assets and Environment Capital					
Northamptonshire Holistic Flood Resilience	1,526,856	3,865,000	0	0	5,391,856
Town Centre Vision - Cinema Site 1	284,307	0	0	0	284,307
Homelessness Temporary Accomodation	843,855	0	0	0	843,855
Northampton Leisure Trust	1,517,315	0	0	0	1,517,315
Daventry to Braunston Cycle Track	170,341	0	0	0	170,341
Property Minor Works 2020-21	13,808	0	0	0	13,808
Parks / Allotments / Cemeteries Enhancements	250,000	260,000	260,000	260,000	1,030,000
Operational Property Enhancements	656,070	0	0	0	656,070
4-14 High March Refurbishment	1,682,780	0	0	0	1,682,780
Property Minor Works 2019-20	864	0	0	0	864
Guildhall Boilers	281,996	0	0	0	281,996
St Michaels MSCp lift refurbishment	253,830	0	0	0	253,830
Middlemore Infrastructure Completion Works	81,259	0	0	0	81,259
Long Buckby Flood Management	104,038	0	0	0	104,038
Racecourse Enhancement	19,878	0	0	0	19,878
Community Youth Provision	104,160	0	0	0	104,160
Public toilets refurbishment	20,651	0	0	0	20,651
Parks, Allotments and Cemeteries funded by external contributions	11,784	0	0	0	11,784
Car Park Extension St John's Square and Chapel Lane	10,000	0	0	0	10,000

New Rehabilitation Building	39,919	0	0	0	39,919
Refurbishment of Paved Areas	86,000	0	0	0	86,000
Heartlands commercial new build	6,503	0	0	0	6,503
Monksmoor Primary School	34,137	0	0	0	34,137
Rainsbrook Crematorium enhancements	71,500	0	0	0	71,500
Middlemore Cycle/Rural Tracks	67,946	0	0	0	67,946
Lodge Farm Community Centre	23,899	0	0	0	23,899
Commercial Landlord Responsibilities	51,430	0	0	0	51,430
Heartlands completion works	46,198	0	0	0	46,198
New Commercial Unit Plot 2B Heartlands Daventry	4,420,000	0	0	0	4,420,000
Refurbishment of paths and structures for open spaces	40,475	0	0	0	40,475
Capital Works to 68 and 68a High St	20,665	0	0	0	20,665
Elgar Centre M&E	15,000	0	0	0	15,000
DCP refurbishment programme	1,930	0	0	0	1,930
Middlemore Landscape Completion Works	31,000	0	0	0	31,000
Guildhall Roof	18,086	0	0	0	18,086
Country Park - Capital Costs	12,594	10,000	0	0	22,594
Westbridge Depot - Accommodation for NPH	1,162,367	0	0	0	1,162,367
Property Minor Works 2022-23	179,966	0	0	0	179,966
Northampton Leisure Centres Fire Assessment Works	348,705	0	0	0	348,705
County Hall Refurbishment/Improvements	944,898	0	0	0	944,898
Central Library Refurbishment	406,299	0	0	0	406,299
LED Replacement Lighting Scheme	261,340	139,568	279,136	0	680,044
Death Management Services	5,683,816	6,700,000	1,000,000	0	13,383,816
Dallington Cemetery Extension	557,993	100,000	0	0	657,993
Floor and wall finishes replacement/ renewal	1,263,278	579,750	3,478,500	0	5,321,528
Boiler Replacements	225,000	225,000	1,125,000	0	1,575,000
Bridge Replacement Works	170,024	40,000	0	0	210,024
Magistrates Court and Hazelrigg House Roof Repairs	44,190	0	0	0	44,190
Southfields Community Centre Refurbishment	90,000	0	0	0	90,000
Abington Museum Boilers	261,303	0	0	0	261,303
Restoration of Historic Monuments & Statues	102,128	15,000	15,000	0	132,128
Purchase of Leasehold Properties in Brackley	2,132,000	0	0	0	2,132,000
Country Parks ANPR Equipment	100,000	0	0	0	100,000
The Abbey Centre	1,170,045	0	0	0	1,170,045
Daventry Leisure Centre	996,800	0	0	0	996,800
EPC Improvements to Leased Buildings	370,000	220,000	220,000	0	810,000
Rural Leisure Centres Heat Decarbonisation Scheme	8,039,000	0	0	0	8,039,000
Property Minor Works 2023-24 onwards	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	2,000,000
Property Access Control System	80,000	0	0	0	80,000
Air Quality	30,280	0	0	0	30,280
Active Traffic Management and Air Quality	130,000	0	0	0	130,000
Total Assets and Environment Capital	38,070,504	12,654,318	6,877,636	760,000	58,362,458
Total	198,666,017	62,367,083	20,423,013	10,224,396	291,680,509

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**Appendix B.
Proposed budget virements and reprofiling – Assets and Environment.**

Proposed Virements

Scheme	Proposed Virement £	Comments	Funding
Property Minor Works 2019-20	-864	Budget to be merged with new Property Minor Works budget to have one consistent budget going forward	Borrowing
Property Minor Works 2020-21 -	-13,808	Budget to be merged with new Property Minor Works budget to have one consistent budget going forward	Borrowing
Property Minor Works 2022-23 -	-179,966	Budget to be merged with new Property Minor Works budget to have one consistent budget going forward	Borrowing
Town Centre Vision - Cinema Site 1	-254,307	Project complete, transfer underspend to Property Minor works budget to cover extensive minor works programme	Borrowing
Property Minor Works 2023-24 onwards	448,945		Borrowing
Commercial Landlord Responsibilities	-51,430	Vire to Operational Property Enhancements budget	Borrowing
Operational Property Enhancements	51,430		Borrowing
Middlemore Infrastructure Completion Works	-71,259	Project complete, budget to be repurposed to other projects outlined below	Borrowing
Community Youth Provision	-104,160	Project complete, budget to be repurposed to other projects outlined below	Capital Receipts
Heartlands commercial new build	-6,503	Project complete, budget to be repurposed to other projects outlined below	Capital Receipts
Middlemore Cycle/Rural Tracks	-67,946	Project complete, budget to be repurposed to other projects outlined below	Capital Receipts

Refurbishment of paths and structures for open spaces	-40,475	Project complete, budget to be repurposed to other projects outlined below	Capital Receipts
Capital Works to 68 and 68a High St	-20,172	Project complete, budget to be repurposed to other projects outlined below	Capital Receipts
Northampton Leisure Centres Fire Assessment Works	-328,705	Project complete, budget to be repurposed to other projects outlined below	Borrowing
Northampton Leisure Trust	200,000	Budget repurposed from projects above to cover heating and energy efficiency costs	Borrowing/Capital receipts
Magistrates Court and Hazelrigg House Roof Repairs	30,000	Budget repurposed from projects above to cover for structural issues	Borrowing
Central Library Refurbishment	185,000	Budget repurposed from projects above to cover for structural issues along with roof and fenestration	Borrowing
Operational Buildings - Enhancements	100,000	Budget repurposed from projects above to cover extensive operational Buildings works programme	Borrowing
Property Minor Works 2023-24 onwards	124,220	Budget repurposed from projects above to cover extensive minor works programme	Borrowing

Proposed reprofiling.

Scheme	Original 23/24 Budget £	Reprofile amount £	Final 23/24 Budget £	Final 2024/25 Budget £	Final 2025/26 Budget £	Final 2026/27 Budget £	Comments	Funding
Daventry to Braunston Cycle Track	170,341	-140,341	30,000	140,341			Reprofile budget to better reflect forecast spend profile	CIL
New Commercial Unit Plot 2B Heartlands Daventry	4,420,000	-3,920,000	500,000	3,920,000			Reprofile budget to better reflect forecast spend profile	Borrowing
Floor and wall finishes replacement/ renewal	1,263,278	-513,278	750,000	513,278	579,750	3,478,500	Reprofile budget to better reflect forecast spend profile	Borrowing



WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

19th September 2023

Cllr Fiona Baker, Lead Member Children, Young People and Education
Services

Report Title	Care Experienced to be seen as a Protected Characteristic
Report Author	Rebecca Wilshire, Director of Children's Services Rebecca.Wilshire@westnorthants.gov.uk

List of Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	23/09/2023
Chief Finance Officer (S.151)	Martin Henry	23/09/2023
Other Director	Stuart Lackenby, Executive Director of People and Deputy Chief Executive	23/09/2023
Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	22/08/2023

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Care Experienced to be seen as a Protected Characteristic Report

Appendix B – Protected Characteristics Briefing Report 14th June 2023 by Terry Galloway

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To seek agreement to '**support and treat care experienced as if it were a Protected Characteristic** until such time it becomes legislation recognising that care-experienced people are a group who are likely to face discrimination.
- 1.2. To seek agreement '**To Adopt the Corporate Parenting Principles**' until such time it becomes legislation.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Independent Review of Children's Social Care, headed by Josh McCallister, published in May 2022, had a final report and recommendations that 'Care Experienced' should be made a Protected Characteristic in law, sitting beside other protected characteristics such as age, disability, race, and religion under the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.2 Many care-experienced people face discrimination, stigma, and prejudice daily, often finding it challenging to access further support. Public perceptions of care experience can sometimes centre on the idea that children are "irredeemably damaged, " which can lead to discrimination and assumptions being made.
- 2.3 While awaiting the outcome of the social care reforms, specifically for care experienced to be seen as a protected characteristic, 46 councils in England have already passed a Motion to consider care experienced as a protected characteristic.
- 2.4 As part of the review there is a recommendation to extend corporate parenting duties to other public bodies, to further support children in care and care leavers.
- 2.5 By considering Care Leavers as a Protected Characteristic, will expand our duties as a Corporate Parent.
- 2.6 **Corporate Parenting Principles**, currently there are 7 Corporate Parenting Principles:
 - 2.6.1 **Well-being**, to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of children and young people.
 - 2.6.2 **Voice**, to encourage those children and young people to express their views wishes and feelings.
 - 2.6.3 **Heard**, to take into account the views wishes and feelings of those children and young people.
 - 2.6.4 **Aspirational**, to promote high aspirations and seek to secure the best outcomes for those children and young people.
 - 2.6.5 **Equality of Opportunity**, to help those children and young people gain access to and make the best use of services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.
 - 2.6.6 **Relationships**, for those children and young people to be safe and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work.
 - 2.6.7 **Preparing for Adulthood**, to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

- 2.7 The Government is looking at implementing an extension of corporate parenting to other public bodies beyond local authorities to lead a more comprehensive and integrated approach to supporting children in care and care leavers.
- 2.8 Extending these principles will enable:
- 2.8.1 **Increased Collaboration:** Encourages collaboration among public bodies to address the needs of care experienced individuals (this would be inconsistent if Care Leaver Status were not a protected characteristic)
(In conjunction with protected characteristic)
 - 2.8.2 **Utilisation of Established Mechanisms:** By integrating care experience into Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and Equality Impact Assessments, which have been in place since 2010, organisations and public bodies can use established mechanisms. This makes it more accessible for those outside of social care who are already familiar with these processes.
 - 2.8.3 **Organisation-wide Responsibility:** As a protected characteristic, the responsibility to support care experienced individuals becomes an intrinsic part of an organisation's culture and decision-making process. It is no longer relegated to specialised teams but is a responsibility that permeates all levels of an organisation.
 - 2.8.4 **Legal Obligation Ensures Consistency:** The legal obligations associated with protected characteristics ensure that public bodies must systematically and consistently consider the needs and rights of care-experienced individuals. This guarantees a uniform approach across different regions and organisations.
 - 2.8.5 **Equitable Policy Development:** The incorporation of care experience into Equality Impact Assessments means that when policies are being developed or reviewed, the specific needs and challenges faced by care-experienced individuals must be considered. This results in more equitable policies that proactively address inequalities.
 - 2.8.6 **Enhanced Cross-Departmental Collaboration:** In local authorities, government departments and other organisations this approach would ensure better cross-departmental collaboration, as all departments would be legally required to consider care experience in their policies and decision-making processes.
- 2.9 In summary, recognising care experience as a protected characteristic feels like the right approach to ensure those who are care experienced are further supported. It not only enshrines the support for care-experienced individuals but also integrates this support into established mechanisms that public bodies are already familiar with. This ensures that supporting care experienced individuals is not an add-on, but a fundamental aspect of policy development and decision-making. The approach guarantees that policies are developed with equity in mind, ensuring that care experienced individuals have the support and opportunities they need to thrive.
- 2.10 As a Council, it needs to be noted that:

- 2.10.1 Care-experienced people face significant barriers that impact them throughout their lives.
 - 2.10.2 Despite the resilience of many care-experienced people, society too often does not take their needs into account.
 - 2.10.3 Care-experienced people often face discrimination and stigma across housing, health, education, relationships, employment, and the criminal justice system.
 - 2.10.4 Care-experienced people may encounter inconsistent support in different geographical areas.
 - 2.10.5 As corporate parents, councillors have a collective responsibility for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children who are looked after by us as an authority.
 - 2.10.6 All corporate parents should consider acting as mentors and be committed to hearing the voices of looked-after children and young people, and considering their needs in any aspect of council work.
 - 2.10.7 Councillors should be champions of the children in our care and challenge the negative attitudes and prejudice that exist in all aspects of society.
 - 2.10.8 The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies, such as councils, to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation of people with protected characteristics.
- 2.11 The Council are already committed to supporting all children, and young people, and to ensure they have the best start in life possible, and already ensure care experienced children and young people are supported. We consider that recognising care experienced children and young people as a Protected Characteristic is the right step forward.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
- a) Agrees to **'support and treat care experienced as if it were a Protected Characteristic'** until such time it becomes legislation.
 - b) Recognises that care-experienced people are a group who are likely to face discrimination.
 - c) Recognises that Councils have a duty to put the needs of disadvantaged people at the heart of decision-making through co-production and collaboration.
 - d) Agree **'To Adopt the Corporate Parenting Principles'** until such time it becomes legislation

This will mean:

- 3.1. Agreeing that future decisions, services, and policies made and adopted by the Council should be assessed through Equality Impact Assessments to determine the impact of changes on people with care experience alongside those who formally share a protected characteristic.
- 3.2. Agreeing that in the delivery of the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Council includes care experience in the publication and review of Equality Objectives and the annual publication of information relating to people who share a protected characteristic in services and employment.
- 3.3. Continuing to proactively be seeking out and listening to the voices of care-experienced people when developing new policies based on their views.
- 3.4. Formally calling upon other bodies to treat care experienced as a Protected Characteristic until such time as it may be introduced by legislation.
- 3.5. Formally calling upon all other bodies who work closely with children in care and care leavers to adopt corporate parenting principles for children in care and care leavers until such time as it may be introduced by legislation.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1. The recommendations enable WNC to align with around 46 other Councils who have already committed to this.
- 4.2. The recommendation will prevent care experienced young people from having to face some of discrimination which other protected groups may face, supporting this enables us to start to level the playing field for this group of young people.
- 4.3. The recommendation supports the Councils corporate parenting responsibility and supports our Equality Policy.

5. Report Background

- 5.1. The Independent Review of Children's Social Care, headed by Josh McCallister, published in May 2022, had a final report and recommendations that 'Care Experienced' should be made a Protected Characteristic in law, sitting beside other protected characteristics such as age, disability, race, and religion under the Equality Act 2010.
- 5.2. Many care-experienced people face discrimination, stigma, and prejudice daily, often finding it challenging to access further support.

- 5.3. The independent review argues that by recommending that care experience is made a Protected Characteristic under equalities legislation, outcomes for care leavers will drastically improve.
- 5.4. The review's outcome has been consulted, and the findings still need to be confirmed and published.
- 5.5. While awaiting the outcome of the reforms, specifically for care experienced to be seen as a protected characteristic, around 46 councils in England have already passed a Motion to consider care experienced as a protected characteristic.
- 5.6. Hearing testimony from care experienced people sharing the discrimination they have experienced, even from a very young age, such discrimination can be similar to other groups with a legally protected characteristic under the Equality Act (2010). So, while there may be ways that society can help reduce stigma and discrimination, including creating greater public consciousness on these issues, just as with other areas of equality, there is a case to go further. Therefore, the government should make care experience a protected characteristic.
- 5.7. Making care experience a protected characteristic would give employers, businesses, public services, and policymakers greater authority to implement policies and programs that promote better outcomes for care-experienced people. It will make the UK the first country globally to recognise care-experienced people in this way.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1. As outlined in above sections, no issues or Choices are set here.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources and Financial

There are no resources or financial implications arising from the proposals.

7.2. Legal

There are no specific legal implications arising from the proposals.

The Campaign and the Review are recommending that the recommendation set here is made in Law.

7.3. Risk

There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

7.4. Consultation and Communications

7.4.1. There are no specific consultation and communications implications arising from the proposals, however by adopting the recommended approach the Council will send out a strengthened message around the actions being taken to help reduce barriers and discrimination for care experienced people across West Northants.

7.5. Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.5.1. This has not been presented to Scrutiny.

7.6. Climate Impact

7.6.1. There is no Climate Impact.

7.7. Community Impact

7.7.1. Include consideration of any distinct community impact that may arise regarding the Council's area, or particular localities within that.

8. Background Papers

8.1. There are no background reports

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Care Experienced to be seen as a Protected Characteristic

Preamble

A campaign led by a group of care leavers under the 'Show Us You Care Campaign' which was a group lobbying for the Care Review to make Care Leavers a Protected Characteristic and was successful.

As the Independent Review of Children's Social Care, headed by Josh McCallister, published in May 2022, had a final report and recommendations that 'Care Experienced' should be made a Protected Characteristic in law, sitting beside other protected characteristics such as age, disability, race, and religion under the Equality Act 2010.

Many care-experienced people face discrimination, stigma, and prejudice daily, often finding it challenging to access further support.

Public perceptions of care experience can sometimes centre on the idea that children are "irredeemably damaged," which can lead to discrimination and assumptions being made.

In the Independent Review, one young person told the review that a teacher had told them, "You're *smart - for a kid in care*". Another young person said, "*I don't want people to point out that I am in care if I don't want that mentioned. It makes me so cross – that shouldn't happen.*"

Children and young people who are care experienced face several challenges and disadvantages, and the move to recognise this is important to attempt to level the playing field for those raised in care.

The independent review argues that by recommending that care experience is made a Protected Characteristic under equalities legislation, outcomes for care leavers will drastically improve.

The review's outcome has been consulted, and the findings still need to be confirmed and published.

While awaiting the outcome of the reforms, specifically for care experienced to be seen as a protected characteristic, around forty-six councils in England have already passed a Motion to consider care experienced as a protected characteristic.

Hearing testimony from care experienced people sharing the discrimination they have experienced, even from an early age, such discrimination can be like other groups with a legally protected characteristic under the Equality Act (2010). So, while there may be ways that society can help reduce stigma and discrimination, including creating greater public consciousness on these issues, just as with other areas of equality, there is a case to go further. Therefore, the government should make care experience a protected characteristic.

Making care experience a protected characteristic would give employers, businesses, public services, and policymakers greater authority to implement policies and programs that promote better outcomes for care-experienced people. It will make the UK the first country globally to recognise care-experienced people in this way.

Until this is considered in Law, several Council across England are implementing this.

Corporate Parenting Principles:

Bu considering Care Leavers as a Protected Characteristic, will expand our duties as a Corporate Parent.

Currently there are 7 Corporate Parenting Principles:

- **Well-being**, to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of children and young people.
- **Voice**, to encourage those children and young people to express their views wishes and feelings.

- **Heard**, to take into account the views wishes and feelings of those children and young people.
- **Aspirational**, to promote high aspirations and seek to secure the best outcomes for those children and young people.
- **Equality of Opportunity**, to help those children and young people gain access to and make the best use of services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.
- **Relationships**, for those children and young people to be safe and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work.
- **Preparing for Adulthood**, to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living

The government are looking at implementing an extension of corporate parenting to other public bodies beyond local authorities to lead a more comprehensive and integrated approach to supporting children in care and care leavers.

By extending these principles will enable:

- **Increased Collaboration:** Encourages collaboration among public bodies to address the needs of care experienced individuals (this would be inconsistent if Care Leaver Status were not a protected characteristic)

(In conjunction with protected characteristic)

- **Utilisation of Established Mechanisms:** By integrating care experience into Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and Equality Impact Assessments, which have been in place since 2010, organisations and public bodies can use established mechanisms. This makes it more accessible for those outside of social care who are already familiar with these processes.
- **Organisation-wide Responsibility:** As a protected characteristic, the responsibility to support care experienced individuals becomes an intrinsic part of an organisation's culture and decision-making process. It is no longer relegated to specialised teams but is a responsibility that permeates all levels of an organisation.
- **Legal Obligation Ensures Consistency:** The legal obligations associated with protected characteristics ensure that public bodies must systematically and consistently consider the needs and rights of care-experienced individuals. This guarantees a uniform approach across different regions and organisations.
- **Equitable Policy Development:** The incorporation of care experience into Equality Impact Assessments means that when policies are being developed or reviewed, the specific needs and challenges faced by care-experienced individuals must be considered. This results in more equitable policies that proactively address inequalities.
- **Enhanced Cross-Departmental Collaboration:** In local authorities, government departments and other organisations this approach would ensure better cross-departmental collaboration, as all departments would be legally required to consider care experience in their policies and decision-making processes.

In summary, recognising care experience as a protected characteristic is a transformative approach. It not only enshrines the support for care-experienced individuals in law but also integrates this support into established mechanisms that public bodies are already familiar with. This ensures that supporting care experienced individuals is not an add-on, but a fundamental aspect of policy development and decision-making. The approach guarantees that policies are developed with equity in mind, ensuring that care experienced individuals have the support and opportunities they need to thrive.

Request

Many councils across England recognise the importance of this and have already agreed on this for their respective Councils as a motion.

As a Council, it needs to be noted that:

- Care-experienced people face significant barriers that impact them throughout their lives.
- Despite the resilience of many care-experienced people, society too often does not take their needs into account.

- Care-experienced people often face discrimination and stigma across housing, health, education, relationships, employment, and the criminal justice system.
- Care-experienced people may encounter inconsistent support in different geographical areas.
- As corporate parents, councillors have a collective responsibility for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children who are looked after by us as an authority.
- All corporate parents should commit to acting as mentors, hearing the voices of looked-after children and young people, and considering their needs in any aspect of council work.
- Councillors should be champions of the children in our care and challenge the negative attitudes and prejudice that exist in all aspects of society.
- The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies, such as councils, to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimization of people with protected characteristics.

It is asked that Council.

- Agree to **'support and treat care experienced as if it were a Protected Characteristic in Law'** until such time it becomes legislation.
 - Recognising that care-experienced people are a group who are likely to face discrimination.
 - Recognising that Councils have a duty to put the needs of disadvantaged people at the heart of decision-making through co-production and collaboration.
- Agree **'To Adopt the Corporate Parenting Principles'** until such time it becomes legislation
- This will mean:
 - Agreeing that future decisions, services, and policies made and adopted by the Council should be assessed through Equality Impact Assessments to determine the impact of changes on people with care experience alongside those who formally share a protected characteristic.
 - Agreeing that in the delivery of the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Council includes care experience in the publication and review of Equality Objectives and the annual publication of information relating to people who share a protected characteristic in services and employment.
 - Continuing to proactively be seeking out and listening to the voices of care-experienced people when developing new policies based on their views.
 - To formally call upon other bodies to treat care experienced as a Protected Characteristic until such time as it may be introduced by legislation.
 - To formally call upon all other bodies to adopt corporate parenting principles for children in care and care leavers until such time as it may be introduced by legislation.

Cllr Fiona Baker
 Lead Member for Children, Young People and Education
 Chair of Corporate Parenting Board

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Briefing Report
Author Terry Galloway

14th June 2023

Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic

Foreword

In the aftermath of a sombre funeral, I found myself standing next to my sister, Hazel. She looked at me with a sadness that penetrated deep into her core, uttering words that will forever echo in my mind, "I will be next." At that moment, an urgent sense of resolve surged within me. I yearned to shift her perspective, to inject a spark of hope into her desolate prognosis.

As we navigated our way through the ensuing conversations, our discourse gradually turned towards the realm of systemic change. We envisaged a world where the care system, which had left such indelible marks on our lives, transformed into an entity that bred hope instead of despair. We dreamed of a reality where our pain, our experiences, our stories would serve as catalysts for change. A reality where those who followed us wouldn't have to tread the same treacherous path we had navigated.

But the harsh realities of life often pay no heed to our dreams and desires. Hazel left us before we could realize our shared vision. Her words came true, much earlier than I ever feared.

This work, this relentless pursuit of systemic change, is dedicated to Hazel. It's dedicated to her spirit, her hopes, and the dreams that she was unable to see materialize in her lifetime. But it doesn't stop at Hazel. This work is also dedicated to every other individual who has lived through the care experience and left us prematurely. Their stories, their struggles, their untapped potential are interwoven in the very fabric of this work.

As we move forward, we hold onto the belief that the lives and stories of those we've lost carry the power to inspire change. It is their voices that propel us towards action. Their experiences that compel us to challenge the system. Their memories that remind us of the immense work that lies ahead.

In honour of Hazel, and countless others like her, we press on. We commit ourselves to a future where the care experience does not define or limit one's life trajectory. This is more than an objective; it's a necessity. The memory of those we've lost serves as both a catalyst and a compass, guiding us towards a reality where pain finds meaning, and systemic change is not just an aspiration, but a tangible reality.

Terry Galloway

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1. Introduction

There is an ongoing debate about the inclusion of additional protected characteristics in the UK Equality Act, with particular attention to whether 'social class's and care experience' should qualify as protected characteristics.

An important contrast between these two examples is that prohibitions on discrimination on the basis of social class might well be legislated on a 'symmetrical model', meaning legal protections would cover members of all social classes. If that happened, policies favouring lower social classes would be at risk of being found to be unlawfully discriminatory against members of higher social classes. Given this potential legal and ethical quandary, some take the view that making social class a 'protected characteristic' under the Equality Act 2010 would not be an effective strategy for achieving the intended social justice outcomes.

In contrast, prohibitions against discrimination based on 'care experience' are more likely to be on a 'non-symmetrical model', akin to existing legal provisions on disability discrimination. In particular, singling out members of this group for dedicated protections against discrimination is less likely to be seen as contentious, politically and otherwise: it is hard to imagine that anyone would think that legal protections for care experienced people ought to be accompanied by equivalent legal rights for those who have never been in care.

This distinction matters for policymakers. The concern is that if the Equality Act is amended to include additional protected characteristics, it could open the floodgates for a multitude of claims, such as those related to poverty or regional accents. However, this approach provides a conceptual tool to differentiate care experience from these other potential claims. It equips politicians with the arguments needed to advocate for care experience as a protected characteristic, whilst being able to challenge the inclusion of broader and more contentious characteristics such as social class.

The independent Review of Children's Social Care in England recommended making 'care experience' a protected characteristic, potentially marking the UK as the first country in the world to take this significant step. They also advised the UK Government to consult with care experienced people and devolved nations regarding this matter. However, the UK Government decided against this, opting instead to tackle discrimination through the application of corporate parenting principles, and declining to consult with care experienced people and the devolved nations on this issue.

It's important to highlight that the Care Review's recommendations only apply to England, and it was The Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP Secretary of State for Education who announced the Government response, but the Equality Act covers the devolved nations Scotland and Wales.

This minister has no jurisdiction over Scotland and Wales on matters of children's social care and care experienced people. In fact, the Welsh Care Review has also proposed the introduction of 'care experience' as a protected characteristic.

The Welsh government lacks the jurisdiction to effect this change unilaterally. This presents an opportunity and a challenge that we aim to address through our campaign.

Part 2 of the Equality act 2010, which is what defines the Protected Characteristics is a political power reserved to the exclusive jurisdiction of Westminster which means this matter will apply across England, Scotland and Wales when it is implemented. Northern Ireland has a different system.

2. Summary and recommendations

This document has been written so we have something to give to the Children's commissioner for England and the Prime Minister when we visit on 14th June 2023.

However now it is written, it provides background to the campaign for Care Experience to become a Protected Characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

So far councils representing 17.97% of the population of England, Scotland and Wales have resolved to "Treat Care Experience as if it were a Protected Characteristic".

In the following pages we hope you will find what you need so that you can join the campaign. But this is moving all the time so if you need any further information or want to chat things through, please get in touch terry@ngalloway.co.uk

Every child entering the care system will cost £1,2m and every child requiring a social worker will cost £620,000. These costs are set to increase and outcomes are likely to get worse. Local Authorities are burdened with huge costs at the beginning of the journey for care experienced people but the higher cost is later in life after 18 years old when everyone has forgotten and we have disappeared and become unheard. Recommendation 5 is designed so that government and relevant departments across society seek us out and find out where we are.

We are making the following recommendations to Government.

1. Government should introduce legislation without delay, so that "Care Experience" becomes a Protected Characteristic in UK Equality law.
2. Government should commission an information campaign to inform care experienced people about Protected Characteristics, Equitable Equality, and the powers available in relation to section 149 and Equality Impact Assessments that could relate to Care Experienced people if it were a protected characteristic.
3. Government should consult with care experienced people and those who are associated with us about the difficulties we face in relation to stigma, direct and indirect discrimination and to explore the ramifications of introducing care experience as a Protected Characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.
4. Government should consult with and listen to the devolved nations of Scotland and Wales about whether protected characteristics for care experienced people should be introduced across the United Kingdom.
5. Government should commission a destinations study identifying where care experienced people are, which services they use and their long-term outcomes and experiences.

We also are asking councils and all bodies providing services to care experienced people.

- 1 To "treat Care Experience as if it were a protected characteristic until such time as it becomes legislation.
- 2 To "Adopt the Corporate Parenting Principals until such time as it becomes legislation"

3. Care Experience: A Non-Symmetrical Model

"Care experience" refers to the experiences of individuals who spent part of their childhood in the care system due to situations beyond their control, primarily arising from abuse and neglect within their families. These individuals can face both direct and indirect discrimination throughout their lives.

In addition to direct and indirect discrimination, foster carers can face harassment and victimisation due to their responsibilities. Harassment may include mocking comments about the foster carer's involvement in case reviews, health appointments, school meetings, and contact visits with the biological family, which are critical for the well-being of care-experienced individuals. Such comments could create an intimidating or hostile environment for the foster carer. Additionally, victimisation can occur if foster carers are treated unfairly for raising concerns about discrimination or harassment related to their responsibilities. For example, a foster carer who complains about a lack of support or flexibility in their workplace due to their caring responsibilities may find themselves excluded from career development opportunities or subjected to unfair treatment.

It is vital to recognise that if care experience were to be a protected characteristic, this protection should extend by association to foster carers. This is because their role is inherently linked to the welfare of care-experienced individuals.

By recognising foster carers by association would ensure that they are safeguarded against discrimination and are supported in fulfilling their crucial role. This includes having the necessary flexibility and understanding from employers and society at large to attend case reviews, health appointments, training sessions, and other responsibilities essential in providing care and support to those with care experience. It is crucial that foster carers are recognised and supported as pivotal contributors to the well-being of care-experienced individuals.

Reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 could be extended to address their unique needs. For instance, educational institutions could consider reasonable adjustments in school allocation policies. While children in care are often given priority in school allocations, this typically occurs just before the start of the school term. However, children can come into care or change foster placements throughout the year. As such, it would be beneficial to have ongoing priority allocation policies that can adapt to the needs of care-experienced children throughout the year, ensuring they have access to suitable education whenever they come into care or move.

The shortage of foster carers and the inflexibility in school allocation policies have a direct impact on the daily lives of children in care. Due to the limited availability of foster placements and the lack of year-round priority in school allocation policies, children often find themselves placed in foster homes that are far from their schools. As a result, many children in care must rely on taxis for daily commutes to school, sometimes covering distances of up to 50 miles. Imagine how a young child feels, having to wake up extra early every day to embark on a long journey in a taxi. The child is likely to face questions from other pupils about why they are arriving in a taxi, which can make them feel self-conscious and isolated. Moreover, these lengthy commutes are not only exhausting for the children but also result in additional costs to local authorities. It is imperative to address the systemic issues, such as the shortage of foster carers and inflexibility in school allocation policies, to improve the day-to-day experiences and well-being of children in care.

Additionally, foster carers could be granted flexibility as part of reasonable adjustments in work schedules to attend essential meetings such as case reviews, educational planning, or life story work without the risk of career detriment. Local authorities could also consider making adjustments in housing policies to better accommodate the needs of foster families, such as prioritising them for housing that has the space needed for care-experienced individuals. Employers might also consider offering additional leave days for foster carers to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities, such as attending training or supporting a young person during transitions in their care arrangements. These reasonable adjustments recognise the specific challenges faced by care-experienced individuals and foster carers and aim to foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for them.

The term “Care Experience” is a description of a definition in law which means that there is no ambiguity. It includes anyone that had the state as its corporate parent by virtue of a care order in accordance with the Children Act 1989 and amendments.

Direct discrimination is rather straightforward: care-experienced individuals are disadvantaged due to biases against them. Here are some examples:

1. **Job Market Discrimination:** Care-experienced individuals are frequently overlooked due to misconceptions labelling them as 'problem children.' This stigma casts a shadow on their potential and ability, despite their hardships primarily stemming from circumstances beyond their control.
2. **Housing Discrimination:** There can be biases in housing applications, where care-experienced individuals might be rejected due to prejudiced views of landlords or agencies.
3. **Educational Bias:** There might be lower expectations of care-experienced students, leading to them being overlooked for academic opportunities for advancement.
4. **Public Perception and Stigma:** Care-experienced individuals might be subject to unfavourable public opinion, leading to social exclusion.

Indirect discrimination, occurs when a provision, criterion, or practice is applied that, while appearing neutral, puts people with a protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage, and, further, this practice cannot be justified in the terms set out in the Equality Act 2010. For care-experienced individuals, this can manifest in several ways:

1. **Data Protection Policies:** Policies that redact photos and information about a person's life can inadvertently deny care-experienced individuals access to their own histories, an issue unique to their circumstances.
2. **University Accommodation Policies:** Universities might offer only term-time accommodation under the assumption that all students have a home to go to during holidays. This disproportionately disadvantages care-experienced individuals, who often lack a traditional family home.
3. **Health and Social Care Services:** Practices like 'off-rolling'—where individuals are removed from service lists when they move out of the area—can disproportionately impact care-experienced individuals who may have unstable living situations due to their care backgrounds.

The societal stigma associated with care experience extends to an institutional level, with planning applications for children's homes often meeting considerable resistance. This opposition, rooted in the misconception of care-experienced children being disruptive, further marginalizes this already vulnerable group.

The 'non-symmetrical model' directly applies to the notion of care experience - a person either has care experience or they do not, therefore no-one would think there was a case for legislation to prohibit non care experienced people from being discriminated against. There is a clear and unambiguous distinction between those who have this characteristic and those who do not, like the protected characteristic of disability. This lack of ambiguity is an essential component for a characteristic to be protected effectively by the law, ensuring there is no room for misinterpretation or misuse.

Recognizing 'care experience' as a protected characteristic under the Equality Act is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, it would provide a legal framework to challenge the discriminatory practices faced by care-experienced individuals. Unlike broader categories such as social class or regional accents, care experience is specific and measurable, which lends itself well to legislative protection. By specifically defining and recognizing care experience in law, it provides a concrete and clear basis for legal redress.

Secondly, embedding care experience into the legal landscape would shine a light on the prejudices experienced by this group. It would provide a clear signal that these forms of discrimination are unacceptable, contributing to a societal shift in attitudes and behaviours towards care-experienced individuals.

Lastly, recognising care experience as a protected characteristic would help foster a more inclusive society for care-experienced individuals. It would serve to counterbalance the disadvantages they face due to direct and indirect discrimination, enhancing their opportunities to thrive and contribute positively to society.

By recognising care experience as a protected characteristic, we acknowledge the unique challenges and discrimination faced by this group, giving them the protection, they deserve, and enabling them to reach their full potential in society. Legal recognition sends a powerful message to society about the value we place on equality and non-discrimination and underscores our commitment to fostering an inclusive society for all.

A critical tool in this fight against discrimination is the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA). EIAs provide a systematic approach for policymakers and decision-makers to assess the potential impact of their proposed policies on different groups, particularly those with protected characteristics. By recognising care experience as a protected characteristic, EIAs would give a voice to care-experienced individuals in arenas where they have not been heard before.

Including care experience within EIAs would ensure the unique experiences and needs of care-experienced individuals are considered at the policy level. It would highlight potential implications of decisions on this group, promoting informed, equitable decision-making.

4. Equitable Equality: Care Experience

Equitable equality is a concept that goes beyond just treating everyone the same or 'equal treatment'. Instead, it recognizes that different individuals or groups may have unique needs or face specific disadvantages that need to be accounted for and addressed to achieve true equality. In this context, adding 'care experience' as a protected characteristic would be a step towards equitable equality as it recognises the specific needs and challenges of care-experienced individuals.

Under the Equality Act 2010, having a protected characteristic means that individuals should not be unfairly disadvantaged, discriminated against, or harassed based on that characteristic. By introducing care experience as a protected characteristic, it provides a legal tool for challenging instances of both direct and indirect discrimination and allows for better protection and representation of care-experienced individuals in various domains including education, employment, health services, and housing.

For example, in terms of policy changes, a university might review its accommodation policy. Currently, many universities only provide term-time accommodation, potentially disadvantaging care-experienced students who may not have a home to return to during holiday periods. If care experience were a protected characteristic, universities might be required to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment, considering the effects of their accommodation policy on care-experienced students. As a result, they might implement year-round accommodation options to meet these students' needs.

Another example could be with housing guarantor policies. Some housing agencies have policies that require tenants to provide a guarantor who can cover the rent if the tenant is unable to. This can disadvantage care-experienced individuals who may not have a family member or friend who can act as a guarantor. Recognising care experience as a protected characteristic could lead to a revision of these policies, ensuring they don't indirectly discriminate against care-experienced individuals.

In health services, the recognition of care experience as a protected characteristic could lead to better access and support for care-experienced individuals who often face higher rates of mental health issues due to their backgrounds. Services could be reformed to ensure they are accessible, responsive, and sensitive to the specific needs of care-experienced individuals.

Overall, making care experience a protected characteristic would promote equitable equality by ensuring that laws, policies and practices are scrutinised to avoid discrimination and promote inclusion of care-experienced individuals, thus recognising and addressing their specific needs and challenges.

5. Symmetrical Models of Protected Characteristics

In our discussions on protected characteristics, it is vital to understand the difference between symmetrical and non-symmetrical protections against discrimination. Symmetrical models refer to those in which protection applies to all individuals who in some way have that identity.

For example, protections against age and religion or belief discrimination are provided symmetrically. Different age groups are protected equally under the Equality Act – both young and old can be victims of age discrimination. Similarly, people with different religions and beliefs (and lacks thereof) are protected, meaning, for example, that individuals cannot lawfully be discriminated against because of their specific faith or because they choose not to follow a religion.

Social class is often debated as a potential candidate for symmetrical protection from discrimination. This is because, theoretically, individuals from all social classes - high, middle, and low - could face discrimination or bias based on their social status or background. However, making social class a protected characteristic raises complex challenges. For example, this might make positive measures to increase equality for those from lower social classes unlawful.

Applying this understanding, the idea of introducing social class as a protected characteristic in the Equality Act 2010 provokes contention. If protections against discrimination on the basis of social class were given symmetrically, those in higher social classes might claim discrimination when positive action is taken to reduce inequality for lower social classes. If protections are given non-symmetrically, some might see this as deeply unfair.

Understanding the symmetrical model is crucial in our ongoing discussions about expanding the definition of protected characteristics, highlighting the nuanced complexities we must navigate to achieve equitable equality. The recognition of these complexities informs our approach and reinforces the unique position of care experience as appropriate for non-symmetrical prohibitions against discrimination.

6. Section 158 & 159 of the Equality Act: A Strong Case for Care Experience

The Equality Act's Section 158 and 159 are cornerstones for fostering 'positive action'. These sections are designed to aid groups that are underrepresented, face unique hardships, or exhibit distinct needs.

Section 158, 'Positive Action', permits organisations to proactively engage with underrepresented groups, through measures such as targeted training programmes and encouragement of applications. Currently, this section applies to groups defined by existing protected characteristics such as race, gender, age, disability, and so on. For instance, employers can run leadership training specifically for women to address their underrepresentation in leadership roles, or host work preparation programmes for young people with disabilities.

Section 159, 'Positive Action in Recruitment and Promotion', offers employers the possibility to favour an individual with a protected characteristic over another candidate of equal qualification, if the employer reasonably believes that individuals with that characteristic are underrepresented or disadvantaged. An example here might be an employer selecting a candidate from a racial minority group over another equally qualified candidate if that racial group is underrepresented within the organisation.

If 'care experience' were to be recognized as a protected characteristic, it would align well with the provisions of Sections 158 and 159. Non-symmetrical protection would allow for targeted policies to be developed without fear of disadvantaging another group. For instance, employers could offer internships specifically for care-experienced individuals to help them gain a foothold in the job market, or housing providers could prioritise care leavers in their allocation policies.

In the realm of recruitment and promotion, care-experienced individuals could be prioritised when they are equally qualified with other candidates, helping to redress any past disadvantage and underrepresentation they might have faced.

The inclusion of care experience as a protected characteristic under the Equality Act would not only align with the existing framework of positive action embodied in Sections 158 and 159, but would also open new possibilities for proactive measures to improve outcomes for this underrepresented and disadvantaged group.

7. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010:

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, known as the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), requires public authorities to consider how their policies, practices, and decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act. It mandates that public authorities must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different groups.

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are a practical tool that helps public authorities to meet the requirements of the PSED. Through EIAs, authorities can systematically assess the likely or actual effects of their policies, practices, or decisions on different groups, particularly those with protected characteristics. EIAs enable public bodies to ensure that their actions do not inadvertently discriminate against certain groups and that they actively promote equality where possible.

In essence, EIAs are integral to fulfilling the obligations of Section 149. They help in analysing the potential impact of a proposed policy or action, ensuring that public authorities take into account the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations. By employing EIAs, public authorities are better equipped to make informed decisions that align with the aims and obligations of the PSED as outlined in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

Regarding mental health services, care-experienced individuals face disruption as they often move, losing their place in waiting lists, and have to face the stark transition from child to adult services at 18. Under Section 149, mental health providers could be encouraged to offer more adaptable services that ensure continuity of care, taking into account that brain development continues until around 25.

Access to primary healthcare, including GPs and dentists, is crucial. Care-experienced individuals are often deregistered when they move, making access to birth control and other medical services difficult. PSED could facilitate the creation of flexible registration and service models for this group, making sure they are not disproportionately disadvantaged.

The emotional impact of care-experienced individuals receiving redacted care records can be devastating. Seeing their history, even photographs, being redacted elicits feelings of unworthiness and erasure. PSED could motivate the Information Commissioner to issue specific guidelines for redaction and data protection, focused on the emotional well-being of care-experienced individuals.

Police forces need to re-evaluate how they respond to incidents in care homes when dealing with care experienced people. Under PSED, they could use Equality Impact Assessments to analyse their policies critically. For example, if a child in a care home slams a door, breaking it, is it proportionate for them to be taken to a police station, compared to the handling of similar incidents in family homes?

There are various check lists that Local Authorities promote to determine whether the police need to be called, but this is not systemic, having a protected characteristic would mean the Police force and Crown Prosecution Service has to consider this issue by law, which in turn would also reduce wasted time and better increased awareness.

Considering housing, care-experienced individuals might need to move to new areas for a fresh start, especially if they are targeted by criminal groups. Section 149 could be utilised to ensure that local connection rules do not hinder their ability to relocate, similar to provisions for those fleeing domestic violence.

Housing associations should also reassess policies regarding eviction. When care leavers experience 'cuckooing', where their property is taken over by gangs for criminal activities, they shouldn't be labelled as 'intentionally homeless'. Under PSED, housing associations could be urged to develop policies that recognise the vulnerability of care leavers and provide them support instead of eviction.

Finally, Section 149 can be influential in reshaping community infrastructure policies, including the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 agreements with developers. It could facilitate obligations for developers to contribute towards housing for care leavers, create repair and maintenance schemes, and provide extensions for foster carers. This would not only foster community support but also provide stability and resources desperately needed by care-experienced individuals.

In conclusion, by actively engaging with Section 149, public authorities have the potential to enact transformative changes that address the unique challenges faced by care-experienced individuals. This would go a long way in ensuring that these individuals are supported, empowered, and given the opportunities they need to thrive.

8. Part 1 “The Socio-Economic Duty”

The Socio-Economic Duty, laid out in Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010, requires specific public authorities to take into account the impact of their decisions on socio-economic inequalities. This means that when making decisions of a strategic nature about how to exercise their functions, these public authorities are obligated to consider how such decisions might help to reduce the inequalities associated with socio-economic status.

This part of the Act is particularly pertinent when considering the broader context of social class. For care-experienced individuals, their challenges often intersect with issues of socio-economic disadvantage. The Socio-Economic Duty can serve as a legislative means of ensuring that the needs and challenges faced by care-experienced individuals, which are often exacerbated by socio-economic factors, are considered in the decision-making processes of public authorities.

Part 1 of the Equality Act has not been enacted in England, but Scotland and Wales have taken steps to enact this Duty, highlighting their commitment to reducing socio-economic inequalities.

9. Government response

On the recommendation set out in the Independent review of children's social care;

“Government should make care experience a protected characteristic, following consultation with care experienced people and the devolved administrations”.

However, in its response the government said. “We have carefully considered the recommendation to make ‘care experience’ a protected characteristic. There are significant concerns in the sector that self-declaration of care experience could increase stigma. We will not be taking forward this recommendation at this time and will prioritise our proposals to extend corporate parenting responsibilities, which we believe will be more impactful in driving real change in the way in which policies and services are designed and delivered to take account of the challenges that care leavers face.”

We feel that the Government should create an information campaign, consult with the devolved nations care experienced people about this, which we feel is the civil rights issue of our time. So far the government has not been able to produce any evidence of ‘Significant Concerns in the sector’ despite continually asking.

At the very least Care Experience people deserve to be heard.

10. Extending Corporate Parenting

As already mentioned previously the government accepted this recommendation by the care review and is now consulting on their proposals. We support wholeheartedly the concept of extending corporate parenting across other public bodies and anticipate that the government may strengthen them to reduce stigma and discrimination.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 Section 1 introduced the seven Corporate Parenting Principals. These principals also extended to lower tier district councils and combined authorities in England.

Well-being, to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of children and young people.

Voice, to encourage those children and young people to express their views wishes and feelings.

Heard, to take into account the views wishes and feelings of those children and young people.

Aspirational, to promote high aspirations and seek to secure the best outcomes for those children and young people.

Equality of Opportunity, to help those children and young people gain access to and make the best use of services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.

Relationships, for those children and young people to be safe and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work.

Preparing for Adulthood, to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 in England made significant strides in extending support for care leavers. A key provision of the Act was the introduction of local authority Personal Advisers for care leavers up to the age of 25, regardless of whether they are in education or training.

Prior to this legislation, support was more limited and often ceased when a young person turned 21 unless they were in education or training. Personal Advisers are tasked with assisting care leavers in various aspects of their life, including education, employment, and housing.

The extension of this support via the Children and Social Work Act 2017 acknowledged the challenges care leavers face in transitioning to adulthood and aimed to ensure that they have continued guidance and assistance during this critical period.

However, before the Children and Social Work Act 2017, Scotland had introduced The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 which had already extended the age range of individuals eligible for support, meaning that young people leaving care could receive continued support up until the age of 26. This recognised that support needs do not end abruptly when young people leave care.

The Scottish Corporate Parenting Principals as set out by Section 58 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and are set out below. These were in legislation 3 years before similar provisions were introduced in England.

These are the corporate parenting responsibilities in Scotland

(a) to be alert to matters which, or which might, adversely affect the wellbeing of children and young people to whom this Part applies,

(b) to assess the needs of those children and young people for services and support it provides,

(c) to promote the interests of those children and young people,

(d) to seek to provide those children and young people with opportunities to participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing,

(e) to take such action as it considers appropriate to help those children and young people

(i) to access opportunities, it provides in pursuance of paragraph (d), and

(ii) to make use of services, and access support, which it provides, and

(f) to take such other action as it considers appropriate for the purposes of improving the way in which it exercises its functions in relation to those children and young people.

However, The Children and Young People (Scotland) 2014 Act had Section 56, Schedule 4 which extended Corporate Parenting in Scotland to include a wider range of public bodies. It represented a significant development in the support provided to care-experienced individuals by bringing in other public bodies.

Corporate parenting in Scotland essentially refers to the collective responsibility of public bodies to provide the necessary support to children and young people in care to ensure their well-being, safety, and development, much like a responsible parent would. The aim is to improve the life chances and outcomes for children and young people in care.

Schedule 4 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 defined who were Corporate Parents.

SCHEDULE 4

Corporate parents in Scotland

1 The Scottish Ministers	13 The Scottish Social Services Council
2 A local authority	14 The Scottish Sports Council
3 The National Convener of Children’s Hearings Scotland	15 The chief constable of the Police Service of Scotland
4 Children’s Hearings Scotland	16 The Scottish Police Authority
5 The Principal Reporter	17 The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
6 The Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration	18 The Scottish Legal Aid Board
7 A health board	19 The Commissioner for Children and Young People in Scotland
8 A board constituted under section 2(1)(b) of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978	20 The Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland
9 Healthcare Improvement Scotland	21 The Scottish Housing Regulator
10 The Scottish Qualifications Authority	22 Bòrd na Gàidhlig
11 Skills Development Scotland Co. Ltd (registered number SC 202659)	23 Creative Scotland
12 Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland	24 A body which is a “post-16 education body” for the purposes of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005

When legislation was introduced across England in 2017, the government chose not to extend corporate parenting to other public bodies like had been done in Scotland. There was an exception however, and that was that district councils and combined authorities would for the first time, also have corporate parenting duties and they would have to create ‘Local offer for care leavers’ which meant they must publish information about services which the local authority offers for care leavers as a result of its functions under the Children Act 1989 and other services which the local authority offers that may assist care leavers in, or in preparing for, adulthood and independent living.

Despite district councils being designated as corporate parents under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 Section 1, there remains a postcode lottery of support available to care leavers. The quality and extent of the support often hinge on the local authority from which the young person comes, and in many cases, it is conditional.

Worryingly, when we consulted with the district councils in 2021 whilst creating the www.careleaveroffer.co.uk website about their corporate parenting duties, only 12% acknowledged having such responsibilities, despite this being enshrined in law. This illustrates a glaring disconnect and a lack of awareness or acknowledgement among many district councils.

The government are now moving forward with implementing an extension of corporate parenting to other public bodies, we think this is a good thing as it could bolster awareness and potentially augment the resources available to aid young people in transitioning to adulthood.

Extending corporate parenting principles to other public bodies beyond local authorities can lead to a more comprehensive and integrated approach to supporting children in care and care leavers. When various agencies work together in a coordinated manner, it helps in utilising resources more efficiently and ensuring that children in care receive the support they need in various aspects of their lives.

11. Extending Corporate Parenting Responsibilities Without Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic

This approach primarily involves extending Corporate Parenting Responsibilities to other public bodies. It focuses on the well-being, voice, aspirations, equal opportunities, stable relationships, and preparation for adulthood of care-experienced individuals.

Positive Aspects:

- **Increased Collaboration:** Encourages collaboration among public bodies to address the needs of care-experienced individuals.

Limitations:

- **Inconsistent Implementation:** Without care experience as a protected characteristic, there is no legal mandate, and implementation is likely to be inconsistent.
- **Dependence on Dedicated Personnel:** The focus on care-experienced individuals may remain within specialised teams or individuals, rather than being integrated throughout an organisation.
- **Lack of Familiarity Outside Social Care:** Those outside of social care might not be familiar with corporate parenting responsibilities and may not engage with them effectively.

12. Extending Corporate Parenting Responsibilities With Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic

Recognising care experience as a protected characteristic in conjunction with extending Corporate Parenting Responsibilities ensures legal backing and integrates the support for care-experienced individuals into existing mechanisms that public bodies are already familiar with.

Positive Aspects:

- **Utilisation of Established Mechanisms:** By integrating care experience into Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and Equality Impact Assessments, which have been in place since 2010, organisations and public bodies can use established mechanisms. This makes it more accessible for those outside of social care who are already familiar with these processes.
- **Organisation-wide Responsibility:** As a protected characteristic, the responsibility to support care-experienced individuals becomes an intrinsic part of an organisation's culture and decision-making process. It is no longer relegated to specialised teams but is a responsibility that permeates all levels of an organisation.
- **Legal Obligation Ensures Consistency:** The legal obligations associated with protected characteristics ensure that public bodies must systematically and consistently consider the needs and rights of care-experienced individuals. This guarantees a uniform approach across different regions and organisations.
- **Equitable Policy Development:** The incorporation of care experience into Equality Impact Assessments means that when policies are being developed or reviewed, the specific needs and challenges faced by care-experienced individuals must be considered. This results in more equitable policies that proactively address inequalities.
- **Enhanced Cross-Departmental Collaboration:** In local authorities, government departments and other organisations this approach would ensure better cross-departmental collaboration, as all departments would be legally required to consider care experience in their policies and decision-making processes.

Limitations:

- **Increased Administrative Oversight:** Compliance with legal obligations may require additional administrative oversight.

In summary, recognising care experience as a protected characteristic is a transformative approach. It not only enshrines the support for care-experienced individuals in law but also integrates this support into established mechanisms that public bodies are already familiar with. This ensures that supporting care-experienced individuals is not an add-on, but a fundamental aspect of policy development and decision-making. The approach guarantees that policies are developed with equity in mind, ensuring that care-experienced individuals have the support and opportunities they need to thrive.

13. The Campaign to make Care Experience a Protected Characteristic

On 15th March 2022 Liberal Democrat Cllr Tammy Palmer proposed a motion at Haringey Council asking her to support the campaign. The campaign was about persuading the then Chair of the English Independent Review of Children's social care that he should recommend to government in his final recommendations that the UK become the first country in the world to make "Care Experience a Protected Characteristic" and that Corporate Parenting should be extended to all public bodies.

"I was put in completely unsuitable and unsafe accommodation," she said, detailing struggles with bullying at school, loneliness and self-harm.

"I heard throughout my childhood from adults that I would fail. The expectations for me were very low," Palmer added, "I am here today as a grown woman with a career, a home, a family, the things that I thought people like me couldn't have."

"You think those perceptions and stereotypes might have changed throughout my life, but they really haven't. Recently I heard a group of individuals talking about some looked-after children that might be coming to live near them, saying 'we don't want kids like that here, they'll be into drink and drugs, they'll smash our car windows, they'll put a brick through the house windows, we don't want those kinds of kids near our kids'," she said.

Cllr Tammy Palmer (Lib Dem)

Following that speech Cllr Seem Chanwani (Labour) also disclosed her care experience and the motion was carried unanimously.

Recommendations of the Care Review

The care review did indeed make the recommendations we were asking for in respect of Protected Characteristics and an Extension of Corporate Parenting to all public bodies.

On 27th July 2022 Cllr Emma Williamson (Labour) at the new Unitary Authority proposed the first motion in the UK that meant her council would voluntarily adopt Protected Characteristics for Care Experienced People.

Since then, there have been 29 councils in England and 2 in Scotland that have passed similar motions. These motions also call on partners to introduce Protected Characteristics and introduce Corporate Parenting across their organisations.

In most cases these motions have gone through unanimously and no-one has voted against them except for the Conservative group of 9 at Westmorland and Furness Council on 29th September 2022 and the Conservative grouping of 11 at Edinburgh Council abstaining. Both conservative groupings were very small minorities on those councils, so each motion was carried overwhelmingly by all other parties and independents.

Since the Local Elections of 2023 several local authorities are in pipeline of bringing these motions to their own councils over the next few months.

These are the 31 councils that have passed the motions so far:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Cumberland (29/07/2022) | 16. Lancashire (23/02/2023) |
| 2. Westmorland and Furness (28/09/2022) | 17. Doncaster (27/02/2023) |
| 3. Ashfield District Council (29/09/2022) | 18. Telford and Wrekin (02/03/2023) |
| 4. Manchester (05/10/2022) | 19. Newark and Sherwood (09/03/2023) |
| 5. Redcar and Cleveland (13/10/2022) | 20. Bradford City Council (14/03/2023) |
| 6. Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (14/12/2022) | 21. Southampton (15/03/2023) |
| 7. Edinburgh (24/11/2022) | 22. Salford City Council (15/03/2023) |
| 8. Wigan (07/12/2022) | 23. Oldham Council (15/03/2023) |
| 9. Nottingham (10/01/2023) | 24. Trafford Council (15/03/2023) |
| 10. Southend on sea Borough Council (12/01/2023) | 25. Plymouth City Council (27/03/2023) |
| 11. Nottinghamshire (19/01/2023) | 26. North Ayrshire (29/03/2023) |
| 12. Sefton (19/01/2023) | 27. Birmingham City Council (18/04/2023) |
| 13. Lambeth (25/01/2023) | 28. Ealing (25/04/2023) |
| 14. Sunderland Council (25/01/2023) | 29. Waltham (27/04/2023) |
| 15. London borough of Sutton (20/02/2023) | 30. Cambridgeshire County Council (16/05/2023) |
| | 31. Somerset Council (24/05/2023) |

In the councils listed above at the time these motions went through there were 1,991 council members representing 11,665,985 people and 17.97% of the UK population (excluding NI)

Total number of Councillors		
Labour		1,004
Conservative		455
Liberal Democrat		291
Independent		162
Green		48
SNP		31
	Total	1,991

Nation	No represented	% of Population
England	10,000,985	19.54%
Scotland	666,000	12.19%
Wales	0	0.00%
Total Population	10,666,985	17.97%

These motions have been proposed by Labour, Liberal Democrat, Green Party and Independents. In the main conservative groupings have also been supporting these motions with some fantastic speeches calling on more to be done.

Who has proposed these motions?		
Labour		20
Liberal Democrat		5
Independent		2
SNP		2
Green Party		1
Youth Council		1
	Total	31

Political Control of these councils?		
Labour		18
Liberal Democrat		5
Conservative		3
No Overall Control (NOC)		3
SNP		1
Independent		1
	Total	31

We have been asking that councils use this as their model motion. One council has passed a motion that did not have the words “**Will treat care experience as if it were a Protected Characteristic**” so it has not been counted in these figures.

This is the model motion:

That this Council **will treat care experience as if it were a Protected Characteristic** so that future services and policies made and adopted by the Council should be assessed through Equality Impact Assessments to determine the impact of changes on people with care experience, alongside those who formally share a Protected Characteristic;

that in the delivery of the **Public Sector Equality Duty** the Council includes care experience in the publication and review of Equality Objectives and the annual publication of information relating to people who share a Protected Characteristic in services and employment.

to formally call upon all **other bodies to treat care experience as a Protected Characteristic** until such time as it may be introduced by legislation.

to formally **call upon all other bodies to adopt corporate parenting** for children in care and care leavers until such time as it may be introduced by legislation.

for the Council to proactively **seek out and listen to the voices of care experienced** people when developing new policies based on their views.

14. The impact of the young people on this campaign

There have been some fantastic speeches in these councils in support of protected characteristics for care experienced people. It has been a pleasure speaking at councils myself and listening to Councillors across the country argue for things to change for care experienced people. This is a movement which is growing every day.

Right from the beginning I wanted to create a movement that could get systemic change for care experienced people so that they did not have to go through what me and my family did as we went through the care system.

But I also wanted to empower young people to use their voice for change, but be part of that change and witness it in a way that inspires them to become changemakers of the future.

In the early part of this campaign, I travelled the length and breadth of our great United Kingdom campaigning for councils to adopt these motions. I’ve spoken at many council meetings; I get nervous every time and when you listen back to those speeches you can really tell. But I’ve done this in the hope that others join this campaign and that they too start bringing motions and speaking at council meetings so that we gain the critical mass that this campaign needs.

I’m care experienced and I have been through so much trauma. I do not speak for all care experienced people because we are such a diverse group of people, and all our experiences are so different. But what I can say is that we are suffering and what unites us is that we need change.

During this campaign I've met many young people who are breaking my heart. They are telling me about the discrimination, prejudice, and trauma they are facing, and it resonates with me, it drives me on because this must stop.

This report is going to be handed to Dame Rachel De Souza on 14th June 2023 when we meet in London with a group of Care Experienced individuals that have contributed to this campaign in so many ways. They have spoken at their own local councils about the trauma they have been through and the change they want. They have driven their local councils to pass these motions.

Many have been in tears, Councillors up and down the country have cried and, in some cases, had to postpone their meetings because emotions have got overwhelming for politicians. I can't stop crying because the impact these young people are making for care experienced people everywhere cannot be understated and when I hear their voice it hits me like a sledgehammer.

15. Youth Voice and empowerment

As you will see from the model motion above there is a paragraph that resolves; "for the Council to proactively **seek out and listen to the voices of care experienced** people when developing new policies based on their views.

Oldham council is committed to this principal and is the only council in the UK that has within the standing orders of it's constitution provisions that empower its youth council to bring motions that are important to them.

In those councils that have passed the Protected Characteristics motion for Care Experienced People I'd like to recommend that they empower their youth councils in the same way. When we created the www.careleaveroffer.co.uk website I asked every council if it had a children in care council and if that council had it's own constitution, its own budget and its own bank account.

None of the councils had a constitution for their children in care councils, nor a budget, nor a bank account. At the time I was hugely disappointed as I'd been a participant at the Krakow Conference helping to revise the European Charter on The Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life and I knew Children in Care Councils across the country were perceived to be very tokenistic. I believed they needed their own constitution and budget to effect change and be truly independent.

However, it took a conversation with a care experienced individual at Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to make me reflect to a deeper understanding of stigma and equality. We were discussing how she would not have liked to have declared her care experience to get privileges to get her job. My go to was that no one ever must declare their care experience as part of Protected Characteristics. It's a personal choice.

During my explanation I talked about people with disabilities not having to declare when using services because they were designed around them, such as a ramp entering a doctor's surgery. A person with mobility constraints could go up the ramp in a wheelchair without having to identify as disabled. And at a crossing in the road, a person with sight impairment would be able to use a crossing by listening to it bleep rather than watch it flash without telling everyone.

My point has always been that equitable equality and accessibility must change; it must get to a point where people can use these services without the need to declare anything, the design takes account of those with protected characteristics so there is no need to declare anything.

That gets me thinking about Oldham Borough Council and its unique position of having within its constitution youth voice. Before we talk about that lets discuss the legalities of what has happened at Oldham. There is a standing item within its constitution of 20 minutes for the youth council to speak and bring motions. The constitution also puts in place a youth mayor and deputy with specific duties across the year.

The format is well developed and allowed for Precious, 13, care experienced young person to bring the motion to Oldham Borough Council as the children in care council is affiliated to the Youth Council who have those rights within the constitution.

When we break this down we are really talking about equitable equality because utilising a Youth Council with rights under a constitution and a Children in Care Council accessing those rights under the umbrella of the Youth Council can be described as an example of equitable equality.

- **Equality Aspect:** The Youth Council, with its rights under a constitution, provides a platform for all young individuals to have a say in matters that affect them. This is the equality aspect, where every young person, irrespective of their background or circumstances, has the same access to this platform.
- **Equity Aspect:** The Children in Care Council represents children who are in care and might have specific needs and challenges due to their circumstances. By creating a Children in Care Council under the umbrella of the Youth Council, the organisation acknowledges that children in care may need additional support or a more tailored approach to effectively participate and voice their concerns. This represents the equity aspect.

In effect, the organisation is ensuring equal access to participation (equality) whilst also providing the support needed to make this participation meaningful and effective for those with specific challenges (equity).

Additionally, by focusing on care-experienced individuals as a protected group and addressing their specific needs through this framework, a precedent is set for acknowledging and accommodating the diverse needs of all young people. This approach is essentially about individualised support and ensuring equal opportunities for all. The attention to care-experienced young people's needs can foster an inclusive and supportive culture within the organisation, which can extend to accommodate the varying needs of all youths. Therefore, through equitable equality, not only are the rights and needs of care-experienced individuals being addressed, but a more inclusive and empathetic environment is being cultivated for the benefit of all young people.

For councils across the UK that have passed motions regarding protected characteristics, particularly focusing on care-experienced individuals, it is strongly recommended to consider adopting Youth Council structures akin to those established by Oldham Borough Council. This approach aligns seamlessly with the essence of the motion, which is "for the Council to proactively seek out and listen to the voices of care-experienced people when developing new policies based on their views."

By integrating care-experienced young people within a wider Youth Council, councils can create an environment that is inherently geared towards proactively seeking and valuing the input of care-experienced individuals. Oldham's model has proven to be effective in not only enhancing youth participation but also ensuring equitable equality for those with care experience. In this structure, care-experienced individuals can receive tailored support that enables them to participate alongside their peers actively and effectively. This inclusive approach not only serves to reduce the stigma associated with being in care but also facilitates a richer understanding of the diverse perspectives within the youth community.

Adopting such a structure can become a powerful conduit for councils to meaningfully engage with care-experienced young people, fostering a culture of inclusivity and responsiveness that is in perfect harmony with the principles laid down in the motion regarding protected characteristics. This holistic approach to youth engagement empowers care-experienced individuals to have their voices heard and ensures that the development of new policies is informed by the lived experiences and insights of those directly impacted. Councils across the UK would be taking a significant and progressive stride towards more inclusive, equitable, and responsive policymaking by embracing this model.

16. Young people's speeches

Oldham Borough Council

Precious is a child in care aged 13. She stood side by side with Penelope to deliver a speech at Oldham Borough Council that blew me away. She has this message for those reading this report.

“The motion I gave for care experience to become a protected characteristic on behalf of Oldham’s Children in Care Council is so important to me; not only me, but to my peers who are also walking in the same shoes. We are encouraged to use our platform to talk, to share our experience but what happens after this? Our voices are only truly heard when we can see the action that our words make. To be able to address the stigma that can have negative impacts on our lives will only measure up when it is openly discussed, and real change is implemented for all young people. As mentioned in our motion, that despite the resilience of many care experienced people, society too often does not take their needs into account and can lead to discrimination and stigma across housing, health, education, relationships, employment and in the criminal justice system. It’s time to make a change.”

Precious

Penelope is not Care Experienced but she stood side by side with Precious to deliver a joint speech. Penelope wants to galvanise all Youth Councils across the UK to propose these motions.

As the current Vice-Chair of Oldham Youth Council, I feel privileged that we can constitutionally take a motion to our local council here in Oldham and take forward subjects that are important to its young people. We were inspired and motivated to support our very own Children in Care Council to champion care experience to be included in the list of protected characteristics. We feel it is imperative to speak and advocate for the needs and wants of ALL young people including those who are care experienced; to ensure they equally receive the same opportunities in work, education, and life as non-care experienced people; We are all young people first.

Penelope

Doncaster Council

"I would like to share with you my experience of feeling stigmatised and discriminated against. This has been especially apparent throughout my time in school and college. I never felt supported by teachers, I have always felt left out, uninvited, and excluded. I have always felt like I never fitted in because I had corporate parents and not parents!

I was even told more than once by other children at school that I was not loved by my parents because I was in care. I was never invited to birthday parties, to sleepovers, and I felt this keenly. This was damaging and debilitating for me and I know will stay with me for a lifetime. The people that have discriminated against me are the next generation and if they continue to think that it is ok to treat people that way then things will never change, and they have to. They just have to."

Rebecca 18, Care Leaver, part of the 'Hear us out' group, lived in foster care, children's homes and is now in semi-independent.

My name is Fay and I am also going to share some experiences with you. It's not easy to speak out about this, but it is important. I have had a few health issues and some of these have been around my mental health. I remember when I had to go to A&E to be treated for an injury and as soon as it was mentioned that I was a care experienced person attending with carers from my children's home I was ushered into a room that is used for prisoners! It was hurtful and unnecessary and left me feeling degraded and pretty rubbish about myself at a time when what I really needed was care and support. It's not right to make a person feel so devalued and it feels very unfair.

I also remember a time when I was being interviewed for a job, I felt the interview was going really well and I mentioned that I had grown up in care. The reaction was immediate, the look on the interviewers' face, the temperature dropped! I knew I had made a mistake in telling them and I knew I was not getting the job! I had been encouraged never to be ashamed, that being in care was not my fault. But that is not how other people think, even today in 2023 care carries a stigma. It's hard, and it's humiliating, and it's misunderstood by so many. It needs to change, and we would like you to help us.

Fay, 17, Care Leaver, part of 'Hear us out' group, lived in children's homes and is now in semi supported accommodation.

On the motion passing "Today was emotional, quite heartfelt, it really touched me. It was nice to see cllrs coming forward about their own experience of being in care. Nice to know we are not alone.

I love my boy so much but during and after pregnancy I felt so much discrimination. In hospital after having given birth, when I mentioned about being a care leaver, I felt them judging me, checking me out, they made me feel like I should be a super mum and that I could not ask for help because otherwise I'd have my child taken away.

During my pregnancy not a single person said congratulations other than other care experienced people or my friends."

Danielle 19, Care Leaver, part of 'Hear us out' group, lived in foster care and now has her own child.

Waltham Forest

There were times when I was placed in care homes and I felt that I was treated differently because of things like having personal conversation about my private in the presence of others including young people. I would be laughed at if I did not speak English properly and was not supported to say what I wanted to say and this would leave me feeling anxious and cautious about sharing any further information with me.

I am of the view this left me feeling pushed behind and I did not progress in areas of education and my general health and relationships. This has left me feeling whether I am accepted by others or not.

It has taken me a lot of confidence and time to rebuild myself and I have now started University at the age of 25yrs.

I would want the Protected Characteristic to help young people access services for Mental health without having to wait long queues.

Madina Sahag, Care Leaver

Coming into care I was 16 years of age till then I was living with my mother so I saw the change in behaviour in teachers/peers once becoming section 20. My traumas and pain was treated like an excuse more than a problem, my first year of college I remember having my first pep meeting, the college was coming down on me hard for my assignments and attendance, my key worker/social worker continued to defend me. I don't come home to cooked meals or clean clothes I am 16 with the responsibilities of an adult and it's not a choice I made. In second year of college my teacher would call parents and warn them about me being in care, it wasn't for her to share and I don't have any behavioural issues so it's hurtful to think someone could section me out just because of mistakes my parents made. Students see it as a Tracy beaker home or you must've been kicked out for being bad. Not many people take the time to think it was the parents fault and they don't consider how much we could've learnt and grown if we had safe spaces growing up. When it came to housing it's hard to get in contact with them and they aren't understanding to the overwhelming feeling of calling waiting for hours then hearing it'll be fixed next week for someone to never come.

I would want the housing team to support us with repairs and take us seriously.

Maria Kiyanimehr, Care Leaver

I felt the tone was rude when I said I was a care leaver, they check that I was doing all the things necessary to qualify for Universal credit. I felt that the support was limited and they did not explore what career or aspirations I had for the future it felt like a tick box exercise. It felt the staff had made their mind that I would not achieve much.

I got little if any support from them to get into my current role as Front of house member at the Victoria and Albert Museum. My other experience is when I was nominated for my social housing and was offered "one offer", I felt this was not suitable for me because of the size/layout of the home.

The Housing officer placed me under stress and pressured me into making a decision and I felt put on the spot and was made to feel that I should be grateful for the offer. If I don't accept the one offer than I would lose this opportunity of social housing which I feel is unfair. I am of the view that care experienced young people should at least get two offers and be able to view the home or have photographs before bidding for the home to make an informed decision about their future home.

I want to be able to have a choice as a care leaver and would like this in respect of housing from the "protected characteristic" motion.

Ridwan Omar, Care Leaver

Cambridgeshire County Council

Care experience is often misunderstood. The first words that are usually said to me once I tell somebody that I was in foster care, are 'you mean like Tracey Beaker'? Followed by a long, awkward pause. Of course, it is understandable why people react like this given the presentation of us in the media alone. It's enough to scare anyone, and this is without the added mystery and misconceptions of being taken out of class regularly to meet with a social worker, or police, or support staff – all of which the system requires. Combine this with outcomes for children in care and it doesn't look great. But we need to shift our perspectives. It's common for these children to have experienced trauma, neglect, separation from siblings and family and moved all over the country. As a child. It's important to remember this; that these are vulnerable children.

I'm one of the lucky ones actually. I get to sit here and tell my story; but I have a job, next week I will be graduating from a fantastic University, and I have the unconditional love and support of both of my foster parents. I'm often told I "Made it out". But every day, I struggle with the label of being in care. I face decisions none of my peers face. To choose to leave my family behind as they did not support my decision to attend university. To work multiple jobs alongside my degree to get me through. To even get to university I had to car hop to attend open days – which already made me feel like I didn't belong. When I made it to University, I had to learn how to maintain friendships even how to write an essay – because I had never been anywhere long enough to learn these skills.

In 3 months, I will have no home, no job, no degree course and there is an expectation I will know what to do. To start this process of transitioning into the real-world, I am interviewing for jobs. I of course, value the work that I do with children in care; and as a result, my CV reflects this because of my work with fostering charities, and my roles outside of university, and of course, my own background. But this is not shared by employers. When employers find out about my care experience, I often have questions about what it means. Funnily enough, they do not like to hear that you were abused and traumatised as a child and put into this "dumping ground" filled with other vulnerable children. Despite the achievements I have made since and the resilience I have continuously shown. This isn't just employers – it stands with friendships and relationships too. It affects all areas of my life. But of course, these are few examples.

It often feels like I have to find something to say to justify this upbringing and why I deserve to live a normal life.

So, for those reasons alone, the recognition and understanding of what care experience is, is significant. Often these children feel alone, they've often been left without connections, networks, skills and opportunities – all of which are needed in order to have a chance at life. Policy such as this, is the only way for this to even begin to change. Recognising that this group is disadvantaged is one thing. But recognising that this group is also discriminated against, is another. Whilst we cannot undo the disadvantage, and take away this trauma, ensuring these children are considered and prevented from further discrimination when it comes to policy and decision-making, is a positive starting point for change. It is a wonder that this action has not been taken already.

This is an opportunity for Cambridgeshire to be at the forefront of innovative thinking and change, which in my experience and understanding, has not been the case in the past. Whether its data gathering, engagement in virtual schools, campaigning or even simply a social media post – I have seen efforts from many local authorities in care experienced matters... but never my own. What we are doing, is not enough. It is my hope that with this motion, we can begin to move forward, improve understanding around care experience and ensure future policy is made that considers a group which for too long has been disregarded.

Elle Johnson 23, Care Leaver

We invite you to join us in this crucial endeavour.

The change starts with us. Together, we can make a difference.



Twitter @terrygalloway

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

19 September 2023

**Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education:
Councillor Fiona Baker**

Report Title	Procurement and Implementation of Education Services Case Management System
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Report Author	Tony Challinor, Assistant Director Commissioning and Partnerships tony.challinor@westnorthants.gov.uk
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List of Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	23/08/2023
Chief Finance Officer (S.151)	Martin Henry	23/08/2023
Other Director	Stuart Lackenby, Executive Director of People Services Ben Pearson, Assistant Director Education Gus De Silva, Head of Procurement Chris Wales, Chief Information Officer	23/08/2023
Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	23/08/2023

List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The current contract with Capita One to provide a Case Management System (CMS) for Education Services ends in March 2024, the Council therefore requires approval to proceed with the procurement of an Education Services CMS for West Northamptonshire Council (WNC).

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. WNC requires effective and efficient technology solutions for case management across Education Services, to enable the service to deliver against the Improved Life Chances council priority, ensuring children are given the best start in life and vulnerable children are supported and protected.
- 2.2. Education Services in WNC require a CMS which can be configured to suit the Council's business needs and can evolve over time with minimal disruption and cost.
- 2.3. The current system in use is Capita One Education which was procured before local government reorganisation and is contracted for use until 31st March 2024. There is therefore a risk that from April 2024 WNC could not fulfil statutory requirements relating to the provision of Education Services in West Northamptonshire because there would be no system in place to enable this.
- 2.4. This report outlines actions that can be taken to mitigate the above risk and costs associated with procuring and implementing a new Case Management System contract.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
 - a) Agrees to proceed with the procurement of a Case Management System for Education Services in WNC, at an estimated contract cost, including licences, hosting, and annual fee costs, of approximately £280,000 per annum for two years, as outlined in Section 7.
 - b) Approves the use of KCS Managed Services Businesses Solutions (Y20023)/ an appropriate framework to purchase the system to ensure compliance with the relevant procurement requirements.
 - c) Delegates authority to the Lead Member for Children, Families, Education and Skills, in liaison with the Executive Director of People Services, to take any further decisions and actions required to implement the Case Management System and award contracts in relation to this.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 Enable compliance with procurement and contract procedure rules.
- 4.2 The framework identified allows continuity of existing goods/services from an awarded supplier.
- 4.3 Allows further time to procure and implement a long-term CMS that is fit for purpose, robust and future-proof.
- 4.4 Addresses the risk in relation to timescales, as it is not feasible to conduct a full procurement and implementation plan for a replacement CMS before March 2024.
- 4.5 Enables continued delivery against the Improved Life Chances council priority area.

- 4.6 To ensure staff are confident and supported in the use of the CMS.
- 4.7 To ensure schools and families continue to be supported with minimal disruption.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 During August 2020 Northamptonshire County Council awarded the current contract to Capita Business Services (Capita) for the provision of an Education Services Case Management System (Capita One Education SaaS). The term of the contract ran to March 2021 with extension options until March 2024.
- 5.2 In December 2020 the contract was amended to novate the contract to North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) with WNC listed as an Affiliate as of April 2021 and extended to March 2024.
- 5.3 At this time work commenced to split the databases into NNC and WNC instances, ahead of the Northamptonshire Structural Changes Order 2019 replacing County, Borough, and District Councils with two new Unitary Councils, and moved to a Cloud hosted solution in keeping with the Council's Digital, Technology, and Innovation (DTI) strategy.
- 5.4 During December 2022, engagement has commenced with Education Services, Procurement, Legal and DTI to address the needs of the service to ensure a suitable CMS continues to be in place after March 2024. Currently the CMS supports the delivery of statutory and non-statutory duties of the following staff and teams:
- School Admissions and Place Planning
 - Appeals
 - Education Health & Care Team
 - SEND Support Service
 - Sensory Impairment Service
 - Virtual School
 - School Attendance Support Service
 - Attendance
 - Attainment
 - Penalty Notices
 - Exclusions
 - Elective Home Education
 - Children Missing in Education
 - Children in Entertainment & Employment
 - Education for Children Out of School (e.g., those with medical conditions that prevent school attendance)
 - Educational Psychology Service
 - Early Education & Childcare Advisory Services
 - Family Information Services/Directory
 - Free School Meals
 - Home to School Transport
 - Governors & Clerks

6. Issues and Choices

6.1 Other alternatives considered include:

6.2 To have no CMS for Education Services: This would not be a viable option that could be considered due to the delivery of statutory duties enabled by this system.

6.3 To explore alternative existing systems: There are no other case management software applications in use within the Council that could be utilised to meet the requirements of Education Services.

7. Implications

7.1 Resources and Financial

7.1.1 It is proposed that the new contract is awarded for one year with the ability to extend for a further year at the end of the contract period.

7.1.2 Current spend has been taken from invoicing documentation and is summarised below:

Annual Running Costs	Joint	WNC
Capita One Education Subscription	£454,394.47	£227,197.24
Training Instance	£12,599.50	£6,299.75
Total	£466,993.97	£233,496.99

7.1.3 The budget for the Education CMS is held by the Digital Technology and Innovation (DTI) Service.

7.1.4 Costs are projected to increase due to inflationary reasons; the table below outlines an estimated contract cost:

Year 1	Year 2	Overall Estimated Cost
£280,000.00	£280,000.00	£560,000.00

7.1.5 There are no anticipated implications on Capital budgets.

7.2 Legal

7.2.1 The current system contract was awarded under the Managed Services for Business Framework Agreement - Y16018 for the timeframe of 10th August 2020 to 31st March 2021. In December 2020 Northamptonshire County Council exercised the right to extend this to March 2024. This is the maximum extension allowable, and there is no further contractual entitlement to extend the term.

7.2.2 The Council has the power to procure the facilities and services pursuant to Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 (GPOC) and section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 (power to do things conducive or incidental to functions).

7.2.3 The estimated value of the contract means that any procurement will be subject to the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the Council's Contract Procedure rules. The Council's intention is to procure a Case Management System from an existing framework. This will provide a legally compliant route to tendering the requirement and provides an opportunity to reduce the time to conclude the tender process.

7.3 Risk

7.3.1 The current contract end date does not allow for the Council to conduct an open procurement process and implement a new CMS. The recommendation proposed allows for continuity of current provision with minimal disruption to services and allows for further time to complete a procurement process for a long-term CMS solution.

7.3.2 There is a significant risk of legal challenge from other providers of case management systems, however it should be noted that a further procurement process would commence in the interim period for a long-term CMS solution.

7.3.3 The costs included in this report are based on estimations and there is the possibility that there are increased costs for the ongoing licence costs however until the procurement activities commence this cannot be confirmed.

7.4 Consultation and Communications

7.4.1 In developing the proposals, the Council has consulted with Education Services colleagues as the primary users of the current CMS. There has also been engagement with the Digital, Technology and Innovation Service and Business Intelligence Service. A communications plan is being developed to ensure all stakeholders will be kept informed and engaged at key stages of project implementation.

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.5.1 This decision has not been considered by the Scrutiny Committee.

7.6 Climate Impact

7.6.1 Once a solution has been selected specific impacts can be assessed. However, one of the potential benefits of a CMS is a retention if not reduction in levels of staff travel, post and associated printing that occurs within the services, potentially leading to a positive impact in this area.

7.7 Community Impact

7.7.1 Helping to ensure children and young people are fully engaged with their Education can lead to positive effects on communities. Timely interventions that are informed and enabled through data collated in an effective CMS will prevent escalating issues for families and a negative impact on local communities.

8. Background Papers

8.1 There are no background papers



WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

19 September 2023

CABINET MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION - Councillor Fiona Baker

Report Title	Proposal for Hunsbury Park SEND (Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities) unit to operate in part from Chiltern Primary from October 2023
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Report Author	Shazia Umer, Head of Admissions and School Place Planning, Shazia.umer@westnorthants.gov.uk
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List of Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	23/08/2023
Chief Finance Officer (S.151)	Martin Henry	23/08/2023
Other Director	Ben Pearson Stuart Lackenby	07/09/2023
Communications Lead/Head of Communications	Craig Forsyth	23/08/2023

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Statutory Notice 22 June 2023

Proposal to expand and operate the Hunsbury Park SEND unit from an annex site at Chiltern Primary School.

Related links:

12 July Cabinet report to establish 50-place SEND unit

[Decision - Proposal to establish a 50 place Special Educational Needs & Disability \(SEND\) unit for pupils with a primary need of Autistic Spectrum Condition \(ASC\) at Hunsbury Park Primary School, Northampton - West Northamptonshire Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report seeks approval from Cabinet Members to:

Proceed with the creation of 55 additional places for primary aged children with an Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC), by expanding and operating the Hunsbury Park Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) unit from an annex site at Chiltern primary school as detailed in this report.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 A statutory consultation took place between 22 June 2023 and 19 July 2023, for part of the Hunsbury SEND unit to operate from Chiltern Primary school instead of the original plans for the entire unit to operate on the Hunsbury Park site from September 2023. The provision caters for primary age pupils who are in receipt of an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) with a primary need of ASC.

2.2 West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) originally established plans for a Hunsbury Park 50-place SEND Unit to be created in two phases. Phase 1 saw 20 places being delivered at Hunsbury Park Primary, for new pupils attending from September 2022 in years reception, 1 and 2 (KS1). However, due to construction constraints and a delayed delivery date, the remaining provision, which was planned as part of phase two for 30 places in years 3-6 (KS2), cannot be accommodated on the same site.

2.3 As a result, WNC has explored alternative options with sufficient spare accommodation having been identified at Chiltern Primary School, Northampton. This will enable the Hunsbury Park SEND unit to operate as an annex site at Chiltern and the increased space will allow for 45 new SEND places to be created. 30 KS2 places will be available for new children to start from Monday 2 October 2023 and a further 15 KS2 places will be created in time for new children to start from September 2024.

Operating part of the Hunsbury Park SEND unit at Chiltern primary will also enable a further 10 places to be created on the Hunsbury site as part of construction work due to be completed in January 2024. Overall, this will result in a total of 75 much needed new places being created during both phases – 25 above the original plans.

Table 1 - summary of changes to Hunsbury Park unit delivery

Original proposal	New proposal
50-place SEND unit at Hunsbury Park Primary to be delivered in two phases. First 20 places to be delivered from September 2022.	Hunsbury Park Primary site – key stage 1 places: Total places already delivered: 20 Total number of new places to be delivered by Jan 24 (subject to project delivery times) – 10 Total places: 30

Further 30 places to be delivered from September 2023.	Chiltern Primary site – key stage 2 places: Total new places being delivered by 2 Oct 2023 – 30 Total new places being delivered by Sept 2024 – 15 Total places: 45 Total planned new places: 75
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This report will provide a summary of all responses received during the period of consultation for the outlined proposal, following the publication of the following statutory notice - *Proposal to expand and operate the Hunsbury Park Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) unit from an annex site at Chiltern primary school. Please refer to appendix A.*

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- a) Approve the creation of 55 new Hunsbury Park SEND places, for children with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC) of which 45 places will operate from an annex site at Chiltern primary school, Northampton and a further 10 will be created on the Hunsbury Park site.
- b) Notes the responses received during the 4-week consultation period on the proposal

4. Reason for Recommendations (NOTE: this section is **mandatory** and **must be completed**)

4.1 The objective of this proposal is to ensure that the Council is able to fulfil its statutory obligation of providing a sufficiency of SEND places in West Northamptonshire.

4.2 The proposal will provide an increased number of SEND places and will help ensure that children with ASC are able to access education in a provision that is best placed to meet their individual needs.

4.3 The proposal can be considered to benefit all West Northamptonshire primary schools as it will reduce the need for mainstream school settings to provide places to children with additional needs, where that provision is not best placed to meet a child’s additional needs.

4.4 The recommended course of action will reduce pressure on the High Needs Block (HNB) element of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) via a reduction in the number of children being required to be placed in more expensive out of county and independent provisions to meet their individual needs.

5. Report Background

5.1 The earlier Cabinet reports of 3 May and 12 July (shown as appendices 2&3) set out the following:

- Current demand for specialist places within West Northamptonshire
- Future demand for specialist places in west Northampton shire
- Future projects to provide additional SEND places

- 5.2 All current specialist setting within the maintained school and academy sector that are in West Northamptonshire have reached or exceeded their capacity. As a result of this WNC has had to utilise independent and out of county specialist provision to ensure students in receipt of an Education Health Care (EHC) plan can access education and learning opportunities. Providing places in this way is more expensive and less cost effective than creating provision in local schools and academies.
- 5.3 This alternative option to create part of the Hunsbury Park unit on the Chiltern Primary school site will alleviate some of the forecasted and imminent pressure on SEND places.
- 5.4 A statutory consultation was undertaken on part of the Hunsbury SEND provision, operating from Chiltern Primary school instead of the original plans for the entire unit to operate solely on the Hunsbury Park site from September 2023. The provision caters for primary age pupils who are in receipt of an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) with ASC.
- 5.5 West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) originally established plans for a 50 place SEND Unit to be created at Hunsbury Park Primary School in two phases. Phase 1 caters for children in Key Stage 1 classes – Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. Phase 2 will cater for children in Key Stage 2 classes – Years 3 to 6.
- 5.6 In November last year, under Phase 1 of the project, a specialist unit creating 20 new places for key stage 1 children with ASD and Educational Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) was opened at Hunsbury Park Primary School. However, due to construction constraints and a delayed delivery date, the remaining provision of 30 places for Phase 2 cannot be accommodated on the same site.
- 5.7 As a result, WNC has explored alternative options with sufficient spare accommodation having been identified at Chiltern Primary School, Northampton. The unit at Chiltern Primary, which will cater for children in Key Stage 2, Years 3 to 6, will continue to be operated by Hunsbury Park Primary School and their specialist SEND staff, with plans to open fully from Monday 2 October 2023.
- 5.8 The additional 30 places will be achieved via the refurbishment of existing classrooms to provide a modern and fit for purpose teaching environment for new pupils. The scheme will also provide further bespoke outdoor learning facilities and dedicated specialist areas such as new hygiene rooms. The accommodation at Chiltern will also allow for an additional 15 places to be created from September 2024, taking the total number of places delivered under Phase 2 to 45.
- 5.9 Relocating Phase 2 to Chiltern primary will also enable a further 10 places to be created on the Hunsbury site as part of the first phase of work due to be completed in January 2024. Overall, this will result in a total of 75 much needed new places being created during both phases – 25 above the original plans.
- 5.10 The Council and Hunsbury Park Primary have been liaising closely with the schools and affected families who have been made aware of the proposals.

- 5.11 This proposal forms part of wider plans for Hunsbury Park Primary and Chiltern Primary to work more closely together in order to improve outcomes overall. Known as a ‘soft federation’ the arrangements will allow both schools to carry out some functions jointly, such as through joint committees and joint board meetings, with a focus on effective collaboration improving key strategic areas. The local authority is supportive of this measure to protect and strengthen LA (Local Authority) maintained schools.
- 5.12 Under this proposal, an executive leadership model has now been implemented with the current headteacher at Hunsbury Park Primary, acting as the new Executive Headteacher at Chiltern Primary. The Executive Headteacher will take a strategic role in both schools with an overarching statutory responsibility of leading the school’s day to day activities in each school and overseeing the SEND provision on both sites.
- 5.13 The proposal to move phase two of the Hunsbury Park Primary SEND provision, to the Chiltern Primary School site helps to address the need for good provision, providing additional places in a faster timeframe whilst under the same leadership, ensuring quality of education and learning is maintained.
- 5.14 This proposal forms part of a wider programme of works that aims to deliver up to 600 new SEND places across West Northants by September 2025.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 As set out in the earlier report of 3 May and 12 July 22 (links to reports shown at the start of report), if this proposal is not approved, this will result in WNC failing to fulfil its statutory obligation of providing sufficiency of SEND places in West Northamptonshire. The Council would need to work fast to secure places in the independent sector for children that required places. This would be difficult to achieve and be more expensive and further strain the High Needs Budget (HNB) and Delegated School Grant (DSG).
- 6.2 The additional 30 places initially, and increasing to 45 places in subsequent years, will be achieved via the refurbishment of existing classrooms to provide a modern and fit for purpose teaching and learning environment for pupil with primarily ASC. The scheme will also provide further bespoke outdoor learning facilities and dedicated specialist areas such as new hygiene rooms.
- 6.3 A summary of the responses received during the consultation on this proposal can be found in section 7 of this report. The majority of the consultation responses received were in support of this proposal.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1 The capital cost of both renovating the accommodation at Chiltern Primary to create a bespoke unit, along with expanding the existing unit at Hunsbury, in order to create a total of 55 new places, is expected to cost £1.8m.

7.1.2 The cost of the project will be funded through a mixture of the SEND capital grant and council borrowing.

7.2 Legal

7.2.1 LA must follow the statutory guidance to establish a new SEND unit at a maintained school, this is defined in the DfE (Department for Education) guidance booklet, 'Making significant changes (prescribed alterations) to maintained schools' and prescribed in the 'The School Organisation (prescribed alterations to maintained schools) Regulations 2013'. The statutory which encompasses the consultation process is provided in section 7.4 of this report. WNC will fully comply with the required statutory process.

7.3 Risk

7.3.1 There are significant risks attached to a decision not to proceed with this proposal at the current time, these risks would relate to WNC's ongoing ability to fulfil its statutory obligations of providing a sufficiency of SEND places and compromise its ability to allocate specialist school places to pupils in receipt of an EHC plan in a timely manner.

7.4 Consultation and Communications

7.4.1 The statutory process that governs school organisational changes of this nature is prescribed in the 'The School Organisation (prescribed alteration to maintained schools) Regulations 2014'. The consultation was carried out in line with DfE guidance.

Stage	Description	When/ How?
1	Publication of statutory notice	Through local newspapers, notifications to families through schools, and by displaying statutory notices outside both schools
2	Representation (formal consultation)	Statutory period of 4 weeks : 22 June – 19 July 2023
3	Decision	To be made at WNC cabinet meeting scheduled 19 September 2023
4	Implementation	New SEND unit (partially) opens from Monday 2 October 2023 (if approved).

7.4.2 Details of the consultation and an opportunity to respond were sent to:

- The Governing Body at Hunsbury Park Primary School and Chiltern Primary School
- Staff at Hunsbury Park Primary and Chiltern Primary School
- Parents of Hunsbury Park Primary School and Chiltern Primary School
- Other nearby schools;
- Local Academy Trusts;
- Local Councillors;
- The local MP;

- Local Diocesan Authorities;
- Other appropriate stakeholder i.e., SEN community and voluntary organisation

7.4.3 There were in total 42 completed responses in total with the majority – 31 consultees (74%), responding in agreement to the proposal. These respondents were from a varied and representative audience which included staff, parent/guardians, SEN professionals and residents. Only 8 disagreed (19%) with the proposal and 3 consultees did not respond ‘not answered’.

Question 1 - Do you agree or disagree that there is a need for additional SEND provision in Northampton to serve children and young people with autistic spectrum disabilities (ASD)? - Need agree/disagree

Response Question 1

Agree	Disagree	Don't Know	Total respondents
39	2	1	42

Question 2 - Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to establish a new initial 30 place, with a future potential of up to 45 place SEND unit catering to pupils with a primary need of autistic spectrum disabilities (ASD) that will be run by Hunsbury Park Primary school but on the site of Chiltern Primary School? - New school agree/disagree

Response Question 2

Agree	Disagree	Not answered	Total respondents
31	8	3	42

7.4.4 The full set of consultation responses will be sent to all cabinet members prior to the Cabinet meeting 19 September, in order that all opinions expressed by stakeholders were given full consideration prior to any decision being made on this proposal.

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.5.1 Not applicable

7.6 Climate Impact

7.6.1 The decision to issue a public notice of WNC’s intent to establish a new SEND unit at Chiltern Primary school and launch a 4-week consultation on the proposal has no related climate impact should the proposal be given approval to progress.

7.7 Community Impact

7.7.1 The proposal to establish a SEND unit at the school will have significant positive impact on the community, by providing specialist provision in a local area which will support families and children with SEN needs.

8. Background Papers

8.1 Please refer to the links at the start of this report for the previous cabinet report of the 3 May and 12 July which provide more details on the original Hunsbury Park SEND unit plans.

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

PROPOSAL TO EXPAND AND OPERATE THE HUNSBURY PARK SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS & DISABILITY (SEND) UNIT FROM AN ANNEX SITE AT CHILTERN PRIMARY SCHOOL

STATUTORY NOTICE

1. Proposer details

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC)
One Angel Square
Angel Street
Northampton
NN1 1ED

2. School details

Hunsbury Park Primary School
Dayrell Road
Northampton
NN4 9RR
&
Chiltern Primary School
30 Chiltern Way
Northampton
NN5 6BW

3. Description of alteration and evidence of demand

WNC has established plans for a 50 place, Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) Unit at Hunsbury Park Primary School. The provision caters for primary aged pupils who are in receipt of an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) with a primary need of Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASD).

The project was planned to be delivered in two phases with the first phase having opened during November 2022. This saw 20 places being created by making modifications to the existing accommodation at Hunsbury Park Primary school along with the provision of new bespoke outdoor learning facilities.

Phase two of the works involved the delivery of a new, stand-alone building on the Hunsbury Park Primary School site, that would provide additional teaching and other education spaces for a further 30 pupils from September 2023. However, this phase is no longer viable due to construction constraints and a delayed delivery date.

As a result, WNC have explored alternative options to ensure the successful delivery of ASD primary places, and as part of this WNC officers have now identified sufficient spare accommodation at Chiltern Primary School. This can be converted into bespoke SEND teaching spaces that can be used to accommodate up to 30 pupils initially and increasing to 45 pupils in subsequent years

Although the proposed unit will operate from the Chiltern site, it will operate under the leadership of Hunsbury Park Primary. In effect, the site will run as Hunsbury provision by Hunsbury specialist staff but on the Chiltern Primary site.

The additional 30 places will be achieved via the refurbishment of existing classrooms to provide a modern and fit for purpose teaching environment for pupils with a primary need of ASC. The scheme will also provide further bespoke outdoor learning facilities and dedicated specialist areas such as new hygiene rooms.

Pupils will be allocated places at the unit via WNC's SEND admissions processes and all pupils attending the SEND unit will be placed on roll at Hunsbury Park Primary School (irrespective of site attended). There will be no change to either school's mainstream Published Admission Number (PAN).

SEND pupil projection forecasts collated by WNC indicate that the total number of children and young people residing in West Northamptonshire in receipt of an EHC Plan will increase by 521 or 25% in the period January 2020 to January 2025.

The SEND pupil projection forecasts further indicate that children and young people with a primary need of ASC will be the biggest driver of this growth and this cohort is anticipated to increase by 299 pupils or 40%.

£2m

It is this level of current and future demand for specialist places that this proposal is intended to (partially) address.

4. Objectives and reasons

The objective of this proposal is to help ensure that WNC can deliver new SEND places in order to fulfil its continued statutory obligation of providing a sufficiency of places for local families.

All current specialist settings within the maintained school and academy sector (with a limited number of exceptions) that are located within West Northamptonshire have reached or exceeded their notional capacity figure i.e., the total number of pupils or students that should be attending any given provision.

As a result of this WNC has been required to utilise independent and out of county specialist provisions to ensure pupils and students in receipt of an EHC plan can access education. Providing places at independent or out of county provisions is more expensive and less cost effective than allocating places within local schools and academies.

The ongoing increase in the demand for specialist places has also resulted in all capacity offered in independent provisions in West Northamptonshire and out of county provisions located close to it, to have also reached their total capacity.

Another consequence of the increased demand for specialist places is that children and young people in receipt of an EHC plan have been required to attend a setting that is not best placed to meet their individual needs, such as a mainstream school setting, or that WNC has been unable to allocate a suitable school place within a timely manner.

5. Related proposals

Hunsbury Park Primary and Chiltern Primary are working towards a collaborative model in order to improve outcomes overall.

This collaborative model will allow both schools to carry out some functions jointly such as through joint committees and joint board meetings, with a focus on effective collaboration improving key strategic areas. It will allow Hunsbury Primary, rated as Good by OFSTED, to share good teaching practices with Chiltern Primary which is currently rated as requires improvement. The local authority is supportive of this measure to protect and strengthen LA maintained schools.

Under this proposal, an executive leadership model will be implemented with Dan York acting as the new executive headteacher (subject to final agreement). Dan will take a strategic role in both schools with an overarching statutory responsibility of leading the school's day to day activities in each school.

6. Project costs and how these will be met

The anticipated total capital cost for phases 1 and 2 of the project is £2m. The funding for the proposal will be provided by the 'Specialist Provision Capital Funding' grant allocation received by WNC from the Department for Education.

This funding is received by Local Authorities for the specific purpose of providing new specialist education places and cannot be utilised for any other purpose.

7. Implementation date

The implementation date for the proposed unit is from 3 October 2023 with transition visits starting from September 2023.

8. Consultation

Periods of consultation with all relevant stakeholders, on how, where and what type of new SEND capacity will be added in West Northamptonshire have been conducted since 2019.

This specific proposal has been developed in collaboration with the senior leadership of Hunsbury Park Primary School and Chiltern Primary School and will run from 22 June 2023 to 19 July 2023

9. Procedure for making representations (support, objections and comments)

Any person may object to, express support for or comment on this proposal by emailing placeplanningconsultation@westnorthants.gov.uk or by [completing the online survey on the council's Consultation Hub](#) within four weeks of the publication of this statutory proposal (22 July 2023).



WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

19 September 2023

CABINET MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR HOUSING, CULTURE AND LEISURE – COUNCILLOR ADAM BROWN

Report Title	Leisure Centre Procurement Approval
Report Author	Louise Seymour Assistant Director for Place Shaping Louise.Seymour@WestNorthants.gov.uk

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List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

To procure new leisure contract(s) for the Council's leisure service facilities in Northampton and Daventry areas expiring 31 March 2026.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The leisure services contracts operated by Sports & Leisure Management Limited (SLM, known as Everyone Active and Trilogly Active Limited (previously Unity Leisure) expire 31 March 2026. The contracts have been in operation since 2012 and 2011 respectively.

- 2.2 Sports & Leisure Management Ltd (SLM) operates and manages Daventry Leisure Centre, Daventry Sports Park and Moulton Leisure Centre. Trilogy Active Ltd operates and manages Mounts Baths, Lings Forum Leisure Centre, and Danes Camp Leisure Centre.
- 2.3 The leisure services contract operated by Parkwood Leisure for the Towcester Centre for Leisure and Brackley Leisure Centre is out of scope for this procurement. The contract runs through to March 2034.
- 2.4 Procuring a new contract(s) allows the Council the best opportunity to deliver value for money, opportunity to improve service delivery and ensures the Council does not breach procurement law. Whilst there are other possible leisure centre delivery options, these have been discounted due to the potential high initial consultant and legal costs, general set up costs and high ongoing costs.
- 2.5 The procurement process needs to commence with suitable time allocated to undertake early market engagement. This would include (if required) suitable project lead in time to include the potential Weston Favell Hub project. The proposed procurement timetable would allow adequate time for Member engagement, preparation of contract documents and time to undertake the procurement process.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
 - 3.1.1 Approves procurement of a new leisure services contract(s) covering Daventry Leisure Centre, Moulton Leisure Centre, Daventry Sports Park, Danes Camp Leisure Centre, Mounts Baths and the Lings Forum Leisure Centre or replacement facility.
 - 3.1.2 Creates a revenue budget of £160k for the purposes of conducting condition surveys as set out in the report. (Refer to 7.5).
 - 3.1.3 Note the Director of Communities and Opportunities to undertake the procurement of specialist consultants for legal and other professional advice associated with the procurement as and when required.
 - 3.1.4 Approves a revenue budget of up to £200k for legal and other professional advice associated with the procurement. (Refer to 7.3).

4 Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 To ensure compliance with the Councils contract procedure rules and national procurement legislation in relation to the procurement of public contracts.
- 4.2 To ensure procurement takes place in a timely manner, enabling a seamless continuation of public leisure services post 31 March 2026.

4.3 To ensure the most cost-effective delivery of the Council's leisure services contracts.

4.4 Enables alignment of leisure services contracts to the Councils corporate plan priorities.

5 Report Background

5.1 The leisure facilities managed under the Council's current leisure contracts are as follows:

Managed by SLM (operating as Everyone Active):

- a) **Daventry Leisure Centre.** Originally built in 1996, the centre has had several alterations including a major round of investment when the current contract was let. It contains a swimming pool, teaching pool, sports hall, fitness gym, cultural hall, squash courts, spinning room and fitness room.
- b) **Daventry Sports Park.** The sports park and pavilion were constructed in the mid 1990's, and the changing rooms and a full-size all-weather pitch were refurbished in 2018.
- c) **Moulton Leisure Centre.** This facility was built by Moulton College and acquired and converted to a public leisure centre in 2020. It provides a swimming pool, fitness gym, hydrotherapy pools, sauna, spa, and steam room, spinning area and fitness room.

Managed by Trilogy Active:

- d) **Danes Camp Leisure Centre.** This was built in the 1987, it has a leisure pool, sports hall, spinning room, sauna and steam room, fitness room and fitness gym.
- e) **Mounts Baths.** This was built in 1936 and is a leisure facility of historical importance. The Mounts Baths are grade II listed art deco swimming pool. Alternative uses of the historic facility are very limited. Tendering it with the other leisure facilities should help offset any potential deficit from operating this site alone. Mounts Baths provides a swimming pool, teaching pool, fitness gym and fitness room. It also has a steam room, sauna, and plunge pool.
- f) **Lings Forum Leisure Centre.** This was opened in 1975 and contains a sports hall, swimming pool, fitness gym, squash courts, cinema, and fitness rooms. As mentioned above, it is desired to replace this facility given its age and condition.

5.2 Existing contract length and terms

5.2.1 SLM has managed Daventry Leisure Centre and Daventry Sports Park since 2012 and Moulton Leisure Centre since 2020. The contract expires 31 March 2026 and does not have the option to be further extended.

5.2.2 The Council's Agreement with Trilogy Active for the operation of Danes Camp Leisure Centre, Mounts Baths and Lings Forum Leisure Centre started on 1 April 2011 and expires 31 March 2026. The contract expiry date co-terminates with the SLM leisure contract.

- 5.2.3 The existing leisure contracts do not take into account the existence of WNC, or any new current policies and organisational context. Procurement will allow the Council to incorporate, within the new contract(s), West Northamptonshire Council's Corporate Plan, Anti-Poverty Strategy, the forthcoming Sports Facility Strategy / Playing Pitch Strategy, Sustainability strategy, and other relevant strategies and align service delivery to the Integrated Care Northamptonshire's 'Live Your Best Life' outcomes.
- 5.2.4 SLM manages Daventry Leisure Centre, Daventry Sports Park and Moulton Leisure Centre under fully repairing leases, where the operator undertakes the maintenance, repair, and (as required) replacement across the entire facility. Where SLM is found to be deficient, the Council can seek recourse. The arrangement means that SLM is itself responsible for the condition and availability of plant on which it relies for successful operations.
- 5.2.5 Under the Operating Agreement with Trilogy Active, the Council is responsible for the replacement of major items of fixed plant and equipment. Trilogy Active is responsible for the general maintenance.
- 5.2.6 This repair or replacement arrangement makes it very difficult for the Council to budget effectively for major items. The maintenance management arrangements also create a risk for the Council as it could be found liable for operating losses caused by actual or alleged lack of action on its part. For example, as part of its contract obligations, the Council has recently invested £1.8m in plant and equipment at the Trilogy Active centres, with an additional £0.6m also being approved by the Council due to increasing costs of the project.

5.3 Condition surveys of leisure centre buildings and plant and machinery

- 5.3.1 In line with the practice under the SLM contract, it is proposed the new contract(s) would place full maintaining obligations on the operator. This avoids disputes over responsibility for any failures on operator income and success.
- 5.3.2 Especially in this context it will be beneficial for the Council to undertake a comprehensive condition survey of the leisure facilities prior to seeking tenders. The condition surveys would be included in the tender documents. Such surveys should be warranted in favour of the incoming operator. This should reduce the perception of risk and thus, by giving tenderers information they can rely on, improve the financial offers the Council receives.
- 5.3.3 The condition surveys would also aid the Council in developing a clear investment strategy. The information on current condition would allow the Council to be clear about what investment in improving the facilities it will fund or would like bidders to deliver as part of a future contract. Likewise, it would help tenderers make informed decisions about their proposals.
- 5.3.4 The cost of the intrusive full condition surveys is expected to be approximately £160k for all six leisure facilities.

5.4 Appointment of specialist consultants

- 5.4.1 The Council will also need to consider what aspects of the entire procurement project are managed by specialist consultants. The cost and scale of the independent specialist scope is to be decided, although some of the procurement work can be undertaken in-house. This process is further complicated by the potential opportunity to combine the Weston Favell Hub project into any tendering specialist brief.
- 5.4.2 Therefore, it is proposed that Cabinet is to note the Director of Communities and Opportunities is to investigate which aspects of the procurement process to undertake in-house and/or by the appointment of specialist consultants.

5.5 Procurement Timetable

- 5.5.1 The proposed timetable for procurement is set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Procurement timetable		
Dates	Activity	Additional information
Sep 2023	Approval to Tender	
Sep - Dec 2023	Early Market Engagement with leisure operators	Process completed with Procurement, Transformation
Jan 2024	Early Market Engagement results reviewed	Review and collate Early Market Engagement results in preparation for Members Workshop
Feb 2024	Members workshop to discuss service delivery options	Workshop to include reviewing results from Early Market Engagement Incorporation of Council Corporate priorities
March 2024	Draft consultancy scope and appoint external consultant if required	Scope to be written after Members' workshop
March - Dec 2024	Preparation of documents to commence Procurement Legal / Contracts / Leases / Specification	Potential consultant appointed User consultation to be undertaken Drafting of procurement documents
Apr - Jun 2024	Comprehensive condition surveys of all sites	Condition surveys to be incorporated into tender documents
Feb 2025	Invitation to Tender	A long time period is required due to the complex nature of the contract evaluation and

		any potential negotiations required
Dec 2025	Tender outcome and recommendation report to Cabinet	
April 2026	Contract commences	

6 Issues and Choices

6.1 The Council has, broadly, four options:

- a) Procure the leisure centres currently managed by SLM and Trilogy Active
- b) Procure only the SLM leisure contract and update, review, modernise and then extend the current Trilogy Active contract
- c) Bring the operation of the leisure centres in-house.
- d) Transfer the operation of the leisure centres to a company controlled by the Council (commonly called 'Teckal' companies).

6.2 Option (a) Procure the leisure centres currently managed by SLM and Trilogy Active – recommended option

- 6.2.1 Procuring the contract(s) covering the centres currently operated by SLM and Trilogy Active leisure centres simultaneously allows the Council the greatest opportunity to maximise the benefit of procurement.
- 6.2.2 A well-designed competitive procurement will optimise the balance of risks and rewards for prospective operators. It will also strike a balance between giving operators freedom to innovate and develop services and ensuring the Council's goals are met.
- 6.2.3 As part of the procurement process, a fundamental requirement is allowing adequate time for the Council to undertake early market engagement with the wider market of leisure providers. This engagement would need to address the size of potential lots (centre packages), contract duration, utility risk, financial arrangements, levels of service, health and community delivery, and centre maintenance. Both current centre operators would be part of this early market engagement; other known leisure operators will be invited to engage with this opportunity through advertisement and direct contact.
- 6.2.4 The maintenance of the leisure centres needs to be considered. A fully repairing lease gives the operator certainty over the repair budget and responsibility, but the length of the contract needs to be long enough to give financial stability to the operator. Splitting maintenance obligations generates uncertainty and complexity and increases risk for the operator as it does not have the condition of its facilities under its control. It also increases the risk of disputes about whether action taken or not taken by the Council has resulted in a loss of income. Therefore, the starting point proposed, is that the contracts should be based on full maintaining obligations resting on the operator. However, for Lings Forum Leisure Centre it may not be worthwhile to place full maintaining obligations on the operator due to the Weston Favell Hub project.

- 6.2.5 Sport England has developed a template contract and specification documents and schedules that could form the basis of any leisure management contract. These documents are known as the “Leisure Services Delivery Guidance”. It provides a strong foundation for any leisure management contract and helps to reduce tendering costs. The template will be amended to suit the specific needs of West Northamptonshire.
- 6.2.6 As well as addressing up-to-date Council policies and strategies in any new leisure contract, Sport England’s leisure services specification guidance would be generally followed to include performance monitoring, social value within its delivery, sports, and health intervention delivery. New contracts will also include all the new legislation since 2012, updated data protection / freedom of information and health and safety legislation.
- 6.2.7 There is an opportunity for the Council to move to a fully repairing lease for all sites. Currently the SLM contract is a fully repairing lease. The Trilogy Active Operating Agreement is not.
- 6.2.8 All of these above changes combined could constitute a ‘material change’ for the Trilogy Active Operating Agreement and as such be subject to a procurement exercise due to the value and far-ranging scope of the changes. Without tendering, there is very likely to be a breach of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and thus a potential legal challenge from other leisure centre operators.
- 6.2.9 A new Procurement Bill is currently before Parliament. Once it completes its passage the Procurement Act and regulations made under it will govern public procurement. This Act is still anticipated to have value for money, maximising public benefit, transparency, and integrity as part of its basic principles.
- 6.2.10 The tender project is a complicated process, and some work can be undertaken inhouse, however, as discussed within this report, some elements of procurement management may be delivered through the support of a leisure procurement specialist.

Procure the leisure centres currently managed by SLM and Trilogy Active	
Advantages	Disadvantages
Competitive procurement should maximise the overall ‘offer’ made by each leisure facility operator, to the benefit of West Northamptonshire residents.	Significant officer time needs to be allocated to the project
The procurement option is a well-established option for the Council.	The scope and cost of any leisure procurement specialist needs to be assessed
The arrangements can be based on a detailed and current services specification and performance measurement system	Depending upon the tender process and the situation with the Weston Favell Hub project a specialist consultant may have to be appointed
One off procurement cost and process	Any contract involves a degree of loss of control and inflexibility to the Council’s future plans

Opportunity to improve service delivery in line with the Councils strategies and policies	
Offers the best opportunity for devising value for money options	
Offers potential for capital investment by the operator	
Early market engagement will give the Council a wider view of the leisure market and potential capital investment opportunities	
The management of the services will be delivered by specialist leisure operators	
The operator provides its own support services for IT, HR, Finance, Maintenance Health and Safety	
Weston Favell Hub project can be included or excluded following early market engagement / funding opportunity	

6.3 Option (b) Procure only the SLM leisure contract and update, review, modernise and then extend the current Trilogy Active contract.

- 6.3.1 The SLM contract must be retendered for 1 April 2026.
- 6.3.2 The Trilogy Active contract requires considerable updating which would be highly likely to lead to a material change requiring a procurement process.
- 6.3.3 The current contract end date of 1 April 2026 gives a clear deadline for all staff and the centre operator.
- 6.3.4 Incremental contract extensions on the Trilogy Active Operating Agreement to allow the council time to be clear on the future for the Lings Forum Leisure Centre/Weston Favell Hub would prove complex to negotiate. The council and operator would need to consider ongoing costs and service delivery for an aging centre. This could create maintenance / replacement of plant issues and an increasing financial burden to the Council. The leisure operator would be expected to continue delivering a first-class service to the end of the centre's lifespan with little to no long-term incentive. A phased handover of responsibility between both parties could occur as the operator moves away from the Lings site. This would provide the council with additional complications to manage including staffing and financial resources.
- 6.3.5 The proposed Weston Favell Hub includes a new leisure centre as replacement for the Lings Forum Leisure Centre. Inclusion of a new leisure centre to the existing Trilogy Active contract would constitute a material change and require re-procurement.
- 6.3.6 The existing Trilogy Active Agreement terms regarding maintenance and replacement of plant and machinery are complex to administer and the split maintenance liabilities do not support efficient and effective operation.

- 6.3.7 Should the proposed Weston Favell Hub come to fruition and provide a new leisure centre, best practice would be that the Council works closely with the incoming leisure operator during the planning, building and pre-launch phases. Procurement is required to award a new operator to the proposed new leisure centre.
- 6.3.8 This option would be a missed opportunity for the council to combine two contracts into one, improve service delivery, and reduce the total costs of managing all six leisure facilities.

Procure only the SLM leisure contract and update, review, modernise and then extend the current Trilogy Active contract	
Advantages	Disadvantages
Procuring the Daventry and Moulton sites means the Council can seek best value through a competitive process	Significant officer time needs to be allocated to the project
Trilogy Active is the current operator in Northampton. Therefore, there is consistency in service delivery for the Northampton leisure centres	The time period to extend the Operating Agreement is difficult to estimate as the extent / build timings of the Weston Favell Hub project is to be decided. This leads to financial and service uncertainty on delivery for the leisure operator and issues with their sub-contractor contracts / service contracts. There would also be issues / increased costs with regard to plant and machinery replacement
	The Trilogy Active Management Agreement needs to be updated; these changes would count as a material change; therefore, they are likely to breach the Public Contract Regulations 2015, the Council could be open to legal challenge
	Any discussions regarding changes in the Operating Agreement would have to be undertaken at the same time as procuring the SLM contract. This will have a simultaneous impact on staff resources for Legal, Procurement, Finance, Assets & Environment, Sports, Leisure & Culture
	If the Council and Trilogy Active do not agree on new Terms for the leisure contract, the current Operating Agreement automatically terminates, this could lead to a rushed procurement process for the Council, which would be costly in terms of Officer time / potential consultants required to meet tight

	deadlines and be likely to result in sub-optimal outcomes
	Missed opportunity to maximise value through single procurement process

6.4 Option (c) Bring the operation of the leisure centres in-house

- 6.4.1 Particularly following the Covid-19 pandemic, a number of local authorities considered bringing their leisure services in-house. This decision was made after appointing various consultants to advise on VAT, NNDR, pensions, legal issues, TUPE, staffing and IT.
- 6.4.2 Based upon the experiences of other Councils (Southwark, Plymouth City Council, Neath Port Talbot and Kingston) this is likely to be the most expensive option to both initially assess with external consultant costs from different specialisms and then to bring in-house with additional dedicated Council staff having to be employed across the authority for HR, Finance, Assets & Environment, Pensions, Procurement, IT, Health and Safety, and Communications to support the ongoing delivery of the service. An additional 300 – 400 leisure centre staff (although less full-time equivalents) would also be bought onto the WNC payroll.

Bring the operation of the leisure centres in-house	
Advantages	Disadvantages
Council has direct control over the service / delivery	Very significant and substantial officer time needs to be allocated to the project
No operator profit – Council retains all income	Cost of investigating the option including gaining external advice will be required for HR, Tax specialists, NNDR, VAT, pension implications, legal and leisure consultants to assess the feasibility and implications of the proposal
Closer strategic alignment to Council priorities	Cost of setting up the delivery of the in-house option in relation to current Council staffing levels has financial / Officer time implications for HR, Finance, Assets and Environment, Pensions, Procurement, IT, Health and Safety, Communications
Removes risk of contractor failure	Ongoing costs – the Council is not currently set up to manage leisure services directly. Additional staff will be required for HR, Finance, Assets and Environment, Pensions, Procurement, IT, Health and Safety, Communications
Greater ability to adjust operations to address Council objectives at any point in time	Need to review and write operational documentation / HR / health and safety policies etc. and all centre operating policies and procedures across six leisure facilities

All staff would gain access to local government pensions, supporting good provision for retirement	TUPE would apply to 300 – 400 full time, part time and casual staff currently working at the leisure centres. Staff subsequently engaged would be on Council terms and conditions. All staff would gain access to local government pensions, at a cost to WNC
	New service, maintenance and product contracts would have to be set up for the many suppliers the leisure centres would need to use
	The Council would bear all staffing and financial risk
	Missed opportunity to gain external funding
	Benefit of leisure specialist company lost to develop the service

6.5 Option (d) Transfer the operation of the leisure centres to a company controlled by the Council (commonly called ‘Teckal’ companies).

6.5.1 The ‘Teckal’ option for leisure services is similar to a combined in-house / trust operation. North Yorkshire County Council in 2022 did propose a ‘Teckal’ company as an interim measure whilst it reviewed its leisure services across 28 leisure centres and seven types of current contracts including: in-house, an already established Teckal company and four outsourced contracts with multiple contract end dates.

Transfer the operation of the leisure centres to a company controlled by the Council (commonly called ‘Teckal’ companies)	
Advantages	Disadvantages
New company will have some independence from the Council, but closer strategic alignment is possible	Officer time needs to be allocated to the project
Depending upon agreement any surpluses/over performance can flow directly to the Council	Cost of setting up – gaining external advice may be required for HR, tax specialists, legal, leisure consultants to assess business rates / VAT / pension implications
Council has direct control over the service / delivery	Cost / split of ongoing service between the Teckal company / Council would need to be established – this would include ongoing service support which would have implications for Finance, Procurement, Legal, IT, health and safety, Assets and Environment
To a significant degree, ability to adjust operations to address Council objectives at any point in time	Council bears ultimate risk of financial underperformance, utility risk and company failure

Council insulated from immediate liability issues	New organisation governance would have to be established as well as a new board with the costs this entails
Some operational flexibility compared to in-house operation	New staff may have to be appointed at senior level to manage facilities
	No leisure specialist company to develop the service
	Teckal company would have to review and write operational documentation / HR / health and safety policies etc and all centre operating policies and procedures across six leisure facilities
	Teckal would have to review and appoint any new service, maintenance, and product contracts the leisure centres would need to use

6.6 Issues

Weston Favell Hub

- 6.6.1 The Lings Forum Leisure Centre is now very dated and in need of major redevelopment. The centre is considered to be in need of replacement
- 6.6.2 The Council has designed a scheme working with NHS partners, for a Weston Favell Hub which includes the replacement of Lings Forum Leisure Centre, a new library, health services, adults, and children's services. Given the intention to replace the Lings Forum Leisure Centre with the new Weston Favell Hub, plant and equipment replacement works at Lings Forum have been kept to a minimum.
- 6.6.3 If the Council is again, unsuccessful in applying for external funding it will have to consider its options - Lings Forum Leisure Centre will be 50 years old and is becoming increasingly costly for the Council and leisure operator to maintain. Other procurement options such as a design, build, operate and maintain could be included in any tender.

7. Implications

Resources and Financial

- 7.1 The tendering of the leisure centres is a large-scale project, but the process is a known one for the Council. The project involves a variety of services including Legal, Procurement, Assets & Environment, Regeneration & Major Projects, Health, Communications, Sport, Leisure & Culture. The Council would need to allocate adequate officer time and resources to it. Officer time will be mapped as part of the procurement project plan scope. These would be a one-off project cost.
- 7.2 The tendering process is complex although some of the work can be undertaken in-house. Tendering six leisure facilities and with the potential added complication of the Weston Favell Hub project, is likely to require support from a leisure specialist consultant. The extent of support

work, scope remit and therefore total cost of a leisure specialist consultant depends upon the early market engagement. The costs are expected to be, depending upon the scope £150k - £200k to allow for contracts, legal advice, surveys, and management of the procurement process.

- 7.3 The cost of up to £200k for specialist consultants would be covered by the Sport, Leisure & Culture Service. £100k of earmarked leisure reserves and £100k earmarked from income received through the Parkwood Leisure Management fees for 2024-25.
- 7.4 At tendering, there is an opportunity to secure an income for the Council, this income value will depend upon the length of contract, lots, contract terms and the market conditions.

Building Condition surveys

- 7.5 Funding of £160k would have to be allocated for the six leisure facility condition surveys to be conducted in 2024/25. These costs would be incurred no matter which option is preferred. The report requests Cabinet approves a one-off draw down on the Council's general fund reserves if funding cannot be identified from any other funding stream.
- 7.6 The value for the current Trilogy Active contract is approximately £7m and the value of the SLM contract is £6m. The aim of a single high-quality procurement would be to minimise the cost and maximise the benefit to the Council.
- 7.7 The expected turnover of the new leisure contract(s), for example, a possible 10-year period is approximately £60m.

8 Legal

- 8.1 The Council may provide such recreational facilities as it thinks fit, pursuant to Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.
- 8.2 The Council will need to consider the affordability, deliverability, sustainability, control, and operational and commercial risk in its future delivery of leisure services also acknowledging its statutory duty to deliver best value. Procurement would also consider social value.
- 8.3 Further detailed legal implications will be reported and addressed as the approach and methodology of the future delivery of leisure services becomes clearer. This will include the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 and pension provisions.
- 8.4 External professional services (probably including legal) will need to be engaged.

9 Risk

- 9.1 The existing Trilogy Active Operating Agreement finishes 31 March 2026. There is an option to extend, however, there is no legal obligation for the Council to extend.
- 9.2 If extended, the Operating Agreement terms should be re-written (based upon Leisure Services Delivery Guidance) and agreed between the parties. This new agreement would have to consider the Council's decision for Lings Forum Leisure Centre and the Weston Favell Hub

timescales and procurement. Combined, all these changes would be a material change. If not tendered, this would open the Council to a legal challenge by other leisure operators as well as potential action by the Council's auditors.

- 9.3 Any new application for external funding for the Weston Favell Hub may not be successful, and as a result, there is a risk to how this project will be funded. To minimise this risk early market engagement with leisure operators could include possible capital funding options. The Council, following early market engagement, needs to set out at the tendering stage, its preferred option to achieve the Weston Favell Hub.

10 Consultation and Communications

- 10.1 Following the early market engagement with potential suppliers, and any outcome from applying for external grants for the Weston Favell Hub project, it is proposed to undertake a Members workshop. This workshop will allow Members opportunity to discuss / comment on the market engagement results, the outcome of the Weston Favell Hub funding application and then input into the way forward and tender documentation including, for example, options for funding the Weston Favell Hub, lots, contract duration, standards of service, social value, utility risk, maintenance options, etc.
- 10.2 A communications and engagement plan will be developed to ensure the public and stakeholders are kept informed and engaged at all stages of the procurement process and beyond.

11 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

- 11.1 Proposal is to engage with Place Scrutiny as part of a series of Members workshops during February 2024.

12 Climate Impact

- 12.1 The leisure centres are some of the Council's largest carbon emitters. The Council has secured just over £7m of SALIX funding to support the decarbonisation of heat at the Brackley, Daventry, Towcester, and Moulton leisure centres. This work has been commissioned and should be complete by April 2024. This will result in the centres being heated by air to water source heat pumps, with new or enlarged photovoltaic (solar) arrays to provide more of the electricity needed to operate them. The procurement process would be designed to facilitate further reductions in emissions.

13 Community Impact

- 13.1 There has been no community consultation in relation to this report at this stage. However, the procurement process will consider community impact as part of the tender specification.

14 Background Papers

None.



WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

19 September 2023

Cllr. Daniel Lister – Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Town Centre Regeneration and Growth

Report Title	Northampton Towns Fund – 35-45 Abington Street asbestos removal and demolition
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Report Author	Wendy Thompson – Principal Regeneration Officer Wendy.Thompson@westnorthants.gov.uk Robert Saunders – Major Projects Manager Robert.Saunders@westnorthants.gov.uk
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Chief Finance Officer (S.151)	Martin Henry	30/08/2023
Other Director	Stuart Timmis	30/08/2023
Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	31/08/2023

List of Appendices

None.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report seeks to provide a progress update following the approval of the Cabinet Decision on 12 April 2022.
- 1.2 To seek delegated authority to enter a construction contract with regards to the main asbestos removal for 35-39 Abington Street, Northampton and 20-28 Wood Street, Northampton.

- 1.3 To seek delegated authority to enter a construction contract with regards to the main demolition and deconstruction of 35-39 Abington Street, Northampton, 41-45 Abington Street, Northampton and 20-28 Wood Street, Northampton.
- 1.4 To note that the procurement route may involve a single contract or separate contracts for the asbestos removal and deconstruction works.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 In April 2022 Cabinet approved the Outline Business Case, and the Procurement and Delivery Strategy, for the delivery of the site known as 35-45 Abington Street with an allocation from the capital Towns Fund grant from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to West Northamptonshire Council of £9.7m.
- 2.2 Acting upon the authority approved by the April 2022 Cabinet the acquisitions of 35-39 Abington Street and 20-28 Wood Street have completed as required to form the entire regeneration site.
- 2.3 Other works have continued to prepare the site for demolition and to commence the procurement process to select a preferred bidder as a development partner to redevelop the site. This report seeks approval to enable the preferred route to deliver to a developer a site cleared of the existing buildings to ground level.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
 - a. Notes the update to works undertaken by Officers from April 2022 onwards.
 - b. Delegates authority to the Director of Communities and Opportunities in consultation with Chief Finance Officer, the Monitoring Officer and the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Town Centre Regeneration and Growth to enter the necessary Contracts, Warranties and Bonds for all related works for the removal of asbestos and the demolition of all the buildings required across the site.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 To allow the 35-45 Abington Street development site to deliver the objectives and strategy agreed by Cabinet on 12th April 2022 by way of providing a development partner with a site cleared of the existing buildings.
- 4.2 To ensure the Towns Fund grant award is spent within the award timescales and for the permitted purposes.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 At the Cabinet meetings held in July 2021 and April 2022, approval was given for the redevelopment of the buildings that form the site known as 35-45 Abington Street.

- 5.2 35-45 Abington Street comprises 1.6 acres of land that is intended for regeneration as a residential use scheme. The site currently comprises two large vacant and redundant retail units, formerly occupied by M&S (41-45 Abington Street) and BHS (35-39 Abington Street) and the former Job Centre vacant office building immediately to the rear of these (20-28 Wood Street). The delivery of a residential redevelopment scheme is aimed to increase vibrancy and prosperity in the town centre by growing and diversifying the living offer, whilst supporting the vitality and resilience of the wider town centre.
- 5.3 Since the April 2022 Cabinet approval, the procurement seeking a development partner has been launched via the Homes England DPS (Dynamic Purchasing System) Framework. Potential development partners will be assessed against criteria set out in the procurement documents. The key project objectives are Concept (Uses and Design) with reference to residential neighbourhood, ground floor uses, and design; Delivery with reference to partnering approach, and delivery and resources; Operation with reference to stakeholder engagement, and long-term structure; Commerciality with reference to viability and funding, and financial structure; and Social Value.
- 5.4 As reported in April 2022 to Cabinet WNC (West Northants Council) the £9.7 million allocation of the Towns Fund grant award for 35-45 Abington Street includes funding for asbestos removal and demolition of the existing buildings. It has been set out in the procurement expression of interest document to developers that the Council will conclude works to complete the asbestos removal and demolition of the existing buildings on the site. This funding - under definitions set out in the grant award - must be spent or allocated contractually in line with the terms of the grant by April 2025.
- 5.5 Without public sector intervention the market would not deliver this scheme. The site has substantial viability challenges in terms of significant “fixed costs” such as acquisition, demolition and remediation work. Viability analysis shows that these are of the extent where not only normal profitability could not be met, but loss is likely.
- 5.6 Without intervention it is likely that the Abington Street site will remain redundant with vacant retail and office buildings following the departure of M&S and BHS. Further, the physical condition of the buildings is poor, with significant detrimental impact on the street scene. Further, the existing buildings attract unwelcome anti-social behaviour.
- 5.7 The April 2022 Cabinet report sets out the Project Milestones for the procurement and delivery of the 35-45 Abington Street scheme. This included the asbestos strip with abnormal and enabling works, which the report stated could include demolitions.
- 5.8 An Intrusive asbestos survey was commissioned and was undertaken for the site commencing February 2023 to locate and identify the presence of asbestos-containing material in 35-39 Abington Street. To summarise, there are large areas of the building that incorporate significant levels of asbestos-containing materials. Additional Health and Safety Executive notifiable licensed asbestos removal has had to be undertaken due to damaged asbestos containing materials being identified as being at risk of imminent failure. When the main work

to remove the asbestos is undertaken this will also involve large amounts of soft strip out with the removal of internal non-load bearing walls, ceilings, and floor finishes.

- 5.9 This report seeks approval for delegated authority for Officers to award a contract or contracts to allow for the main asbestos removal from 20-28 Wood Street and 35-39 Abington Street, and the deconstruction / demolition contract for all three buildings and related structures that form the regeneration site 35-45 Abington Street.
- 5.10 Since Cabinet Approval in April 2022 the project has progressed with the creation of a Project Board, the appointment of a Project Manager and a technical delivery team to lead on the development and procurement of the development, including specialist commercial advisors (Cushman Wakefield) and external legal advisors (Browne Jacobson, Solicitors). The procurement of a multi-disciplinary team to focus on the design and management of the delivery of the asbestos removal and demolition has recently been initiated.
- 5.11 Acquisition of 35-45 Abington Street was completed in September 2022 with vacant possession of the whole premises being obtained in November 2022. Acquisition of 20-28 Wood Street completed in August 2023. Therefore, freehold vacant possession has now been obtained for the whole of the regeneration site.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 To approve the ability for the Council to award a contract or contracts to enable the asbestos removal from 20-28 Wood Street and 35-39 Abington Street and the demolition of 20-28 Wood Street, 35-39 Abington Street and 41-45 Abington Street. These will allow the Council to deliver to a developer a cleared site: Cushman Wakefield have identified this approach as the most economically advantageous route to attracting developer interest in the site.
- 6.2 Not to approve the ability for the Council to award a contract or contracts to enable the asbestos removal from 20-28 Wood Street and 35-39 Abington Street and the demolition of 20-28 Wood Street, 35-39 Abington Street and 41-45 Abington Street. This would mean reviewing the whole delivery strategy for the scheme. It would also mean that the buildings will be left empty for considerably longer period with prolonged adverse impact on the street scene and encouraging further anti-social behaviour, potentially creating less interest from potential development partners, and incurring greater costs to achieve a cleared site. It would also cause significant challenge to the Council's ability to meet the date by which the grant fund must be disbursed (April 2025). MCHLG sets grant spend dates deliberately short to encourage and to incentivise the rapid conclusion of funded schemes: the Abington Street scheme is no exception. If the grant were not spent by the due date, there is no guarantee that the spend period would be extended.
- 6.3 When the procurement route is confirmed, an Equality Screening Assessment (ESA) will be undertaken in order to ensure that the selected procurement route adheres to the duties set out by the Equality Act 2010 and the Council's procedures relating to this are followed.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

7.1.1 It is noted that the budget for this project was agreed in the April 2022 cabinet report.

7.1.2 Works to be awarded under either a single or separate contracts relating to the main asbestos strip for 35-39 Abington Street and for 20-28 Wood Street are anticipated to be within the available budget. If works exceed this and the contract value cannot be reduced or otherwise value-engineered then Officers will bring a further report, with relevant options, to Cabinet for further review and discussion.

7.1.3 It is noted at paragraph 5.10 that a multi-disciplinary team has been appointed to focus on the design and management of the delivery of the asbestos removal and demolition. A robust budget has been allocated for these works and the Regeneration Team will work with the multi-disciplinary team to ensure that the both the design and management and the asbestos removal and demolition works are carried out to budget, to specification, and to time.

7.2 Legal

7.2.1 It is noted from paragraph 5.4 above that the removal of asbestos from the buildings known as 35-39 Abington Street and 20-28 Wood Street is subject to both a significant time constraint and a cost ceiling. The financial implications and subsequent risk on the Council's short-term plans were identified as a high-level risk to the Council in the Statement of Officer Delegated Executive Decision dated 28th August 2020 following the consideration of and completion of the due diligence undertaken by the Council prior to the acquisition of these properties.

7.2.2 It is noted at paragraph 7.2 that if potential additional costs would be incurred over and above the grant funding provided that a further report will be brought to Cabinet. It is recommended that Cabinet as part of the decision-making process should have the fullest opportunity to review all material considerations, including what steps the Council can take if the cost of the asbestos removal exceeds the funding available.

7.2.3 Once the design and management statement referred to at para 5.10 of this Report is finalised, the works will need to be tendered and awarded in strict accordance with the conditions of the relevant framework and external advice obtained to ensure the Council has a strict Health and Safety compliant contract that addresses satisfactorily all the risks and liabilities the Council could be exposed to in a contract of this nature. Collateral warranties may be required to ensure appropriate recourse.

7.3 Risk

7.3.1 Financial risks: If the projects are not delivered within time and deadlines are not met, the Council risks grant clawback and loss of external funding and faces increased costs such as further inflationary pressure and abortive costs to date.

- 7.3.2 Reputational risks: If the Asbestos and Demolition works are not delivered it could affect the Council's position to secure major funding in the future because our programme will not be met. There would also be a reputational damage with the public, with many of these schemes already having been heavily promoted including programme timelines for works.
- 7.3.3 Development Partner risk: The procurement of a development partner has commenced in line with the approved Business Case. This includes the provisions that a site clear of buildings will be made available by the Council. Without approvals the current programme would not be met and the project stage cannot be delivered.
- 7.3.4 Holding Vacant Buildings risk: Trespass and vandalism damage are already an ongoing issue, and requires proactive ongoing management. Continuing to hold as vacant buildings expose the Council to the risk of claims and excessive building management costs such as enhanced security measures for longer and sustained period.

7.4 **Consultation and Communications**

- 7.4.1 The Council will keep stakeholders informed and engaged by sharing proactive communications regarding the outcome and the next steps for the project, including asbestos removal and subsequent demolition. The site forms part of the Town Investment Plan (TIP) which was guided by widespread community and stakeholder consultation. The TIP builds on the initial consultation work undertaken to inform the development of the Town Centre Masterplan which seeks to address many of the challenges faced by the town centre. Further consultation will be undertaken at the appropriate time.

7.5 **Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

- 7.5.1 Place Overview and Scrutiny committee met on December 5th 2022. It was resolved that a site visit would be arranged by Officers to similar schemes and that the Committee would establish Pre-Decision Scrutiny scope. The key lines of enquiry for the subsequently established scope focus on the effectiveness of the scheme and how it will contribute to the strategic driver of regeneration of the town centre of Northampton having particular regard to: business, skills, infrastructure, investment and innovation. The scope thereby does not focus on the Asbestos Removal and Demolition aspects but on the future development proposals.

7.6 **Climate Impact**

- 7.6.1 The demolition of the buildings will have an environmental impact, but this will be mitigated by the instruction of competent designers and contractors who will manage the design, deconstruction and construction processes involved at this stage to maximise recycling of materials and minimisation of waste. Asbestos removal work will be cleansing the site of a contaminating material that can lead to significant health issues.

7.7 Community Impact

- 7.7.1 The aim of the project is to support the Regeneration of the Town Centre and establish new communities thereby making the Town Centre more sustainable and competitive and resolving the problem of unviable large format retail units.
- 7.7.2 A Construction Management Plan (CMP) will be in place prior to the commencement of the works to minimise and manage the disruption caused during the phases of works. Inevitably there are some consequential localised impacts during the demolition activities, but the CMP is in place to ensure issues are properly managed.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1 Cabinet Report: 12 April 2022 - Towns Fund: 35-45 Abington Street Project – Business Case and Delivery Strategy
- 8.2 Cabinet Report: 13 July 2021 – Northampton Towns Fund

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

19 September 2023

Leader of the Council: Cllr Jonathan Nunn

Report Title	Sustainability Report 2022/23
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List of Appendices

Appendix A – Sustainability Report 2022/23

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to inform members and residents of the sustainability projects that have taken place and the progress towards the sustainability pledges during 2022/23 which have been reported on in the first of an annual sustainability report for the Council.
- 1.2. The creation of the sustainability report follows on from various sustainability commitments the Council has made since its conception, including Net Zero, sustainability pledges and more recently its first environmental accreditation to the Investors in the Environment scheme (iiE).

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Alongside the publication of the Council's Sustainability Strategy in March 2022, the Council pledged to be a community leader for sustainability across West Northamptonshire. To achieve this the Council needs to lead by example, so it is important that progress towards delivery of our sustainability commitments is communicated accurately and on a regular basis, hence the introduction of this new annual report.
- 2.2 The report summarises the sustainability progress at the Council during 2022/23 with information drawn from key service areas such as public health, housing and waste as well as the work completed by the sustainability team.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:
- a) Agree to publish the Annual Sustainability Report for 2022/23
 - b) Note that the report is retrospective and is not making any new commitments

4. Reason for Recommendations

- The Council recognises the climate emergency and the importance of being transparent with residents and showcasing our sustainability achievements without green washing.
- Making the report publicly available shows accountability and reinforces the Council's commitment to the 2030 net zero target and will help set the format for work towards the 2045 target.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 The sustainability project has been ongoing since late 2021 following the Council's commitment that year to recognise the climate emergency. Since that time various sustainability and Net Zero commitments have been made and the sustainability report showcases our achievements and progress towards these commitments.
- 5.2 The sustainability report is intended to be an annual retrospective report which details the achievements of the previous financial year. All service areas have had the opportunity to input information about projects that they have been working on and the report has contributions from the majority of service areas including waste, planning, housing and public health.
- 5.3 One of the main drivers for this report is to demonstrate progress to stakeholders through a transparent report on annual projects and sustainability initiatives.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 This report is a factual summary of work completed during the course of the last financial year, it is therefore not deemed to be contentious as it is not making recommendations, rather reporting on progress already made.

7. Implications

7.1 Resources and Financial

7.1 Publishing of the report itself does not hold financial risk, however it should be noted that the Net Zero agenda which features as part of the emissions section has potential long-term financial implications, which will be considered in the relevant budget setting cycle.

7.2 Legal

7.2 There are no legal implications from publication of the report.

7.3 Risk

7.3 In order to meet the sustainability pledge of being a leader in sustainability the Council must strive to be transparent about its own progress. This means that the risk of reputational damage in not reporting progress and therefore 'green hushing' is deemed to be higher than risks associated with publication.

7.4 Consultation and Communications

7.4 The Council has engaged with community group Climate Action West Northants (CA-WN) to make them aware of the impending sustainability report. Communications have played a key role in communicating sustainability objectives, outcomes and achievements over the past year and will continue to do so to keep communities informed and engaged on future activities.

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.5 These recommendations have not been discussed with overview and scrutiny at this stage

7.6 Climate Impact

7.7 The sustainability report summarises climate and sustainability work and therefore is deemed to have a positive impact in this policy area.

7.8 It is acknowledged by officers and the sustainability cross-party working group that more action is needed directly on climate action, but the sustainability progress report is a summary of the Council's contribution to sustainability.

7.9 Community Impact

7.9 It is hoped that the community impact as a result of publishing the annual sustainability report is one which drives others to follow and inspires individuals, communities and businesses to contribute to the sustainability of West Northants.

8. Background Papers

8.1 Sustainability Annual Report 2022/23



West
Northamptonshire
Council

Sustainability Report 2022/23



Sustainable
West Northants

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Foreword

This first WNC annual sustainability report is a statement of projects and initiatives completed during 2022/23 which have contributed to the council's sustainability commitments, including our progress towards net zero.

Key council service areas have all contributed to the report, with the content summarised by the sustainability team.

Following the publication of the sustainability strategy and launch of Sustainable West Northants in 2022, the Council made three Sustainability Pledges as a foundation for steering resources and actions.

These primary commitments are:

- Net zero own emissions by 2030 and those of residents and businesses by 2045
- Take a community leadership role for Sustainability in West Northants
- Ensure all our Council strategies and policies are aligned to and contribute to the delivery of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This report has been produced to demonstrate our progress towards these commitments, to show transparency and to show that we are determined to lead by example. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) form the basis of our sustainability approach and have been highlighted throughout the report sections to show progress towards specific areas of sustainability.

Sustainability is not just about the work of a specific team; it is about the whole council and beyond, because it needs to become, and I believe it is becoming, a key thread throughout the whole organisation. It's also important to note that sustainability isn't just about having a specific budget for a small team, but rather about having a sustainability focus, initiatives, and investment across all departments of the Council.



I would like to thank the Sustainability Team for the energy and passion that they continually put into helping us to achieve our sustainability goals, and also to thank the cross-party Sustainability Working Group for the oversight and ideas that they provide to this work.

Thanks also to the many staff across WNC who are helping us towards our sustainability goals in their own departments, and to the partner organisations which we are delighted to be working alongside towards common objectives.

While we still have a long way to go and there is so much more to do, I want to assure you that we will continue to keep you informed of our progress with complete transparency. We recognise the urgency of this matter and will make it a top priority for our council.

In the meantime, I am extremely proud of what we are starting to achieve, and I hope that you are encouraged by the progress that you read about in this report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Nunn', written over a horizontal line.

Cllr Jonathan Nunn

Leader
West Northamptonshire Council



Introduction

This report has been created to summarise the sustainability progress at the Council during 2022/23 with information drawn from key service areas such as public health, housing and waste as well as the work completed by the sustainability team.

The report follows on from the Council's sustainability pledges made in 2022 and aims to demonstrate our position as a leader in sustainability. The project has been supported by the introduction of a cross-party sustainability members working group. The working group supported the development of a sustainability workplan which helped shape the priorities for the sustainability team. The workplan will continue to be

reviewed on a regular basis. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) consist of 17 goals created in 2015 as a blueprint to achieving a better and more sustainable future for all. They address a range of challenges including those related to poverty, inequality, climate change and peace. All the goals are interconnected and need to be tackled in cohesion. It was agreed that the Council would use the SDGs as a framework for reporting on our sustainability progress and the relevant SDGs are referenced throughout sections of this report. For more information on the targets and indicators for each of the SDGs, [visit the UN website - UN SDGs.](#)



Executive Summary

Since the sustainability pledges were made in 2022, the Council has demonstrated the commitment to these pledges by forming a dedicated sustainability team. At the time, the Council decided to shift the focus to sustainability and not solely climate change and the extent of the projects covered within this report demonstrates the broad remit of the team. The report shows good progress over the first year since the team was introduced and further annual sustainability reports will demonstrate our transparency and commitment in this area.

Particular highlights during 2022/23 include measures to support residents to improve the energy efficiency

of their homes, participating in our first No Mow May campaign and achieving Bronze level accreditation to the Investors in the Environment scheme.

In addition to these achievements, the Council has laid the foundations for long term sustainability progress to be delivered through projects such as the deployment of large scale solar arrays, installation of energy efficient heating systems for leisure centres and an off-gas village competition, all of which will help deliver both net zero targets.





The Council's Assets & Environment team manages energy for the Council, working with the Sustainability team and others.

Renewable energy purchases

During the 2022/23 year the Council and Northamptonshire Partnership Homes, which manages WNC's council housing stock, purchased 24m kWh of energy from renewable sources (64% of the council's energy demand), these purchases are supported by Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGO) certificates. The benefit of this is a reduced reliance on fossil fuel energy. The Council will continue to work to increase the number of assets on renewable energy contracts.

Reducing energy demand

As well as the commitment to purchase our energy from renewable sources, the Council is also generating its own renewable energy through various solar arrays (also known as photovoltaics or PV). During 2022/23 the Council generated 359,010 kWh of renewable energy which reduced our demand for national grid energy. The number of buildings with small renewable energy generation systems will continue to increase further reducing electricity sourced from the national grid.

In the corporate buildings, energy is predominantly controlled centrally to manage lighting and heating effectively. A staff engagement campaign to promote energy awareness and efficiency is planned for winter 2023 which will endeavour to reduce unnecessary energy in corporate buildings, where use of electrical equipment or lighting is down to the individual user.

Closure of Lodge Road offices (office optimisation)

WNC is going through a process of responding to its lower requirements for office space. The first phase of this was the decision to close the Daventry Lodge Road offices. Staff have been relocated to other office locations and WNC's presence in Daventry is maintained at the Abbey Centre. The closure of Lodge Road will result in an estimated CO2e saving of 140t per year.



Large scale solar projects

In 2022/23, the Council embarked on a programme to assess the feasibility of installing large scale PV systems on its assets around West Northamptonshire. This is an ambitious programme with the goal of securing the energy demand of the Council from renewables by 2030. During 2023/24 the Council will be working with partners to develop the business case for this project. Initial indications are that the Council controls sufficient land to make this goal possible.

Estate Climate Strategy

The Estate Climate Strategy will draw much of the above work together and set out an approach by which WNC can achieve a net zero estate by 2030. Where practical, the aim is to achieve this directly, through efficient buildings, low carbon heating and lighting, and good management. Emissions which remain would be offset either through generation of surplus green electricity or measures such as tree planting to positively remove carbon from the atmosphere.

The strategy will be presented to Cabinet for approval later in 2023.

Construction and Maintenance Climate Strategy

The draft strategy has taken into consideration guidance from professional bodies and agencies. It sets out a series of steps the Council could take to work towards low-carbon construction. These include:

- Only building that which is genuinely required.
- Re-using and adapting existing buildings where practical.
- Using low-carbon materials where practical, especially timber, which can support net removal of carbon from the atmosphere, the strategy will be presented to Cabinet for approval later in 2023.

Sustainable heat network

In partnership with NPH, the council has been awarded £112k as part of the Heat Network Delivery Unit phase 12 funding, to carry out a feasibility study for a sustainable heat network for Northampton and Rothersthorpe village. Public Health grant

and NPH are match funding the study in a bid to help alleviate fuel poverty by designing a solution to deliver lower-cost large-scale carbon heat to homes and to commercial properties. Sources of heat being explored include large-scale water and air source heat pumps and waste industrial heat.

If the feasibility study suggests a network would be viable, the next step would be to apply for a further grant for design development and commercial assessment.

Off-gas village competition

The Council is working with partners on a scheme to pilot sustainable energy for a village without gas supplies. In such villages both the cost and carbon footprint of heating tends to be higher, as residents and businesses have to rely on oil or solid fuels for most of their heating needs. It is likely a local 'smart grid' would be used, allowing shared use of renewable energy sources.

It is proposed to hold a competition to select a village to pilot this approach. If successful, further villages may follow.

Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS)

The Council was successful in securing £7m from the PSDS phase 3b to decarbonise and improve energy efficiency of four leisure centres across West Northamptonshire, this was match funded by a contribution from WNC bringing the total project value to £8m. The fund, initiated by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, is delivered by Salix Finance, which supports decarbonisation and energy efficiency across Great Britain. The objective is to bring facilities up to date and contribute towards decarbonisation.

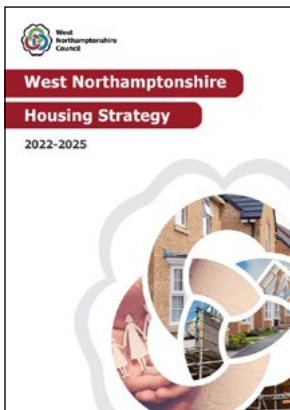
The funding will be used to decommission the end-of-life gas boilers and replace them with air source heat pumps or similar low carbon heating solutions which will be partially fed by electricity produced from new PV systems at Daventry Leisure Centre, Moulton Leisure Centre, Brackley Leisure Centre, and Towcester Centre for Leisure. The estimated annual carbon reduction on completion of the project is 861 tCO₂e per year.



Housing



Housing Strategy



Improving the quality, affordability, and energy efficiency of homes across the West Northamptonshire area is a key priority for the sustainability agenda with multiple benefits. Improving the fabric of building, improving energy efficiency and reducing energy demand in homes contributes towards our net zero area wide ambitions, reduces energy bill costs for residents, a particular concern during the current cost of living

crisis, and can improve comfort levels and reduce instances of damp and mould and their associated health risks.

The first housing strategy for West Northamptonshire Council was developed by the Housing Team and approved by Cabinet in 2022, forming one of the cornerstones for delivering the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-2025.

[The West Northants Housing Strategy 2022-2025](#)

identifies the key issues relating to housing and is built around delivering on four themes and their associated objectives and highlights the importance of partnership working to achieve this. The four themes cover aspects of all three pillars of sustainability: Economic, social and environmental. The four themes are:

Theme 1: Deliver homes people need and can afford

Theme 2: Improve the quality, standard and safety of homes and housing services

Theme 3: Support residents to live healthy, safe, independent and active lives

Theme 4: Support thriving and sustainable communities.



Northamptonshire Partnership Homes (NPH)

NPH manages a portfolio of 12,404 homes on behalf of WNC and aim to transform these to a net zero portfolio by reducing energy consumption and increasing renewable energy generation. 1,600 homes already have PV systems installed and in 2022/23 these generated 2.8 million kWh of renewable energy, saving 550 tCO₂e as well as saving residents hundreds of pounds in energy bills and providing some protection from energy price fluctuations.

In 2022/23 WNC received funding under the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) and in partnership with NPH completed the delivery of the SHDF demonstrator project. This project saw 149 homes in the Kingsley and Kingsthorpe area undergo a whole house retrofit. The award-winning project focused on older solid walled properties which are more expensive to heat and less energy efficient. Throughout the project high performance energy efficiency measures were installed such as external wall insulation, loft insulation, improved ventilation, new windows, and doors along with smart devices to monitor internal conditions. Additionally, 70 new PV systems were installed.

This SHDF demonstrator project has been extended through wave 1 of the SHDF, through a grant of just over £6 million, treating a further 200 properties in the same way. This project is ongoing but aims to complete a total of 429 retrofits. In March 2023, NPH was notified that WNC had been awarded £1.25 million from wave 2 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund meaning that NPH will be able to continue this project into the future and treat a further 101 homes.

Funding

The Sustainability and Housing teams at WNC have worked together to secure access to the following funding schemes for home energy improvements for residents on low incomes living in energy inefficient properties:

Green Home Grant Local Authority Delivery

Phase 2 (LAD 2): The delivery of LAD2 concluded in 2022. This was a government funded project to improve the energy efficiency of the homes of people on lower incomes. Greater South East Energy Hub (GSEEH) have grant funded £166k. This supported NPH to install air source heat pumps and PV systems on 15 and 18 council properties, respectively.

Sustainable Warmth: Government funded scheme which was due to run from early 2022 to 31st March 2023. Due to various start delays, delivery of this scheme has been extended and is ongoing as of the end of financial year 2022/23 although it is now closed to new applicants and a sufficient number of eligible households have been referred to our delivery partners. Sustainable Warmth combines two schemes; Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) which is for homes that are not connected to the gas grid and Local Authority Delivery 3 (LAD3) which is for homes which are connected to the gas grid for heating.

WNC secured funding as part of the Cambridge and Peterborough consortium bid, managed by the Greater Southeast Net Zero Hub (GSENZH). WNC was allocated funding to upgrade 34 properties through HUG and 153 through LAD3.

ECOflex: The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is a Government Scheme which confers an obligation on energy suppliers to install energy efficiency and heating measures to homes. It is currently in its fourth iteration, known as ECO4 which will run until 31 March 2026. ECO is aimed at householders on means tested benefits, however, suppliers are allowed to fulfil part of the obligation through ECOflex. ECOflex means that householders who are on low income/are particularly vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home can still be eligible. Working with an installer, households complete a self-declaration and provide evidence to show that they meet the requirements of one of the Government defined eligibility routes. Participating local authorities then check and sign off these declarations so that householders can access funding.

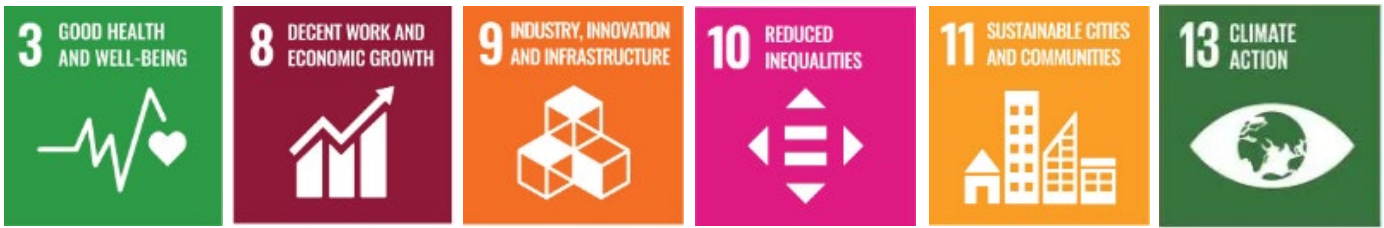
There is quite a significant administrative burden for local authorities who choose to participate in ECOflex and at WNC this has stretched internal resources. For ECO4flex, WNC agreed a partnership agreement with national energy charity NEF (at no cost to the authority) to ease some of this burden. NEF check and onboard installer qualifications and add them to their network of approved suppliers and pre-check self-declarations and evidence. WNC then complete a final check and sign the declarations and audit a random sample.

In 2022/23 WNC signed off 38 declarations through this arrangement. Additionally, although installers can contact NEF directly to join their network, we also received contact from 14 installers looking to undertake ECOflex work in our area, who were then directed to the NEF network.

HUG2: Government scheme designed to be a continuation of the HUG scheme in Sustainable Warmth to upgrade homes that are not connected to the mains gas grid for heating. WNC were part of the successful Cambridge and Peterborough consortium bid, managed by the GSENZH, the application was submitted in November 2022 and successful applicants were notified in March 2023. As we are part of a consortium bid, funding allocation has some flexibility, but we expect to have funding to upgrade around 120 homes in West Northamptonshire. Delivery of this project will begin in 2023 and should conclude by 31 March 2025.



Transport and Highways



Local Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (LEVI)

The Council is working on a large-scale concession contract to support the roll-out of EV charging facilities on its street and car parks, and the car parks of any willing partners.

UK Government introduced the Local Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (LEVI) fund to support local authorities with the deployment of local electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure. The capability fund provides upfront resource funding to recruit dedicated staff to undertake the planning required for EV infrastructure. WNC was awarded £73,620 for the capability fund in 2022/23 with a further tranche of £335,380 awarded and the recruitment process has commenced.

The second aspect of LEVI is the capital fund, this will enable the Council to bid for funds to deliver EV charge point infrastructure. WNC has provisionally been allocated £2.8 million for this purpose.

Active Travel

Strategy development and behavioural change

In 2022/23 we were successful in securing £152,723 from the Capability and Ambition Fund. The one-year funding, which has to be spent by November 2023 is the second revenue funding round being managed by the Department for Transport's new executive agency, Active Travel England, who has a 2030 vision for half of journeys in towns and cities to be walked, wheeled or cycled.

Some of the funding is being used to develop a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for Towcester. This document will set out the priorities for improving walking and cycling infrastructure in Towcester over the next 10 years. It is being developed with stakeholders including National Highways to ensure integration with

their proposals for the A5. The project began in March 2023 and is planned to conclude in autumn 2023.

Draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans for Brackley and Daventry were also completed in 2022/23 and consultation on them is planned later this year.

As well as building new infrastructure, encouraging, and supporting behavioural change is key to getting more people to walk, cycle and scoot. Alongside our normal Bikeability training for school children, £29,670 of the Capability and Ambition Fund is being used to support delivery of a range of behaviour change initiatives that include cycle training, loan bikes both electric and pedal, led rides aimed at different sectors of the community and maintenance and training qualifications.

Delapre Abbey are our delivery partner for these activities which will mainly be focused in the vicinity of Brackmills, University of Northampton, schools in the area and the wider community through initiatives like social prescribing. The project will be monitored throughout and evaluated at the finish. The area was chosen to complement the proposed traffic free routes in the Delapre area. Funding for these was secured through Active Travel Fund round 4. They are being delivered in 2023/24.

Scheme delivery

During 2022/23 we continued to develop the Abington Area Active Travel Scheme, through the Active Travel Fund and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). Following feasibility design, public consultation was undertaken in spring 2023. The comments, online survey results and feedback are being analysed and compiled into a consultation report which will be published on the consultation portal. The feedback will be used to inform the next steps with the portfolio holder.



Transport and Highways

Public e-scooters and e-bikes

This year we made major in-roads into making Northampton's e-scooters part of everyday life for our residents, offering an affordable, low carbon and flexible way to travel. Working with our micromobility partners Voi and North Northants Council, having taken on the scheme in its infancy from the previous council, we committed to extending it and steering a significant increase in take-up. We have worked closely with police to innovate and improve safety, investing in new racks and creating an online reporting feature to help prevent misuse by users. Voi has also developed plans for providing e-bikes alongside the e-scooters.

Kier

The contract 'Climate Change and Environmental Management Plan' was developed at the start of the WNC's contract with Kier in September 2022. This is a management plan with a suite of appendices to manage environment and sustainability on the WNC Highways contract. The sustainability objectives and associated action plans were developed by aligning with Kier's Group Targets, the UN SDGs and WNC objectives. One of the most significant changes to fleet management since the contract commenced has been the introduction of hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO), this has reduced fleet emissions associated with this contract.

Kier also had a stand down day which promoted sustainability and biodiversity improvements. They handed out leaflets made with wildflower seeded paper with the Kier Sustainability Principles printed on them. Kier is increasing overall sustainability awareness and have delivered a series of Toolbox Talks, articles and bulletins to be rolled out throughout the year including; energy saving, pollution prevention, single use plastics, No Mow May and nesting birds.



Biodiversity



Local Nature Recovery Strategy

The Council has now been formally appointed as the responsible authority for developing a local nature recovery strategy for West Northamptonshire. This work will be done in close collaboration with local groups, landowners, and businesses, working with the Northamptonshire Local Nature Partnership. The Strategy will help restore West Northamptonshire's nature, including rare and threatened species, whilst securing other benefits which as flood risk mitigation and natural carbon storage. Recruitment of a Nature Recovery Co-ordinator is underway.

Parks and Open Spaces

Daventry Parks

WNC have worked with Cummins to plant 50 trees at Borough Hill along with a beech hedgerow. The project was developed with Cummins to celebrate their 50th anniversary of working in Daventry. The beech hedgerow will provide a year-round source of shelter and food for wildlife and will remain long after the fence. Further to the Borough Hill project, 213 trees have been planted within Daventry Country Park as part of the Queens Green Canopy with volunteers from the Daventry Scouts as well as several private memorials and donations to the park.

Work is ongoing with Green Health to develop a Community Allotment Garden, producing a variety of plants and vegetables for re-sale to raise funds to reinvest into the project. This project offers people living with mental illness the opportunity to develop knowledge and awareness of horticulture and its benefits on health.

The Racecourse

The Garden in the Park: A space that was previously an antisocial behaviour hotspot has been turned into a community garden and orchard. It consists

of 12 raised beds which are sponsored or cared for by organisations such as the Umbrella Fair organisation, The Friends of the Racecourse, Bosworth Independent College, Northamptonshire MIND, and Billingbrook School (Special Educational Needs & Disabilities).

The project will support organisations to grow fruit and vegetables for use in their own organisation or to supply the local community with the produce through a proposed new community shelf and 'pick your own' events. The site consists of planters, a wildflower bed, a small orchard with trees and bushes and composting bays where contractors recycle green waste to be used within the garden and park. There is also a seating area, bug hotel, bird baths and feeders.

A workshop has been created which will be used by the community and schools to build bird boxes, hedgehog houses and more and will include an area for potting up. The Council's landscape maintenance contractor has changed a large bed near the entrance to the park from annual bedding to a seasonal wildflower bed. Additionally, 25 new trees have been planted in the park.

Bradlaugh Fields

Over the last two years, wildflower areas have been created with the intention to expand the area in the coming year. Two beds have been made using willow from the park which has been planted to become a living surround.

Different species of trees have been donated including willow, hazel, rowan, box, horse chestnut, and three Christmas trees as well as some rose plants.



Biodiversity

In the outdoor classroom, rangers planted a hazel, dog rose and hawthorn to provide habitat for nesting birds in the future. These were donated by a member of the community.

Over the last six months work has started to develop a community orchard at Bradlaugh with the help of community payback (probation service) and LIVE team (supported employment). The area has been planted with 12 fruit trees and fruit bushes with a wide variety of species. Similarly to the Racecourse, this will be open for the community to come and pick their own.

The Friends of Bradlaugh fields have a community garden with pine trees, vegetables and herbs which they tend to on a weekly basis. The intention is to develop the garden into a sustainable resource for the local community.

No Mow May

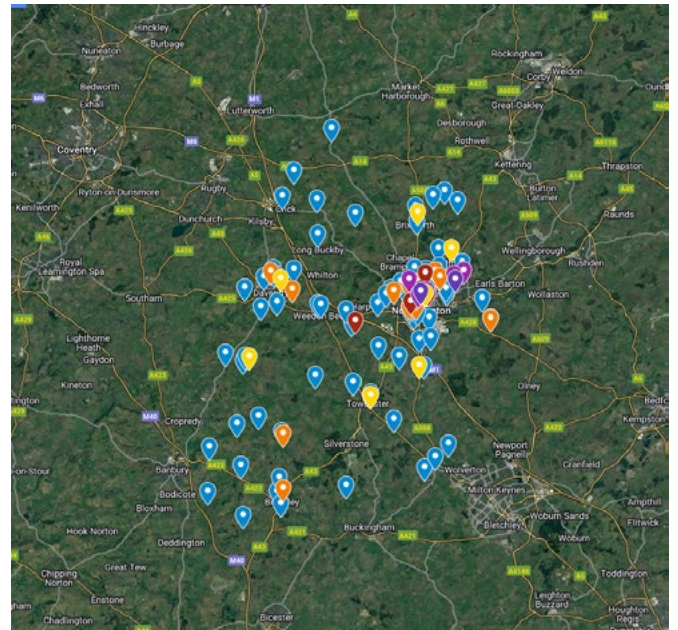
From early 2023, we started preparing to implement the 'No Mow May' campaign across the area. Several parks were selected including Abington Park, The Racecourse and more. We also contacted parish and town councils asking them to participate in the campaign, as well as starting discussions with the WNC highways team to decide what road verges can be left unmown without causing an obstruction to safety.

Overall, we had 16 parish and town councils officially confirm they would be participating in the campaign, although we expect actual participation to be much higher. This will have several benefits to the area from increasing biodiversity and reducing emissions from grass cutting equipment. The outcome of the 2023 campaign will be reported in next year's sustainability report.

Allotment Mapping

At the request of the sustainability members working group, work is ongoing to collect information about allotments and food assets to create an interactive map. The map has multiple layers and will be used to identify the areas without access to allotments and with little or no access to fresh produce. There are currently over 70 allotments in the area with a range of WNC, parish council and privately owned sites.

The interactive map will be a useful tool for organisations such as the WNSFP who can use the gap analysis to develop future projects.



Tree Strategy & Policy

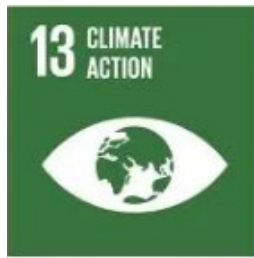
Following a review by a task and finish group of the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet endorsed proposals for the Council to develop a Tree Strategy & Policy, and Council approved as part of the budget funding for a strategic tree officer to work on the strategy and policy, and then its implementation. The recommendations reflected the outcomes of engagement with parish councils and community groups, and a survey of public attitudes and priorities. Challenges with recruitment initially slowed the process, but the Council has now appointed a consultancy to commence work on the document, and recruitment for the officer post is underway. There will be further public engagement as work on the strategy and policy proceeds.

During the year the Council also used funding from the Forestry Commission to plant 64 trees as part of their Urban Tree Challenge Fund. The three year project aims to complete planting of 127 trees across three parks – Bradlaugh Fields, The Racecourse and Eastfield Park.

Other areas of the Council's work, such as the Construction & Maintenance Climate Strategy, will also consider opportunities to support tree planting and positive use of timber.



Emissions Reporting



Carbon emissions represents one of the clearest and toughest measurements of our progress. West Northamptonshire Council committed to achieving net zero on its own emissions by 2030 and net zero on West Northants emissions by 2045. Adopting these ambitious Net Zero targets require the Council to monitor, reduce and where possible, eliminate sources of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions across the organisation and the area. In addition to the benefits net zero will bring to West Northants, it will also contribute towards the UK 2050 Net Zero target.

WNC Operational Emissions

In 2022, West Northants Council declared their target of reaching net zero emissions in its own operations by 2030. In order to track progress against this target, an annual review of emissions will be undertaken and reported within the sustainability report. The reporting year 2021-22 has been established as the baseline and details of this first emissions report can be found here [WNC Emissions Base \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk).

WNC strive to continuously improve its reporting on

emissions and will seek to provide the fullest picture on our progress that data allows. This means where additional data becomes available and calculation methodologies improve, we will include this in our reporting. In 2022-23 we have established a methodology for recording working from home emissions; included new data on materials used such as the food and drink consumed at our offices; and improved our data on waste generated from our operations.

For reporting year 2022-23 total emissions were 22,964.70 tCO₂e. This is a 3.4% increase against the baseline. However, in part this arises from including more aspects of emissions (e.g. home working) rather than true increases. We are also pleased to have achieved an overall reduction in Scopes 1 and 2 which are the direct emissions. Table 1 and Figure 1 below show these emissions in more detail and how they compare to the 2021-22 baseline.



Emissions Reporting

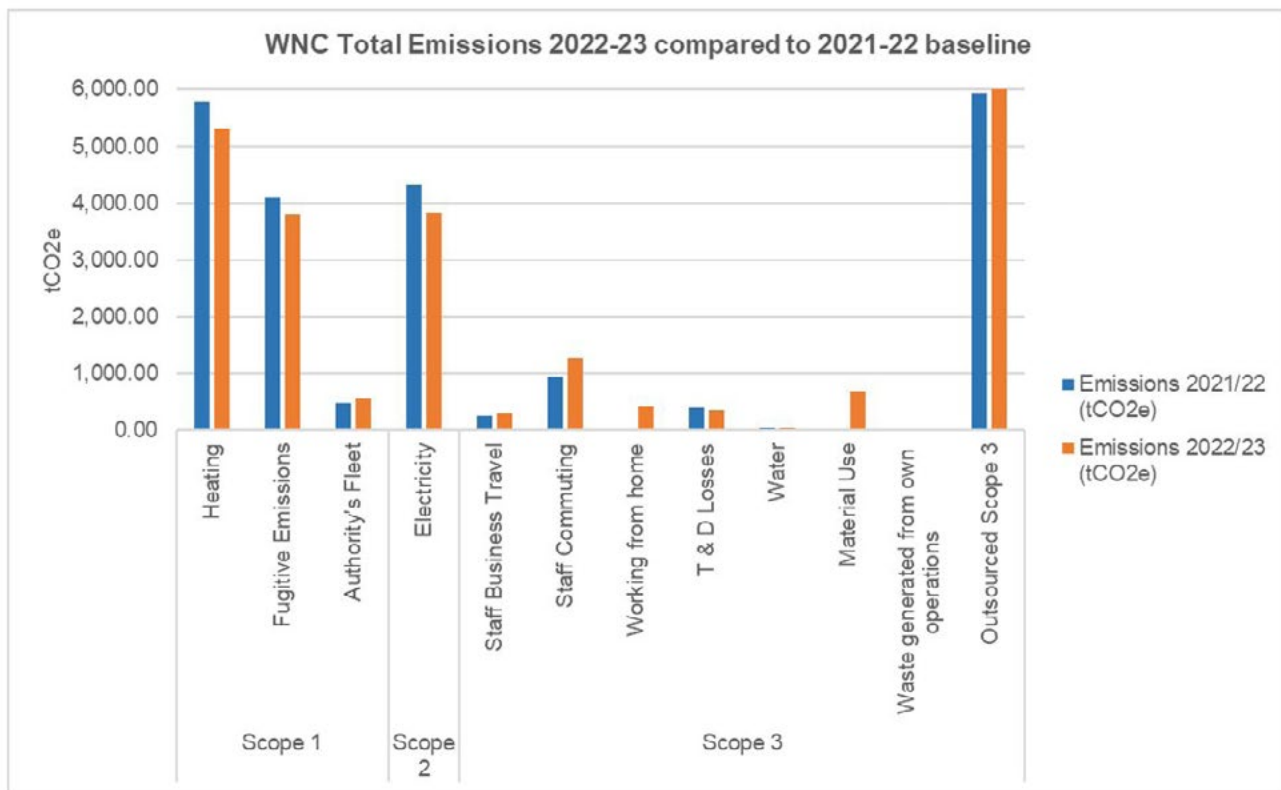
Table 1: Emissions by scope 2022-23 and the percentage change from the 2021-22 baseline

Scope	Emissions Type	Emissions (tCO2e)	Percentage of Total Emissions	Percentage change from baseline
Scope 1	Heating	5,296.11	23.1%	-8.4
	Fugitive Emissions	3,795	16.5%	-7.3
	Authority's Fleet	560.04	2.4%	18.1
Scope 2	Electricity	3,828.47	16.7%	-11.5
Scope 3	Staff Business Travel	294.25	1.3%	16.5
	Staff Commuting	1,255.66	5.5%	35.5
	Working from home	404.74	1.8%	100.0
	T & D Losses	350.22	1.5%	-8.5
	Water	29.56	0.1%	3.4
	Material Use	684.13	3.0%	3656.2
	Waste generated from own operations	3.49	0.02%	41.7
	Outsourced Scope 3	6,463.04	28.1%	9.2
Total Emissions		22,964.70	100%	3.4
Renewable Energy Generation (kWh) (WNC)	359,010			
Green Tariffs (kWh) (WNC & NPH)	24,343,420	4,554		
Net Emissions		18,410.70		



Emissions Reporting

Figure 1: 2022-23 emissions compared against 2021-22 baseline



Key points

Scope 1 - Total mileage from the authority's fleet has increased from 2021-22 likely due to return to business as usual. A decrease in energy use and fugitive emissions has resulted in an overall decline in total emissions for scope 1 by 6.75% compared to baseline. These factors highlight the importance of the Fleet Climate Strategy, which is at an early stage of development.

Scope 2 - Largest reduction is attributable to a decrease in emissions from streetlighting as the asset portfolio transitions to LED, around 4000 lights were converted last year and the whole portfolio will be transitioning over the next two years. Scope 2 emissions have decreased by 11.48% compared to baseline.

Energy continues to account for a large proportion of total emissions (39.8%) but a decrease of almost 1,000 tCO2e from energy use has been observed against the baseline.

Scope 3 – Two new datasets have been introduced in this category namely the working from home

emissions and material use which has resulted in an additional 1,088 tCO2e in this category. Emissions from staff commuting have increased this year due to an increase in the number of respondents driving to work. Scope 3 emissions have increased by 87% compared to baseline mostly attributable to the new data.

Outsourced Scope 3 – There have been increases in vehicle mileage across most of the outsourced services which has resulted in an increase in outsourced Scope 3 emissions by 9.2% against baseline. The Kier contract has seen a transition to a greener fleet with the introduction of hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) fuel.

Area Wide Emissions

[The Area Wide Emissions Baseline](#) report informs and supports our communities, residents, and businesses in reducing their own emissions and will help us meet our commitment to achieve net zero West Northamptonshire emissions by 2045.



External Accreditations



Investors in the Environment (iiE)

WNC has reached a key milestone in its journey towards becoming a net zero local authority by achieving its first national environmental

accreditation. Following an independent audit, the Council has started this journey by earning Bronze Award accreditation with the Investors in the Environment scheme (iiE), recognising its commitment towards sustainability. The iiE scheme is designed to help organisations improve their environmental performance and reduce their impact on the

environment, save time and money as well as get recognition for their progress. Bronze status is the first of three iiE accreditation levels the Council is working towards achieving to ensure environmental excellence.

Local Government Chronicle (LGC) Awards Nomination

In late 2022, the Council was shortlisted for the Climate Response award at the 2023 LGC awards. The submission was made following the implementation of our new Sustainable West Northants Strategy and programme.

Adaptation



Local Plan

The development plan for West Northamptonshire consists of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (WNJCS) (Part 1) and Part 2 Plans for the Daventry, Northampton and South Northamptonshire areas.

These plans all contain policies relating to sustainable development that are used to guide proposals and make decisions. The Plans will guide development in West Northamptonshire to 2029.

Policies S10 and S11 of the WNJCS specifically set out the sustainable development principles that applicants should adhere to with Policy C1 seeking to achieve modal shift to foot and cycle for most journeys.

Policies BN2 and BN3 relate to biodiversity and woodland enhancement and creation.

The Local Plan Part 2s (LPP2) adds further details to the Part 1 policies.

Policy ST1 of the Daventry Settlements and Countryside LPP2 supports measures to promote walking and cycling within and around Daventry town, including connections with nearby villages; between villages that depend on each other for services and facilities; and between other towns and villages. It also promotes specific walking and cycling routes and sustainable routes along the canal and disused railway line networks. The policy also encourages the provision of EV charging infrastructure within

developments.

Policy ENV9 supports proposals for renewable and low carbon development subject to their impact on a variety of environmental assets and existing development.

Policy CW1 promotes healthy lifestyles including co-locating services and provision of sustainable links between developments, services and facilities, jobs and the countryside.

Policy Q3 of the Northampton LPP2 requires developments to provide a Sustainability Statement to be submitted with planning applications discussing, among other issues, how the development will adapt to climate change, reduce carbon and manage water resources. Additionally, Policy MO1 'Designing sustainable transport and travel' requires new developments to be designed to promote, improve, and encourages active lifestyles to improve wellbeing.

Similarly, policies within the South Northamptonshire LPP2 (ST1, ENV9 and ENV11) require applicants to promote measures such as cycling and walking over the use of the private car, support renewable energy development and manage flood risk.

The Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan for West Northamptonshire. Sustainable development will be a golden thread running through the plan and planning policy is currently working with other services and stakeholders to ensure that policies can achieve quality sustainable development across the



Waste



Internal Waste

In December 2022, disposable coffee cups were removed from the café at One Angel Square, this means that disposable cups are now not supplied at any council offices. It was estimated that on an average day the café used 150 disposable coffee cups. An incentive was introduced to encourage people to bring their own cup and the café space was redeveloped to create a wellbeing area. The change has been received well by staff and has helped the Council to work towards its sustainability commitments by eliminating a whole waste stream.

As part of the work towards the Investors in the Environment accreditation, a Waste Management Plan was developed by the Facilities Management team to describe the waste collection processes at each of the WNC offices. Alongside this, new bin stickers were introduced to encourage recycling and reduce contamination. A food waste collection also commenced at One Angel Square and was already in place at the other offices.

Northampton Food Waste Reduction and Recycling Campaign

Starting in March 2023, the Northampton Food Waste Reduction and Recycling Campaign, "Love Food Hate Waste", is working with Public Health to promote healthy eating, to assist residents with cost-of-living crisis, to reduce the amount of food waste that is disposed of and to encourage residents to use the separate food waste collection systems.

Food waste is carbon intensive and can make up 30% of the carbon emissions from the residual waste stream. By reducing and recycling food waste WNC will also be reducing area wide carbon emissions.

Contamination in Recycling Campaign

The aim of this campaign is to reduce the amount of non-recyclable items in resident's co-mingled recycling bins. If the recycling collected is significantly contaminated, the whole load may be rejected, and this material is disposed of rather than recycled. This increases the costs to the council and means we aren't maximising the amount that can be recycled, with the associated carbon savings that recycling achieve.

Residents have helped us to increase the amount of waste that goes in their recycling bins rather than their waste bins, so now we are moving to the next level of recycling knowledge, and to aid residents in understanding this, our key campaign message is **'Right stuff, Right Bin. If in doubt, leave it out'**. The campaign is informing residents what items are accepted in their co-mingled recycling bin and where other items that are not accepted, but which could be recycled may be taken.



West Northamptonshire Bin App



During 2023 the availability of the West Northamptonshire bin app was extended to include the town of Northampton. Residents can use this app to be sent reminders as to when to put their general waste and recycling containers out for collection.

This aids the smooth running of the service, leads to fewer missed bins and encourages participation in our recycling services. The app can also be used to check what can and can't be recycled in our services but also by other community schemes. The app has replaced some paper-based forms of communicating with residents on recycling issues, meaning less paper use and reduced emissions from the delivery of printed materials to individual households. Further development of the app is planned for later in 2023, whereby residents will be able to use it to report issues which require our action to us.

Resources and Waste Strategy

At the formation of West Northamptonshire Council, the waste functions of the four predecessor councils amalgamated to become one waste collection and disposal service. This means the authority has a mixture of services provided "in house" and others

provided by contractors, the contracts for which will come to an end in 2025 (waste treatment, disposal and Household Waste Recycling Centres) and 2028 (waste collection).

Prior to these arrangements ending, consideration needs to be given to the Council's 'vision' for harmonising waste services, so that new arrangements can be put in place to ensure the seamless delivery of services for residents, that in their development and operation, meet the council's targets – financially and sustainability.

West Northamptonshire's Waste Management team are in the process of developing a 'Resources and Waste Strategy' which will provide the action plan for future implementation. The Vision for the strategy is currently subject to public consultation and will be finalised in the autumn of 2023.



Economic Growth



Economic Growth and Inward Investment Team

The Economic Growth and Inward Investment (EGII) Team have worked closely with the Sustainability Team in multiple initiatives, including launching the Sustainability strategy and establishing new initiatives to support employers to access guidance on decarbonisation. The EGII Team are leading on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which has dedicated funds aimed at decarbonisation for residents and for businesses, along with an allocation towards Active Travel.

The EGII Team are also leading on a new Place Vision for West Northamptonshire, establishing ambitious aspirations for how the area can be developed to continue to thrive and evolve to achieve economic prosperity. Sustainability is a priority for the Vision, recognising that energy efficiency, reduced emissions and nurturing the natural environment and supporting the planet are of utmost importance.

As part of the remit of the EGII Team, they are dedicated to supporting employers to fill their vacancies by utilising the skilled local labour market, as well as enabling residents to secure local, sustainable employment. This will result in reduced commuting, improved community engagement and increased economic benefits and retention of spend.

Inward Investment and place-marketing is a priority for the EGII Team and all of West Northamptonshire Council and they're dedicated to attracting employers to create highly skilled, highly paid jobs for local residents and boost the economy for the benefit of everyone.

The EGII Team and Sustainability Team will continue to work collaboratively for the benefit of the business community, using WNC as a champion and pioneer for reducing emissions and fulfilling the UNSDG's. This will result in an enhanced economy, a thriving community and showcasing West Northamptonshire as a destination to work, live, visit and invest.

Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) Start up Day

In February the Council's sustainability team attended a Business Start Up day ran by the BIPC Northamptonshire and engaged with pre-startup businesses to understand their barriers to engaging in sustainability and net zero. Feedback suggested that most business start-ups are keen to do the right thing from the outset but are unsure where to start and what information to trust. We have been awarded a share of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to offer support to businesses in West Northamptonshire to decarbonise during the next two years.

Explore West Northants App

The ExploreWN app is a tourism/e-commerce platform to raise awareness of the local offer to residents and visitors to West Northants. The website and app provide information on local events and things to do in the area as well as exclusive offers from local businesses. It is free for businesses to join and there are currently over 250 businesses/organisations registered across West Northants, with over 1,000 users utilising the innovative tool. By showcasing the high-quality local offer, residents aren't required to travel as far for shopping, tourism and leisure purposes, reducing commuting and increasing local spend. The app promotes the ethos of supporting the local community and the benefits and impacts this has to the economy.

This app is part of the reason that WNC was successful in winning the regional "All Round Small Business Friendly" Award in the FSB Local Government Awards, as it showcased West Northamptonshire Council's creative approach to promoting businesses, driving physical footfall, increasing local spend and shining a spotlight on local employers.



Regeneration



Northampton Bike Park

The project involved the conversion of a 16 ha site from a disused nine-hole golf course into a mountain bike centre. The project retained all the natural features and habitats which included native hedgerow, broadleaf woodland, neutral grass lands, ponds, ruderal areas and scrubland. These will be managed for the next 30 years via a Local Ecological Management Plan and monitored on a five yearly basis. Additional features including hibernacula and bird and bat boxes have been installed across the site.

The trails themselves are 1 to 3m in width and constructed from gravel and stone and are therefore not considered to result in the creation of significant ecological barriers to the movement of species within/across the site and as such, the scheme is not considered likely to result in a notable reduction of the site's overall ecological connectivity.

Prior to the construction of the bike park, the Northamptonshire area was devoid of any purpose-built free facilities, for off road cycling. Some unofficial trails have been built in local woods and are well used by local mountain bike riders, but obvious conflicts exist between the riders, landowners and other amenity users. Riders

were also driving up to two hrs or more to use facilities with a similar provision. The one thing all of these facilities have in common is the need for motorised transport to get there. Given this the Northampton will reduce the number of local users travelling to use facilities elsewhere and will also make it easier for younger riders to access. The facility is also in line with the Northamptonshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2020 which sets out measures to reduce health inequalities through the creation of spaces, facilities, and infrastructure to enable people to make healthier choices. It also sets out objectives to ensure people have access to leisure spaces, green and natural spaces and recreational facilities and community assets that promote health and wellbeing and improve cycling as part of an integrated infrastructure.



Environmental Health



Air Quality

WNC recognises that air pollution is a significant environmental and public health concern. During the last year a grant funded project from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has progressed the installation of real time NOx sensors at major junctions across Northampton. These sensors will link to traffic management systems and in due course provide real time air quality data to the roadside information screens.

A further project which has received funding for the coming year will progress the development of local evidence base on the extent of particulate pollution across West Northants using low-cost sensor. This data will be brought together with an evaluation of the extent of solid fuel combustion and the economic and social implications of any controls on this will assist in decision making in relation to an expansion of the existing smoke control areas in West Northants.

Fly Tipping

In Autumn 2022 the Cleaner Communities Campaign was launched with the aim of bringing together a range of services to help make West Northamptonshire a

cleaner and greener place to live and thrive. Through a dedicated webpage and social media posts, actions taken to address fly tipping and other environmental crime are publicised. Enforcement action forms part of the programme and during 2022/23 a total of 71 prosecutions for environmental crime offences were commenced. Work is progressing with MSc students at the University of Northampton to develop innovative approaches to better understand the causes of fly tipping and to find long term sustainable solutions to this problem.



Public Health and Wellbeing



During the last year, the public health team have been supporting colleagues around the development and implementation of the Anti-Poverty Strategy. They have provided £2 million of Public Health funding recognising that there is a link between poverty and a reduction in health and wellbeing. This funding has been used to support the warm spaces, distribution of the household support fund, Community Training Partnership, food larders and food banks.

The Integrated Care Northamptonshire System agreed its strategy for Northamptonshire in December 2022, and the team are currently working on the West Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy. It has 10 ambitions around 'Live Your Best Life': -

- The best start in life
- Access to the best available learning
- Opportunity to be fit, well and independent
- Employment that keeps them and their families out of poverty
- Good housing in places that are clean and green
- To feel safe in their homes and when out and about
- Connected to their friends and families
- The chance for a fresh start when things go wrong
- Access to health and social care when they need it
- To be accepted and valued simply for who they are.

Last year **Northamptonshire Health Inequalities Strategy and Plan** was produced which is based around the 'Core 20 plus 5', an NHS approach to reducing healthcare inequalities. The approach defines a target population – the 'Core20PLUS' – and identifies '5' focus clinical areas requiring accelerated improvement. The 'Core20' is the most

deprived 20% of the population as identified by the national Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). 'PLUS' is identified at a local level with people identified from ethnic minority communities, people with learning disabilities and long-term health conditions etc. '5' is the clinical areas of focus that require

accelerated improvements, this includes maternity, severe mental illness, early cancer diagnosis, chronic respiratory disease and hypertension case finding and optimal management. Alongside this the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment has been refreshed which is the baseline of health and wellbeing for residents in West Northamptonshire.

Public Health have funded a scheme with a contribution from the UKSPF called Northamptonshire Energy Saving Service (NESS) which is a multiagency service providing free, independent, and confidential advice and support to those who are struggling with fuel poverty. Over 640 residents in West Northants have been directly supported by NESS since August 2022. This has resulted in an estimated £14,418 energy savings for residents and the total debt managed is £117,928.

The development of the Northamptonshire Anchor Institutions Network began in 2022 led by public health. The network consists of organisations that have a significant impact across the local area due to their influence on employment, sustainability, assets and social value. One of the ambitions of the network organisations have committed to improving is their impact on sustainability.



Public Health and Wellbeing

Workplace Wellbeing

At West Northants Council we are in the process of implementing our Workforce Wellbeing Strategy, activities to date include reviewing and relaunching our Mental Health First Aider network; and providing Wellbeing rooms in our main office hubs. We have also developed guidance to Improve the Way you Work and support sustainable and healthier habits

in the now normal, virtual and hybrid workspace. Our learning and development open programme weaves wellbeing into all our delivery with focused courses on the impact of change and personal resilience.

Procurement



Social Value Policy

In 2022 the Council introduced a Social Value Policy for the decision making, procurement and contract delivery of its goods, services and works.

The Social Value priorities of WNC are as follows:

- Jobs – Promote local skills and employment
- Growth – Supporting growth of responsible regional business
- Social – Healthier, safer, and more resilient communities
- Environment – Decarbonising and safeguarding our world

We require our suppliers to set out the social, economic and environmental benefits they achieve when performing our contract meaning that the true commercial impact is taken into account when tendering. It will encourage vendors to consider the way that they deliver goods, services or works, for example:

- creating job opportunities for residents, those not in employment or for people with disabilities
- providing support, advice or mentoring opportunities to the unemployed, schools or school leavers
- providing opportunities for a diverse range of suppliers, including the participation of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and 3rd sector organisations, and local suppliers in general
- offering a range of apprenticeship, training and skills development opportunities as well as employment opportunities
- providing support for communities
- promoting greater environmental sustainability: minimising waste and pollution, supporting carbon reduction initiatives, furthering energy efficiency and other sustainability activities.

Since October 2022, successful providers who have bid for procurement contracts have promised £1,061,142 of additional Social Value alongside delivering the Contract.



Performance

The Council has 6 key priorities which all form part of the vision towards Sustainable West Northants. For more information on the 2022/23 performance against the corporate plan measures, [see the annual report.](#)

Green and Clean
Environment & Wellbeing

1

Improved Life Chances

Health, Social Care & Families

2

Connected Communities

Transport & Connectivity

3

Thriving Villages & Towns
Place Shaping & Homes

4

Economic Development
Growth & Prosperity

5

Robust Resource Management

Transparency & Financial Probity

6

Looking forward

This report provides a comprehensive overview of progress towards delivery of the Council's sustainability objectives and an overview of the work completed by the new sustainability team. The report will be published on an annual basis providing updates for residents on progress towards the Council's sustainability objectives. The next report will be a reflection on the current 2023/24 year and will be published in the autumn of 2024. To support our net zero ambitions, the Council is developing an Emissions Reduction Plan which will outline the route to achieving net zero on council operations by 2030. This report is expected to be published in early 2024.

To keep up to date with our progress, view the [Council's forward plan](#), visit our dedicated [Sustainable West Northants page](#) and follow the team on Twitter @SustainableWN. You can contact the team by email at sustainable@westnorthants.gov.uk



Glossary

Authority's Fleet - Vehicles owned and operated by the authority. (1)

Biodiversity – the variety of plant and animal life in a particular habitat (2)

Decarbonisation – the process of removing or reducing carbon emissions, especially carbon dioxide from the atmosphere because of a process

Financial Control Boundary - The authority reports on all sources of carbon emissions over which it has financial control. The authority has financial control over a service if it has the ability to direct the financial and operating policies of the service with a view to financially managing its activities, e.g. setting budgets, managing expenditure, and/or obtaining an 'income', such it might be the case in leisure centres, community centres, etc. (3)

Fuel Poverty – when households are spending 10% of their income to provide a sufficient heating regime. (<https://www.nea.org.uk/what-is-fuel-poverty/#:~:text=The%20definition%20of%20fuel%20poverty,maintain%20a%20satisfactory%20heating%20regime.>) (4)

Fugitive emissions - These emissions result from intentional or unintentional release. (3) The only fugitive emissions included in this report are those emitted from closed landfill sites.

Net Zero – achieving a balance between the carbon emitted into the atmosphere, and the carbon removed from it (What is net zero and how can we get there? - Energy Saving Trust) (5)

Outsourced Scope 3 emissions – These emissions are from high value, large, outsourced contracts which are likely to present the biggest opportunity for making emissions reductions. For example waste management services (collection, disposal, treatment), facilities management, leisure centres, highway maintenance, social care and children's services (including home to school transport) (1)

Ruderal – growing on waste ground

Scope 1 emissions - Direct GHG emissions occur from sources that are owned or controlled by the company, for example, emissions from combustion in owned or controlled boilers and vehicles. (3)

Scope 2 emissions - Indirect GHG emissions from the generation of purchased electricity consumed by the

company. (3)

Scope 3 emissions - Scope 3 is an optional reporting category that allows for the treatment of all other indirect emissions. These emissions are a consequence of the activities of the company, but occur from sources not owned or controlled by the company. For example, staff business travel, water usage, waste. (3)

Staff Business Travel - Vehicles owned by employees but used to carry out the business of the authority. (1)

Staff Commuting – This represents emissions from vehicles used for staff commuting to and from work. (1) This data was obtained by a survey undertaken by WNC.

T & D Losses – Electric utility companies often purchase electricity from independent power generators or the grid and resell it to end-consumers through a transmission and distribution (T&D) system. A portion of the electricity purchased by a utility company is lost during its transmission and distribution to end-consumers. (3)

References

1. LGA - Climate Change: <https://www.local.gov.uk/climate-change-reporting-guidance-local-authorities>
2. WWF - <https://www.worldwildlife.org/pages/what-is-biodiversity>
3. GHG Protocol - <https://ghgprotocol.org/sites/default/files/standards/ghg-protocol-revised.pdf>
4. NEA Action for Warm Homes - <https://www.nea.org.uk/what-is-fuel-poverty/>
5. Energy Saving Trust - <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/what-is-net-zero-and-how-can-we-get-there/>



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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

19 September 2022

**Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Wellbeing and Health Integration:
Cllr Matt Golby**

Report Title	Assistive Technology Framework
Report Author	Pedro Santos – Team Manager Assistive Technology Pedro.Santos@Westnorthants.gov.uk

List of Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	23/08/2023
Chief Finance Officer (S.151)	Martin Henry	23/08/2023
Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	22/08/2023

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Service background

Appendix B – Assistive Technology Strategy

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To outline Adult Social Care's intentions to renew and expand the existing Assistive Technology Framework which enables West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) and its partners to procure a range of assistive technology goods and services from appointed suppliers.
- 1.2 To seek Cabinet approval for delegated authority to renew and expand the framework to procure goods and services from the appointed suppliers where not already delegated.
- 1.3 To continue to support the implementation of the Assistive Technology Strategy and the expansion of remote monitoring in Northamptonshire.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 West Northamptonshire Council (Assistive Technology and Call Care) currently supplies a range of assistive technology to over 9,000 people across Northamptonshire per year, supporting them to live more independently.
- 2.2 The assistive technology framework enables the Assistive Technology team and Call Care to purchase equipment which the service then delivers to the people of Northamptonshire as required and as per their assessed need.
- 2.3 The assistive technology service is currently hosted in the West and will continue to provide the service on behalf of North Northamptonshire until 31st of March 2024, when the service is due to be disaggregated.
- 2.4 As a result of service developments and new partnerships, it is proposed that Northampton Health Foundation Trust, North Northants Council and both the General Hospitals are added to the framework. This strategic move aims to bolster our partners, enhance project delivery efficiency, streamline procurement processes, and foster continuous development within our partnerships, ultimately leading to improved outcomes and increased procurement efficiencies.
- 2.5 The Assistive Technology Service provides a range of equipment including:
- Telecare – group of devices that link to a 24h monitoring centre, WNC Call Care, and lead/require an emergency response. This includes pendants, smoke detectors, fall sensors, bed and chair sensors, etc.
 - Apps – With the increased use of smartphones and tablets apps, companies started to cater towards people with disabilities and creating apps that support people in communicating, anxiety, reminders, guided conversations etc.
 - Monitoring devices – Passive devices that provide information about the person activity or location whilst at home or when accessing the local community.
 - Memory prompts – reminders to prompt the person to complete tasks throughout the day, for example, medication, drinking water, eating, etc.
 - Hearing equipment – safety and quality of life devices for hearing impaired people.
 - Smart Devices – Google Home or Amazon Alexa provide good alternatives to more complex environmental control devices and the ability for a person to use their voice to control some aspects of their life such as calling for help, talking to friend and family, turning lights on and off, etc.
 - Remote monitoring / Telehealth – the use of assistive technology to monitor, control or manage a person health remotely. These devices include the use of spo2, blood pressure,

thermometers and weight scales linked to a software platform that provides alerts when readings are deemed out of variance leading to a clinical intervention.

- As part of the new Assistive Technology strategy and in partnership with Northampton Health Foundation Trust (NHFT) the Assistive Technology Team have implemented and developed a Virtual Care Hub. The hub is composed by NHFT nurses, Assistive Technology staff and Call Care operators to bring remote monitoring to Northamptonshire.

- 2.6 The project has provided support to over 650 people in the first year and responded to over 23,000 alerts, leading to people in their own home or in a residential care to be able to stay in their place of choice for longer, avoid hospital admissions, reduce emergency ambulance calls and tackle early signs of deterioration.
- 2.7 The existing project has been given approval to continue for the remaining future and it's part of the NHFT 5-year funding plan. New pathways for the community remote monitoring are being developed such as: heart failure, diabetes, AF screening, etc., and we are also increasing the number of care homes in the county who can access this service and therefore continue developing and expanding the hub.
- 2.8 The hub has been recognised by the HSJ Digital Awards where they won in the category of Improving Out of Hospital Care Through Digital and received a high commendation in Connecting Health and Social Care Through Digital.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet
- a) Approve the establishment of a framework to allow West Northamptonshire Council to procure a range of assistive technology goods and services from appointed suppliers.
 - b) Give delegated authority to the Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing to establish the Assistive Technology Framework to procure goods and services from appointed suppliers where not already delegated.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- To comply with procurement requirements and West Northants procurement policy
- To enable the procurement of assistive technology equipment so that the service and their partners can continue/purchase equipment which supports people to live more independently and reduces the need for higher cost care packages.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 The existing assistive technology framework has been live since April 22 and is set to expire on 31st March 2024. There is an opportunity to extend the existing framework, however, this would potentially limit the service as it would mean that new providers/partners cannot be added and new developments in technology may therefore not be able to be utilised. Page 243

- 5.2 The existing Assistive Technology Service is hosted by West Northants Council, delivered on behalf of North Northamptonshire and is due to be disaggregated in April 24.
- 5.3 A new Assistive Technology Framework for the procurement of equipment is required from 1st April 2024 to allow the team to continue to help promote Northamptonshire residents' quality of life, independence and wellbeing, support with hospital discharges and the delivery of cost avoidances to Health and Social Care.
- 5.4 The service is seeking approval to establish a new Assistive Technology Framework to ensure compliance with legislation and West Northants Council's procurement policy. A new framework will also support future work with a range of partners developing new models for delivering care and support across the county. (See appendix 2, The AT Strategy)

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 Not to approve the procurement/renew of the Assistive Technology Framework will lead to the service not being able to continue to develop the existing projects and create limitations of what can be done to support vulnerable people in Northamptonshire.
- 6.2 Approval to proceed with the procurement of an Assistive Technology Framework, will result in the service being able to continue to provide equipment to the vulnerable people of Northamptonshire and continue the development of the service.

7. Implications

7.1 Resources and Financial

7.1.1 The framework value will be set to an upper limit of £3,000,000.

7.1.2 This value does not mean that the Assistive Technology team will spend the estimated amount in the 4 years of the framework (2+2), as the value is set to a level which will allow the service and its partners (including health as part of the integrated care system) to use the framework up to that limit. Currently the existing framework is limited to £250,000 per year, which significantly limits the ability to open the framework to partners and consider projects without reaching the maximum value.

7.1.3 It is therefore proposed that the Framework should be set at this value to future proof the service for developments which can benefit people of Northamptonshire. Internal governance procedures will ensure that any expenditure incurred can be met from within existing budgets

7.1.4 The current equipment spent is capitalised and there are no implications to the existing budgets or expenditure levels through this procurement framework paper.

7.1.5 There are no implications on staffing levels through this procurement framework paper.

7.2.1 It is necessary for contracting authorities to treat economic operators equally and without discrimination and to act in a transparent and proportionate manner in order to comply with procurement legislation.

7.2.2 The design of the procurement shall not be made with the intention of excluding it from the procurement legislation or of artificially narrowing competition

7.2.3 Although there's an existing framework which could be extended for another 2 years the limitations on value and partner accessibility will severely limit the potential development of the service and the positive impact it can achieve.

7.3 Risk

7.3.1 Delays in the approval decision and therefore procurement of a new Framework will put at risk new developments and may prevent the acquisition of suppliers or services for WNC.

7.3.2 There are no other significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

7.4 Consultation and Communications

7.4.1 WNC Procurement Team will communicate with the current providers within the existing WNC framework, notifying them of our decision not to proceed with the renewal of the existing framework.

7.4.2 Further communication will be shared with existing providers and the market to generate interest and invite them to apply to the new framework.

7.4.3 WNC partners have been made aware of our intention to name them under the proposed new Framework and guidance will be provided to them.

7.1 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

Comments have not been requested from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to this report and recommendations.

7.2 Climate Impact

The use of assistive technology promotes efficient ways of support for individuals who have health and social care needs. The technology can support independence or reduced dependency on social care type services reducing the climate/environmental impact of physical support which causes additional road use and traffic in our communities.

7.3 Community Impact

The Community Impact would rise from a failure to provide Assistive Technology to the people of Northamptonshire. Financial pressures would increase via the need to meet eligible care needs through more formal care packages which may disproportionately be felt in more deprived areas of Northamptonshire where usage is higher.

8. Background Papers

Appendix 1 - AT Strategy

Endorsement -

In recent years, the digital revolution has changed our world. Our long term vision for Health, Social Care and Housing sees huge opportunity for using modern digital technology to transform the way our services are provided.

New assistive technology will play an ever increasing role in supporting healthy and fulfilling lives. This strategy document sets out a vision for how we can use a more preventative approach rather than a reactive approach using the best of the latest technology to support people within Northamptonshire to thrive.

There is an opportunity across Health, Social Care, Housing, other public bodies and voluntary sector (See Appendix 1) to join together around a new “Northamptonshire Assistive Technology Model” building on National Ageing Well Programme priorities in Northamptonshire. Underpinning this is the NHCP’s (Northamptonshire health and care partnership) iCAN (integrated care across Northamptonshire) programme.

How will iCAN support the system vision and mission?

Northamptonshire
Health and Care Partnership

The aims of the iCAN programme align with the NHCP mission for people to choose well, stay well and live well. We’ve looked at each of these elements in turn through our pillars; Primary & Community, Discharge and Frailty.



iCAN be sure that the right choices are available to me

iCAN be sure that the right services are there to help me look after my own health



iCAN be sure that the right services are there to detect, diagnose and treat my illness as early as possible

iCAN be sure that I get the right treatment



iCAN be sure that the right care and support exists to help me manage

iCAN be sure that the care and support is in the right place for me

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The aims of the iCAN programme alongside principals of the strength based conversation model adopted by adult social care means that there is a significant opportunity for technology to play a prominent role in achieving the best outcomes possible for the people of Northamptonshire. (See Appendix 2&3 for NHCP and iCAN governance structures)

Northamptonshire in 2025



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The strategy itself was developed with input from Health, Social Care, Housing and a wide range of partners and stakeholders. We are delighted to welcome this assistive technology strategy and look forward to the developments that will follow from it; along with the benefits that flow from people independence living well-connected lives within our communities (See Appendix 2&3)

Summary

Northamptonshire Vision for the use of Assistive Technology

To use a proactive, preventive approach to assistive technology, making the hub(s) the heartbeat, joining services across Health, Social Care and Housing to provide an early response to support people to live where they want to be, stay connected to their local communities, staying fitter and active for longer. With the ability to trigger rapid support at times of rapid deterioration or crisis

Achieving the strategic aims

Prevention and independence

- Using technology in care and support planning
- Using data from the hub(s) to initiate the right response at the right time
- Developing the technology service offer using the latest technologies
- Research new and innovative ways to support different groups of people

Enhancing independence

Supporting the provision of care and support in the right place

Information and choice

- Promoting apps, kits and technology to our people
- Equipping our staff with the skills they need to inform and advise
- Supporting people to use technology

Through co-production creating a menu of digital options recognising the unique needs of each person

Empowering people

Use of data to future plan for people's care and support

Future proof

- Understanding, testing and using new technology
- Using data and evaluating effectiveness to inform future direction

Building on interoperability capability which promotes intelligent sharing of key information between solutions

Process and practice change

Value

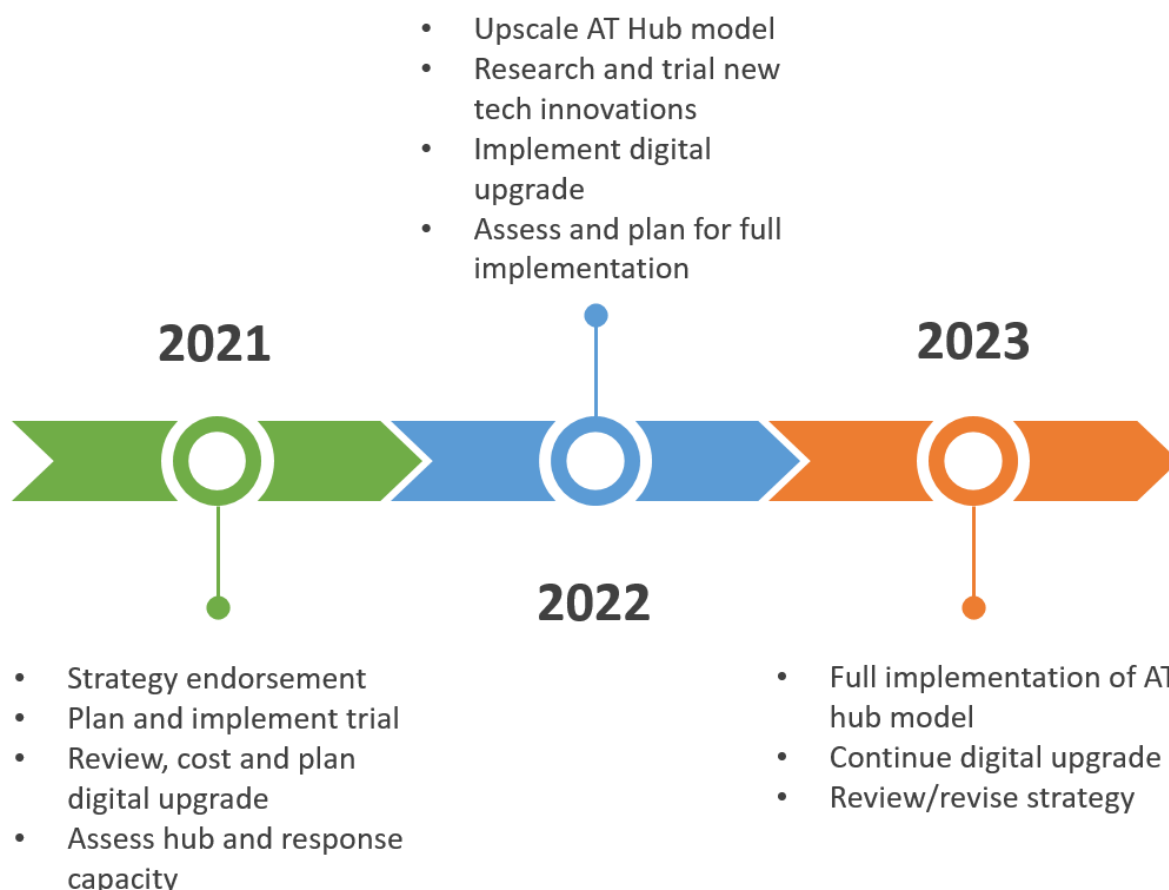
- Understanding the economic costs and benefits and using our resources to achieve the greatest impact

- Investing in assistive technology for prevention to save money in the future

Capturing wellbeing as reported by the user in relation to benefit of technology used

Self care and connection with others

3 Year Plan



Introduction

We live in a fast moving digital world where the use of technology has become common place. All public and partner organisations have embraced the use of technologies in varying degrees and volumes. Much of the use of technology from these organisations has been implemented in isolation specifically to enhance services and efficiencies in delivery to the person they are serving rather than at scale to meet overall population outcomes

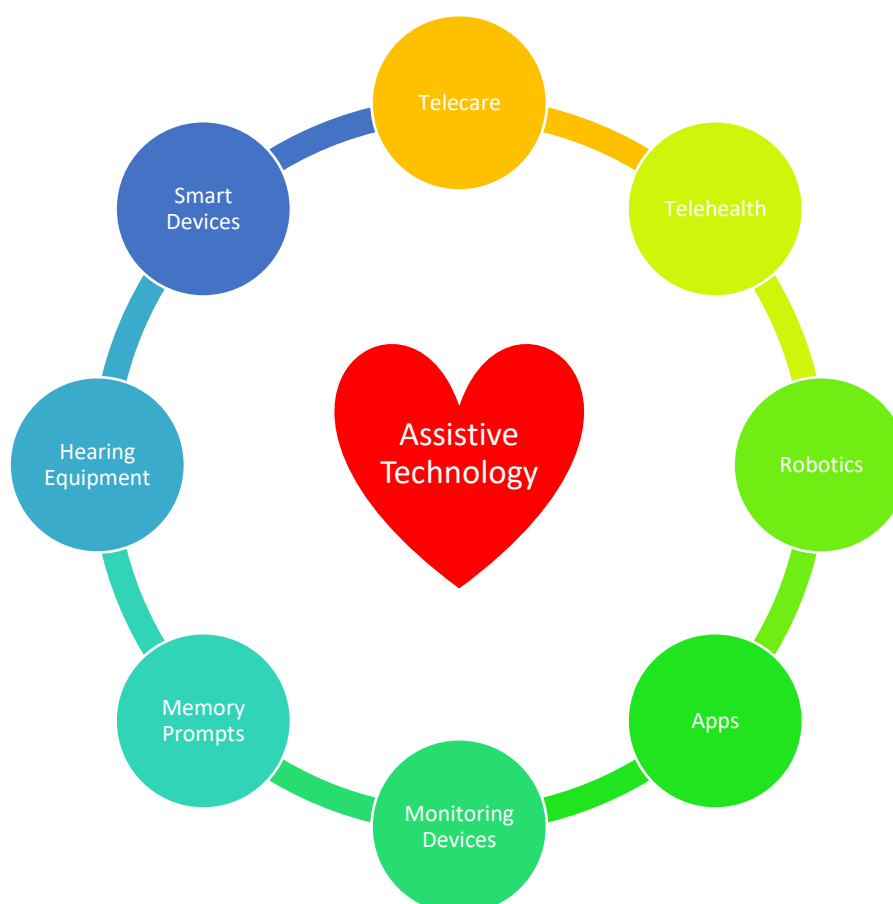
There has been growth in telecommunications and mobile phone internet which enables people to be more in control of their own lives. Health prevention is growing, as sensors installed in people's smartphones allow them to measure and monitor their wellbeing and fitness through activity; use of health promoting apps which can promote healthy lifestyles and detect the signs of illness. Signal strength and coverage continues to improve with superfast broadband and fibre coverage within Northamptonshire at 99%.

These developments have the power to transform the delivery of Health, Social Care and Housing and align our public services in Northamptonshire as we have never seen or experienced before.

The pandemic has shown us that technology can aid safety and has been actively embraced by cohorts within our society who may previously had some reluctance to engage. We now have a new challenge – to ensure that we do not create digital inequalities within our population

What is AT?

Assistive technology refers to devices or systems that help maintain or improve a person's ability to do things in everyday life. These can assist with a range of difficulties, including problems with memory and mobility.



Elements which come together within the Assistive Technology umbrella include:

Telecare – group of devices that link directly to a 24h monitoring centre and lead to an emergency response.

Telehealth – Health data gathering devices that provide information on various readings allowing proactive approaches to take place through the identification of needs and escalation to the appropriate services.

Robotics – The constant expansion in the field of robotics means that this technology will start seeing an increased use in the future through exoskeletons, artificial intelligent companions and daily living devices.

Apps – With the increase use of smartphones and tablets apps, companies started to cater towards people with disabilities and creating apps that support people in communicating, anxiety, reminders, guided conversations etc.

Monitoring devices – Passive devices that provide information about the person activity or location whilst at home or when accessing the local community.

Memory prompts – reminders to prompt the person to complete tasks throughout the day, for example, medication, drinking water, eating, etc.

Hearing equipment – safety and quality of life devices for hearing impaired people.

Smart Devices – Google Home or Amazon Alexa can provide good alternatives to more complex environmental control devices and the ability for a person to use their voice to control some aspects of their life such as calling for help, talking to friend and family, turning lights on and off, closing curtains or blinds etc.

Benefits of Technology

Improved quality of life for people through AT

Reduce social isolation for people

Raise awareness of partner services

Reduction in ambulance calls and A&E visits

Support Hospital discharges

Cost avoidance

Benefits of Technology

Improve quality of life – Supports people to achieve their outcomes improving their health and wellbeing and maintain independence for as long as possible

Reduce Social Isolation – The hub will make proactive wellbeing calls to identified groups of people, link people with partner organisations, charities, libraries, events, to promote community based approaches and support services. This includes the provision of targeted on-line support groups e.g. Dementia Choir

Raise awareness of partner services- Promotion of county wide services through the 3 conversation model and iCAN approach and the extended functionality of a Northamptonshire Health and Care Directory

Reduction in ambulance calls and A&E visits – Achieved by working proactively and avoiding crisis situations through the use of data, wellbeing checks and early warning indicators when person is self-reporting as feeling unwell. Use of response services instead of blue light services for less urgent and complex interventions.

Supporting Hospital discharges – Through iCAN and National Ageing Well Programme including provision of additional monitoring equipment with direct links back to hospital Consultants during the first few days following return to place of usual residence

Cost Avoidance – Delivery of cost avoidances to both social and health care

Current Situation

There are numerous commissioned assistive technology services across Northamptonshire offering various types of technology ranging from health monitors, telecare, trackers, hearing equipment, monitoring devices and smart devices. these services are commissioned by various partners across health, Social care and Housing. Private partners also offer an array of technology solutions.

Much of the existing telecare offers are largely analogue based which will need to move to digital platforms by 2025.

The services provided across the public sector in Northamptonshire are generally seen as successful arrangements with well established, tried and tested approaches. Health Social Care and Housing would like to build on the successes and extend the use of this technology from a reactive approach to a preventative approach meeting needs at a much earlier stage. It also aims to harness the benefits of newer forms of technology.

Ambition

Our ambition for Northamptonshire is to connect Health, Social Care and Housing through the use of modern assistive technology, having it beat strongly at the heart of our services rather than a pulse on extremities of our organisations. Assistive technology has often been treated as an add on to services something that is thrown in on the side to give us some additionally rather than thinking it as a core component of the whole system.

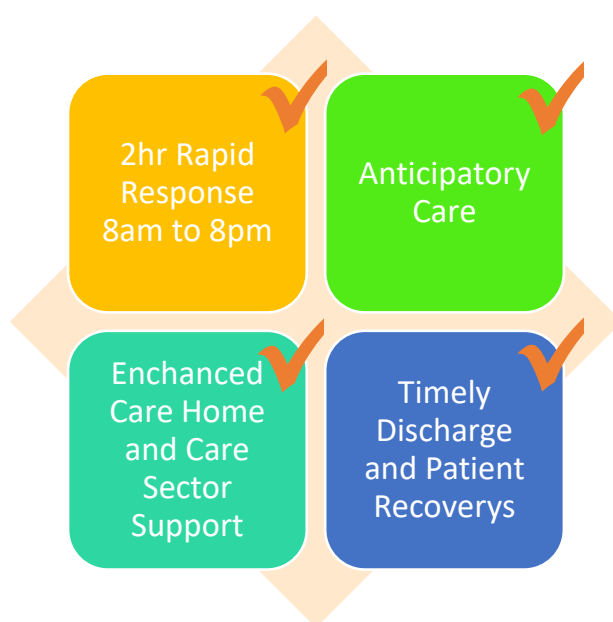
Our ambition is, aligned to holistic care planning all of our older population and those who are younger with frailty will be offered technology solutions to aid them. By 2025 we expect 50% of our older population to have some form of technology linked to our central monitoring hub. This will give a coverage of circa 70,000 persons.

We aim to use a new central hub(s) as the heartbeat of the preventative AT strategy, joining up technology around the county, using it to know and understand the needs of our people, maximising and personalising the use of assistive technology with the people that use the services. We will also aim to incorporate the best of all latest technologies and approaches to deliver the New “Northamptonshire AT model” and implement the required changes to be digital ready by 2025.

We recognise the diverse range of solutions available within the market and intend to work with a number of different providers to ensure the best products and personalised solutions are available for our population. All suppliers we work with will be required to support the ambitions of the Northamptonshire Health and Care Partnership, support research and evaluation, including using data to support population health management, the building of an evidence based practice, and will be expected to work collaboratively to ensure timely access to information and minimise multiple log-ins for those monitoring and delivering care.

The Northamptonshire AT model, will support the delivery of the National Ageing Well Programme priorities in Northamptonshire and deliver on the iCAN digital program using the principals of the strength based conversation model. The Northamptonshire AT Model will build upon the existing tailored offer to working aged adults to incorporate the latest evidenced based practice to maximise the opportunities for independent living.

National Ageing Well Priorities



The AT Strategy

Key point	Description
Prevention	Use of Technology Enabled Care (TEC) and telehealth to identify and prevent ‘crisis management’ situations supporting customers to avoid the need for more intensive forms of care and promote their independence across all working age adults and older persons
Digital & Data	Use of data provided by TEC’s to target customer groups with specific interventions and provide a known customer/known needs approach. Using the single care record to support this
Future Proof	Digital ready technology in line with the digital switch over from analogue to digital.
Partnership	Look for opportunities across Health, Social Care, Housing, Voluntary Sector and their partners to design approaches and work collaborations including response services
Value	Understand the social and economic costs and benefits of TEC’s and targeting resources accordingly; use TEC’s to meet the challenges of rising demography and increasing complexity.

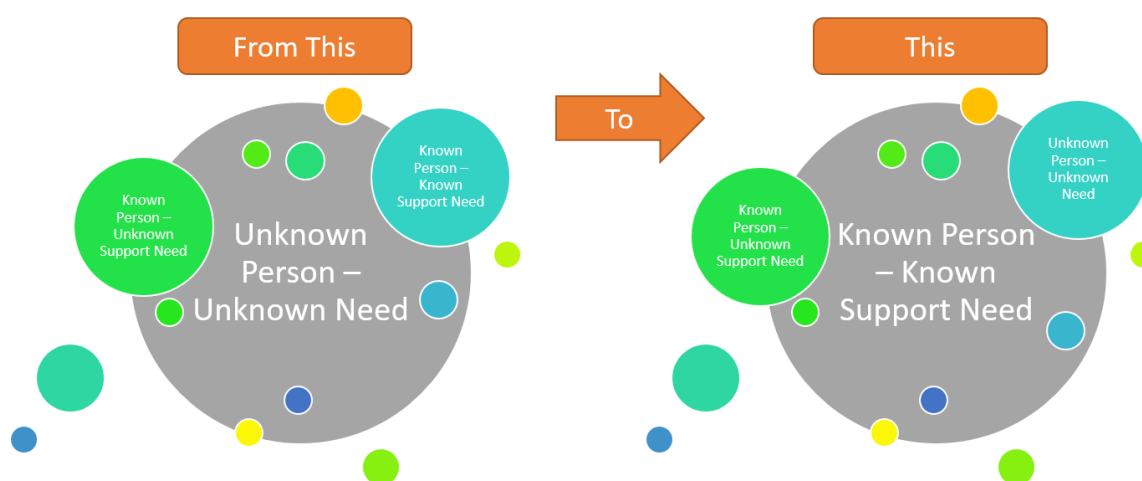
Prevention - Use of existing Telecare Control rooms to create a Hub where customer information is gathered through the use of TEC devices. The hub(s) approach will be based on a wraparound model of AT support and will provide regular proactive wellbeing calls to people with the intent to find information about a specific need or just a general proactive conversation and provide a proportionate response to emerging and changing need

The test and learn process during year two will inform the future accommodation requirements of the core hub function. Aligned to the new Rapid Response clinical triage function and primary care there is significant opportunity to consider co-location of these elements. Virtual links will also be essential to the Mental Health Hub, Police and Fire HQ and the primary care out of hours’ hubs.

There will need to be dedicated digital back up capabilities both with servers and second delivery / access site for the hub in the event of unforeseen local environmental issues or cyber-attacks.

This approach will allow both Health, Social Care and housing to identify early signs of deterioration which might require input from their professionals and reduce the number of people who receive crisis management interventions across both sectors. The aim of this approach will be to know more people and know their needs, see diagram below.

Northamptonshire Integrated Care Approach - “Know the Person, Know the Need”



The Hub will be able to target specific groups of people with specific questions or reminders, identify 1st signs of vulnerability or deterioration and when information gathered requires further intervention, inform the appropriate teams and partners.

Responder services are a fundamental part of the TEC's and we aim to link community response resources when a visit is required.

The hub will provide potential opportunities to provide a single access point for health and social care to further integrate services.

Digital and Data - TEC devices can provide a wealth of data that can provide opportunities to improve or transform provision of services.

Telehealth in conjunction with a proactive approach has an increase benefit for Health and Social Care in identifying people that require input prior to crisis and therefore reduce the need for long term interventions or emergency admissions.

Devices that provide activity monitoring information such as, GPS trackers, Canary, Brain in Hand, Embrace etc. can have rules and alerts being triggered to the hubs and emergency calls made to the appropriate responders.

Future proof - Continue development of new technologies requires constant exploration of TEC solutions. Our aim is to identify, test and deploy new TEC's that provide a solution for the needs of the people of Northamptonshire.

Partnership - To maximise the benefits and opportunities provided by TEC's and bring these to as many people as possible. The new Northamptonshire AT model will be delivered in partnership with NHS, Public Health, Voluntary and Community Sector and housing groups.

Value - Many studies have demonstrated the value in preventative approaches through the use TEC's.

The Barcelona model white paper and the Airedale reports, both link the use of TEC's to savings and cost avoidances, to both Health and Social Care, by reducing emergency admissions, A&E contacts and provide cost avoidances through the preventative approach.

Value in promoting self-care and self-help – For people across the age spectrum who have low level needs, do not require monitoring and would benefit from advice and information, the strategy would promote, and encourage the use of mainstream technologies in everyday life. The AT strategy will also aim to build a body of expert evidence based practice of technologies (through evaluation and research) that can produce effective outcomes for people to use in their lives.

Operational Vision – “Northamptonshire AT Model”

A proactive hub as the heartbeat, making proactive wellbeing calls, monitoring and analysing numerous devices and data, engaging with people.



Timely Response – the hub will connect with local services sharing data and signposting in a timely way to ensure people receive the right response at the right time.



For our supported persons this will be a key part of their overall support offer. The wider elements of which are highlighted in the visual below.

In 2025 I will have

Northamptonshire
Health and Care Partnership



Northamptonshire AT Model - 3 Year Plan

Year 1

- Northamptonshire AT Strategy to be endorsed across system partners
- Communicate the new Northamptonshire AT Strategy
- MAP Acute/Community AT & response Services
- Plan & Implement trial of the [Northamptonshire AT Hub Model](#)
- Research and report on findings of [Northamptonshire AT Hub Model](#)
- Implement new learning
- Research and trial new tech & innovations
- Review, Cost, Plan, apply for funding for Digital Upgrade
- Assessment of hub capacity for wider implementation (65%)
- Assessment of response service capacity for wider implementation (65%)
- Plan wider implementation and apply for funding as required (65%)

Year 2

- Implementation and upscale of the [Northamptonshire AT Hub Model](#) (65%)
- Research and report on findings of the [Northamptonshire AT Hub Model](#)
- Implement new learning
- Continue to research, trial and implement as BAU new tech & innovations
- Implement Digital Upgrade
- Further assessment of hub capacity for full implementation
- Further assessment of response service capacity for full implementation
- Plan full implementation and apply for funding as required

Year 3

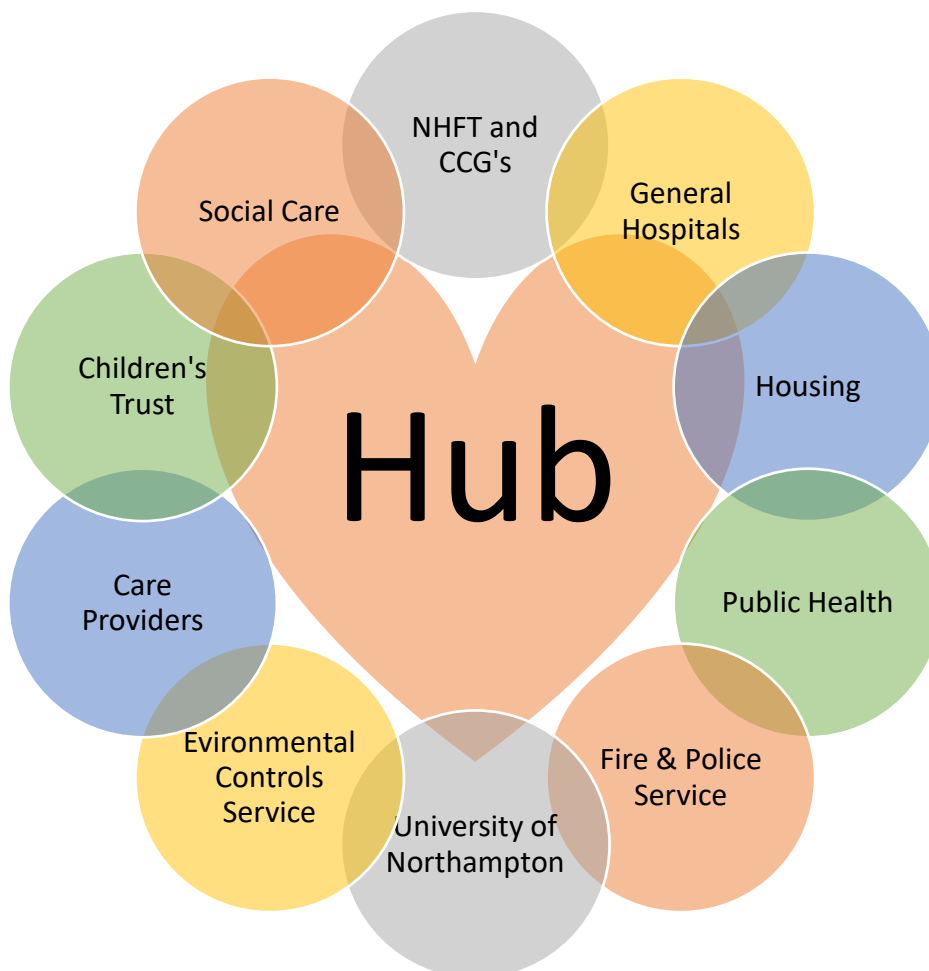
- Full Implementation of the [Northamptonshire AT Hub Model](#)
- Research and report on findings of [Northamptonshire AT Hub Model](#)
- Implement new learning
- Continue to research, trial and implement as BAU new tech & innovations
- Continue Digital Upgrade
- Review, revise and communicate 3 Year Northamptonshire AT Strategy

Appendices

Appendix 1

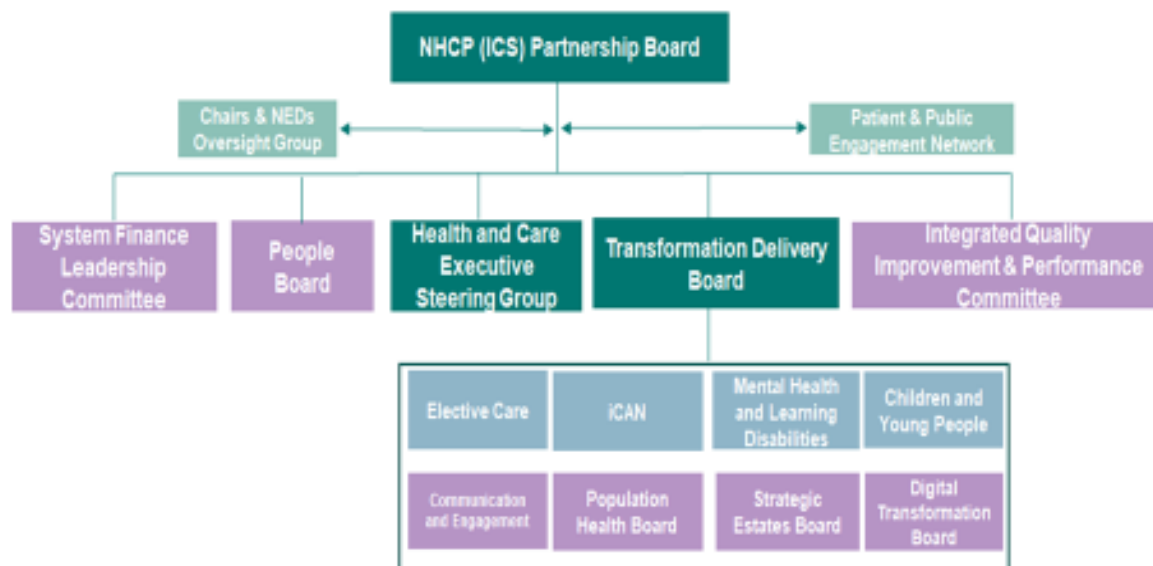
Our Partners

Aim to have the following partner organisations sign up to the AT Strategy;



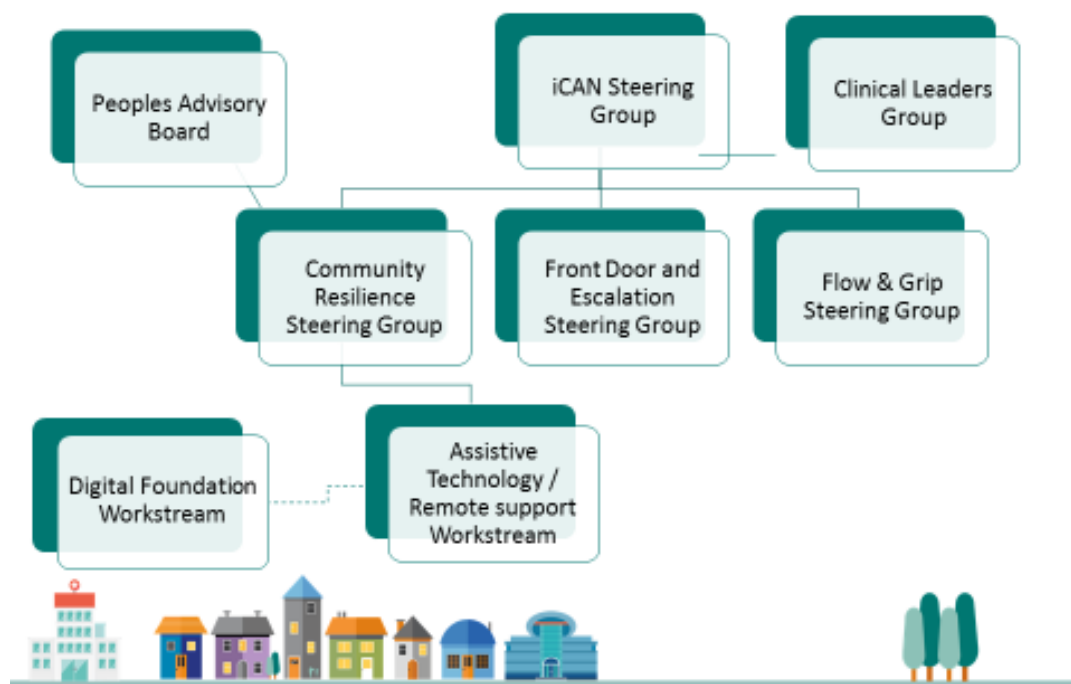
Appendix 2

NHCP Integrated Governance



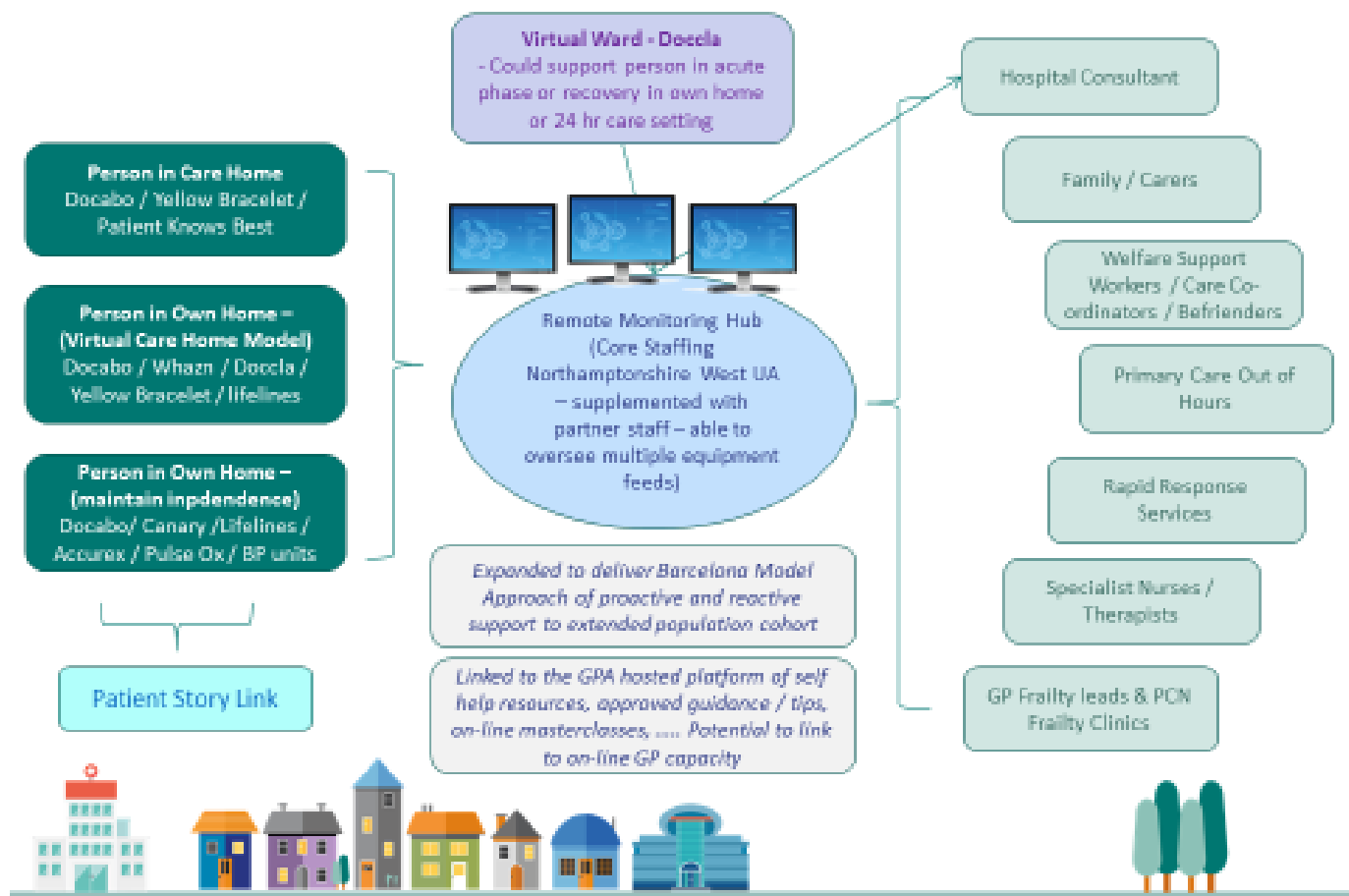
Appendix 3

iCAN Governance



Appendix 4

Remote Patient Support – draft visual



Appendix 5

Current AT Provision Map – currently incomplete

Organisation	Service Offer	Commissioning Organisation	Provider
Assistive Technology Team	Countywide	CCG	NHFT
Call Care	Countywide	WNC	WNC
Vitalink	Corby	NNC	NNC
Grand Union Housing	South Northants	Grand Union Housing	Grand Union Housing
North Northamptonshire	Kettering	NNC	NNC
Greatwell Homes	Greatwell Homes Properties, Wellingborough	Greatwell Homes	Greatwell Homes
Longhurst Group	Longhurst Group Properties, East Northants	Longhurst Group	Longhurst Group
Beep Assist	Futures Housing, Daventry	Futures Housing Group	Futures Housing Group
Electronic Assistive Technology Service (eats)	Countywide	CCG	Lincolnshire Community Health Services, NHS
Yellow Bracelet	Countywide	CCG	CCG

Appendix 6

Current Response Provision Map – currently incomplete

Category	Service Offer	Commissioning Organisation	Provider
ICT	Countywide	CCG	NHFT
START	Countywide	WNC	WNC
Social Care Response Service	Countywide	WNC	WNC
Rapid Response Team	Countywide	CCG	NHFT
Call Care Emergency Response Service	Northampton Partnership Homes	WNC	WNC
Night Sitting Service	Countywide	WNC	WNC

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

19 September 2023

**Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Wellbeing and Health Integration:
Cllr Matthew Golby,**

Report Title	Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy
Report Author	Sally Burns, Director of Public Health, West Northants Council

List of Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	23/08/2023
Chief Finance Officer (S.151)	Martin Henry	23/08/2023
Other Director	Stuart Lackenby	23/08/2023
Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	22/08/2023

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report presents the draft West Northamptonshire Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy to Cabinet Members for endorsement and support.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Health and Care Act 2022 requires all Health and Wellbeing Boards to develop and deliver a Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy. This strategy will complement and contribute to the system wide strategy, 'Integrated Care Northamptonshire' – Live Your Best Life, which was adopted by the Integrated Care Board in December 2022.

- 2.2 The Draft Strategy has been developed over the last year and reports to the West Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Board on 23 March and 25 May 2023 particularly focused on local engagement gathered to inform the strategy and priorities against the 10 Live Your Best Life ambitions.
- 2.3 The Board endorsed the draft strategy for wider formal consultation on the 27 July including the key priority outcomes to jointly deliver and focus its ambition to ensure local people Live Their Best Life.
- 2.4 The Local Authority is a key statutory partner on the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Board is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Wellbeing and Health Integration.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet endorse and support the approval of the Draft West Northamptonshire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy by the Health and Wellbeing Board.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 The Local Authority is a key Statutory Partner on the Health and Wellbeing Board and therefore it is important that the strategy is endorsed and supported by West Northants Council through its Cabinet.
- 4.2 Delivery of the Strategy underpins the authority's wellbeing responsibilities as set out in the Care Act 2014
- 4.3 The Draft West Northamptonshire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy is aligned to the Corporate Plan and associated strategies.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 The Health and Care Act 2022 changed the leadership architecture around the Health and Care system. An Integrated Care Board and Partnership was established in Northamptonshire including membership from West and North Northamptonshire Councils and other key system partners.
- 5.2 Health and Wellbeing Boards continue to be responsible for assessing the health and wellbeing needs of their population and publishing a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and a Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- 5.3 The Draft West Northamptonshire Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy sets out the priorities for improving the health and wellbeing of West Northamptonshire, highlights how the identified needs will be addressed, including addressing health inequalities. The Strategy reflects the evidence of need and feedback from local people.

- 5.4 The Strategy will directly inform the development of joint commissioning arrangements

Section 75 of the National Health Service Act 2006) in West Northamptonshire and the co-ordination of NHS and local authority commissioning, including Better Care Fund plans.

- 5.5 To ensure that local authorities build on their unique 'place' role to support the delivery of the ICB Health and Care Strategy, the Board is required to agree and deliver a Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy to ensure that locally agreed ambitions and outcomes can be fully delivered in West Northamptonshire.
- 5.6 Work on the development of the draft strategy started in January working closely with system wide colleagues and extensive engagement with stakeholders and local people. A draft strategy is now prepared for approval for wider consultation and is attached at Appendix A

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 The Health and Wellbeing Board endorsed the Strategy for Public Engagement in July and since that time wider engagement with residents, local community leaders and organisations has taken place. The Strategy has also been presented to the partner organisations as required.
- 6.2 A Local Area Partnership engagement plan is being developed to facilitate community feedback alongside updated evidence from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment enabling it to be reviewed and updated as necessary.
- 6.3 Work is also underway to embed the agreed high level outcomes framework and progress the delivery plans for each of the ambitions in the Strategy. The Health and Wellbeing Board is expected to approve the final version of this document at its meeting at the end of September.

7. Implications

7.1 Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1 There are no immediate financial implications as a result of this report but the strategy sets out the priorities for the Health and Wellbeing Board and therefore it is anticipated that all organisations support, align and focus their resources towards these priorities.

7.2 Legal

- 7.2.1 Health and Wellbeing Boards have a statutory responsibility for assessing the health and wellbeing needs of their population and publishing a joint Strategic Needs Assessment and a Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The draft strategy sets out the priorities for improving the health and wellbeing of West Northamptonshire

7.3 Risk

- 7.3.1 Work is underway to produce delivery plans behind each of the ambitions in the health and Wellbeing Strategy, this includes risk identification and risk management.

7.4 Consultation and Communications

7.4.1 Extensive consultation has taken place so far with partners, stakeholders and with communities. Further wider consultation is planned and the delivery approach is based on consultation and co-production.

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.5.1 The strategy has not been considered by overview and scrutiny however there have been three all member workshops so far as part of the progression of this work.

7.6 Climate Impact

7.6.1 There are positive implications and the impact of climate change and adaptation to climate change clearly has important implications for the health and wellbeing of our residents. Through the delivery of the strategy we will have a positive impact.

7.7 Community Impact

7.7.1 The Local Area Partnership and place delivery model which underpins the draft Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy will help focus on reducing health inequalities across both geographical communities and communities of interest.

8. Background Papers

8.1

- a) West Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy Engagement overview
- b) Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Refresh
[Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\) | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/joint-strategic-needs-assessment-jsna)
- c) Integrated Care Northamptonshire Strategy
[Integrated Care Northamptonshire Strategy \(icnorthamptonshire.org.uk\)](https://www.icnorthamptonshire.org.uk)
- d) Five Year Forward View Strategy
[NHS Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board Five-Year Joint Forward Plan \(icnorthamptonshire.org.uk\)](https://www.icnorthamptonshire.org.uk/nhs-northamptonshire-integrated-care-board-five-year-joint-forward-plan)
- e) Summary of engagement feedback by live your best life ambitions 1 and 2 (available on request from chloe.gay@westnorthants.gov.uk)
- f) West Northamptonshire Feedback from local engagement informing the JLHWS (available on request from chloe.gay@westnorthants.gov.uk)

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Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy

2023-2028

Please note, this is a draft version subject to consultation feedback, final proofing and accessibility checks

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Summary of our strategy

Our shared vision

We want to work better together to create a place where people are active, confident and enjoy good health and wellbeing. A West Northamptonshire where people can see and feel a bright future for quality support and services when they need help.

Across the life course we are committed to



Starting Well



Living Well



Ageing Well

Our approach

1. Prevention as a priority
2. Tackling health and wellbeing inequalities
3. The importance of 'Place' and delivery through our Local Area Partnerships and Local Area Forums
4. An evidence-based and community insight led approach
5. Co-production

Summary of our strategy

Ambition	Key outcomes	Available system priority metrics
Best start in life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women are healthy and well during and after pregnancy. Children are healthy from birth. All children grow and develop well so they are ready and equipped to start school. Children in care are healthy, well and ready for adulthood. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % achieving good level of development at age 2-3
Access to best education and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children and young people perform well at all key stages. SEND education meets the needs of children locally. Schools serve all children and young people well and nobody misses out on learning. Adults have access to learning opportunities which supports employment and life skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average attainment 8 score of all pupils % of SEND children electively home educated Rate of permanent exclusions (per 100 pupils)
Opportunities to be fit, well and independent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults are healthy and active, and enjoy good mental health. People experience less ill-health and disability due to lung and heart diseases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9% of adults currently smoke' (APS) % Adults classified as overweight or obese Adolescent self-reported wellbeing (SHEU) Standardised rate of emergency admissions due to COPD
Employment that keeps you and your families out of poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More adults are employed and receive a 'living wage'. Adults and families take up benefits they are entitled to. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gap in employment for those in touch with secondary mental health services
Good housing in places which are clean and green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good access to affordable, safe, quality, accommodation and security of tenure. The local environment is clean and green with lower carbon emissions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of households owed a prevention duty under Homelessness Reduction Act
Safe in your homes and when out and about	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People are safe in their homes, on public transport and in public places. Children and young people are safe and protected from harm. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of re-referrals to MARAC for children experiencing domestic abuse
Connected to families and friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People feel well connected to family, friends and their community. Connections are helped by public transport and technology. Improving outcomes for those who are socially excluded. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % adult social care users with as much social contact as they like
The chance for a fresh start when things go wrong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homeless people and ex-offenders are helped back into society. People have good access to support for addictive behaviour and take it up. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of emergency hospital admissions for those with no fixed abode
Access to health and social care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timely access to all health and social care services when they need across life course from conception to end of life. People are supported to live at places of their residence and only spend time in hospital to meet medical needs. Services to prevent illness (all health screening and vaccinations) are easy to access with quality service provision. People are treated with dignity and respect in all care provisions including end of life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % Cancer diagnosed at stage 1/2 % of people discharged from hospital to their usual place of residence Rate of emergency department attendances for falls in those aged 65+ % eligible adults with learning disability/severe mental illness receive annual health check
To be accepted and valued simply for who you are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity is respected and celebrated. People feel they are a valued part of their community and are not isolated or lonely. People are treated with dignity and respect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metrics to be developed

Foreword

I am delighted to introduce the West Northamptonshire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy for 2023 to 2028. This challenging new plan sets out how, in West Northamptonshire, we will work together as a partnership and with residents to improve health outcomes for local people.

We do this at a time of significant pressures on public services post pandemic, and on people nationally due to unprecedented cost of living challenges, exacerbated by the conflict in Ukraine and the impact of climate change.

In 2022 changes to the health system architecture and leadership led to the development of 'Integrated Care Northamptonshire' a system wide strategy for the county and a fundamental shift in health and care organisation.

An Integrated Care Board (ICB) replaced the former Clinical Commissioning Group and both West and North Northamptonshire Councils are key partners on this board alongside local healthcare leaders. 'Integrated Care Northamptonshire' has been developed around 10 ambitions, to enable people living and working in the area to Live Their Best Life.

The West Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Board will play a significant role in the delivery of 'Integrated Care Northamptonshire' over the next 5 years. These ambitions are the starting point for us as we shape our own Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JLHWS).

This document explains how the Health and Wellbeing Board intends to play its part to improve the health and wellbeing of people living in West Northamptonshire; and how we will do this by engaging and enabling our local communities through a 'place' based approach.

This is our health and wellbeing commitment to the people of West Northamptonshire for the next five years. We will regularly review and report back on our progress and develop an open two-way dialogue with our local communities to ensure we deliver what is important to residents. It is intentionally ambitious to ensure we can turn the tide of growing demand on health and care services enabling them to have the space to improve.

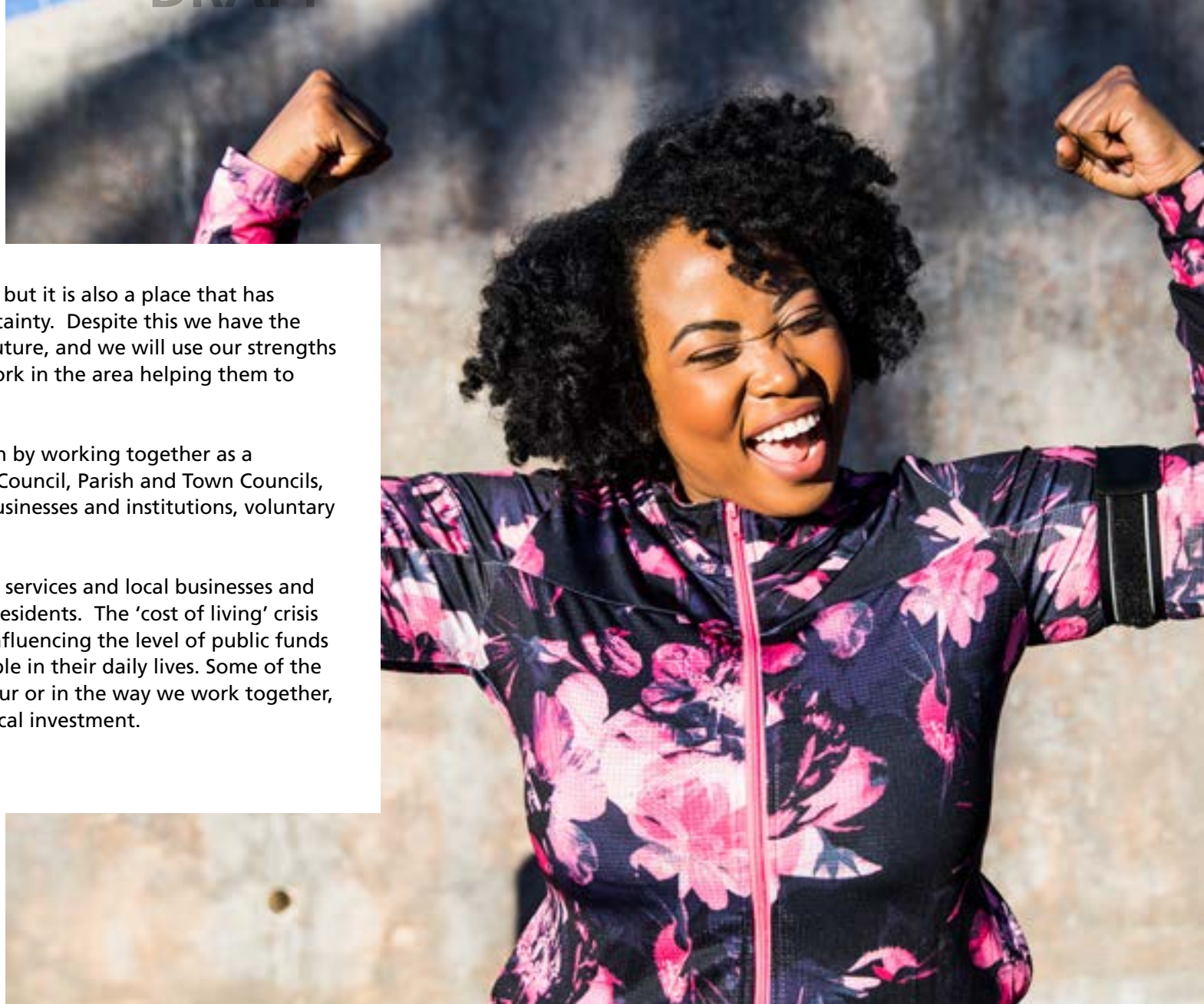
Our starting point is prevention, through education and by empowering local people to take responsibility for their own good health and wellbeing. To achieve this, we are committed to tackling health inequalities in some of our communities.

Our mission is to ensure the people of West Northamptonshire are supported and able to live their best life. I hope you agree that this exciting strategy will help us get there.



Cllr Matt Golby,
Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health

Introduction



West Northamptonshire is a great place to live but it is also a place that has challenges and like all areas, faces some uncertainty. Despite this we have the opportunity and potential to create a bright future, and we will use our strengths to improve the lives of people who live and work in the area helping them to 'Live their Best Life'.

We can shape our own journey and destination by working together as a partnership between West Northamptonshire Council, Parish and Town Councils, NHS, primary care, emergency services, local businesses and institutions, voluntary sector and our community partners.

The pandemic put an enormous pressure upon services and local businesses and has left a challenging personal legacy for our residents. The 'cost of living' crisis adds to this challenge nationally and locally; influencing the level of public funds available and the pressures faced by local people in their daily lives. Some of the challenges we face require changes in behaviour or in the way we work together, some will require considerable national and local investment.

Our shared vision

Together, with our partners, we share a vision for health and wellbeing:

We want to work better together to create a place where people are active, confident and enjoy good health and wellbeing. A West Northamptonshire where people can see and feel a bright future for themselves and their families, take personal responsibility for their own health, but can reach out to quality support and services when they need help.

Through Integrated Care Northamptonshire we have agreed 10 challenging ambitions to enable local people to Live Their Best Life. Our West Northamptonshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy brings vision this to life at a place level.

Many of these ambitions require us to address the wider determinants of health and this is where all partner organisations in West Northamptonshire can add the greatest value.



Our 10 ambitions reflect what local people need to have or be to help them Live their Best Life.

These are:

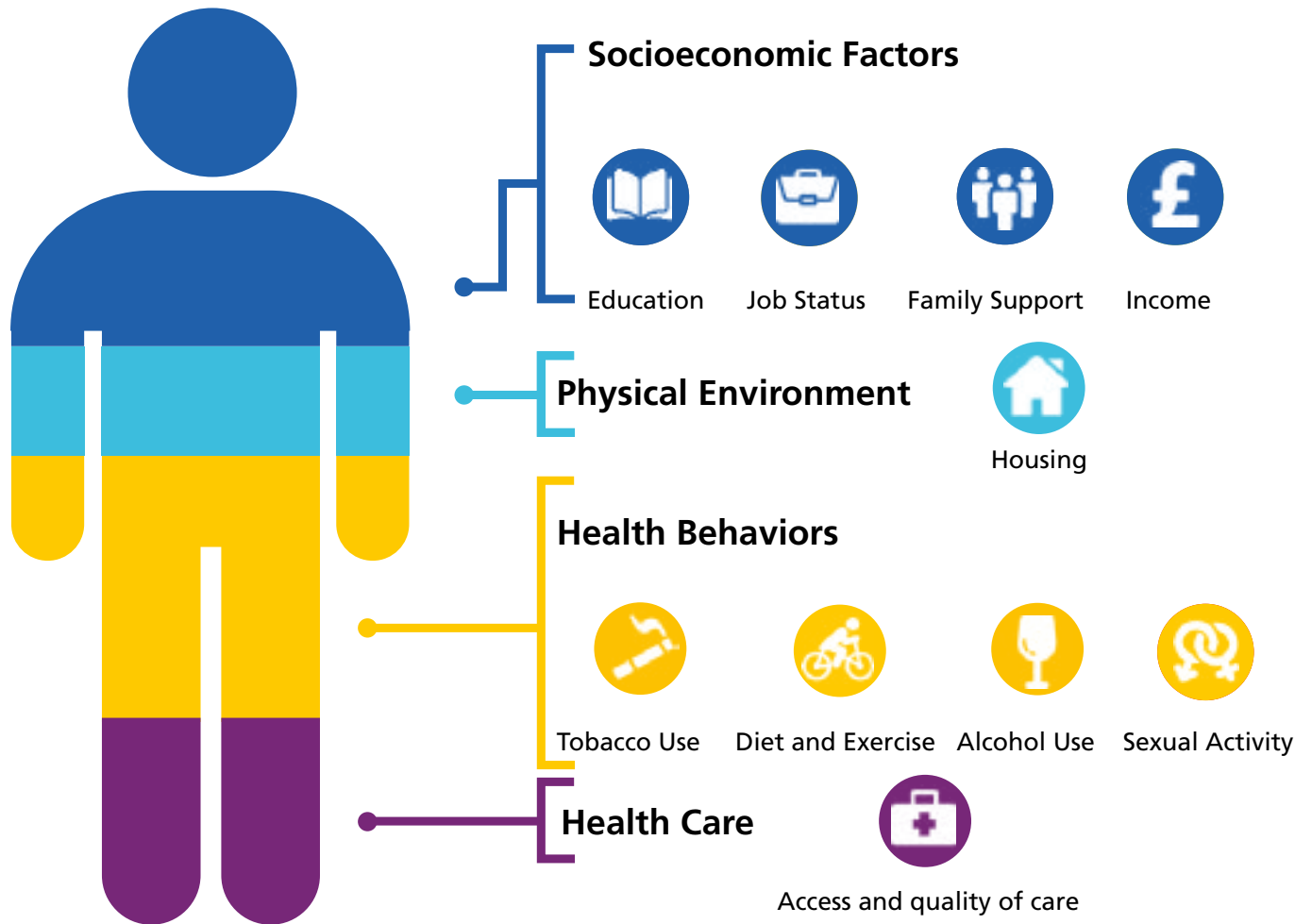
- The best start in life
- Access to the best available education and learning
- Opportunity to be fit, well and independent
- Employment that keeps you and your family out of poverty
- Good housing in places which are clean and green
- Safe in your homes and when out and about
- Connected to friends and family
- The chance of a fresh start when things go wrong
- Access to health and social care when they need it
- Accepted and valued for who you are

Our understanding of what makes us healthy and happy

Impacts of the wider determinants of health - Robert Wood Johnson model

Health and wellbeing is a complex interaction between individual behaviours (such as lifestyle including smoking, diet and exercise, alcohol use and sexual activity), social and economic factors (such as education, job status, family support, income), the physical environment (where we live) and access to quality healthcare.

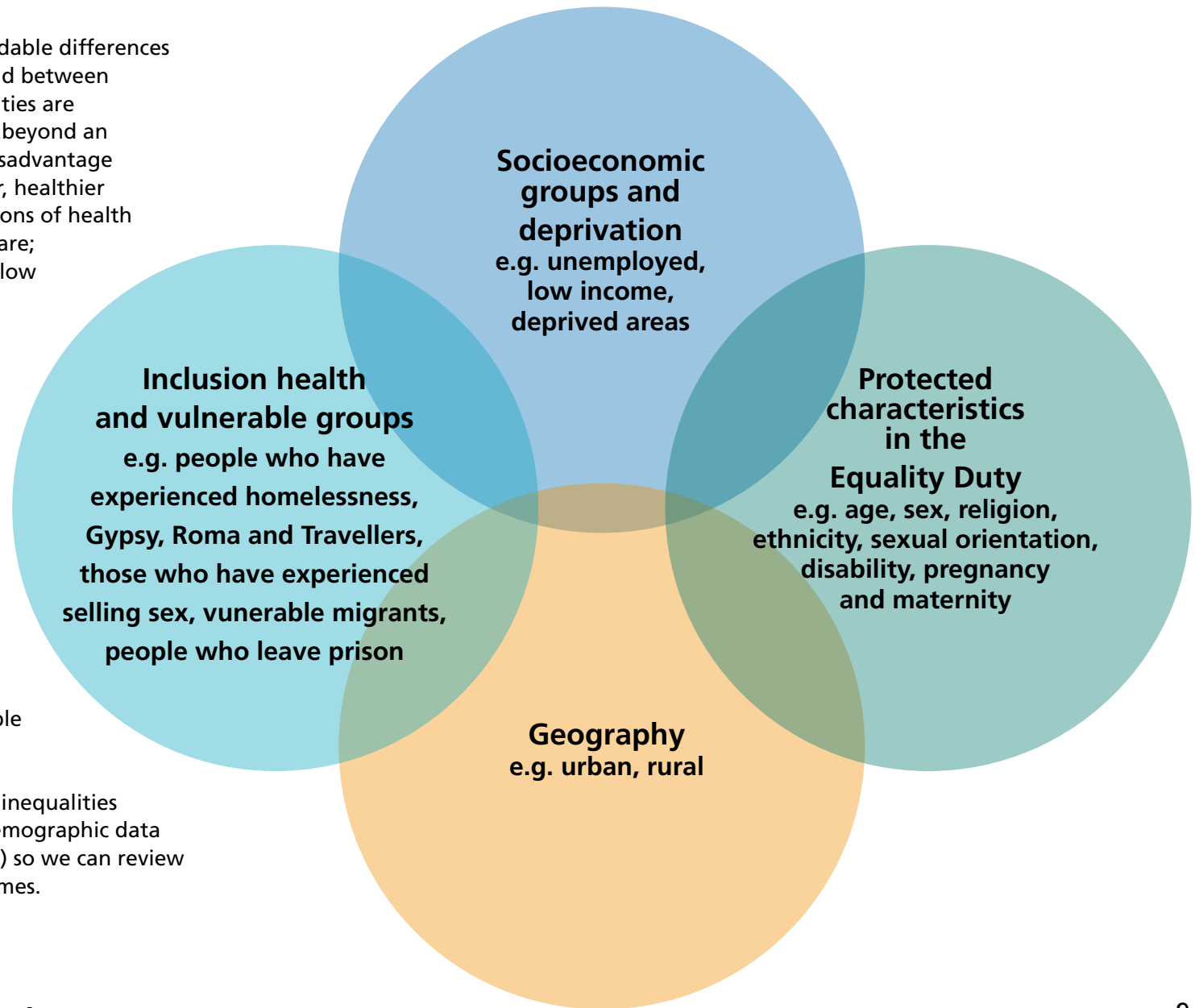
The diagram shows that the physical environment contributes to 10% of health outcomes; healthcare contributes to 20%; health behaviours 30% and social and economic factors 40%. Therefore, a holistic approach to health and wellbeing is needed, which takes all of these characteristics into account and encourages people to take charge of their own health and wellbeing. If we focus solely on healthcare it will not address all health problems, and we need to work together as a system to address all of these factors, with a greater focus on the wider determinants of health, because health starts long before illness, it starts in our homes, schools and jobs.



Drivers of inequalities

The overlapping dimensions of health inequalities

Health inequalities are the unjust and avoidable differences in people's health across the population and between specific population groups. Health inequalities are determined by social circumstances largely beyond an individual's control. These circumstances disadvantage people and limit their chance to live longer, healthier lives. The Venn diagram shows the dimensions of health inequalities and how these overlap. These are; socioeconomic groups and deprivation i.e. low income / unemployment, people living in deprived areas; protected characteristics in the Equality Duty such as age, sex, ethnicity; geography i.e. urban / rural; and inclusion health and vulnerable groups such as people experiencing homelessness, those who have experienced selling sex. Many people fall into more than one of these groups and experience multiple disadvantage. Inequalities can lead to marginalisation of individuals and groups, who experience discrimination, barriers to accessing services, as well as worse outcomes and experiences of services. Providing universal services with targeted support for vulnerable groups is effective at reaching all of those that need them by ensuring that there are fewer or no barriers. To better understand inequalities all services need to commit to collecting demographic data (as a minimum postcode, age and ethnicity) so we can review inequities in access, experiences and outcomes.



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Key factors for health and happiness

There are a number of key factors that impact on a persons health and happiness as highlighted by Marmot and recognised in the 10 keys to happiness below. These are:



Giving

Do kind things for others



Relating

Connect with people



Exercising

Take care of your body



Awareness

Live life mindfully



Trying out

Keep learning new things



Direction

Have goals to look forward to



Resilience

Find ways to bounce back



Emotions

Look for what's good



Acceptance

Be comfortable with who you are



Meaning

Be part of something bigger

Credit source: Action for happiness (www.actionforhappiness.org)

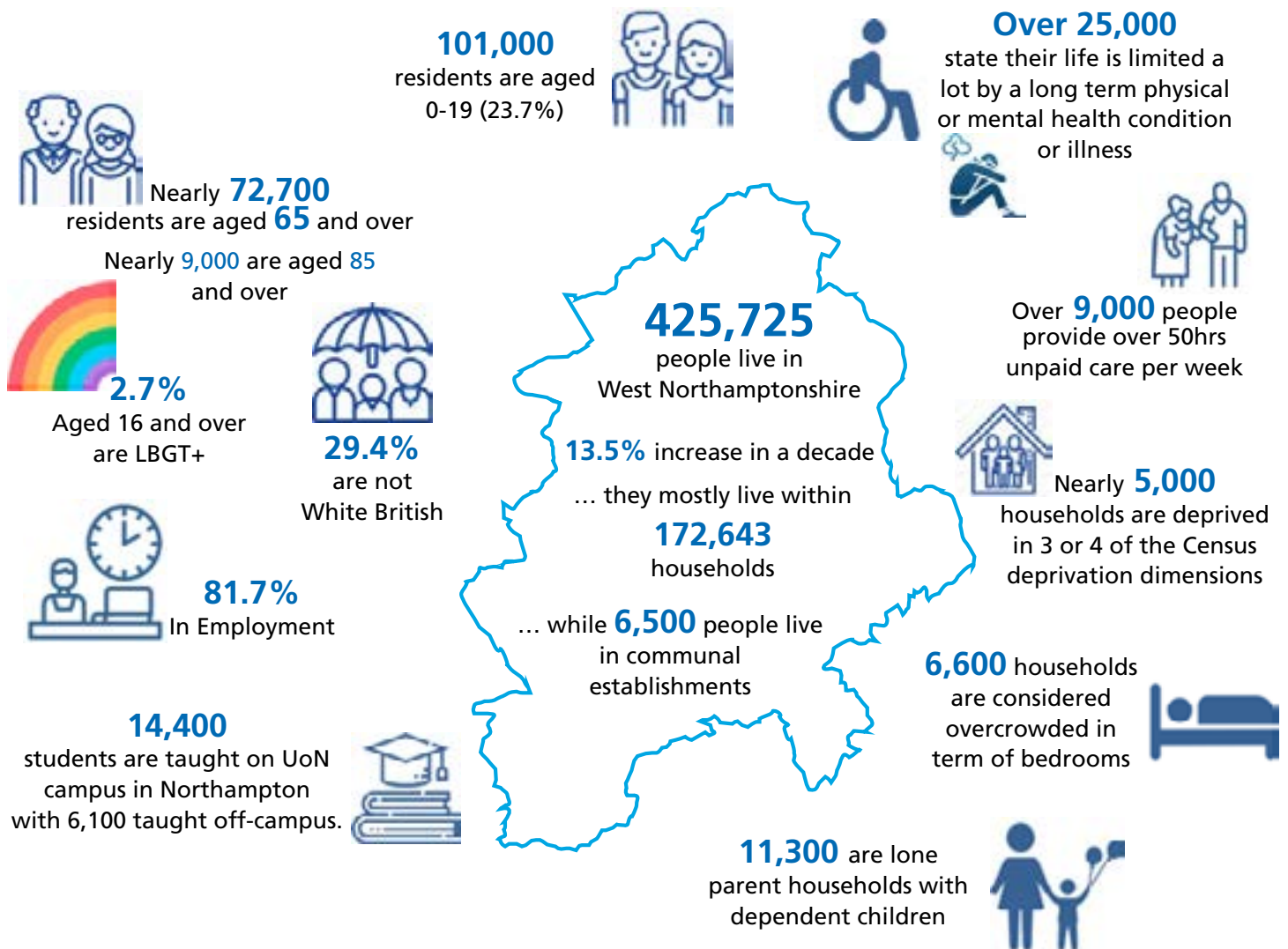
Fair society, healthy lives: the Marmot Review: strategic review of health inequalities in England post-2010. Available from: www.gov.uk/research-for-development-outputs/fair-society-healthy-lives-the-marmot-review-strategic-review-of-healthinequalities-in-england-post-2010

Our current position in West Northamptonshire

The diagram (right) explains the population of West Northamptonshire and highlights a number of key statistics, including 6,600 households are considered overcrowded in terms of bedrooms, 11,300 are lone parents with dependent children, 81.7% are in employment and nearly 101,000 of our residents are aged between 0 to 19.

Key health challenges that we face











- Our key health challenges are informed by our joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA) and supporting themed fact sheets. www.westnorthants.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing-board
- Social determinants and poverty set a pattern of poor lifestyle behaviours that compound poor health.
- We must take a preventative approach to poor health and tackle the social determinants whilst supporting people to have positive behaviours.














Health and Wellbeing in West Northamptonshire


This page sets out the challenges residents face through their lives. The symbols in red show where West Northamptonshire is performing worse than the England average. If we look into the data further to look at outcomes for different communities (both geographic and communities of interest) it will show that there are inequalities in these outcomes, with people from some communities experiencing a higher number of worse outcomes. We will use this data and insight to target our activities to address inequalities.

Start Well




-  4,647 babies were born in 2021.
-  12.3% of mothers smoked at the time of birth in 2020/21. This is worse than the England average.
-  The population of West Northamptonshire was 425,700 in 2021.
-  72% of children achieved a good level of development at the end of reception class in 2019.
-  14% of children aged under 16 lived-in low-income families in 2020/21. This is better than the England average.
-  21% of children in reception class were overweight or obese in 2019/20. This is better than the England average.*
-  30% of children in Year 6 were overweight or obese in 2019/20. This is better than the England average.*
-  73% of young people gained a standard pass (4) in English and Maths GCSEs in 2021.
-  The Chlamydia detection rate was 1,417 per 100,000 in 15- to 24-year-olds in 2020 This is below the national target range.
-  There were 10 pregnancies in females aged under 18 per 1,000 girls aged 15 to 17, in 2020. This is lower than the England average.


Live Well


-  A 2018 based projection estimated there were 170,103 households in West Northamptonshire in 2021.
-  The average salary (persons) in 2020 was £32,467. This was an increase of 2% compared to 2019.
-  78% of adults were employed in 2020/21. This is similar to the England average.
-  9% of households experienced fuel poverty in 2018.
-  There were 374 new sexually transmitted infections per 100,000 population in 2020. This is lower than the England average.
-  63% of adults were physically active in 2020/21. This is worse than the England average.
-  52% of the population aged 16+ ate their "5-a-day" in 2019/20. This is worse than the England average.
-  69% of adults were overweight or obese in 2020/21. This is worse than the England average.
-  There were 467 alcohol related hospital admissions per 100,000 population in 2020/21. This is similar to the England average.
-  15% of adults smoked in 2019. This is similar to the England average.
-  There were 8 suicides per 100,000 population in 2018-2020. This is lower than the England average.


-  There were 297 hospital admissions for self-harm per 100,000 population in 2020/21. This is worse than the England average.
-  There were 3 deaths from drug misuse per 100,000 population in 2018-2020. This is lower than the England average.
-  42 people were killed or seriously injured on roads per 100,000 population in the 2016-2018. This is similar to the England average.
-  There were 26 deaths from preventable cardiovascular diseases per 100,000 population in 2017-2019. This is similar to the England average.
-  There were 20 deaths in under 75s from preventable respiratory diseases per 100,000 population in 2017-2019. This is similar to the England average.
-  There were 54 deaths from preventable cancers per 100,000 population in 2017-2019. This is similar to the England average.


Age Well

-  There were 2,727 hospital admissions due to falls in people aged 65+ per 100,000 65+ population in 2020/21. This is worse than the England average.
-  The average male life expectancy was 79.8 in 2018-2020. This is better than the England average.
-  The average female life expectancy was 82.8 in 2018-2020. This is worse than the England average.

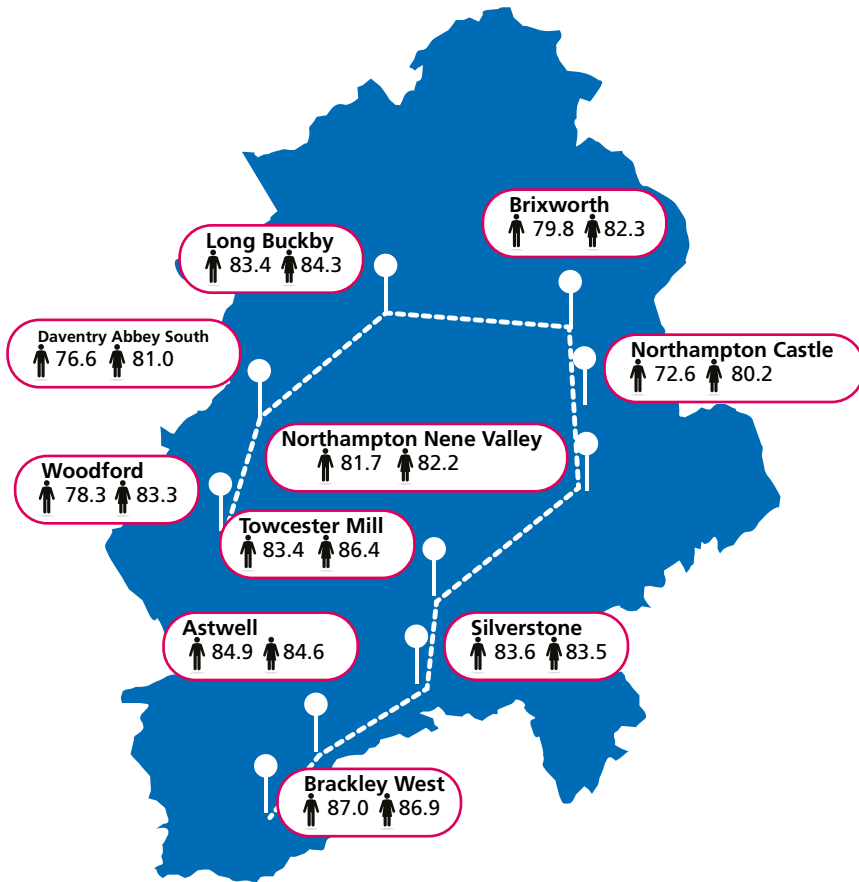
 better than England average

 worse than England average

 similar to England average

 no comparison data available

Life expectancy in West Northamptonshire

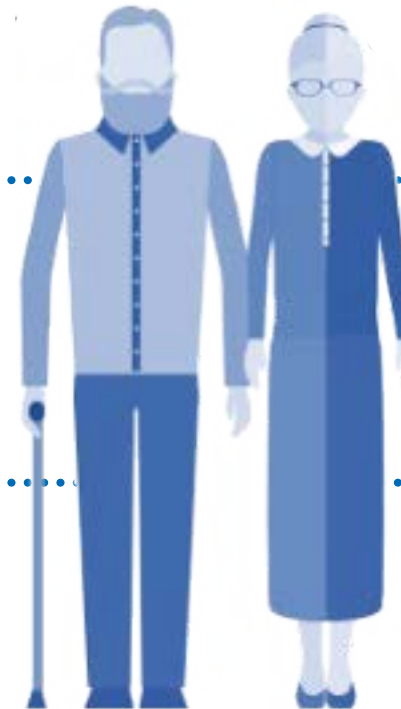


Average life expectancy at birth for men is 79.8

Men living in the more affluent 20% of the West can expect to live 9 years longer than those in the 20% most deprived areas

Average life expectancy at birth for women is 82.8

Women living in the more affluent 20% of the West can expect to live 8 years longer than those in the 20% most deprived areas



Following a 'bus route' in each unitary, demonstrates that communities that only live a few miles apart can have stark differences in life expectancy.

Healthy life expectancy (the average number of years a person would expect to live in good health) for men and women in Northamptonshire ranges between 63 and 65 years of age meaning that most people will start their retirement with some degree of poor health.

Source Data : Fingertips 2018-2020

Our approach

Through our services and policies, we can make the greatest impact within the partnership by focussing our efforts on improving outcomes within the wider determinants of health including; housing, air quality, community cohesion and social improvements in places and communities which we live.

Five key approaches will shape our strategic health and wellbeing ambitions.

1 - Prevention as a priority

National and local resources to support health and wellbeing are critically stretched because of high demand often due to lifestyle and environmental pressures on people of all ages. Preventing poor health and wellbeing is more important than ever.

Local data suggests that there is more we can do on prevention in West Northamptonshire – supporting people to make good lifestyle choices, picking problems up earlier and creating local environmental conditions that support good health; thereby taking pressure off primary and acute services.

Generally, people want to be in control of their lives and not rely on services to put things right. We will support them by providing help in preventing health problems and enabling people to manage their lives in a way that can lead to a happy, healthier future. We are also committed to ensuring local communities are great places to live with a culture of wellbeing.

The Health and Wellbeing Board is well placed to support preventative interventions through; housing and environment, children's and adults, leisure and cultural services, highways and footways and community safety.

Our approach

2 -Tackling health and wellbeing inequalities

We recognise that there are people in our communities who experience greater health and care challenges or are not always visible to the services that can support them.

Health inequalities are preventable, unfair, and unjust differences in health between groups, populations, or individuals. These arise from unequal social, economic, and environmental conditions which in turn, can determine the risk of people getting ill, their ability to prevent sickness, or their chance to get treatment when health or care needs occur.

In short, inequalities mean that some people do not have the same chances to be healthy. The disproportionate impact of COVID further highlighted long-standing health inequalities on different groups and communities particularly highlighting ethnic inequalities.

We know from data and feedback where these inequalities occur locally and through this strategy, we will target those most in need or seldom heard. In everything that we do we will ensure that we collect the right data to understand where the inequalities are and target services to better meet those needs.

The Integrated Care Northamptonshire Health Inequalities Plan describes how we will work with communities so that everyone has the chance to thrive and to access quality services providing excellent experiences and the best outcomes for all. The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy will adopt the principles of the Health Inequalities Plan to enable us to achieve this aim.

To read the full ICN Health Inequalities plan follow the link below:

[Northamptonshire Health Inequalities Plan 2022/23-2025/26 \(icnorthamptonshire.org.uk\)](https://www.icnorthamptonshire.org.uk)

Our approach

3-The importance of 'place' and local assets

We need to take very local action to address specific problems in some communities that prevent good health and wellbeing. To do this we need to work side by side with local people and community leaders. Our place model for West Northamptonshire includes the development of nine Local Area Partnerships (LAPs) supported by two Health and Wellbeing Forums.

The model is reliant on all partners working together to identify local priorities, improve outcomes and reduce inequalities for residents and their communities.

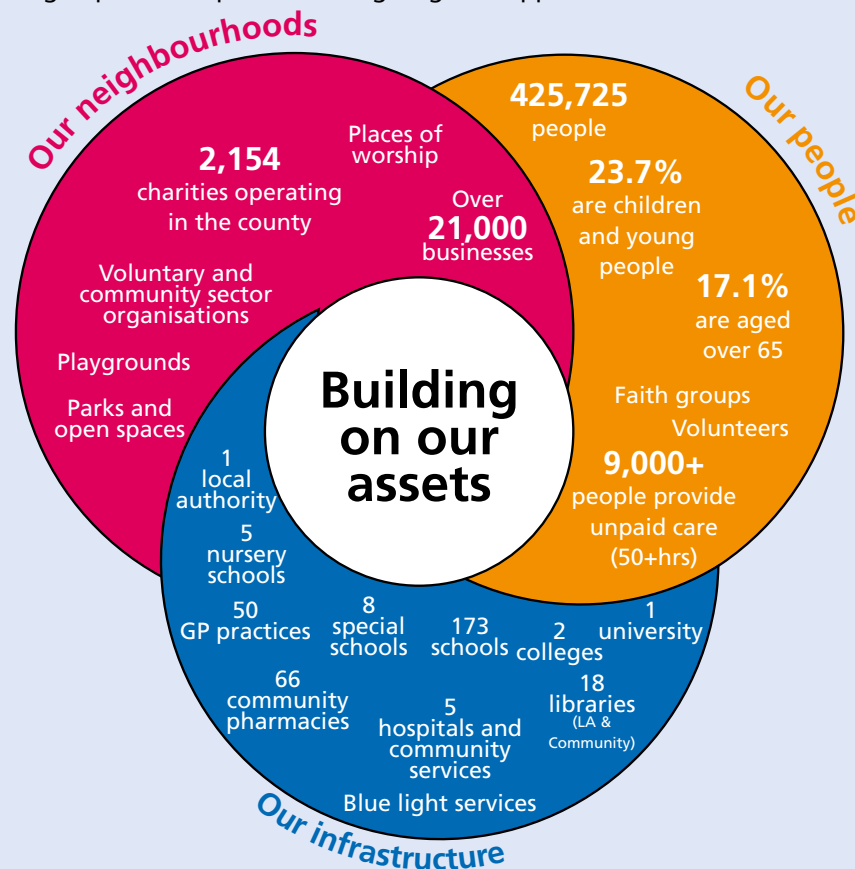
The initial functions of the Local Area Partnerships are to:

- represent local areas and give a voice to residents, translating strategy into local action
- empower residents to co-produce new services and solutions locally with partners
- contribute to system-wide priorities by utilising evidence-based information and local insight from frontline services and communities
- empower local leaders to take accountability for local action.

Each Local Area Partnership has a core membership that brings together leaders who work closely within their community and understand the local landscape.

For more information about the Place delivery structures including our Health and Wellbeing Forums and the LAPs please see www.westnorthants.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing-board.

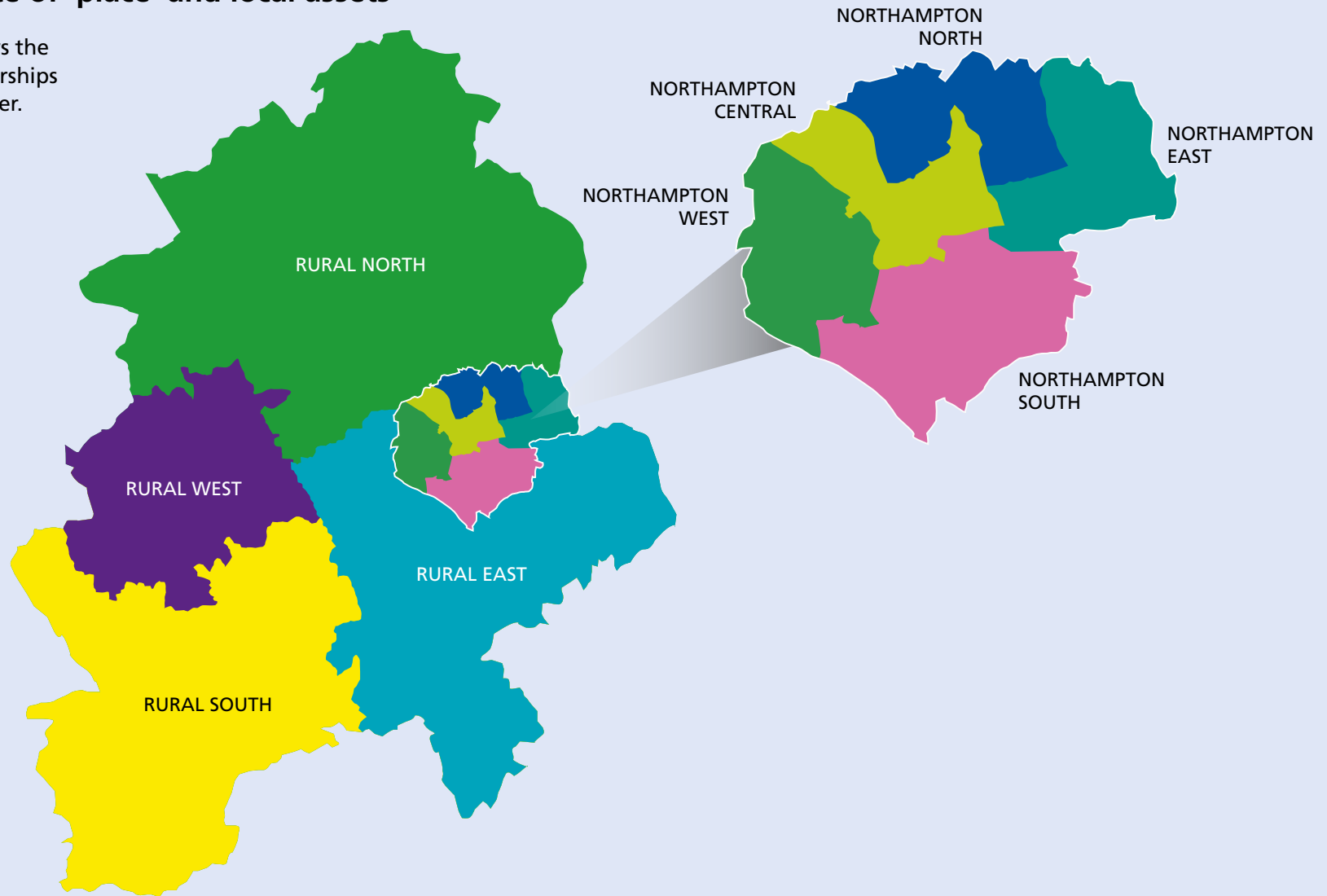
As shown in the diagram (below), our assets are made up of our neighbourhoods, people and infrastructure. For example our neighbourhoods include places of worship, charities, voluntary and community sector organisations and playgrounds to name a few. Our people show the number of people living in West Northants and the population of children, young people, over 65's and those providing unpaid care. Our infrastructure highlights our GP practices, libraries, schools and anchor institutions as assets that can create a positive impact on our local area through working in partnership and offering targeted opportunities.



Our approach

3-The importance of 'place' and local assets

The map (below) shows the nine Local Area Partnerships and the areas they cover.



Our approach

4 - An evidence-based and community insight led approach

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) is a summary of data related to health and wellbeing across Northamptonshire that provides a view of local health and wellbeing information alongside national data. This data informs our priorities and performance focus. We have used this valuable resource to shape our priorities, identify where we need to improve and allocate our resources.

Enriching that knowledge, we have also taken on board insights from our local communities. These may be geographic communities a defined local area, for example a Local Area Partnership or Parish, or communities of interest. It can also be a cross cutting community, for example young people across West Northamptonshire. Insight from across our area has already been built into the development of this strategy and we will continue to work in this way to support its further development. We are particularly keen to build on our Well Northants asset-based model of community engagement.

The West Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Board values this insight from local people and has listened to a wide range of local voices including our community forums in developing this strategy. There were many common themes which have helped us to focus on what matters most locally. We will continue to listen to local voices as we roll out delivery plans and fine tune our priorities.

5- Co-production

Passion for the place, experience, assets, and skills are abundant in our local communities. This is often an untapped resource when designing and commissioning services locally. Our fantastic community and voluntary sector are a critical part of our co-production and are our secret weapon locally. Co-production is a way of working where service providers and service users work together to reach a shared outcome. This approach is value driven and built on the principle that those who are affected by a service are best placed to help design it. It contributes to a sense of shared identity and purpose locally. The 'Place' approach outlined above creates the right environment for this to work well; and local insight sets the context for the creative development of services designed together.



Our ten ambitions set out to support residents in West Northampton to 'Live Your Best Life'

Each ambition has a set of metrics that have been agreed by the Integrated Care Northamptonshire Partnership as metrics we as a county will be working together to improve. The Health and Wellbeing Board will use these metrics to monitor our progress and are essential in ensuring that we are moving forward and delivering the ten 'Live Your Best Life' ambitions. Alongside this, we will create a detailed delivery plan for each ambition and performance metrics that we will monitor as part of the delivery of this strategy.



- Ambition**
- The best start in life
- Access to the best available education and learning
- Opportunities to be fit well and independent
- Employment that keeps you and your family out of poverty
- Good housing in places which are clean and green
- Safe in your homes and when out and about
- Connected to friends and family
- The chance for a fresh start when things go wrong
- Access to health and social care
- Accepted and valued for who you are

Ambition 1 - The best start in life

Introduction

In West Northamptonshire we are committed to give children the best start in life to grow happy and healthy, flourish and succeed in life. With the current cost of living crisis long lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, children and families are facing huge challenges to receive the support they need when they need it, leading us to pick up issues at crisis point. We want to ensure we develop an integrated support offer for families and children to meet their needs at the earliest point of identification, and enable them to access local, timely and welcoming services to prevent problems from escalating. We want to ensure we give children the best start for life to flourish and live a healthy adulthood.

Where we are now

- Risks of birth complications and poor health in newborn children is higher than it ought to be due to high levels of smoking and obesity in pregnancy.
- Children in care in Northamptonshire have poorer access to regular health and dental checks than other areas.
- Not enough children are starting school with the skills they need to succeed.
- There is a lack of youth provision for young people.
- Too many young people have poor mental wellbeing and this is increasing.
- The severity of poor mental health in adolescence is also increasing resulting in high rates of admission to hospital for self-harm and eating disorders.

What you have told us

- The community want locally based support services for families and young people.
- The community would like a 'drop in' service with tailored support for young parents.
- We want more support for children with special needs and their parents.



What is the inequalities focus

We need to focus on children and families in the 20% most deprived areas, families from ethnic minorities, children in care, young parents, children with special needs and children with long term conditions.



What we want to achieve

- Women are healthy and well during and after pregnancy.
- Children are healthy from birth.
- All children grow and develop well so they are ready and equipped to start school.
- Children in care are healthy, well and ready for adulthood.



How we will achieve our ambition

- We will develop a supportive, integrated and consistent offer to support women from pre-pregnancy stage to postnatal stage by working with the Local Maternity System prevention group and wider partners across the system.
- We will work to increase the uptake of free early education entitlement for all three and four years old. We will work with the 0-19 service to increase the integrated aged 2-2.5 reviews and expand the universal and targeted support for parents to ensure that all children are ready to start school and able to flourish and live a healthy adulthood.
- We will develop an early help universal offer to support families in need at the earliest point of identification and to prevent issues from reaching crisis point.
- We will develop the family hubs programme building on existing services and community assets and strengthen integrated services across local authority, Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board, Children Trust, and the voluntary community sector to improve outcomes for children and young people across West Northants.
- We will increase access to specialist care and support services for at risk children and their parents.

Ambition 2 - Access to the best available education and learning

Introduction

In West Northamptonshire we are committed to giving all children access to the best education and learning. We want all children to attend safe, inclusive and aspirational schools, settings and providers. We want all educational establishments to be at least 'Good' in all areas and to deliver an innovative, carefully planned curriculum that promotes personal development and provides a high quality, inclusive and diverse education.

We will work together to provide a robust multi-agency approach to support all children and young people to have access to the best educational provision, which meets their needs and enables them to thrive and fulfil their potential. Our aim is to ensure that we provide an appropriate, high quality, sustainable Education service. In doing so, we will improve life chances of all children and young people and enable them to flourish into adulthood as valued citizens.

Where we are now

- 91% of primary schools are good and outstanding
- 82% of our secondary schools are good and outstanding
- Our school attendance across is 92.5%
- 5,569 incidents of suspension linked or related to 2005 pupils, and 93 permanent exclusions in 22/23
- 63% of eligible 2 year olds access free education and childcare for 2-year-olds
- 60% of 3 and 4 year olds access the free universal funded early education entitlement
- 53% of eligible 3 and 4 year olds currently accessing the universal entitlement,

We know there is limited access to activities for young people outside of school

What you have told us

- Schools and other settings need to be more inclusive.
- Children and young people need 'safe spaces' outside of school.
- More support for children with special needs and their parents is needed.

What we want to achieve

- Children and young people perform well at all key stages.
- SEND education meets the needs of children locally.
- Schools serve all children and young people well and nobody misses out on learning.

How we will achieve our ambition

- We will ensure all families have access to the best education and can access educational settings to meet their children's needs.
- We will ensure that all children, including those with SEND or vulnerabilities are able to develop resilience and independence.
- We will work to increase the uptake of free early education entitlement for all two, three and four years old.
- We will work with all education partners to identify children at risk of exclusion, and develop packages of support to enable children to remain in appropriate education settings.
- We will work with all education partners to provide sufficient education places to meet need of all children, including those with SEND.
- We will develop a West Northants youth offer to provide children with safe spaces out of school.

What is the inequalities focus

We need to focus on children and families in the 20% most deprived areas, families from ethnic minorities, children in care, children with special needs and children who are vulnerable or those who are disadvantaged.

Ambition 3 - Opportunities to be fit well and independent

Introduction

The ability of our residents to live well, be fit and independent is hugely shaped by the circumstances in which they live their lives. To enable residents to live healthy lives, prevent ill health and promote wellbeing, people need the right information, services and support, with targeted interventions for those who need it most.

By working together as a system, and taking a life course approach, we can make sure that local people in West Northamptonshire have the opportunities to be fit, well and independent.

Where we are now

- Over one in four adults in West Northants are classified as physically inactive, and almost two thirds are classified as overweight or obese.
- Smoking is the single greatest risk factor for death and disability in West Northants with 11.5% of adults being current smokers.
- West Northants has growing older population and with people living in poor health.
- There are high rates of respiratory, diabetes and cardiovascular disease conditions with higher rates of mortality.
- Admissions for self-harm is higher than the England average.

What you have told us

- Bring people together by offering local activities and events to support healthier lifestyles that are affordable.
- The opportunity to receive care in our own homes to support independence is something that is important to us.
- We would like to see better communication, so we can stay informed and up to date on what is going on, as well as having a clear understanding of where to go for support.



What is the inequalities focus

- We know that people from certain communities are more at risk of poorer health, exposed to risk factors, and may not access services to improve their health and wellbeing.
- We need to make sure all of our services take into account needs of different communities and target them to ensure good uptake, experiences and outcomes. In particular, we will focus on supporting people living in areas of deprivation, people from ethnic minorities and marginalised groups.



What we want to achieve

- Adults are healthy and active, and enjoy good mental health.
- People experience less ill-health and disability due to lung and heart diseases.



How we will achieve our ambition

- We are developing a more joined up approach to the way we deliver services to support people to live healthy lives and improve their physical and mental health – taking an asset based community development approach to better understand communities and develop targeted offers to within local communities.
- We will support people as they age to stay well for longer, by working with individuals and communities to understand their concerns, and using the best available evidence to enable them to stay active and healthy.
- Through the Mental Health and Learning Disability Collaborative, and the Mental Health Prevention Action Plan, we are working together across the system to promote emotional wellbeing and mental health.
- We will enhance opportunities for active travel through the development and implementation of the Council's new Local Transport Plan, due for adoption in 2024/25. Additionally, through the development of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans across West Northamptonshire.

Ambition 4 - Employment that keeps you and your family out of poverty

Introduction

The causes and consequences of poverty are often complex. There is no single cause, but a range of factors contribute to people's risk of experiencing poverty. Over half of those living in poverty live in working households, where work does not provide enough income to meet basic needs or people fall into poverty due to circumstances beyond their control. Low pay and low wage growth is a key cause of poverty, and we have seen a significant rise in part-time contracts. There is still a strong association between unemployment and poverty. It is clear that our young people are particularly impacted

Where we are now

- We have relatively high rates of employment across the area as a whole but there are significant disparities at a more local level.
- There are large gaps in employment for vulnerable communities such as those with serious and enduring mental illness and those with learning disabilities.
- Cost of living crisis and resulting poverty having particular impact on health and wellbeing of residents. There are particular concerns regarding fuel and food costs.

Many people and families are not claiming financial support they are eligible for.

What you have told us

- The community would like local outreach employment support services including skills training, financial and benefits advice, support for business start-ups and social enterprises.
- Increase the number of apprenticeships for residents of all ages.
- Improved rural transport is needed to support local working people to access jobs.



What is the inequalities focus

We need to address gaps in employment for vulnerable communities such as ethnic minorities, those with serious and enduring mental illness and learning disabilities, care leavers and those living in areas of deprivation.



What we want to achieve

- More adults are employed and receive a 'living wage'.
- Adults and families take up benefits they are entitled to.



How we will achieve our ambition

- We will continue to deliver the Anti-poverty Strategy and work on the sustainability of cost-of-living support.
- We will support the West Northants Sustainable Food Network to address food poverty.
- We will develop our financial information and advice offer, especially in considering the needs of under-served communities.
- We will work with education settings, employers and recruiters to ensure there are meaningful and sustainable employment opportunities with targeted hyper-local support for vulnerable groups and those in groups who are under-employed to access jobs and remain in employment.
- The Northamptonshire Anchor Institutions Network will support provision of inclusive employment opportunities, particularly with under-served groups such as care leavers.

Ambition 5 - Good housing in places which are clean and green

Introduction

A stable and secure home is one of the foundations of a good life. The condition and nature of homes, including factors such as stability, space, tenure and cost, can have a big impact on people's lives, influencing their wellbeing and health. A secure, comfortable home enriches our lives and supports our mental and physical health. But high costs and a shortage of affordable homes means many people have to live in poor, overcrowded conditions, fall into debt because costs are too high, move frequently, or may face repossessions or evictions. This all creates further instability and stress, with a significant impact on people's health and wellbeing.

As well as housing, the places we live can also impact physical and mental health. Having access to clean and green spaces is important for wellbeing and promoting a healthy life, as well as can enable people to build social connections.

Where we are now

- The population of West Northamptonshire has grown by over 13.5% in the last decade which represents among the highest growth in the country.
- During 2022/23, 2275 households were owed a homelessness prevention or relief duty by WNC under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- While the area is largely green and rural, with much of land usage agricultural, access to green spaces for people who live in our urban centres requires improvement.
- Air quality in some areas of Northampton requires improvement.

What you have told us

- More affordable rental accommodation is needed that is well maintained by landlords.
- It's very important that the environment around housing is clean, green safe and well maintained.
- We need to tackle shortage of housing and enable all people to access good housing, and considering the need for car parking spaces, open spaces and recreational land.



What is the inequalities focus

- We need secure and safe access to accommodation for vulnerable groups including care leavers and migrants.
- We need to prevent homelessness.
- People living in areas of deprivation are particularly affected by a lack of access to quality green spaces and air pollution.



What we want to achieve

- Good access to affordable, safe, quality, accommodation and security of tenure.
- The local environment is clean and green with lower carbon emissions.



How we will achieve our ambition

- We will support the priorities of the Housing Partnership Board and contribute to the WNC Housing Strategy to; deliver homes people need and can afford, improve the quality, standard and safety of homes and housing services, support residents, and sustainable communities.
- Through our Parks Strategy, we will ensure our green spaces are equally accessible for all and provide the opportunity to participate in activities. Local Area Partnerships will enable us to develop community led approaches to improving our local environment.
- We will support the development and implementation of air quality action plans through a collaborative working group.
- As Anchor Institutions we will support the work of the Sustainability Local Innovation Partnership Agenda Hub (SLIPAH) and the commitments in the Northampton Sustainability Accord.

Ambition 6 - Safe in your homes and when out and about

Introduction

Feeling safe, whether at home, in the street or at work has an effect on quality of life and enabling people to pursue and obtain the fullest benefits from domestic, social and economic lives without fear or hindrance from crime and disorder. The factors that affect community safety include higher levels of deprivation, estate design which favours criminality and youth involvement in anti-social behaviour, drug criminality and violence. Involvement in drug criminality has been linked to missing persons, and children are often exploited, increasing the risk of serious or sexual violence against vulnerable persons. Women and girls do not feel safe on our streets as a result of sexual harassment, and misogyny has become more prevalent online, with websites and chatrooms encouraging sexual violence against women.

Where we are now

- The age of youths engaging in drug related violence/weapons and violence against women and girls (VAWG) criminality is decreasing and commonly commences from pre/ early teenager years.
- Those dependent on drugs are often closely associated to neighbourhood crime to fund their addictions. The Home Office estimates 50% of all neighbourhood crime is committed by drug users, mainly heroin and crack users.
- Drug criminality analysis indicated that around 30% of Northamptonshire acquisitive crime was committed by individuals associated with drugs.

What you have told us

The majority of worries and concerns are about; youth violence and drug dealing, anti-social behaviour and knife crime, road safety, home safety, burglary and theft, which means we are scared to go out at night or use certain areas.



What is the inequalities focus

- There is a clear link between deprivation and crime, with focus needed on high need areas.
- Particular groups disproportionately affected by crime, including women and girls and those who have experienced selling sex.
- We particularly want to focus on supporting young people who are more vulnerable to exploitation.



What we want to achieve

- People are safe in their homes, on public transport and in public places.
- Children and young people are safe and protected from harm.



How we will achieve our ambition

- We will increase partnership outreach, promoting wellbeing and safety in our communities focused on contextual safeguarding, working with schools and those who are most vulnerable.
- We will develop of collaborative programmes and pathways for support, training and education.
- We will work through the Local Area Partnerships to develop place-based community approaches to priority neighbourhoods and vulnerable locations to ensure people are safe.
- We will develop of environmental improvements at neighbourhood level that design out crime will be delivered through the safer streets programme.
- We will promote of Fire and Rescue service home safety checks, and use of online home hazard checklist to help prevent falls and other accidents.
- We will increase early intervention and youth provision offer to ensure young people are safe and protected from harm – establishing and working with the youth collaborative.
- We will support the work of Trading Standards in relation to scams, doorstep crime and rogue traders

Ambition 7 - Connected to families and friends

Introduction

The assets within communities, such as the skills and knowledge, social networks and community organisations, are building blocks for good health. Community life, social connections and having a voice in local decisions all underpin good health, however too many people experience the effects of exclusion or lack social support.

The internet and digital technology is at the heart now of how public, economic and social life functions. It has transformed how we work, communicate, consume, learn, entertain and access information and public services. However, the spread of access and use is uneven, and many people remain digitally excluded. Those who are excluded can be limited or unable to participate fully in society.

Where we are now

- Many of our neighbourhoods score poorly compared with the national average in measures of connectivity to key services, digital infrastructure and isolation.
- While lots of learning and positive action has been taken from the COVID-19 pandemic, social isolation remains an issue including for younger people in deprived urban centres.

What you have told us

- You would like to see better communication, so you stay informed and up to date on what is going on.
- Bring people together by offering local activities and events to support healthier lifestyles and to connect with others.
- People in rural communities can feel isolated and lack of community transport affects our ability to get out and about.



What is the inequalities focus

- Some groups experience social exclusion, such as those mental health conditions, Gypsy Roma Traveller community, people who are homeless, migrants, sex workers.
- Older people and people with disabilities.
- There is huge variation in digital exclusion across the county with high rates of exclusion both in our most deprived communities as well as less deprived rural communities.



What we want to achieve

- People feel well connected to family, friends and their community.
- Connections are helped by public transport and technology.

- Improving outcomes for those who are socially excluded.



How we will achieve our ambition

- We will work through our place approach to ensure the right services are in the right place and joined up to enable people to feel well connected to their communities taking into account the different needs of rural and urban places.
- We will communicate in a variety of ways to ensure communities are aware of what is happening in their local communities and how to access support.
- We will continue to develop our Welcoming Spaces Initiative and ensure delivery of sustainable wrap-around services in local trusted settings.
- We will continue to develop One Stop Shops in communities.
- We will support the development and implementation of the Council's new Local Transport Plan, due for adoption in 2024/25 to support connectedness across West Northamptonshire.
- The Integrated Care Northamptonshire Digital Transformation Strategy will enable us to join up health and social care services and provide more digital access, through the creation of the Northants Care Record and single digital front door.
- We will develop projects to improve access to digital technology and the skills to use it.

Ambition 8 - The chance for a fresh start when things go wrong

Introduction

As well as ensuring that, as far as is possible, we prevent “deep social exclusion” which includes combinations of homelessness, substance misuse, history of offending and ‘street culture’ activities (such as begging and street drinking). We also want to ensure that people who have these experiences have a “fresh start in life”.

Our West Northamptonshire housing strategy commits to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping in a way that delivers positive long-term outcomes for each individual.

In addition to this, our county-wide Combating Drugs Partnership Strategic Plan recognises the strong connections between addressing aspects of social exclusion in order to improve chances of recovery. This means ensuring access to housing and employment opportunities for those trying to make a fresh start.

What you have told us



- Drugs dealers target young people in our area and it is worrying.
- People who have experienced homelessness or rough sleeping or who have been released from prison are helped back into society
- More investment in support services for those released from prison, for both physical and mental issues.
- Concern re increasing number of rough sleepers who are asylum seekers with no recourse to public funds.

What is the inequalities focus



- People who experience deep social exclusion are an inequalities group in and of themselves.
- Inequity of access to current services still requires further exploration but we believe affects those in rural communities, Ethnic minority groups communities and vulnerable women.

What we want to achieve



- Homeless people and ex-offenders are helped back into society.
- People have good access to support for addictive behaviour and take it up.

How we will achieve our ambition

- We will deliver a new homelessness and rough sleeping strategy by April 2024.
- We will increase numbers of people in drug and alcohol treatment services by improving service promotion, address gaps in geographical access, as well as access for under-served groups.
- We will improve successful completion of treatment by improving treatment for co-existing mental ill health and substance use.
- We will increase the capacity and capability to respond to increasing complexity and Improving quality of care, including particularly for young adults, and transition to adult services, and older people.
- We will strengthen the harm reduction offer and improve quality of treatment by reviewing and learning from deaths.

Where we are now

- Too many people in the county have experiences associated with ‘deep social exclusion’ – namely, homelessness, substance misuse, history of offending and ‘street culture’ activities (such as begging and street drinking).
- Too many preventable and early deaths happen due to drug and alcohol use or in people experiencing rough sleeping.

Ambition 9 - Access to health and social care

Introduction

In West Northamptonshire we want to ensure our residents are able to access the most appropriate health and social care services to meet their needs. We know we need to work with our partners and communities to provide easy and timely access to all health services including primary, secondary and specialist care. As well as access to social care support in places of residence including care homes, nursing homes, specialist centres, or homes. We want our services to be of good quality, to ensure all people have positive experiences and get the same outcomes, regardless of who they are.

Where we are now

- There is delay in access to health services for medical, surgical or mental health interventions.
- Demand of service provision is exceeding current capacity including primary care, accident and emergency, acute services and social care and people are not accessing the right services at the right time.
- Delays in access to health screening and vaccinations is creating delays in early detection and diagnosis of diseases and protecting less people from vaccine preventable illnesses.
- Access to primary care services such as GP, dentists, opticians, podiatry and pharmacy is a challenge, especially for those with learning disabilities due to changing consultation methods.
- There is an inadequate social care bed capacity for patients with changing mental health status.

There is a delay in timely processing of discharge plans due to medically unfit people not being able to return to a suitable place of residence.

What you have told us

- Health care hubs needed in our local communities with walk-in access for a range of services all on one site.
- People with language or communication difficulties find accessing primary care services a challenge.
- Migrants with no access to public funds find it hard to register with a GP, so have to present in crisis to A&E
- More investment is needed in social care services
- The transition from Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services to adult mental health services is not good enough and causes delay in treatment and stress to the family.

What is the inequalities focus

- Reaching out to residents not accessing health and social care services through community outreach services.
- Improving accessibility to health and wider services for the vulnerable groups i.e., people from ethnic minority groups, people who have experienced homelessness or rough sleeping, people with experience of substance misuse, unregistered migrant workers, people with learning disabilities or mental health, carers and asylum seekers/ refugees, vulnerable women.

What we want to achieve

- Timely access to all health and social care services when they need across life course from conception to end of life.
- People are supported to live at places of their residence and only spend time in hospital to meet medical needs.

- Services to prevent illness (all health screening and vaccinations) easy to access with a quality service provision.
- People are treated with dignity and respect in all care provisions including end of life.

How we will achieve our ambition

- We will use health equity assessments to understand inequality and inequities in access, experience and outcomes and develop targeted programmes to address the gaps.
- We will take a collaborative approach to develop a consistent model of 'outreach' and 'in-reach' provision of services with a better mobilisation of resources to improve access.
- We will redesign existing care pathways by including additional provisions with the help

of alternate providers to help deliver the services for people who need it closer to home with appropriate use of the better care fund plan.

- We will work collaboratively to support people to have timely access to services and triage people through appropriate pathways to overcome delays in health and social care support.
- We will work to take a collective system approach to resolve bed capacity issues for people with changing mental health status.

Ambition 10 - To be accepted and valued simply for who you are

Introduction

It is well known that people get a sense of belonging if they are part of a vibrant, welcoming community which can also provide support during difficult times. In West Northamptonshire we want to promote this sense of wellbeing in both rural and urban areas and across all ages and communities. We want everybody who lives in West Northamptonshire to feel valued, to celebrate diversity and the good things this brings to life in our area.

We will continue to work together and with our local communities to ensure living here is a great experience regardless of who you are and how you choose to live, what you believe or how you appear.

Promotion of understanding, tolerance and celebrating what we share, and our differences will support a happy, healthier Northamptonshire which in turn can set a great example to other parts of the country.

What you have told us



- We want more cultural events to support community cohesion.
- Welcome packs and newsletters at a community level would support community unity.
- We need more intergenerational activities locally to promote inclusivity.
- Some ethnic minority communities feel marginalised from representation in civil and public life .
- LGBTQ accessibility schemes should be promoted and LGBTQ community involved in shaping services.
- Ensure investment and resources are available in rural communities.
- Involve local communities in decision-making and service design.

What is the inequalities focus



- Seldom heard and ethnically diverse communities.
- Marginalised communities e.g. women/ those who have experienced selling sex, Gypsy, Roma and Travellers, People who have experienced homelessness or rough sleeping.
- People living in the most deprived areas.

What we want to achieve

- Diversity is respected and celebrated.
- People feel they are a valued part of their community and are not isolated or lonely.
- People are treated with dignity and respect.



How we will achieve our ambition

- We will take a community-based approach to shape the ambition and actions in partnership with identified groups and communities using the Well Northants asset-based community development model.
- We will acknowledge and challenge the impact of structural racism, or fear of it, on health equalities.
- We will ensure our extensive community engagement framework established is built on and maintained, and that it is reflective of our communities.
- We will implement equality standards and strategies across system organisations.
- We will ensure our extensive community engagement framework established is built on and maintained, and that it is reflective of our communities.
- We will increase access to activities and community events to develop inclusion and participation and celebrate diversity.

Where we are now

- The 2021 census showed an increase in the population in West Northamptonshire by 13.5% to 425,700 people - across all ages with growth greater than the England average 30.3% (20.1% in England).

We are an increasingly diverse population with 24.9% identifying as non-White British an increase from 8.8% in 2001.

Our governance - making things happen

Leadership

Our Health and Wellbeing Board plays a key statutory role in facilitating joint working across the system and setting the strategic direction to improve local health and wellbeing in West Northamptonshire.

It provides a forum where political, clinical, professional and community leaders from across the system come together to improve the health and wellbeing of their local population and reduce health inequalities.

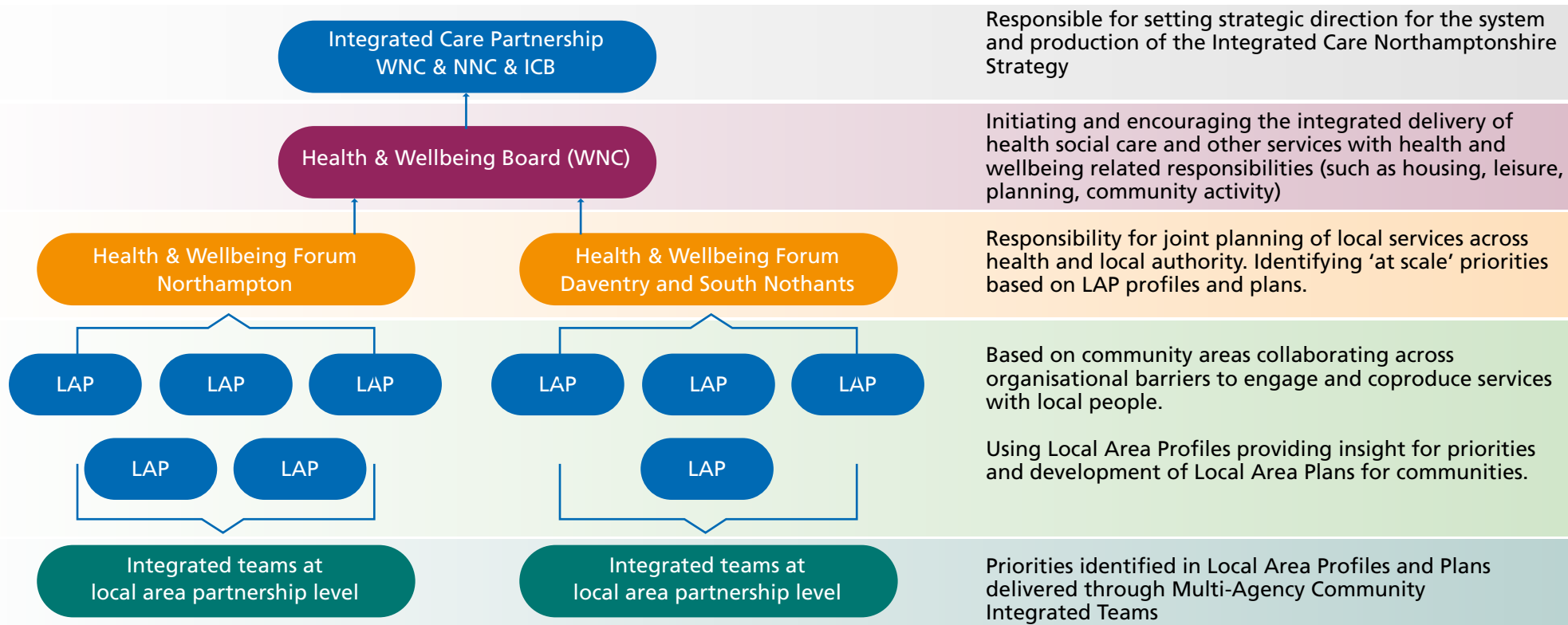
The strategy is strongly linked with many wider strategies and strategic delivery boards for example the Community Safety Partnership, Combatting Drugs Partnership and Housing Delivery Board to name a few.

Governance

A strong model of accountability is in place to ensure this strategy is driven forward and that performance against key outcomes is measured, monitored, and reported.

Reporting progress

It is the intention of the Health and Wellbeing Board to regularly review progress against the key outcomes in this strategy aligned to our 10 Live Your Best Life ambitions. We intend to share this progress with our communities in West Northamptonshire on a regular basis and if necessary, adjust our trajectory and resourcing.



Our performance framework

Ambition	Available system priority metrics
Best start in life	▶ % achieving good level of development at age 2-3
Access to best education and learning	▶ Average attainment 8 score of all pupils ▶ % of SEND children electively home educated ▶ Rate of permanent exclusions (per 100 pupils)
Opportunities to be fit, well and independent	▶ % of adults currently smoke (APS) ▶ % Adults classified as overweight or obese ▶ Adolescent self-reported wellbeing (SHEU) ▶ Standardised rate of emergency admissions due to COPD
Employment that keeps them and their families out of poverty	▶ Gap in employment for those in touch with secondary mental health services
Good housing in places which are clean and green	▶ Number of households owed a prevention duty under Homelessness Reduction Act
People feeling safe in their own homes and when out and about	▶ Number of re-referrals to MARAC for children experiencing domestic abuse
Connected to their families and friends	▶ % adult social care users with as much social contact as they like
The chance for a fresh start when things go wrong	▶ Number of emergency hospital admissions for those with no fixed abode
Access to health and social care	▶ % Cancer diagnosed at stage 1/2 ▶ % of people discharged from hospital to their usual place of residence ▶ Rate of emergency department attendances for falls in those aged 65+ ▶ % eligible adults with Learning disability/Severe mental illness receive annual health check
To be accepted and valued simply for who they are	▶ Metrics to be developed

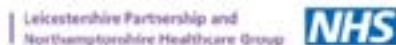
Having a set of metrics which we can use to monitor our progress is really important in ensuring that we are moving forward and delivering the ten 'Live Your Best Life' ambitions.

The metrics outlined in this performance framework have been agreed by the Integrated Care Northamptonshire Partnership as metrics we as a county will be working together to improve.

There will be many other detailed performance metrics that we will be monitoring as part of the delivery of this strategy but the performance frameworks outlines those metrics that are key priorities for us as a partnership and these will be reported to the HWB.

DRAFT

Members of the West Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Board





WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

19th September 2023

CLLr David Smith – Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Engagement, and Regulatory Services.

Report Title	Variation of The Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) (Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking in Public Places) 2022.
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List of Approvers

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List of Appendices

Appendix A – Consultation results and comments.

Appendix B - Consultation questionnaire and supporting information.

Appendix C - Draft varied Order.

Appendix D-J - Maps of the area to be covered by the proposed variation.

Appendix K - Professional Dog Walkers' Guidelines: General Guidance Documents – CFSG

Appendix L – Northampton Borough PSPO: PSPO - Variation March 2021 | West Northamptonshire Council - Northampton Area [PSPO - Variation March 2021 | West Northamptonshire Council - Northampton Area](#)

Appendix M - PSPO Cabinet Report October 2022 - Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking 2022 for Daventry and South: West Northamptonshire Council (modern.gov.co.uk)

Appendix N - Northamptonshire Police Upton Country Park – Appeal for information.

Appendix O - WNC Dog related statistics.

Appendix P - Equality Impact Assessment.

Appendix Q - WNC Public Spaces Protection Order (Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking in Public Places) 2022.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides feedback on the results of the public consultation to vary the Public Spaces Protection Order (Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking in Public Places) 2022 that is in place in Daventry and South areas to include the former area of Northampton Borough to form one single West Northamptonshire PSPO relating to Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking in certain public open spaces. It also includes the requirement to have dogs on leads at all times in Northampton Town Centre and also at Upton Country Park Phase 2 – this area of land runs parallel to the A4500 and flanks the river Nene between Kislingbury to Upton. The results of the consultation are appended to this report as **Appendix A and B**.
- 1.2 The report also seeks Cabinet approval of the draft varied PSPO at **Appendix C** and to grant approval for the formal making of that varied Order to the Executive Director for Place and Economy, as well as the necessary compliance with the remaining statutory requirements to bring it into force.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 gave powers to local authorities to introduce Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) to control a range of issues linked to anti-social behaviour, including the control of dogs. The Act also gave the power to vary the Order by increasing the affected area and/or adding new prohibitions or requirements.
- 2.2 Although the vast majority of dogs cause no problems and the vast majority of owners look after their pets in a responsible manner, the control of dogs remains a significant issue to the public with dog fouling being a particular concern to many in the Northampton area.
- 2.3 As part of the Councils commitment to Public Health and other statutory public health requirements, it needs to do all it can to reduce exposure to second-hand smoke, make smoking less visible to children and address the anti-social issue of smoking associated litter.
- 2.4 By introducing the proposed variation to the PSPO across the Northampton area, the Council would bring the same powers to require dog owners to comply with certain requirements and prohibit smoking in specific open spaces across the whole of the West Northamptonshire administrative area.
- 2.5 In addition, there is a proposed variation to require that dogs are kept on leads at all times when in Upton Country Park Phase 2 and also in Northampton Town Centre. Both requirements are already contained in a Northampton Borough PSPO that will expire in September 2023.
- 2.6 It is anticipated that as well as improving dog control and incidents of fouling, it will reduce passive smoking, the prohibiting of smoking will help reduce littering of cigarettes and associated items and will help keep open spaces safer, cleaner and greener for all.
- 2.7 The thirteen proposed measures that would apply to the Northampton area are:
 - Proposal 1 - The geographic extent of the PSPO. The PSPO (Dog Control and the Prohibition of Smoking in Public Places) 2022, that is in place in the Daventry and South Northants Areas should be extended to cover the Northampton Area, this includes the following:

- Proposal 2 - Failure to clean up after your dog. Persons in control of a dog must clean up and remove its faeces from the area and place it in a bin or take it home for disposal.
- Proposal 3 – Appropriate means to pick up dog faeces. Persons in charge of a dog must carry a poop bag or other appropriate means for clearing up after their dog.
- Proposal 4 – Dog exclusion zones. Persons in control of a dog must not take it into or onto any of the following areas, fenced or otherwise: Children’s play areas; Educational institutions when open and in use by pupils; skateparks; tennis courts; multi-use games areas (MUGA); bowling greens.
- Proposal 5 – Dogs on leads. Persons in control of a dog must ensure the dog is on a lead in cemeteries, burial sites, graveyards, memorial gardens, allotments, car parks to which the public have access and sports grounds, sports fields and pitches when in use for authorised sporting activity, land at Daventry Country Park, land near schools when open and in use by pupils, Northampton Town Centre and Upton Country Park Phase 2.
- Proposal 6 – Dogs on leads by direction. Persons in charge of a dog in the Northampton area must put the dog on a lead if asked to do so by an authorised officer.
- Proposal 7 – Maximum number of dogs. Persons in charge of multiple dogs should not be permitted to walk more than four dogs at any one time.
- Proposal 8 – Prohibition of smoking. All persons are prohibited from smoking tobacco, tobacco related products, smokeless tobacco products including electronic cigarettes, herbal cigarettes or any illegal substances in Northampton within the following areas, whether fenced or not: children’s play areas, land near schools when open and in use by pupils, skateparks, tennis courts, multi-use games areas (MUGA) and bowling greens.
- Proposal 9 – Breach of the PSPO. The maximum fixed penalty charge for breaches of the PSPO permitted by the Act is £100.
- Proposal 10 – Variation to the existing PSPO to enforce the requirement to keep dogs on leads at all times in Upton Country Park Phase 2.
- Proposal 11 - Variation to the existing PSPO to include the requirement for dogs to be kept on a lead at all times when in Upton Country Park Phase 2 in the PSPO for Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking that is currently in force in the Daventry and South Northants Areas.
- Proposal 12 - Variation to the existing PSPO to enforce the requirement to keep dogs on leads at all times in Northampton Town centre.
- Proposal 13 - Variation to the existing PSPO to include the requirement for dogs to be kept on a lead at all times when in Northampton town centre in the PSPO for Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking that is currently in force in the Daventry and South Northants Areas.

2.8 A consultation exercise has taken place and responses were in favour of the Council implementing all thirteen proposals though there are notable concerns from some members of the professional dog walking community regarding the proposal to walk a maximum of four dogs at any one time. The Council plan to investigate the development of a licensing scheme for professional dog walkers with a view to developing a local scheme if a national scheme is not brought forward. If this proposal is progressed, it will be the subject of a future separate report.

2.9 This report recommends implementing a variation to the PSPO across the Northampton area to form a single West-wide Order relating to Dog Control and the Prohibition of Smoking in Specific Public Spaces. It sets out the proposals which, if adopted, would be in place for the

statutory remaining period of three years until October 2025, unless reviewed and the subject of a further report to Cabinet to vary or replace.

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- a) Approves the variation to the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to also cover the Northampton area of West Northamptonshire Council administrative area and include the requirement that dogs must be on leads at all times at Upton Country Park Phase 2 and also in Northampton Town Centre and for the varied Order to remain in force for the remaining term until October 2025. Maps showing the extent of the variation to cover the Northampton area and also Upton Country Park Phase 2 and Northampton Town Centre are appended to this report as **Appendix D-J**.
- b) Resolve that the draft varied PSPO at **Appendix C** shall be made by the Council.

4. Reason for Recommendations (NOTE: this section is mandatory and must be completed)

Without the variation:

- It is expected that incidents of dog and smoking related anti-social behaviour will increase in the locality.
- Enforcement of the anti-social behaviour is made more difficult.
- Incidents of displacement of the anti-social behaviour may increase.

The variation:

- Has been well supported in the public consultation - see **Appendix A**.
- Is considered an appropriate and proportionate response to dog control and smoking related issues in the locality.
- Will bring alignment of requirements and consistency for residents who live, work and visit public open spaces across the whole of West Northamptonshire.
- Will allow for consistent messaging, improve education and compliance thereby reducing incidents of anti-social behaviour in the locality.
- Takes steps towards achieving some of the councils Corporate Strategy priorities – Clean and Green, Thriving Villages and Towns and Improved Life Chances.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (“the Act”) introduced new powers to tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB). This legislation also replaced the Dog Control Orders made under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. The Police and Local Authorities are responsible for tackling anti-social behaviour.
- 5.2 Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) can be used to address particular nuisance or problems in public places that have a “detrimental effect” on the local community.
- 5.3 PSPOs may lawfully impose legally enforceable restrictions on certain activities or conduct of any person in the area to be covered. They may also lawfully impose legally enforceable specific restrictions on persons engaged in certain activities or conduct in the same area. A PSPO is designed to ensure that residents and visitors can use and enjoy public spaces without experiencing anti-social behaviour and suffering detrimental impact.

- 5.4 Section 59 of The Act provides local authorities with the powers to create a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) where they are satisfied that activities carried out in a public place: Have had, or likely to have, a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality. Is, or is likely to be persistent or continuing in nature. Is, or is likely to be unreasonable. Justify the restrictions to be imposed.
- 5.5 Section 61 of The Act provides local authorities with powers to vary a PSPO once they have been made, by altering the area to which it applies, or changing the requirements of the Order. The legislative tests of detrimental impact, proportionality and reasonableness need to be satisfied, there are also statutory requirements regarding publishing or publicising the variation and the council is also required to undertake a consultation process.
- 5.6 Following an extensive consultation and appropriate notification in 2022, a PSPO was introduced on 17th October 2022 across Daventry and South areas to tackle irresponsible dog ownership and prohibit smoking in certain public places. This PSPO is in force for the maximum 3-year period until 17th October 2025. See **Appendix Q**.
- 5.7 To address additional concerns regarding dog fouling on sports pitches, a dog poo patrol project on 7 sports pitches was undertaken for a 3-month period across West Northamptonshire to determine if any further measures may be required to those already included in the PSPO. The conclusion was that no additional measures were required as there are a number of requirements and restrictions already contained within the PSPO that can be used to effectively address issues of fouling, and, that resources would be better targeted into effective patrol, better communications, sufficient bin provision and signage.
- 5.8 Once the PSPO was introduced in October 2022, some professional dog walkers advised the Council of their displeasure that they could only walk 4 dogs at any one time in public open spaces as some walk in excess of this number of dogs and wished to continue to do so. Some professional dog walkers cited reasons for wanting to walk more than 4 as being experienced, having relevant training, qualifications, appropriate insurance permitting them to walk in excess of 4 dogs, some cited it being detrimental to their income and not necessarily in the best interest for the dog's welfare if the dog/s may otherwise remain unwalked and/or inadequately socialised by their owners. A small number of professional dog walkers started a national petition and there was much press coverage as a result. In response, talks were held with some members of the professional dog walking community and council officers to listen to their concerns and discuss the options going forward to better support the professional dog walking community who find themselves operating in a growing, unregulated and unlicensed industry.
- 5.9 The growth in dog ownership during the pandemic - an additional 3.2 million households obtained pets during this time - has led to an increase nationally of more inexperienced owners, inadequately socialised dogs and poor breeding. It is these issues that are now believed to be behind the national increase in dog attacks and fatalities which have been heavily publicised in the national media over recent years bringing the issue very much into focus.
- 5.10 The growth of dog ownership, the low barriers to entry to become a professional dog walker along with its associated higher than average income potential and lack of industry regulation has led to an increase in people setting up businesses to walk dogs with no need to acquire relevant qualifications or undertake training. As a result, there are some less competent professional dog walkers operating. The Dogs Trust also state that up to 60% of owners who use professional dog walking services do not have a contract or legal agreement in place. Therefore, many professional dog walkers support the introduction of better regulation via a national Professional Dog Walker licensing scheme or a discretionary professional dog walker licensing scheme.
- 5.11 In January 2023, there was a tragic incident involving a professional dog walker in Surrey who sadly died after being attacked by some of the 8 dogs she was walking at the time. In that area, professional dog walkers are required to hold a licence issued by the Council in this area to walk no more than 6, in this instance the dog walker did not hold a licence and was also walking a mixed group of differing breeds and sizes. An inquest subsequently revealed that it was her own American Bully XL that killed her, but 5 other dogs belonging to other people still remain in private kennels, the full inquest was adjourned until 29th June 2023 and at time of writing this report, we await the full details. As a result of this incident and the rising number of dog attacks and human fatalities across the UK, DEFRA consulted with industry

- experts and all local authorities across the UK on the matter. At the current time, WNC are awaiting notification of their findings. They could introduce a national professional dog walking scheme, reduce the number of dogs that can be walked by canine professionals who hold licenses for boarding and day care establishments or keep the status quo which currently allows no more than 6 dogs to be walked at the same time if they hold a licence under The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals)(England) Regulations 2018 and are a licensed boarder, breeder or dog day care provider.
- 5.12 To support the growing professional dog walking industry, there are a number of national Trade Associations - who offer memberships and codes of conduct - that are available for professional dog walkers to join, these all advise or require that professional dog walkers only walk 4 dogs at any one time. There is also a set of Professional Dog Walkers' Guidelines (**See appendix K**) that were written and endorsed by The Pet Industry Federation (PIF), Dogs Trust, RSPCA and the Canine and Feline Sector Group (CFSG) - CFSG is made up of influential organisations who advise Government on behalf of the sector on strategically important dog and cat health and welfare issues and standards - This document aims to provide guidelines that professional dog walkers should conform to, ensuring standards of welfare for the dog, respect for the environment and peace of mind for the owner. It advises that *"The maximum number of dogs that can be walked at any one time should not exceed the number stated in the walker's insurance policy and comply with local authority requirements regarding the number of dogs. It is recommended that no more than four dogs are walked at any one time. All dogs under a dog walker's care should be reliably under control at all times and transported."* This best practice guidance was used by WNC when the PSPO covering Daventry and South areas was consulted on in Spring 2022 and, has again been used for the subsequent consultation to vary the PSPO in March 2023.
- 5.13 There is currently a PSPO covering the former Northampton Borough Council administrative area which is in force and is due to expire on 18th September 2023. It currently contains some dog control measures and can be viewed at **Appendix L**. As stated in the Cabinet report in October 2022 **appendix M**, it was the intention to explore extending the geographic area covered by the Order to also include Northampton by way of variation which would be subject to another statutory consultation process. This consultation took place for 4 weeks in March 2023. By varying the PSPO, it would provide a West-wide Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking in specific open spaces PSPO.
- 5.14 The soon to expire former Northampton Borough PSPO was varied in March 2021 to include the requirement to keep dogs on leads at Upton Country Park Phase 2 after a number of incidents of dogs off leads attacking the sheep in the fields adjoining the Phase 2 area of Upton Country Park, resulting in serious and fatal injuries to livestock. Prior to the variation being introduced, there were already a number of signs located in Upton Country Park stating that dogs must be kept on leads at all times whilst being walked in the "Phase 2" area of the Park. However, the prohibition was effectively legally unenforceable without including it in a variation. Whilst incidents of livestock worrying and attacks on sheep have reduced since its introduction, they are still occurring with the most recent reported incident taking place in March 2023 during the consultation to vary this PSPO, the Northants Police report can be viewed at **Appendix N**. Concern has also been expressed that a lot of people put their dogs on a lead when agricultural workers approach and then let them off when they think the workers have gone, suggesting that dog owners know they are in the wrong. The area also has a number of ground nesting birds, off lead dogs are scaring the birds from the nests or killing the young. The combination of dogs off leads and some irresponsible owners is making the area un-farmable.
- 5.15 Also contained in the former Borough of Northampton varied Order, is the requirement to place dogs on a lead in the town centre area, it is considered that if this requirement is not included in the proposed varied PSPO, then incidents of out of control dogs will increase the likelihood of harm to people or other dogs and animals will increase as this is a densely populated area with lots of traffic.

The problem – Dog control

- 5.16 There are now estimated to be 13m dogs in the UK and that 34% of all households in the UK own a dog, with 3.2 million households in the UK having acquired a pet since the start of the

pandemic in 2020. In further research conducted by The Dogs Trust, a quarter of owners also reported their dog has developed a new behaviour problem during pandemic lockdowns. It is estimated that dogs produce more than 1,000 tonnes of waste each day, and 31% of dog owners admit to not cleaning up after their dogs.

- 5.17 In 2022, West Northamptonshire Council received more than 1097 complaints about dog fouling and dog control issues **Appendix O** and, whilst most dog owners are caring, responsible individuals, there are still some who are irresponsible.
- 5.18 Whilst WNC receives many dog fouling complaints each year, it believes that the true number of incidents is far greater than the number reported. Dog fouling is not only deeply unpleasant, but it can also be dangerous. Whilst rare, contact with dog excrement or contaminated soil can cause toxocariasis – a nasty infection that can lead to dizziness, nausea, asthma and even blindness and seizures. Dog foul can also pass Neospora and Sarcocystosis to cattle and sheep respectively if left on land which is grazed by farm animals. Neospora can cause abortions in cattle or result in weak calves, and Sarcocystosis can cause neurological disease and death in sheep.
- 5.19 Incidents of livestock worrying by dogs (when a dog chases or attacks farm animals such as sheep and cattle) have increased over recent years. The National Farmers Union estimates that farm animals worth £1.8 million were severely injured or killed by dogs in the UK in 2022. In England, the Midlands was the worst-hit region with dog attacks on livestock totalling an estimated £313,000. The National Farmers Union research also found that dog owners are becoming more distracted with their pets out of sight, and are therefore unaware of the damage that could be inflicted. Many remain unaware that even if their dog doesn't come into contact with a sheep, the distress caused by the chase can trigger a pregnant ewe to die or miscarry. The same research found 64% of dog owners admit their dogs chase animals, almost half (46%) believe that their dog was not capable of injuring or killing livestock, nearly two thirds of owners let their dog roam off-lead in the countryside and that 39% of owners admit their pets do not always come back when called.
- 5.20 Several high-profile dog attacks across the United Kingdom, some resulting in fatalities, have also brought the issue of dog control sharply into focus. The number of dog attacks recorded by police in England and Wales has risen by more than a third in the past five years – in 2022 there were nearly 22,000 cases of out-of-control dogs causing injury. In 2018, there were just over 16,000. The number of dogs seized during this time has also increased by 36% nationally. Northamptonshire Police reported more than 400 dog attacks which were recorded between October 2021 and November 2022 with 40 against other dogs and 399 against humans, 155 of those occurring across West Northamptonshire.

The problem – Prohibition of smoking in certain public spaces

- 5.21 In Northamptonshire there are approximately 96,000 smokers, with the County seeing more than 7,000 hospital admissions, 300,000 GP appointments and more than 1,000 smoking related deaths each year. As part of the Council's commitment to Public Health Northamptonshire, we need to do all we can to reduce exposure to second-hand smoke and make smoking less visible to children. Children's play areas, educational facilities, skateparks, tennis courts, multi-use games areas, bowling greens, fenced or otherwise, are all public places for residents to go to maintain and enjoy a healthy lifestyle which can be supported with the banning of smoking in these specific areas. This no smoking policy has already been adopted

across all these places in the former South Northants and Daventry areas of West Northamptonshire, including all Country Park play areas.

- 5.22 Cigarette butts are the most prevalent form of litter in England and account for 66% of all littered items. The vast majority of cigarettes butts are single-use plastic and contain hundreds of toxic chemicals once smoked. Littered cigarette filters can persist in the environment for many years and release these chemicals into air, land and water, harming plant growth and wildlife. In the UK, 14 million single use vapes are now bought each month with 50% of these being thrown away. Incorrect disposal can potentially leak plastic chemicals and toxic electronic waste into the environment. Littering is a separate criminal offence under section 87 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, so the Council cannot lawfully prohibit littering of any kind within its area, but it can impose restrictions with a view to proactively preventing the littering of discarded cigarettes and vapes taking place in the first place within certain areas.
- 5.23 WNC is keen to take measures to combat all of these problems by proposing to use powers contained in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 Act ("the Act") to give its enforcement officers powers to deal with dog owners who fail to properly control their dogs in public open spaces, and those who fail to refrain from smoking in specific public places in the Northampton area to give one consistent Order throughout the WNC administrative area.
- 5.24 WNC sought the views of members of the public and other interested parties by running a 4-week statutorily required consultation process from 16th March 2023 to 17th April 2023, with the aim of considering whether to vary the current Daventry and South Northants PSPO (Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking in Public Places) 2022 to also cover the Northampton Area.
- 5.25 The geographic scope of the variation would cover a combined area of five hundred square miles with a population of 405,000. The area of Northampton has a population of 246,000. The results of this consultation to vary the order, the questionnaire and comments can be found at **Appendix A and B**.
- 5.26 The proposal is for the varied Order to take effect for the statutory remaining term until October 2025.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 *The Committee could choose not to approve the variation to the PSPO to include Northampton area requiring dogs on leads at all times at Upton Country Park Phase 2 and also Northampton Town Centre all of which are intended to encourage more responsible dog ownership.* **This is not recommended** because of the potentially serious impact which a small number of irresponsible or inconsiderate dog owners could have on the wider community. Education and encouragement regarding responsible dog ownership and control would be made more difficult in different areas of West Northants. Messaging of the requirements across different parts of the West Northamptonshire authority is far more difficult to achieve. Enforcement is made more difficult if issues arise. Over time, there is a concern that levels of anti-social behaviour regarding dog control and ownership would increase, it is therefore anticipated that there would be a greater risk of more people experiencing a greater detrimental impact on the wider community of those who live, work or visit the areas of Northampton. There are also concerns about displacement of anti-social behaviour to areas of Northampton not covered by the variation. The consultation exercise has demonstrated public support for the introduction of the variation to the PSPO in proposed terms.

6.2 *The Committee could choose to accept and implement parts of the varied Order to cover Northampton.*

This is not recommended due to the same issues as stated in **6.1**. If it were then deemed that further measures need to be introduced at a later date, this would involve undertaking another lengthy statutory consultation process followed by a lengthy implementation process, additional printing and siting of extra signage. This would be an inefficient use of resource and may damage the reputation of the Council. This may lead to an increased detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality.

6.3 *The Committee could choose to approve the variation to the PSPO to include Northampton area.*

This is recommended. The variation will come into force once the order is made. A programme of communications and education along with placing of signage will be undertaken along with a proportionate, targeted and intelligence led approach to enforcement. This will allow those who may be affected by the Order to become aware and accustomed to it. It will bring consistency across the West area. Canine professionals who walk in excess of 4 dogs are able to do so with permission on private land or in accordance with any licence or permit issued by WNC or authority in accordance with legislation other than the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

6.4 *Approve the making of the draft variation to the PSPO at **Appendix C** to cover the former Northampton Borough area until October 2025.*

For the reasons outlined in paragraph 4, **this is the preferred recommendation.**

6.5 *Grant approval for the formal making of that varied Order to the Executive Director for Place and Economy, as well as the necessary compliance with the remaining statutory requirements to bring it into force.*

This is recommended. Cabinet cannot in practice carry out the remaining necessary statutory processes set out in the legal implication comments below, which are required to be completed in order for any PSPO to be formally made and lawfully brought into force. These tasks will have to be completed by Council officers and so a formal instruction to do so is required once Cabinet approves the draft varied Order at **Appendix C**.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

7.1.1 The consultation to vary the Order has been undertaken using existing resource and existing budgets.

7.1.2 Additional signage for the varied PSPO will need to be printed and installed at each of the sites across the Northampton area. The cost will be covered from existing budgets.

7.1.3 Old and expired PSPO signage will need to be removed and replaced. This will take time due to the size of the Northampton area.

7.1.4 The placing of new signage and removal of old, will be undertaken by existing officers who work out in the community and around their other work schedules to maximise efficiency and keep cost low.

7.1.5 Along with the signage, a communications campaign will support the varied Order to improve and enhance public understanding of the requirements of the PSPO. This will be undertaken by WNC Communications Team and will use existing resource.

- 7.1.6 An indicative print cost for signage of £4,100 has been identified for the scheme; however, this is prior to tender for supply and subject to the PSPO measures decided upon.
- 7.1.7 Enforcement of the varied PSPO will be undertaken within existing resources and budget. Kingdom LA Support, an Environmental Enforcement Contractor will also be used to support enforcement and help provide a visible presence across West Northamptonshire. They already work in the Northampton area; their contract is being renegotiated at the time of writing.
- 7.1.8 Targeted, intelligence-led enforcement activity will continue to be carried out by Council officers and the Police where possible. Officers already deal with a wide range of environmental enforcement issues and are specifically trained in carrying out enforcement activities in a sensitive and proportionate manner.

7.2 Legal

- 7.2.1 The making or variation of a PSPO is a legal power available to the council in order to prevent people living, working and visiting in specific areas from suffering harm caused by certain activities taking place there. Variation can include increasing the extent of the area in which the Order is in force, as is proposed in this report.
- 7.2.2 In making or varying an order, the local authority must be satisfied that what has been happening in a relevant area has had, or is likely to have, a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality and that it has been persistent or is likely to continue. The provisions within the Order must then address that specific activity and either prohibit it or require people carrying it out to do certain things.
- 7.2.3 Statutory consultation and publication is required before an Order can be made and they are subject to a right of appeal to the High Court by “interested persons” on the grounds of validity or procedural defect, for a period of 6 weeks after being made. There are therefore a number of risks associated with the making of a PSPO which Members should be aware of. Those risks are set out below alongside the mitigations that have been put in place to minimise those risks.

7.3 Risk

7.3.1 *Risk 1 – Appeal against the making of the varied Order.*

Risk mitigation - Ensuring that the varied Order is made strictly in accordance with the statutory procedure for making and varying a PSPO, including evidential and statutory consultation requirements and especially with regard to any prohibition or restriction not included within the draft varied Order at **Appendix C**.

7.3.2 *Risk 2 – The varied PSPO and its measures cannot be enforced adequately.*

Risk mitigation – Ensuring that the varied Order is robust and its implementation is subject to a plan of execution, which will include the installation of signage, education and sufficient publicity of its effect in practical terms, clear instruction to officers responsible for its enforcement and a proportionate response as those affected by its introduction become aware of its requirements.

7.3.3 *Risk 3 - Inadequately delivered public awareness and promotion campaign of the varied Order and it fails to raise public awareness.*

Risk mitigation – The Council will deliver a comprehensive promotion campaign if the varied Order is made and following its implementation.

7.3.4 Risk 4 – Reputational damage to WNC if the varied Order is not introduced.

Risk mitigation – The consultation to vary the Order has been undertaken with those likely to be impacted by introduction of the variation. There is strong support for all of the proposed restrictions and requirements, although some professional dog walkers and their customers have voiced their concerns around limiting the number of dogs walked to 4, this is dealt with in more detail in the report at **6.3 and 7.3.5 and 7.3.6**. PSPOs are intended to prevent anti-social behaviour and other unreasonable activities from detrimentally affecting the lives of people who live and work in affected by such activities, as well as those that visit them. Consulting the public and organisations in the proposal area of Northampton has informed WNC that a PSPO is required to restrict the conduct and activities addressed by the proposed varied Order or introduce specific requirements to control them.

7.3.5 Risk 5 – Reputational damage to WNC if the varied Order is introduced but fails to communicate effectively with professional dog walkers and other canine professionals who wish to walk more than 4 dogs at any one time whilst in West Northamptonshire the rationale for the council’s decision.

Risk mitigation – In 2019, The Dogs Trust, Pet Industry Federation, RSPCA, Tailster and Canine and Feline Sector Group produced The Professional Dog Walkers’ Guidelines, which recommended “The maximum number of dogs that can be walked at any one time should not exceed the number stated in the walker’s insurance policy and comply with local authority requirements regarding the number of dogs. It is recommended that no more than four dogs are walked at any one time”. These guidelines were drawn up to create a workable set of guidelines that can provide information for local authorities and provide a framework for professional dog walkers, as well as helping pet owners understand what they should expect from a suitable dog walker. They are readily available on a number of animal welfare and dog charity websites and The Local Government Animal Welfare Group website. Some well-known insurance companies and insurance search engine providers also refer to these guidelines or reference Professional Dog Walking Trade Associations which require that no more than 4 dogs should be walked at any one time - although insurance is available for professional dog walkers to walk more than 4 depending on the individual’s circumstances.

During the consultation to vary the PSPO, a number of dog charities, welfare groups, trade associations and canine professionals were consulted, The Dogs Trust stated that “95% of dog owners have up to 3 dogs. Therefore, the number of dogs taken out on to land by one individual would not normally be expected to exceed four dogs.” This suggests that the majority of the population would be well within the requirements of the PSPO to walk no more than 4 dogs at any one time and therefore that particular requirement wouldn’t apply to them. National professional dog walking Trade Associations who offer membership to professional dog walkers and operate codes of conduct advised WNC that “DWSA (Dog Walkers & Sitters Association).....are working hard to attempt to regulate and improve the safety and standards of this rapidly growing industry. We welcome being consulted on such issues and our own

conduct includes dog walkers not walking more than 4 dogs at a time, always having the means to clean up after dogs...” The National Association of Pet Sitters and Dog Walkers (NarpsUK) also strongly support all measures including the requirement to walk no more than 4 dogs at any one time and it provides a membership scheme and associated code of conduct that also requires this. Northampton Town Council also support the introduction of a maximum limit that one person can walk at a time citing in their response to the consultation that they “particularly support the introduction of a maximum limit that one person can walk at a time. The uptake in the dog walking industry needs some regulation and the intention to introduce a licence and/or code of conduct is welcomed”. Some professional dog walkers also only walk 4 dogs, this is a requirement too if they belong to one of the Professional Dog Walking Trade Associations. Some professional dog walkers and users of professional dog walking services also advised that only walking a maximum of 4 dogs at one time allows for better dog control, better ability to pick up fouling, improved welfare and ability to address a dog’s individual needs. 55% of respondents to the consultation agreed or strongly agreed that 4 dogs should be the maximum amount of dogs that can be walked at any one time with 21% of respondents stating that they had encountered issues with multiple dogs being walked at any one time.

More than 4 dogs can be walked on private land with the owners’ permission. There are a number of dog parks and fields available across Northamptonshire and surrounding counties which can be rented out for between 30 minutes to 1 hour, sometimes longer. Prices start at £3.50 for 30 minutes for between 1-3 dogs and up to £15 for 1 hour for between 9 -12 dogs depending on the dog field visited. Petbusinessinsurance.co.uk suggests that the average professional dog walking charges per dog walked are between £8-£15 per hour, per dog, they also state that allowing a dog to be walked with others can often reduce the cost and could bring average costs per walk down from £12 to £8 suggesting that, during a cost of living crisis, some owners may allow their dogs to be walked in groups to make the costs more affordable which could, depending on the expertise and training of the professional dog walker and the behaviour of the dog/s being walked together, lead to an increase in dog control issues.

The exemption to the varied Order for those who hold a WNC licence for boarding, breeding and dog day care under The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 should be communicated clearly. The current DEFRA Statutory Guidance relating to boarders, breeders and day care businesses currently allows for a maximum of 6 dogs to be walked, it states “No more than 6 dogs per person can be walked at one time. The owner’s consent is needed for a dog to walk with other dogs. Dogs must be familiarised with each other before the walk.” WNC have over 100 licenced dog related businesses in its administrative area.

7.3.6 Risk 6 – Failure to address concerns raised from some Professional Dog Walkers regarding their ability to walk a maximum of 4 dogs at any one time on land where the varied Order applies.

Risk mitigation – WNC have held conversations with representatives of professional dog walkers and listened to concerns. Consideration is being given to the development of a licensing scheme and/or associated code of conduct for professional dog walkers to better support the growing unregulated and unlicensed industry to ensure that they can continue to operate safely, legally with the highest standards of animal welfare. The finer details of what this scheme could look like, will be the subject of further work that is outside of the scope of this report. There are also a few exemptions where more than 4 dogs can be walked – on private land with consent

parks, if they are licensed by WNC under The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals)(England) Regulations 2018 as a provider of boarding or dog day care services. As also stated in paragraph 5.10 the Council is currently awaiting consultation finding from DEFRA regarding the number of dogs walked at any one time and also any possible introduction of a national dog walking licensing scheme.

Since talks were held with dog walkers, the consultation to vary the Order has taken place and the results and evidence gathered supports retaining the 4-dog maximum requirement, there has also been the untimely and tragic death of the professional dog walker in East Surrey, and a high number of dog attacks reported in the media, suggesting that public opinion may be more supportive of a reduced number of dogs being walked at any one time.

7.4 Consultation and Communications

- 7.4.1 In addition to statutory consultation requirements set out in the 2014 Act, the Council has also conducted a public consultation with supporting information and maps showing the area that may be affected by the introduction of the proposed variation. The consultation ran for 4 weeks from 16th March 2023 to 17th April 2023. The results of the consultation to vary the PSPO have been crucial in developing the draft at **Appendix C**. The consultation results and comments, consultation questionnaire, supporting information and maps are provided in **Appendix A and B**.
- 7.4.2 The consultation was carried out online through the West Northamptonshire Council Consultation Hub. It was supported by a West Northamptonshire Council communications campaign to raise awareness and encourage participation. Alternative formats of the consultation were made available if required.
- 7.4.3 More than one hundred canine related businesses were notified across West Northamptonshire including vets, dog trainers, professional dog walkers, behaviour experts, groomers, WNC animal licensees – dog boarders, kennels, breeders and pet shops. They were supplied with a poster to promote the consultation and share with their customers.
- 7.4.4 All Parish Councils and Town Councils in West Northamptonshire were notified and asked to share with residents, clubs, organisations and groups in their area.
- 7.4.5 Over twenty different animal welfare, animal assistance charities and professional dog walking trade associations were notified. These included The Kennel Club, The Dogs Trust, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, Guide Dogs for the Blind, Assistance Dogs UK, Autism Dogs, Canine Partners, Dog Aid - Assistance in Disability, Dogs for Good, Medical Detection Dogs, Support Dogs, The Seeing Dogs Alliance, RSPCA, Association of Professional Dog Walkers and Sitters (APDWS), National Association of Pet Sitters and Dog Walkers (NARPS UK), Professional Dog Walkers Association (PDWA), Dog Walkers and Sitters Association (DWSA) and The Canine and Feline Sector Group (CFSG).
- 7.4.6 All primary and secondary schools across West Northamptonshire were notified and asked to share details of the consultation with parents and carers.
- 7.4.7 Libraries across West Northamptonshire were asked to support and promote the consultation and accessing of it for residents and support with promotion of the consultation by way of poster.
- 7.4.8 Notification of the consultation was sent to those on the WNC Consultation Register and the WNC Resident's Panel with approximately 450 contacts.
- 7.4.9 Statutory partners were notified including Northamptonshire Police Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner along with other interested groups including Northamptonshire

Football Association, Ramblers Association, Keep Britain Tidy, neighbouring Local Authorities, The Canal and Rivers Trust, National Trust, Community Safety partners. WNC staff including the Chief Executive, Senior Leadership Team, Assistant Directors, Environmental Health and Environmental Crime Officers, Neighbourhood Wardens, Dog Wardens, Rangers, Regulatory Services Lead Officers and the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Engagement and Regulatory Services. All were given the opportunity to comment on the consultation.

- 7.4.10 Results of this consultation have shown strong support for all of the proposals which were proposed for inclusion within the variation to the Order. The full report, including the results, comments and consultation questionnaire can be found at **Appendix A and B**.
- 7.4.11 The Council received 436 responses to the online consultation. 9.2% were received on behalf of a business, organisation, voluntary or community group. This option also applied if the respondent looked after or walked dogs as part of their own business and wished to respond in that capacity. Of those organisations that responded, 15% were charities, 21% public sector organisations, 47% were dog related businesses. 90.8% were individuals who responded. Respondents were also given the opportunity to make comments, Of the 436 responses received, 48% (211) of respondents chose to make comments.
- 7.4.12 54% of those who responded to the consultation to vary the PSPO were a resident of Northampton (38.7%), worked in Northampton (10.8%) or responded as a visitor (4.5%) to Northampton.
- 7.4.13 Of the consultees who chose to answer the question relating to dog ownership, 59% stated that they owned a dog with 1% stating that they had an assistance dog and 3% advising that they had a disability or health condition that restricts their ability to walk and clean up after their dog. Of those that advised that they owned a dog, 58% said they only owned one, 26% owned two, 5% owned three dogs and 2% owned 4. 3% owned 5 or more dogs but all were canine professionals – breeders, dog care or professional dog walkers.
- 7.4.14 Consultees were asked to comment on thirteen specific proposals:

Proposal 1 - The geographic extent of the PSPO. 95% of consultees responded to this proposal. 62% of responses strongly agreed or agreed that the PSPO (Dog Control and the Prohibition of Smoking in Public Places) 2022, that is in place in the Daventry and South Northants Areas should be extended to cover the Northampton Area. 26% disagreed or strongly disagreed that the variation should be applied to the Northampton area.

A synopsis of the comments relating to the geographic extent of the Order include:

- Other areas that should have been considered for inclusion for dogs on leads - The Washlands, an area of international environmental significance for the protection of birds species but most dog owners ignore it resulting in dogs off the lead chasing, scaring and killing birds and sheep and dog attacks on humans.
- Enforcement of the Order.
- Better education is needed, education should be used before fines.
- Creation of enclosed dog spaces.
- Use or employment of a dog warden to educate dog owners.
- With an increase in dog ownership the PSPO is important as not all dogs are friendly and not all owners are responsible.
- Take action against irresponsible behaviour but do not spoil it for everyone just because of the actions of a minority.

Proposal 2 - Failure to clean up after your dog. 93% of respondents answered this question. 98% of those who responded believed that persons in control of a dog must clean up and remove its faeces from the area and place it in a bin or take it home for disposal. 73% of respondents stated that they had experienced issues with dog fouling in the Northampton area in the last 6 months.

A synopsis of the comments relating to fouling were regarding:

- An increase in fouling.
- Loose dogs not being watched and being left to foul.
- Persons with several dogs being less able to deal with fouling.
- Fouling being unsightly, spoiling enjoyment of outside spaces, associated health risks of fouling.
- Incorrect disposal of fouling by bagging and leaving it in bushes or left bagged on the ground.
- More bin provision for better disposal.
- Wishing for a cleaner, nicer place to live.
- Fouling locations were provided including - Upton estate and Country Park, Eastfield Park, Little Billing, Great Billing and Bellinge, Briar Hill pocket park, Kingsley, Bouverie Estate, Queen's Park, Lorraine Crescent, Bunting Road, Abington and Abington Park, Northampton.

Proposal 3 – Having the means to pick up after your dog. 93% of consultees answered this question with 97% support of having the means to pick up after your dog with 67% of respondents experiencing issues with dog owners or walkers failing to remove their dog's waste from public places and/or not carrying the means to do so in the Northampton Area in the last 6 months.

A synopsis of comments relating to this proposal related to:

- Concern that a female dog owner who walks alone would be uncomfortable about being approached by someone wanting to know what was in their pocket.
- If a dog owner's approached at the end of a walk, they may have already used the bags or given a spare bag to someone else.

Proposal 4 – Dog exclusion zones. Persons in control of a dog must not take it into or onto any of the following areas, fenced or otherwise: Children's play areas; Educational facilities; skateparks; tennis courts; multi-use games areas (MUGA); bowling greens. 91% of people responded to this question, of those, 77% strongly agreed or agreed with this proposal. Whilst 62% of those who answered this question had not had issues in these areas of Northampton with off lead and/or out of control dogs, 29% of respondents had encountered problems.

A synopsis of comments relating to this proposal are:

- Consultee had stopped taking their children to Abington Park and Upton Country Park due to off-lead dogs frightening children.
- Dogs chasing and jumping up children at Upton Country Park resulting in a fearful child.
- On school grounds dogs should be banned, with exemption for assistance/therapy dogs, even when dogs are on leads, the leads are often let out to long lengths which trip up children, get entangled and otherwise are a safety concern. Children will go up to dogs and you are never quite sure how they are going to react.
- Dogs on school grounds should be prohibited for the safety of all.
- Keeping exclusion zones to a minimum.

Proposal 5 – Dogs on leads in specific open spaces. Persons in control of a dog must ensure that it is kept on a lead at all times whilst in the following: Cemeteries, burial sites, graveyards, memorial gardens, allotments, car parks to which the public have access to, sports grounds, fields and pitches when in use for an authorised activity, land near schools when open and in use by pupils, Northampton Town Centre and Upton Country Park Phase 2. 90% of people responded to this question with 56% of responses strongly agreeing and 20% agreeing that persons in control of a dog must ensure the dog is on a lead in cemeteries, burial sites, graveyards and/or memorial gardens, allotments, car parks to which the public have access and sports grounds, sports fields and pitches when in use for authorised sporting activity, land near schools and also when in Northampton town centre and at Upton Country Park Phase 2. 35% of responses stated that they had encountered issues with off lead dogs in these specific areas when in Northampton but 58% had not.

A synopsis of the comments in relation to dogs being required to be kept on leads in specific places are:

- Being approached by dogs in public places and feeling fearful of unfamiliar dogs.
- Being unable to take grandchildren to a play area due to dogs not being on leads.
- Inability to retrieve off-lead dogs at Upton Country Park.
- Feeling intimidated by off-lead dogs at Billing Road Cemetery and a minority of abusive owners.
- Safety concerns in car parks where off-lead dogs run in and around cars.
- Clarity wanted around criminalisation of those who have a well-behaved dog off-lead in a car park.
- Dogs should be on leads at all times in residential areas or all the time as you are not in control unless it's on a lead.
- Suggestion that leads should not be retractable as the dogs can still get away from owners which can run up to children and dogs and be hazardous to cyclists and pedestrians.
- Billing Road Cemetery being used for other antisocial activity which is being witnessed and reported by dog walkers and therefore should be exempt from the Order as it is a closed cemetery.
- Parents on the school run with dogs, tie them up outside the school and leave them barking.
- Consider the Animal Welfare Act 2006, section 9 requirements (the 'duty of care') that include the dog's need to exhibit normal behaviour patterns – this includes the need for sufficient exercise including the need to run off lead in appropriate areas.

Proposal 6 – Dogs on lead by direction. 90% of people responded to this question with 83% strongly agreeing or agreeing that persons in charge of a dog in the Northampton area must put the dog on a lead if asked to do so by an authorised officer. 54% of those who responded stated that they have had issues where dogs have been off lead and not under proper control by the person responsible for them in the Northampton area, 42% stated that they had not had issues.

A synopsis of the comments received relating to this requirement include:

- Being able to address irresponsible owners who let their dogs run up to other people off lead which then may jump up at them, dirtying clothing.

- Dog owners lacking control over their dogs and refusing to put them on a lead when requested by members of the public.
- Dogs running and barking and appearing out of control may be frightening to others such as children and make others feel under threat and affect their mental health and their ability to enjoy peace and quiet.
- Some consultees stated they'd rather have a dogs on leads at all times requirement for improved safety and enjoyment reasons.

Proposal 7 – Maximum number of dogs. 90% (388 people) of respondents answered this question. 44% strongly agreed and 11% agreed that persons in charge of multiple dogs should not be allowed to walk any more than four at any one time with 5% disagreeing and 27% strongly disagreeing with this proposal.

When asked if the consultee had encountered any problems caused by a number of dogs being walked at the same time by one person in the Northampton Area 73% said that they had not but 21% stated that they had encountered issues.

A synopsis of comments received relating to this proposal were:

- The PSPO would penalise those who had a number of well-behaved dogs.
- It's often owners with one dog that they cannot control, not those with a group of dogs who are in control.
- If 6 dogs are well socialised, why can't they be walked together. There is a difference between a responsible dog owner walking their six rescue greyhounds on a lead and an unlicensed dog walker letting six dogs from different households run riot with no control.
- Too many people see dog walking as easy money, do not have the necessary experience and skills and make poor choices.
- Provider of a dog day care business would be required to leave 2 of the 6 dogs at home to comply with the PSPO requirements.
- Using a professional dog walker allows people to work where their dog may otherwise be unwalked or rehomed which may be detrimental to the dog's welfare and mental health of the owner.
- Dog businesses with a licence should be treated separately as they have had to demonstrate ability via training – punish those who fail to train.
- Limit of 4 dogs is sensible in parks and towns regardless of whether a professional person is present but to have those limits set for open countryside including some public footpaths and bridleways is excessive and unnecessary.
- Support for licensing/accreditation scheme professional dog walkers.
- Boarders should be able to walk 6 dogs.
- Support for licensing of professional dog walkers and boarders to walk 6 under standards mutually agreed with penalties for anyone breaching these limits as the blanket limit of 4 dogs is severely restrictive to current business practises and will cause many conscientious professionals to go out of business or lose a third of their income.
- Professional dog walkers with insurance that covers up to 6 dogs should be able to walk 6.
- A competent walker will have control over all their dogs and will take them to the appropriate places to walk them.
- Sometimes there is no room to shuffle the dogs so more than 4 have to be walked.

- Incidents with inexperienced owners, who don't seem to socialise their dogs or read their dog's body language - my dog walker gives my dog a great time with his friends and often meets up with other dog walkers. I get photos of 10-15 happy, playful dogs and this is what I want for my dog.
- There should be no limit imposed because that is dictated by your competence as a dog handler and the training of the dogs. Specifying a number criminalises those who have trained their dogs well but have more than the specified number to walk. It also encourages people who aren't competent and have untrained dogs to walk more than they are competent to walk.
- Dogs left for long hours, or without adequate exercise and socialisation can quickly become frustrated, leading to dogs developing undesirable behaviours.
- Need for a licensing scheme for professionals, that can provide the appropriate guidelines for dog walkers, and owners to look for when enquiring about a dog walker.
- Any more than 4 would be dangerous for the public, the dog walker and other dogs in the area. How can dog poo be picked up with a large number of dogs.
- Walking no more than 4 dogs at any one time unless on private land with no public access.
- Multiple dogs are not walked together, dog walking should be focused on the needs of the individual dog, one person can't safely control more than 4 dogs at a time on the lead and cannot watch and control more than 4 dogs off lead and see where they all are at once and if they have fouled.
- Walks with one person and more than 4 dogs are for money and not for the welfare of the dogs.
- A regulation system for dog walkers is needed.
- Joining of a Trade Association or accreditation scheme for professional dog walkers.
- 8/9 dogs being walked by one individual which is highly risky and does not promote animal welfare or responsible dog ownership, dog walking companies have too many dogs on walks. They don't keep eyes on them when they let them off lead which then means they are not observing dog's behaviour towards people and other animals.

Proposal 8 – Prohibition of smoking in specific public open spaces in the Northampton area.

88% of consultees responded to this proposal. Of those that did, 79% strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal to prohibit all persons from smoking tobacco, tobacco related products, smokeless tobacco products including electronic cigarettes, herbal cigarettes or any illegal substances within the following areas, whether fenced or not: children's play areas, playgrounds, educational facilities, skateparks, tennis courts, multi-use games areas (MUGA) and bowling greens. 8% of respondents disagreed with this proposal. When asked if respondents to the consultation had encountered any issues with persons smoking tobacco, tobacco related products, smokeless tobacco products including electronic cigarettes and herbal cigarettes or any illegal substances in the Northampton area within the following locations: Children's play areas; Land near an entrance or exit of a school when open and in use by pupils; Skateparks; Tennis courts; Multi-use games areas and bowling greens 43% said they had encountered issues and 51% stated that they had not.

A synopsis of comments received regarding this proposal include:

- The proposal is unfair and that people should still have the right to choose what they put in their bodies.

- The plume of smoke from vapes and cigarettes is unpleasant to breathe in especially when outside getting fresh air.
- Health impacts on children are concerning especially near schools and play areas.
- Smoking is awful, unsightly and anti-social.
- Parents and teachers have been seen outside school gates smoking and dropping cigarette butts.

Proposal 9 – Breach of the PSPO. The maximum fixed penalty charge for breaches of the PSPO permitted by the Act is £100. When asked to what extent the consultees agreed or disagreed that the fixed penalty charge should be set at £100 in the Northampton Area to match the charge already set in the former Daventry and South Northants Areas 70% agreed or strongly agreed that the amount should be the same. 14% disagreed or strongly disagreed. 87% of consultees responded to this question.

A synopsis of comments relating to this proposal include:

- The fine should be £500 for fouling.
- £100 fine is too high.
- £100 is too low.
- Fine is another way to raise income for the council, they pay enough to the council.
- Fines are great but won't be paid without enforcement follow-up.

Proposal 10 – Variation to the existing PSPO to enforce the requirement to keep dogs on leads at all times in Upton Country Park Phase 2. 85% of consultees responded to this question with 44% of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing and 26% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing to enforce the requirement to keep dogs on leads at all times at Upton Country Park Phase 2. When asked if respondents had encountered issues in the last 6 months with off lead dogs in the Upton Country Park Phase 2 area, 49% had not encountered a problem but 16% stated that they had encountered problems with off lead dogs despite there already being a PSPO in place that requires that dogs are kept on leads when in Upton Country Park Phase 2.

Proposal 11 – Variation to the existing PSPO to include the requirement for dogs to be kept on a lead at all times when in Upton Country Park Phase 2 in the PSPO for Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking that is currently in force in the Daventry and South Northants Areas.

When asked to what extent did consultees agree or disagree that the PSPO for Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking which is now in force in the Daventry and South Northants Areas should be varied to include dogs on leads at all times at Upton Country Park Phase 2, 35% strongly agreed and 14% strongly agreed with 24% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that it should be included with 16% having a neutral response and 12% having no opinion.

A synopsis of comments relating to this proposal include:

- Incident where an off-lead dog tried to bite the ankle of a runner, that person won't take their child to the area as they are fearful.
- Rather have the offence if the dog is off a lead at Upton Country Park due to walking a dog that doesn't like being approached by others so is kept on a lead but gets distressed by other off-lead dogs.
- Dog owners need somewhere to exercise their dogs off lead, not all dog owners are irresponsible.

- If there is livestock grazing in this area, dogs should be on the lead but if they are not then dogs should be able to run around and get the exercise they need.
- Restricting dogs to being on lead in parks is unfair to the animal's welfare.

Proposal 12 - Variation to the existing PSPO to enforce the requirement to keep dogs on leads at all times in Northampton Town centre. 85% of consultees responded to this question with 83% of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing and 7% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing to enforce the requirement to keep dogs on leads at all times in Northampton Town Centre. When asked if respondents had encountered issues in the last 6 months with off lead dogs in Northampton Town Centre, 64% had not encountered a problem but 13% stated that they had encountered problems with off lead dogs despite there already being a PSPO in place that requires that dogs are kept on leads in Northampton town centre.

Proposal 13 – Variation to the existing PSPO to include the requirement for dogs to be kept on a lead at all times when in Northampton town centre in the PSPO for Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking that is currently in force in the Daventry and South Northants Areas.

When asked to what extent did consultees agree or disagree that the PSPO for Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking which is now in force in the Daventry and South Northants Areas should be varied to include dogs on leads at all times in Northampton town centre, 54 % strongly agreed and 22% agreed with 3% disagreeing or 6% strongly disagreeing that it should be included with 11% having a neutral response and 4% having no opinion.

A synopsis of comments include:

- What is the boundary of the area to be covered.
- Dogs are best on leads as it's potentially an unsafe environment with traffic and more visitors.
- Experience of dogs being poorly controlled in the town centre and in some parks in the town.

Communications

7.4.15 During August 2023, and prior to this Cabinet meeting, sufficient publicity and notification has been provided by the WNC Communications team to promote and inform those living, working or visiting the area that could potentially be affected by the introduction of the varied Order. A press release supported by social media has been issued. Town and Parish Councils have also been supplied a copy of the draft varied Order, which has also been uploaded to the Council website.

7.4.16 Once approved, the varied Order will be fully supported by another communications campaign, this will include a press release, social media, Town and Parish Council briefing, WNC members briefing, information on the WNC website including the varied Order and frequently asked questions (FAQs). Signage will also be printed and positioned across the affected area and in specific locations such as graveyards, near schools etc.

7.4.17 A communications campaign will also be run to advise and remind owners about responsible dog ownership which fall outside the scope of a PSPO. i.e., dog identification, microchipping, livestock worrying etc.

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.5.1 Not considered. None received.

7.6 Climate Impact

7.6.1 The Council has made a commitment in the Corporate Plan to use resources wisely to protect the environment, where everyone can live well and safely together and be a place where everyone thrives. It aspires to be an authority that puts the environment first and encourages and supports others to do the same to help shape a cleaner, greener West Northants. Although the proposed varied PSPO is not lawfully capable of being created in order to assist the Council in achieving any of its environmental goals, it is anticipated that this will be a knock-on effect should the varied Order be brought into force.

7.6.2 The varied Order needs to be regularly reviewed to ensure sufficient education and enforcement can take place if necessary.

7.6.3 There will continue to be a positive effect on local environmental quality with the proposed varied Order and the associated education and enforcement against irresponsible dog owners.

7.6.4 After the Order was introduced in South and Daventry areas, there were some concerns raised from residents in bordering areas of Northampton regarding possible displacement of irresponsible dog owners and walkers who may venture into the Northampton area which has slightly differing requirements in place currently, thereby potentially increasing incidents of fouling and out of control dogs in the area. The introduction of the varied order would reduce this risk.

7.6.5 Comments received from the consultation suggested that The Washlands was an area where there are issues with irresponsible dog owners and fouling and since the consultation ended, Environmental Improvement have been made aware of a WNC and NNC jointly commissioned report into the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area Visitor Access and Bird Disturbance Study providing evidence that dogs off lead continue to disturb birds at Northampton Washlands and that respondents to the survey suggested improvements could include improved dog control and fouling measures. This site will be considered for further measures when the PSPO is reviewed.

7.7 Community Impact

7.7.1 The geographic scope of the variation would cover a combined area of five hundred square miles with a total population of 405,000. The proposed variation area of Northampton has a population of 246,000 and is the largest town in West Northamptonshire. It is surrounded by more rural areas which include 3 smaller towns and 166 parishes which cover public footpaths, bridle paths and byways which cross fields and private land. Whilst the scope of a PSPO does not extend to private land to which the public do not have access, with or without a fee, including agricultural land, it does cover the public footpaths, bridle paths and byways that may cross that land. WNC will endeavour to support this message with a targeted communications education campaign to advise and remind owners about responsible dog ownership wherever they are in West Northamptonshire. Some of these requirements will fall outside of the scope of the PSPO i.e., dog identification, microchipping, livestock worrying etc. All are requirements of responsible dog ownership and are covered by their own legislation.

- 7.7.2 The consultation results have identified some problem locations, these areas will be targeted for patrol, education, appropriate signage and enforcement.
- 7.7.3 Feedback was provided by the consultation to ensure that due regard was given to the Equality Act 2010. See **Appendix P** for the full Equality Screening Assessment for the impact of any resulting varied PSPO on protected groups, a summary is provided:
- **Age** - will be mitigated against by using Officer discretion or exemption from the requirements of the varied PSPO to pick up after their dog if affected.
 - **Disability** - nothing in the proposed variation shall apply to a person who is registered as a blind person on a register compiled under section 29 or the National Assistance Act 1948; or is deaf, in respect of a dog trained by Hearing Dogs for Deaf People (register charity number 293358) and upon which the person relies for assistance; or has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on the ability to carry out common day-to-day activities in respect of a dog trained by any current or future members of Assistance Dogs UK, or any other charity registered in the UK with a purpose of training assistance dogs and upon which the person relies for assistance. Has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities and in the reasonable opinion of the Council that person relies upon the assistance of the dog in connection with their disability.
 - **Pregnancy and maternity** – will be mitigated against by using officer discretion or exemption from requirements of the varied PSPO to pick up after the dog if affected.
- 7.7.4 Results demonstrate that all of the proposals contained in the consultation to vary the PSPO were well supported and the majority of consultees very strongly or strongly agreed with the measures. There were, however, a number of respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal that persons (individuals or professional dog walkers) should only walk a maximum of 4 dogs at any one time in West Northamptonshire. The majority of these responses were from canine professionals - professional dog walkers or boarders - or were from respondents who use dog walking services. Their comments can be viewed from page 72 in **Appendix A**. Many of the respondents were in favour of some form of licensing scheme as they acknowledge that there are some “professional” dog walkers operating who are not undertaking appropriate training etc and that this would provide some sort of support and regulation in this otherwise unregulated and unlicensed industry.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1 Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014: [Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- 8.2 Statutory Guidance: [Anti-social behaviour powers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- 8.3 Local Government Association Guidance: [Public Spaces Protection Orders: Guidance for councils | Local Government Association](#)
- 8.4 West Northamptonshire Corporate Plan: [Corporate Plan | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](#)
- 8.5 Equality and Human Rights Commission: [Assistance dogs: a guide for all businesses | Equality and Human Rights Commission \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](#)
- 8.6 Professional Dog Walkers' Guidelines: [Dog walking guide online \(rspca.org.uk\)](#)
- 8.7 West Northamptonshire Council Northampton area PSPO: [PSPO - Variation March 2021 | West Northamptonshire Council - Northampton Area](#)

- 8.8 Keep Britain Tidy Report: [20200330_KBT_Litter_Composition_Report_-_FINAL.pdf \(keepbritaintidy.org\)](#)
- 8.9 E-cigarette litter and use statistics: [One million single use vapes thrown away every week contributing to the growing e-waste challenge in the UK - Material Focus](#)
- 8.10 Dog ownership statistics: [UK pet ownership at 62% overall in 2022, dogs top list | PetfoodIndustry](#)
- 8.11 Northamptonshire Police, dog behaviour statistics: [More than 400 dangerous dog attacks reported to Northamptonshire Police in 12 months, data reveals | Northampton Chronicle and Echo](#)
- 8.12 National dog attack statistics: [Dog attacks: 34% increase recorded by police in England and Wales - BBC News](#)
- 8.13 E-cigarettes litter and use statistics: [Government explores next steps to clean up tobacco litter in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- 8.14 Public Health Northamptonshire – Action on smoking 2023: [ASH Ready Reckoner - ASH](#)
- 8.15 Vape waste statistics: [One million single use vapes thrown away every week contributing to the growing e-waste challenge in the UK - Material Focus](#)
- 8.16 Dog waste statistics: [Dog fouling & the law | Keep Britain Tidy](#)
- 8.17 Farm animal dog attack loss statistics: [UK cost of dog attacks rises by 50%, causing needless suffering of sheep \(nfumutual.co.uk\)](#) [Dog attacks on livestock – the true cost – NFUonline](#)
- 8.18 Dog behaviour lockdown issues: [Dogs Trust concern at lockdown-sparked dog behaviour issues | Vet Times](#)
- 8.19 UK Dog walking costs Infographic: [how much are dog walkers infographic.jpg \(1500x10600\) \(petbusinessinsurance.co.uk\)](#)
- 8.20 Professional dog walker contract statistics: [How to find a good dog walker | Dogs Trust](#)
- 8.21 Professional dog walker news article: [Northamptonshire council halts four dog walking rule after backlash - BBC News](#) [Council bans dog walkers in Daventry from walking more than four animals at once | ITV News Anglia](#)
- 8.22 WNC Press release: [A group of professional dog walkers invited to talks over new rules | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](#)
- 8.23 Home boarding for dogs statutory guidance: [Home boarding for dogs licensing: statutory guidance for local authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- 8.24 Home boarding for dogs licensing: [The Animal Welfare \(Licensing of Activities Involving Animals\) \(England\) Regulations 2018 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- 8.25 Professional Dog walker attack: [Dog walker Natasha Johnston died from neck bites in Caterham attack - BBC News](#)
- 8.26 Dog Parks and fields for private hire: [Dog Parks Near Me - Secure Dog Fields in England - East Midlands British Dog Fields - British Dog Fields | For Field Owners and Users](#)

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**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Public Spaces Protection Order (Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking in Public Places) 2022 Variation. Consultation Results and Comments.

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Methodology

In accordance with statutory guidelines and detailed in Section 72 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) has conducted a consultation. The consultation ran for 4 weeks from 16 March 2023 to 17 April 2023.

The consultation was carried out online through the West Northamptonshire Council Consultation Hub. It was supported by a West Northamptonshire Council communications campaign to raise awareness and encourage participation.

More than 100 businesses were notified in the proposal area including vets, dog trainers, professional dog walkers, behaviour experts, groomers, WNC animal licensees – dog boarders, kennels, breeders and pet shops.

Posters were produced to circulate or display in their business and share with their customers to raise awareness of the consultation and encourage participation.

All Parish Councils and Town Councils across West Northamptonshire were notified and asked to share with clubs, organisations and groups in their area.

Over 20 different animal welfare and animal assistance charities and organisations were notified. These included The Kennel Club, The Dogs Trust, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, Guide Dogs for the Blind, Assistance Dogs UK, Autism Dogs, Canine Partners, Dog Aid – Assistance in Disability, Dogs for Good, Medical Detection Dogs, Support Dogs, The Seeing Dogs Alliance, RSPCA, Association of Professional Dog Walkers and Sitters (APDWS), National Association of Pet Sitters and Dog Walkers (NARPS UK), Professional Dog Walkers Association (PDWA), Canine and Feline Sector Group (CFSG), Dog Walkers and Sitters Association (DWSA), British College of Canine Studies.

All primary and secondary schools in West Northamptonshire were notified and asked to share details of the consultation with parents and carers.

Libraries across West Northamptonshire also supported and promoted the consultation and assisted with accessing it for residents.

Those on the WNC Consultation Register and the WNC Resident's Panel were notified - approximately 450 contacts.

Statutory partners were notified including Northamptonshire Police Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner along with other groups and organisations who may be potentially affected by the introduction of the varied Order. These include a number of Residents Associations, Northamptonshire Football Association, Ramblers Association, Keep Britain Tidy, The National Trust, Community Safety Partners. WNC staff including the Chief Executive, Senior Leadership Team, Assistant Directors, Environmental Health and Environmental Crime Officers, Neighbourhood Wardens, Dog Warden, Rangers, Regulatory Services Lead Officers and the Portfolio Holder for Community safety and Engagement and Regulatory Services and neighbouring local authorities. All were given the opportunity to comment on the consultation.

Results from the consultation have shown strong support for each of the proposals which would be contained within the varied Order.

Results

A total of 436 responses were received online. Of these, 373 were completed and 63 incomplete responses.

Not all consultees filled in every answer.

336 (90.8%) of responses were received from individuals.

34 responses (9.2%) were received on behalf of a business, organisation, voluntary or community group. This option also applied if the respondent looked after or walked dogs as part of their own business and wished to respond in that capacity. In total, 370 respondents chose to answer this question, with 66 respondents not completing this question.

Of the 436 responses received, 211 (48%) of respondents chose to make comments, 225 (52%) respondents chose not to make any.

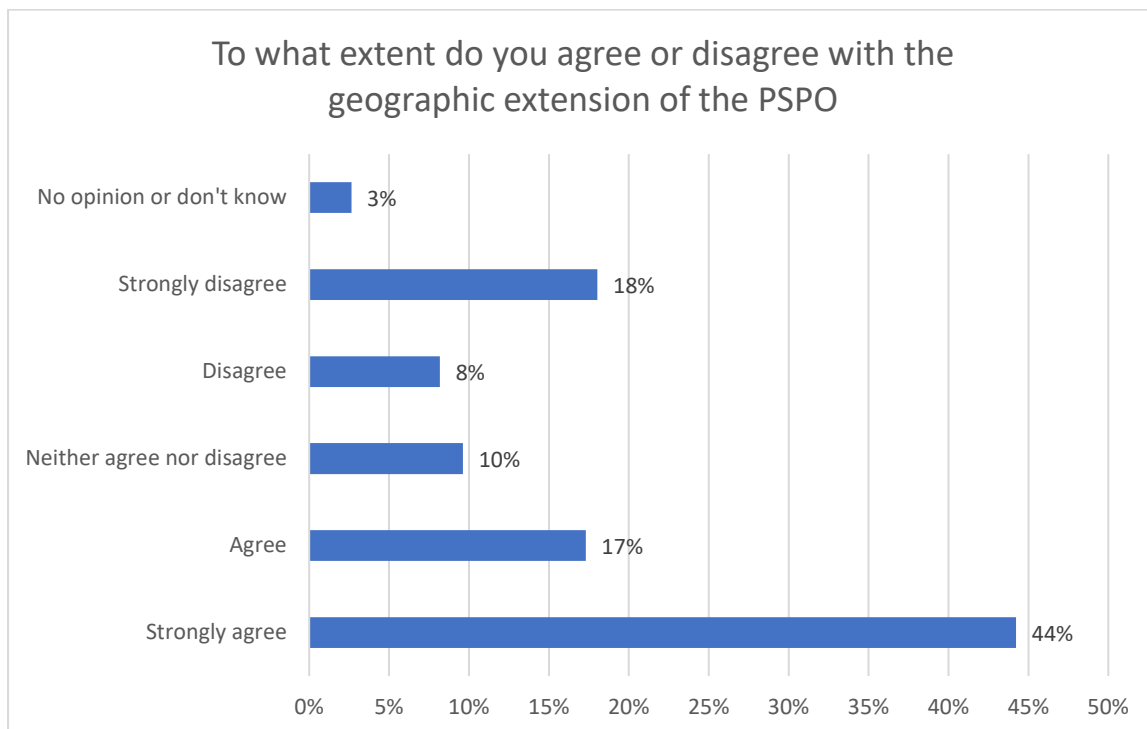
1 The geographic extent of the PSPO

The PSPO (Dog Control and the Prohibition of Smoking in Public Places) 2022, that is in place in the Daventry and South Northants Areas would be extended to cover the Northampton Area.

Table 1a: To what extent do you agree or disagree with this?

Response	Count	Percentage
Strongly agree	184	44%
Agree	72	17%
Neither agree nor disagree	40	10%
Disagree	34	8%
Strongly disagree	75	18%
No opinion or don't know	11	3%
Total	416	100%

Chart 1a.



2 Failure to clean up after your dog

This places a requirement on dog owners and walkers to immediately pick up after the dog they are responsible for.

Further information: This measure will apply to any place within the Northampton Area to which the public or any section of the public has access, on payment or otherwise, as of right or by virtue of express or implied permission, including privately owned land with permitted public access, as is currently the case in the former Daventry and South Northants Areas. This also applies to all public footpaths and bridlepaths. There are many bins specifically for dog waste located in West Northamptonshire and should there not be one nearby, it is permitted to put dog waste in a public bin, alternatively owners can take it home for disposal with their household waste.

Table 2a: To what extent do you agree or disagree that it's important for dog owners and walkers to clean up after their dog in the Northampton Area of West Northants?

Response	Count	Percentage
Strongly agree	364	90%

Agree	35	9%
Neither agree nor disagree	2	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly disagree	4	1%
No opinion or don't know	1	0%
Total	406	100%

Chart 2a.

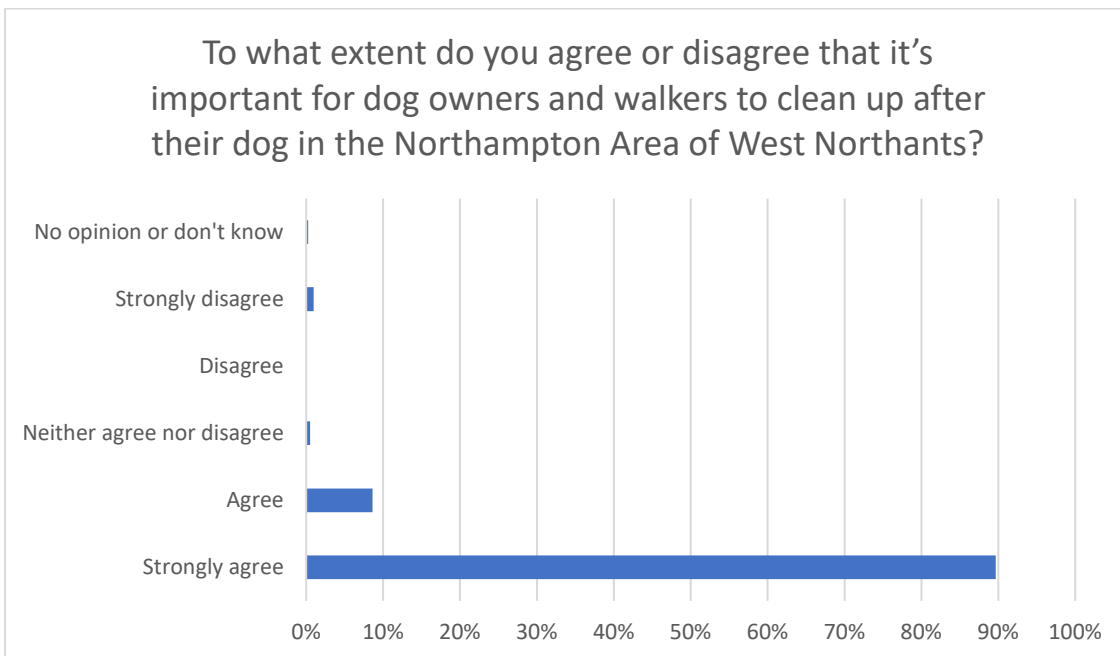


Table 2b: Have you experienced issues with dog fouling in the Northampton Area within the last 6 months?

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	295	73%
No	87	21%
Not applicable	23	6%
Total	405	100%

Chart 2b.

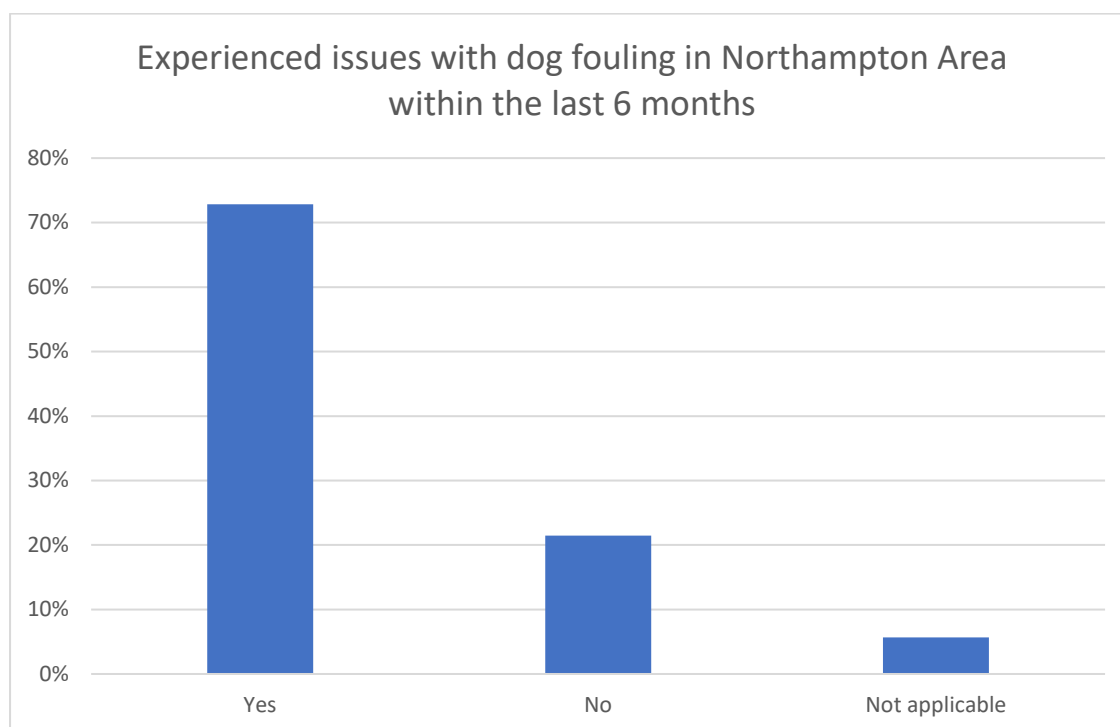


Table 2c: To what extent do you agree or disagree that it's important to have the means to pick up after your dog when in the Northampton Area?

Response	Count	Percentage
Strongly agree	348	86%
Agree	44	11%
Neither agree nor disagree	7	2%
Disagree	1	0%
Strongly disagree	3	1%
No opinion or don't know	3	1%
Total	406	100%

Chart 2c:

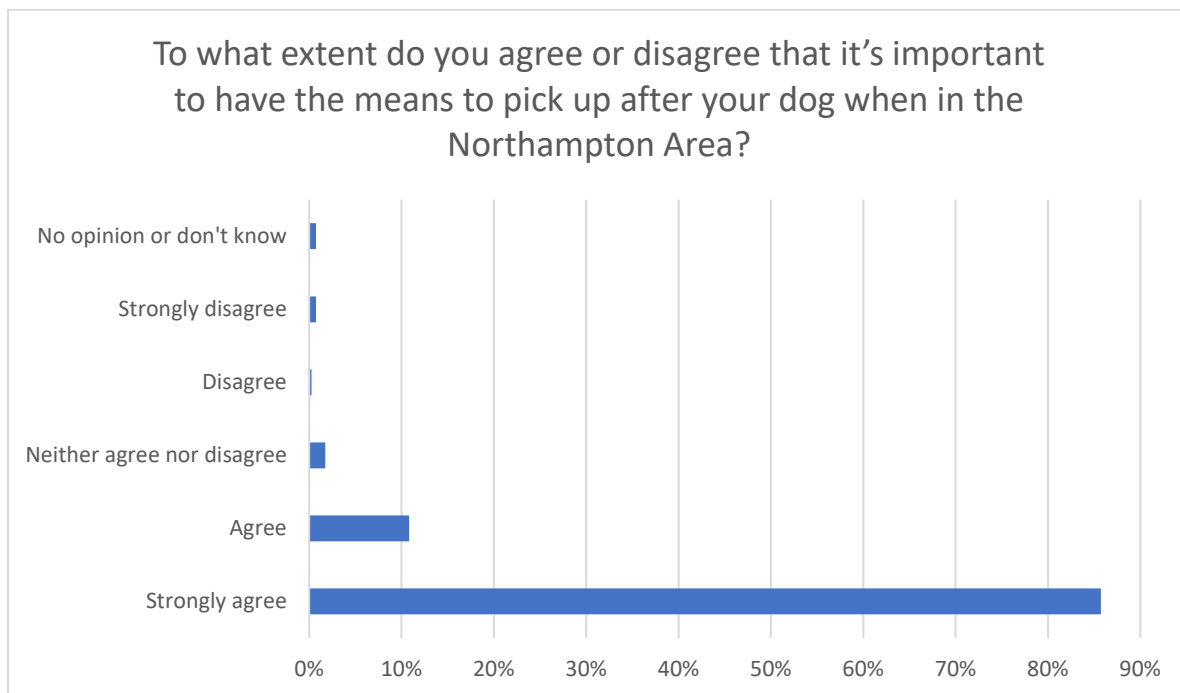
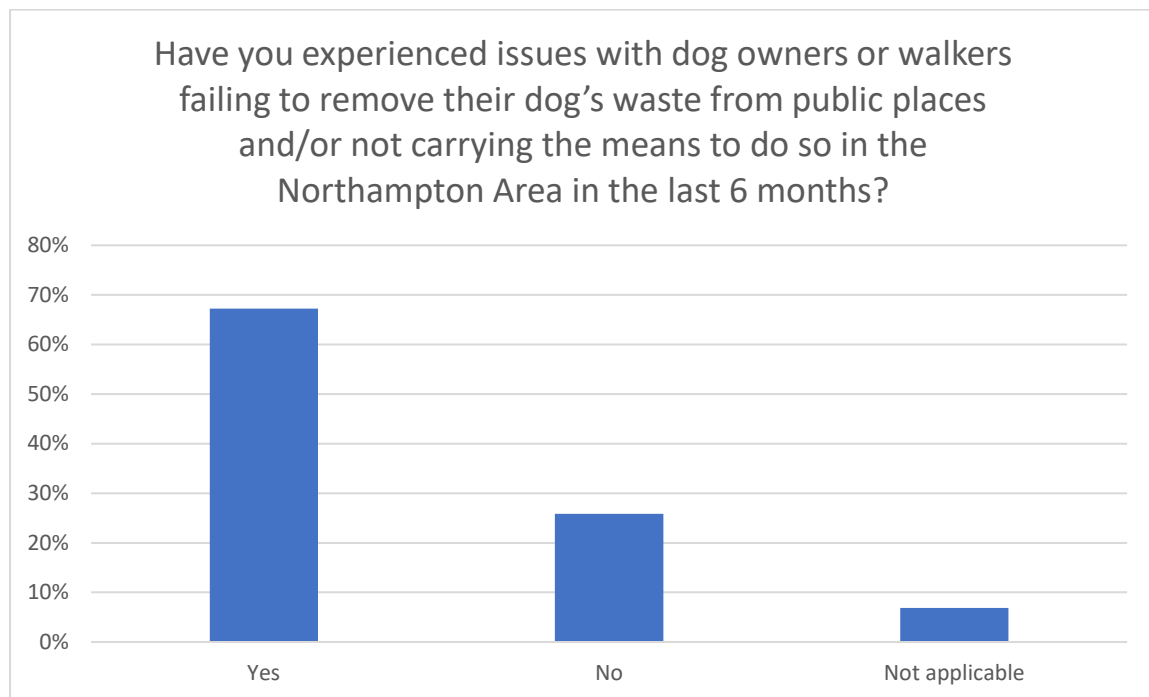


Table 2d: Have you experienced issues with dog owners or walkers failing to remove their dog's waste from public places and/or not carrying the means to do so in the Northampton Area in the last 6 months?

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	273	67%
No	105	26%
Not applicable	28	7%
Total	406	100%

Chart 2d.



3 Dog exclusion zones

This measure provides that dogs are excluded from the following areas: Children's play areas, educational institutions, skateparks, tennis courts, multi-use games areas, and bowling greens.

Further information: Dogs are currently excluded from all children's play areas containing children's play equipment such as slides, swings, climbing frames, and which are either enclosed on all sides by fences, or by other structures or markings that define the boundary of the play area such as wood chip or safety surface, within the former Daventry and South Northants Areas. These described boundaries make it easy for people to identify the extent of the dog exclusion area. By describing the types of areas where dogs are not allowed, rather than by specifying named and mapped areas, we ensure that newly created or developing play areas, educational institutions, skateparks, tennis courts, multi-use games areas and bowling greens, fenced or otherwise, are included, ensuring a common approach across the area covered by the current WNC PSPO and giving residents certainty should future planned development take place.

Table 3a: To what extent do you agree or disagree that dogs should be excluded from the following locations in the Northampton Area: children’s play areas, educational institutions when open and in use by pupils, skateparks, tennis courts, multi-use games areas, and bowling greens?

Response	Count	Percentage
Strongly agree	219	55%
Agree	88	22%
Neither agree nor disagree	31	8%
Disagree	28	7%
Strongly disagree	27	7%
No opinion or don't know	5	1%
Total	398	100%

Chart 3a.

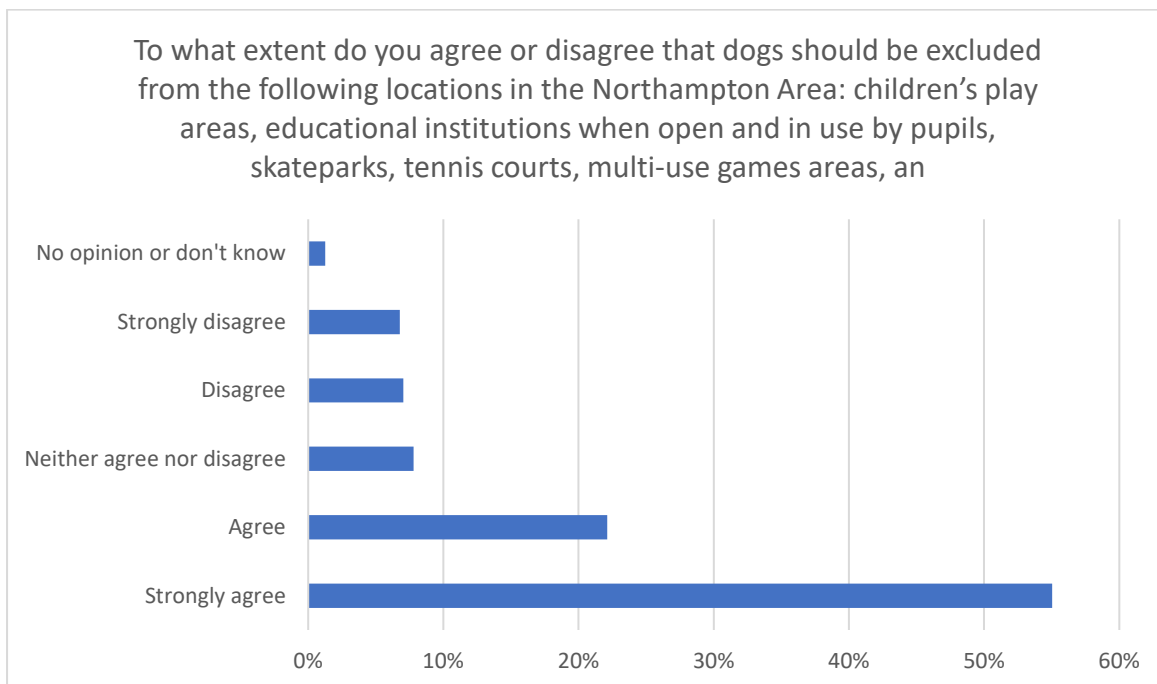
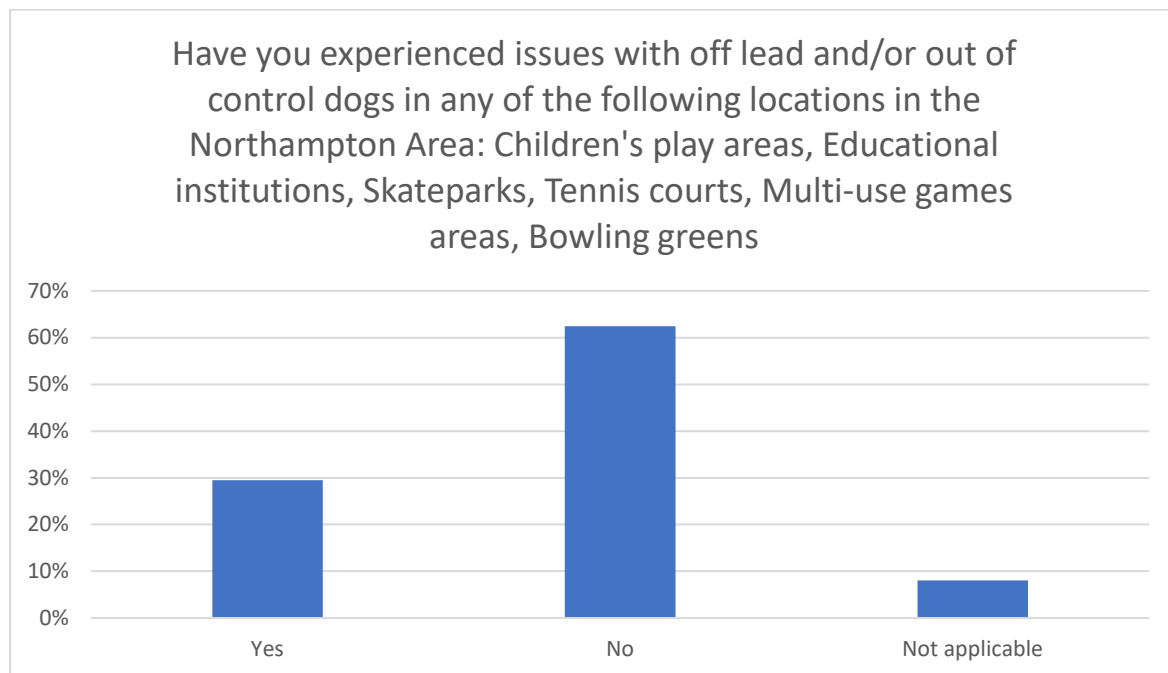


Table 3b: Have you experienced issues with off lead and/or out of control dogs in any of the following locations in the Northampton Area: Children's play areas, Educational institutions, Skateparks, Tennis courts, Multi-use games areas, Bowling greens?

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	117	29%
No	248	62%
Not applicable	32	8%
Total	397	100%

Chart 3b.



4 Dogs on leads in specific open spaces

This proposal requires persons in control of a dog to ensure that it is kept on a lead at all times whilst in the following: Cemeteries, burial sites, graveyards, memorial gardens, allotments, car parks to which the public have access to, sports grounds, fields, and pitches when in use for an authorised activity, land near schools when open and in use by pupils, Northampton Town Centre and Upton Country Park Phase 2.

Further information: Allowing dogs to enter cemeteries, burial sites, graveyards and/or memorial gardens and allotments whilst on a lead, means owners could keep their dogs with them to ensure their dog may not be stressed by separation and it may also reduce risk of theft of the dog if it would otherwise be left unattended.

Authorised sporting activity means an organised sporting event such as an amateur football or rugby games, taking place on land which is owned, operated, managed, or maintained by the Council, Parish, Town or Community Council or any amateur sporting club. This proposal seeks to prevent dogs from running onto pitches during play and spoiling enjoyment for other users of the public open space.

Where there are is a high prevalence of children, such as in schools, it is sensible to place dogs on a lead to ensure proper control and to minimise the chance of a dog fouling in the immediate area and it being trodden into buildings.

Requiring dogs to be walked on leads in Northampton town centre and at Upton Country Park has reduced the number of dog related incidents in these areas.

Table 4a: To what extent do you agree or disagree that dogs should be kept on a lead in all the following locations within the Northampton Area: Cemeteries, Burial sites, Graveyards, memorial gardens, Allotments, Car parks, Sports grounds, sports fields and pitches when in use for authorised sporting activity, Land near school entrances/exits when open and in use by pupils, Northampton Town Centre and Upton Country Park, Phase 2?

Response	Count	Percentage
Strongly agree	219	56%
Agree	79	20%
Neither agree nor disagree	26	7%
Disagree	28	7%
Strongly disagree	37	9%
No opinion or don't know	4	1%
Total	393	100%

Chart 4a.

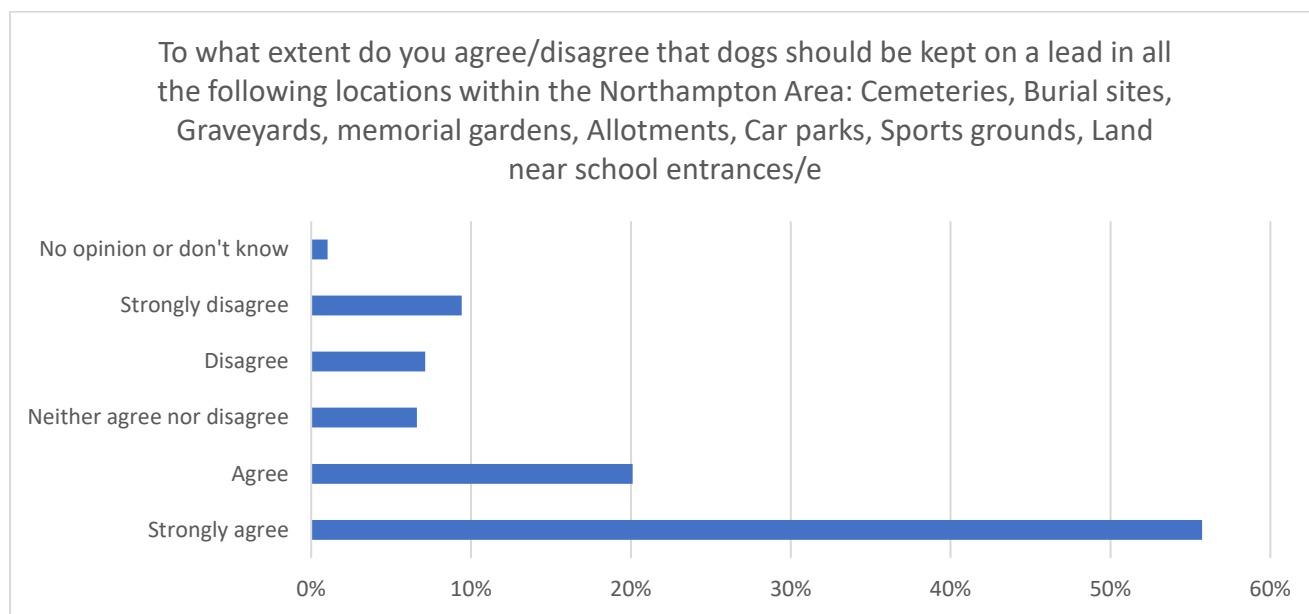
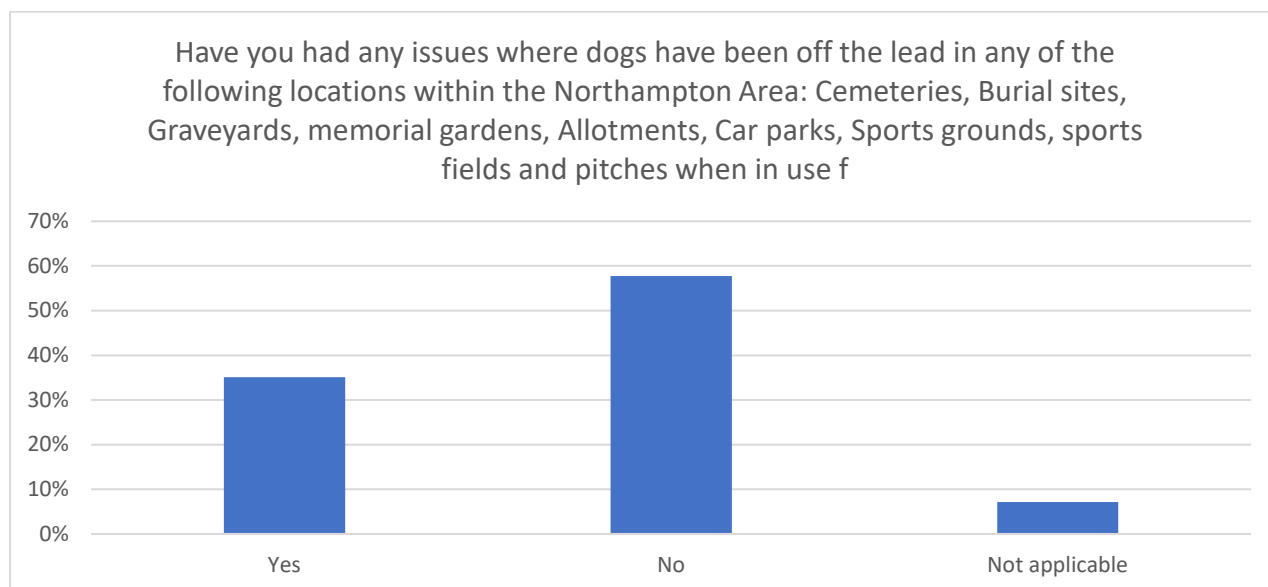


Table 4b: Have you had any issues where dogs have been off the lead in any of the following locations within the Northampton Area: Cemeteries, Burial sites, Graveyards, memorial gardens, Allotments, Car parks, Sports grounds, sports fields and pitches when in use for authorised sporting activity, Land near school entrances/exits when open and in use by pupils, Northampton Town Centre and Upton Country Park?

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	138	35%
No	227	58%
Not applicable	28	7%
Total	393	100%

Chart 4b.



5 Dogs on leads by direction

This measure requires those responsible for the dog or dogs to place them on a lead when asked to do so by an authorised person.

Further information: For animal welfare reasons, it is advantageous for dog owners to be able to exercise their dogs off lead in open spaces. WNC recognises that most dog owners act responsibly and keep their dogs under the appropriate level of control when they are out. However, if they are not properly supervised and controlled, dogs that are allowed off a lead in public areas can cause nuisance or even injury to members of the public or other animals and could cause road traffic accidents. In such circumstances, we believe the option should exist for authorised person to require a dog to be put on a lead. Authorised persons will carry appropriate identification.

This proposal will help WNC to deal with any behaviour by a dog that is likely to cause annoyance or disturbance without introducing overly restrictive measures on all dogs and dog owners at all times. This flexible approach will also allow officers to address issues that arise in any area at any time during the lifetime of the Order.

Table 5a: To what extent do you agree or disagree that persons in charge of a dog must put the dog on a lead if asked to do so by an authorised officer when in the Northampton Area?

Response	Count	Percentage
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Strongly agree	234	60%
Agree	92	23%
Neither agree nor disagree	31	8%
Disagree	12	8%
Strongly disagree	21	5%
No opinion or don't know	2	1%
Total	392	100%

Chart 5a.

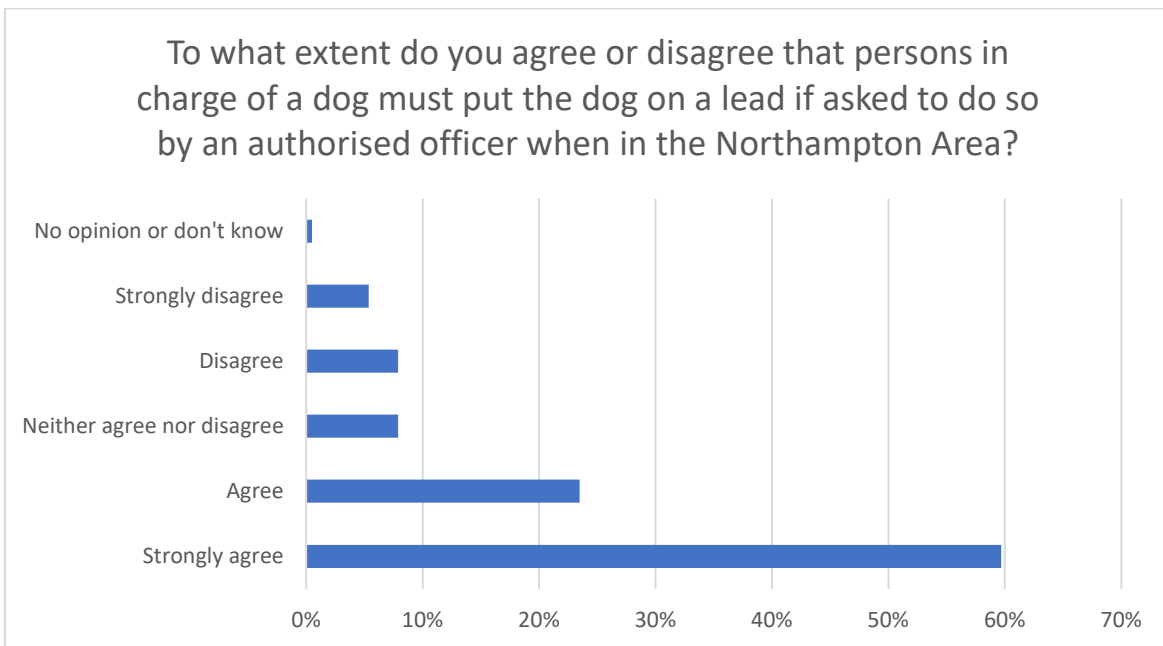
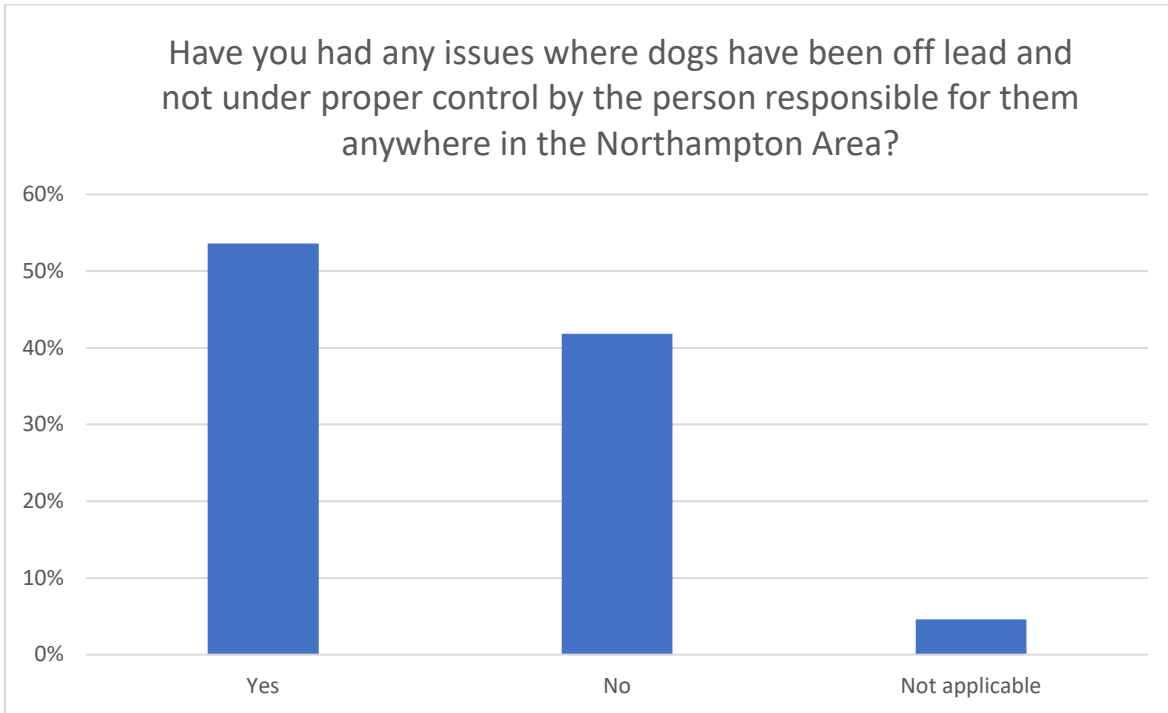


Table 5b: Have you had any issues where dogs have been off lead and not under proper control by the person responsible for them anywhere in the Northampton Area?

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	210	54%
No	164	42%

Not applicable	18	5%
Total	392	100%

Chart 5b.



6 Maximum number of dogs permitted to be walked at any one time

This measure will limit the maximum number of dogs walked by any one person at any one time to 4. This applies to those who professionally walk dogs including charities, and dog owners, unless they are permitted by the council to walk more.

Conversations are currently taking place with representatives of professional dog walkers and consideration is being given to the development of a licensing scheme and associated code of conduct for professional dog walkers.

Further information: This could potentially apply to all dog walkers; those who walk dogs professionally and dog owners, unless expressly permitted or authorised by WNC.

A maximum number of 4 dogs has been recommended in Professional Dog Walker Guidelines produced by The Pet Industry Federation, RSPCA, and The Dogs Trust.

Dogs Trust research from 2010 shows that 95% of dog owners have up to 3 dogs. Therefore, the number of dogs taken out on to land by one individual would not normally be expected to exceed four dogs.

The intended effect of limiting the number of dogs to be taken onto a public place to 4 will help minimise risks associated with 'pack mentality', and to reduce the impact on pedestrians and other dog walkers, whilst still affording those with multiple dogs and/or those who walk dogs on behalf of others the opportunity to exercise their dogs.

Table 6a: To what extent do you agree or disagree that persons in charge of a number of dogs should not be allowed to walk any more than 4 dogs at any one time in the Northampton Area unless expressly permitted or authorised by WNC?

Response	Count	Percentage
Strongly agree	172	44%
Agree	43	11%
Neither agree nor disagree	43	11%
Disagree	20	5%
Strongly disagree	103	27%
No opinion or don't know	7	2%
Total	388	100%

Chart 6a.

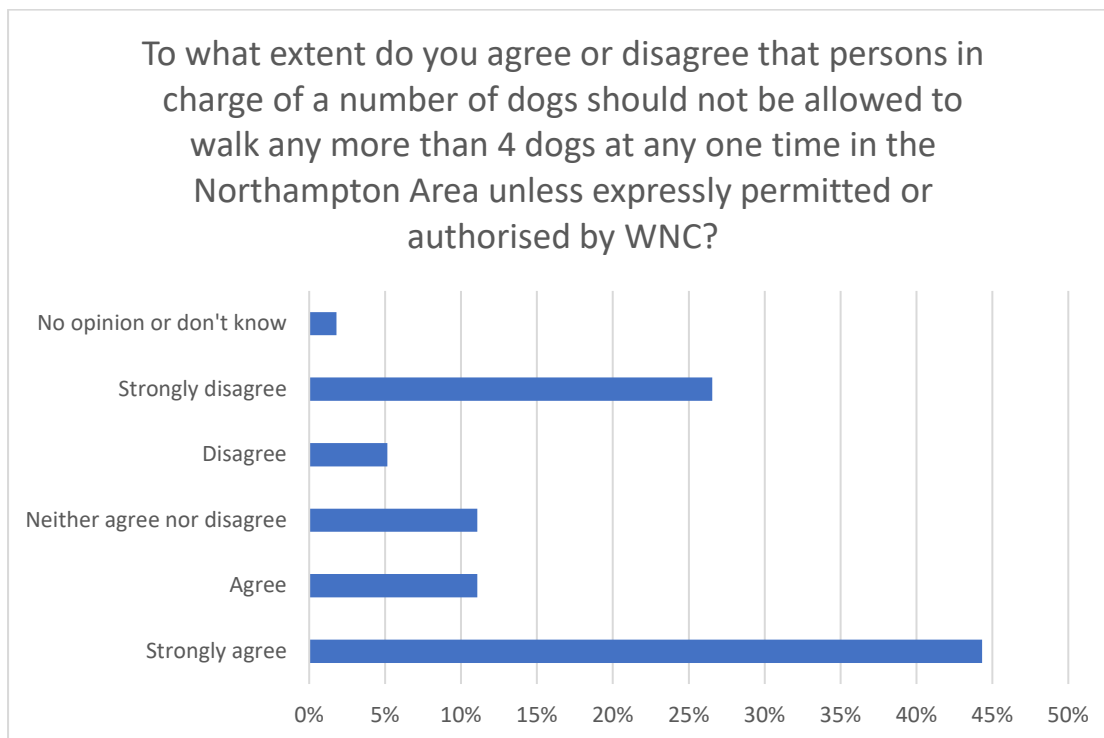
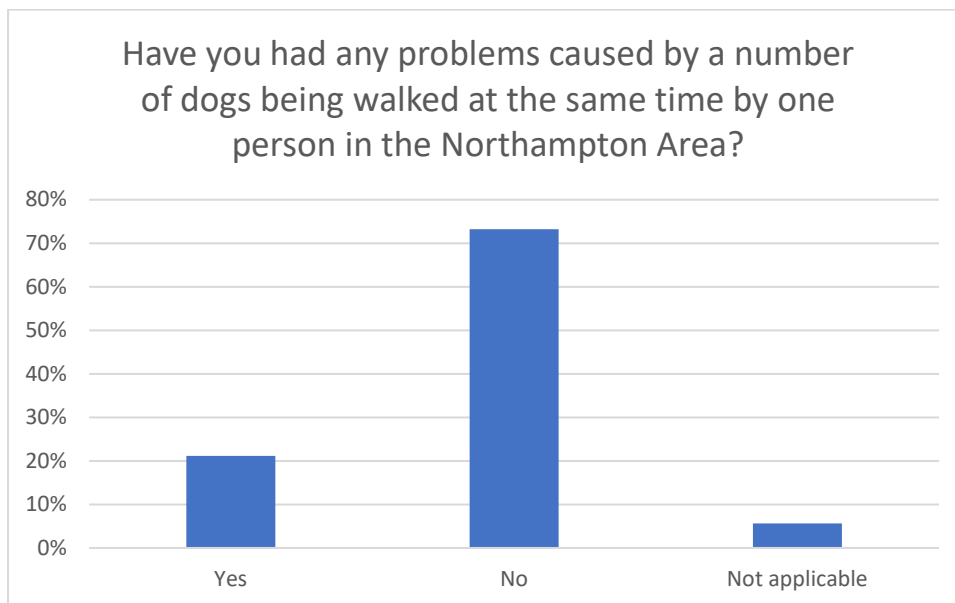


Table 6b: Have you had any problems caused by a number of dogs being walked at the same time by one person in the Northampton Area?

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	82	21%
No	284	73%
Not applicable	22	6%
Total	388	100%

Chart 6b.



7 Prohibition of smoking in certain public open spaces

This requirement disallows smoking (of any kind including electronic and herbal) in the following areas: Children's play areas, land near schools when open and in use by pupils, skate parks, tennis courts, multi-use games areas, and bowling greens.

Further information: In Northamptonshire there are approximately 96,000 smokers, with the County seeing more than 7,000 hospital admissions, 300,000 GP appointments and more than 1,000 smoking related deaths each year. As part of The Council's commitment to public health in Northamptonshire, we need to do all we can to reduce exposure to second-hand smoke and make smoking less visible to children.

Children's play areas, playgrounds, educational institutions, skateparks, tennis courts, multi-use games areas, bowling greens, (fenced or otherwise) are all public places for residents to visit and use to maintain and enjoy a healthy lifestyle, this can be supported with the banning of smoking in these areas.

A no smoking requirement has already been adopted across all Country Park play areas in West and North Northamptonshire and across Daventry and South Northants. A common approach across the whole of West Northamptonshire to include the Northampton Area should give residents certainty and clarity of the requirement. The prohibiting of smoking in these areas will help reduce littering of cigarettes and associated items and will help keep open spaces safer, cleaner, and greener for all.

Table 7a: To what extent do you agree or disagree that all persons are prohibited from smoking tobacco, tobacco related products, smokeless tobacco products including electronic cigarettes and herbal cigarettes or any illegal substances in the Northampton Area in all the following locations, whether fenced or otherwise: Children's play areas, Land near an entrance or exit of a school when open and in use by pupils, Skateparks, Tennis courts, Multi-use games areas, Bowling greens?

Response	Count	Percentage
Strongly agree	254	66%
Agree	50	13%
Neither agree nor disagree	44	11%
Disagree	13	3%
Strongly disagree	18	5%
No opinion or don't know	4	1%
Total	383	100%

Chart 7a.

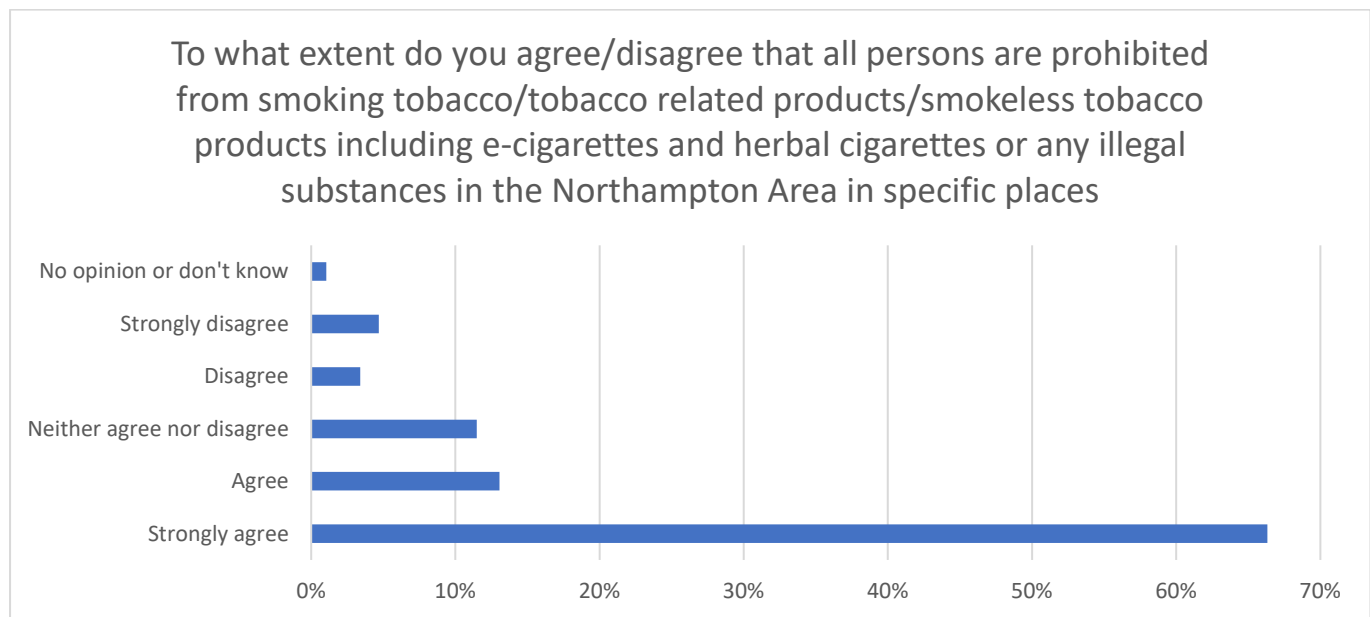
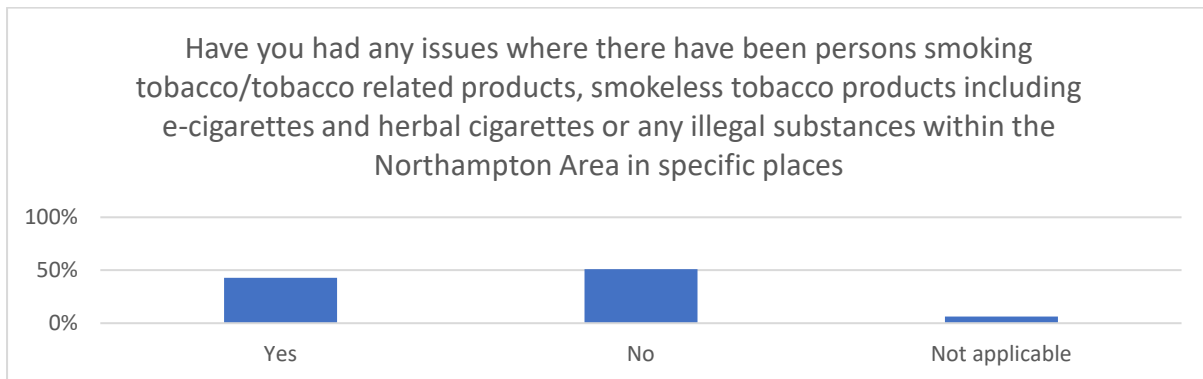


Table 7b: Have you had any issues where there have been persons smoking tobacco, tobacco related products, smokeless tobacco products including electronic cigarettes and herbal cigarettes or any illegal substances within the following locations in the Northampton Area, whether fenced or otherwise: Children's play areas, Land near an entrance or exit of a school when open and in use by pupils, Skateparks, Tennis courts, Multi-use games areas, Bowling greens?

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	164	43%
No	195	51%
Not applicable	24	6%
Total	383	100%

Chart 7b.



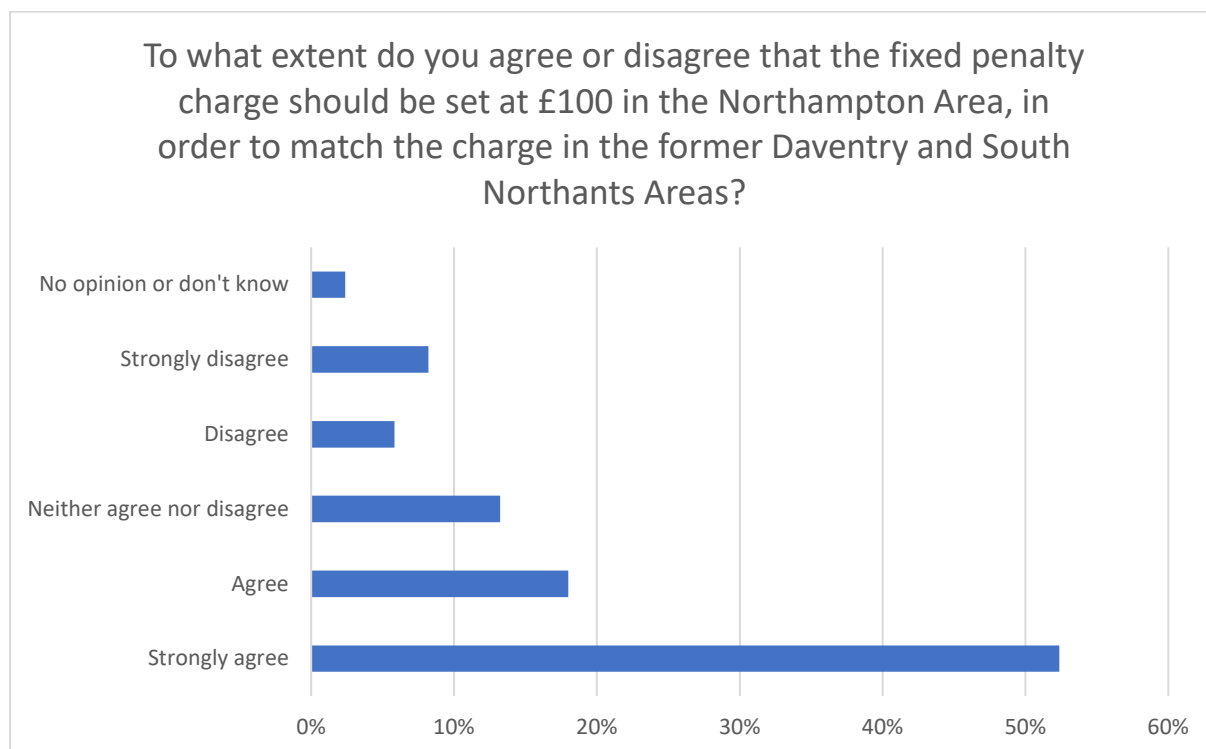
8 Breach of the PSPO

The maximum fixed penalty charge for breaches of the PSPO permitted by the Act is £100 which can help act as an effective deterrent against non-compliance of the PSPO. Any enforcement including the issuing of fixed penalty notices will be undertaken in line with the Council's Enforcement Policy. The penalty charge for breach of the current WNC PSPO is £100, and this will now apply to all of West Northamptonshire.

Table 8a: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the fixed penalty charge should be set at £100 in the Northampton Area, in order to match the charge in the former Daventry and South Northants Areas?

Response	Count	Percentage
Strongly agree	198	52%
Agree	68	18%
Neither agree nor disagree	50	13%
Disagree	22	6%
Strongly disagree	31	8%
No opinion or don't know	9	2%
Total	378	100%

Chart 8a.



9 Variation of the existing PSPO

The following questions relate to dogs on lead and applies to Northampton Town Centre and Upton Country Park.

Further information: Requiring dogs to be walked on leads in Northampton Town Centre and also at Upton Country Park has reduced the number of dog related incidents in these areas. This requirement already applies to these areas because of an existing PSPO but this expires in September 2023 unless included within a varied WNC Order.

Table 9a: How often do you tend to use the Upton Country Park Phase 2 area? (Select one answer)

Response	Count	Percentage
Daily	13	4%
Several times a week	12	3%
Once or twice a week	29	8%

Once or twice a month	60	16%
Rarely	108	29%
Never	146	40%
Total	368	100%

Chart 9a.

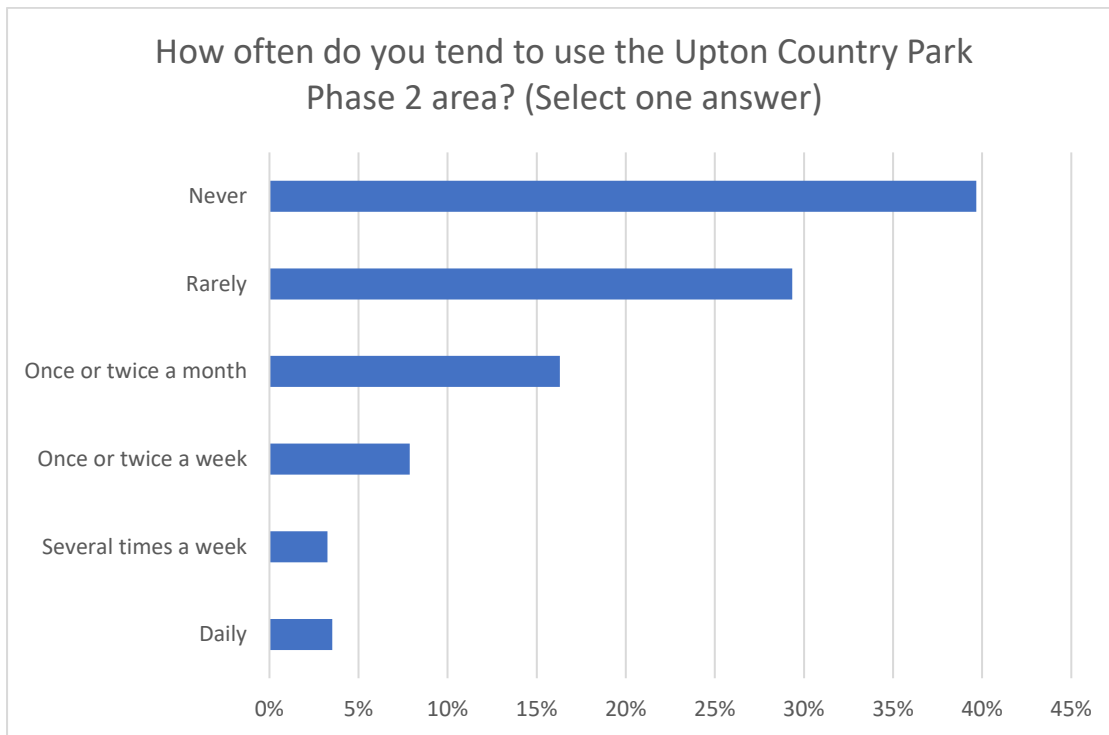


Table 9b: Have you had any issues with dogs off the lead in the following areas in the last 6 months in Northampton town Centre?:

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	48	13%
No	236	64%
Not applicable	85	23%
Total	369	100%

Chart 9b.

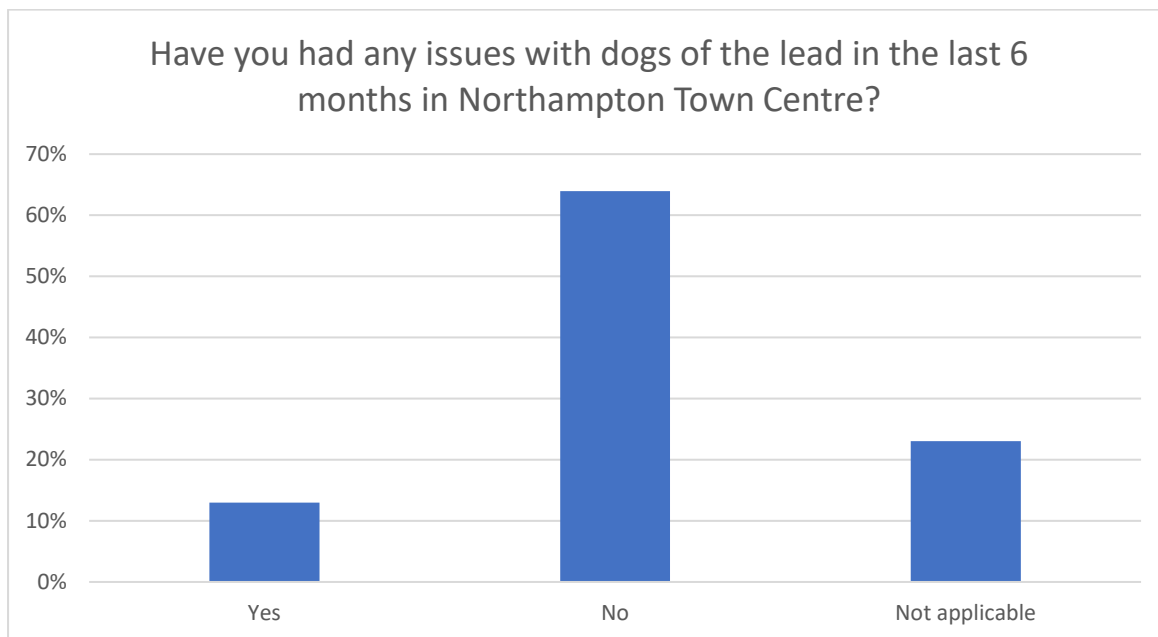


Table 9c: Have you had any issues with dogs off the lead in the following areas in the last 6 months at Upton Country Park Phase 2?:

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	60	16%
No	180	49%
Not applicable	129	35%
Total	369	100%

Chart 9c.

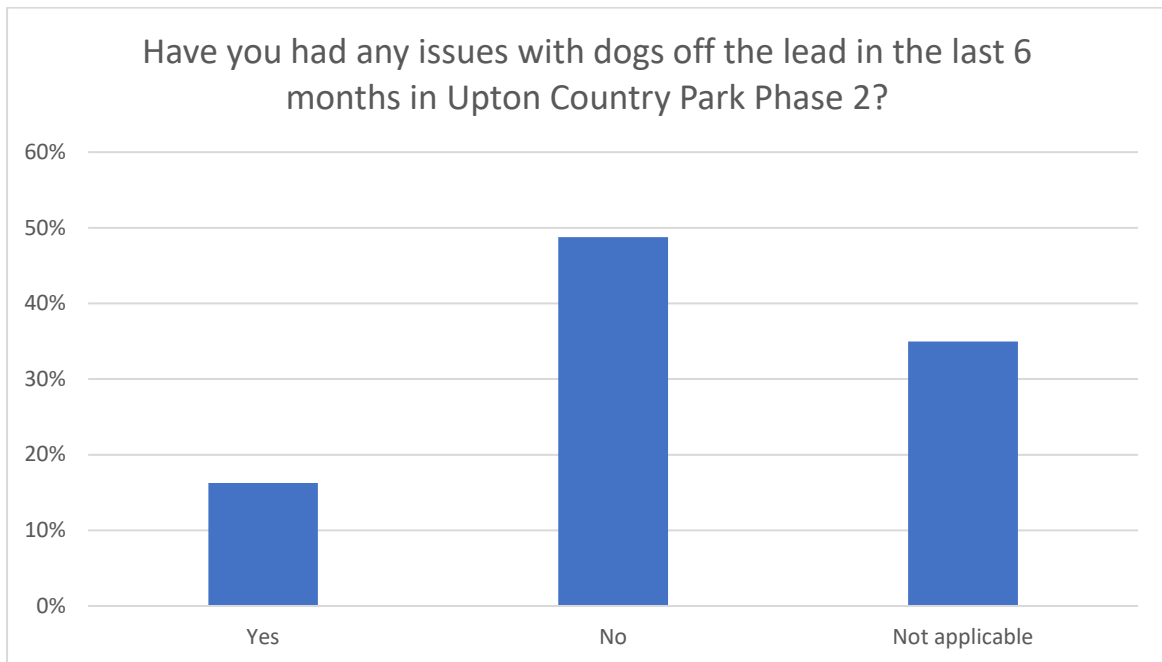


Table 9d: To what extent do you agree or disagree to enforcing the requirement to have dogs on leads at all times in Upton Country Park Phase 2?

Response	Count	Percentage
Strongly agree	112	30%
Agree	50	14%
Neither agree nor disagree	53	14%
Disagree	41	11%
Strongly disagree	55	15%
No opinion or don't know	59	16%
Total	370	100%

Chart 9d.

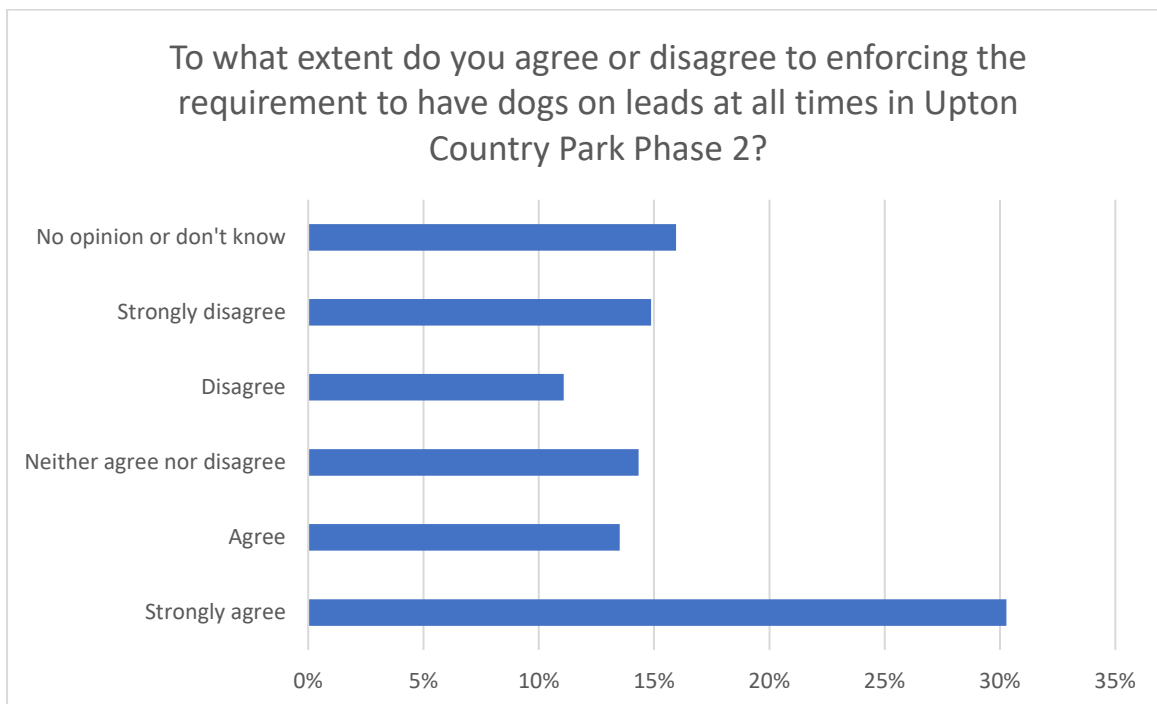


Table 9e: To what extent do you agree or disagree to enforcing the requirement to have dogs on leads at all times in Northampton Town Centre?

Response	Count	Percentage
Strongly agree	214	58%
Agree	94	25%
Neither agree nor disagree	29	8%
Disagree	10	3%
Strongly disagree	17	5%
No opinion or don't know	8	2%
Total	372	100%

Chart 9e.

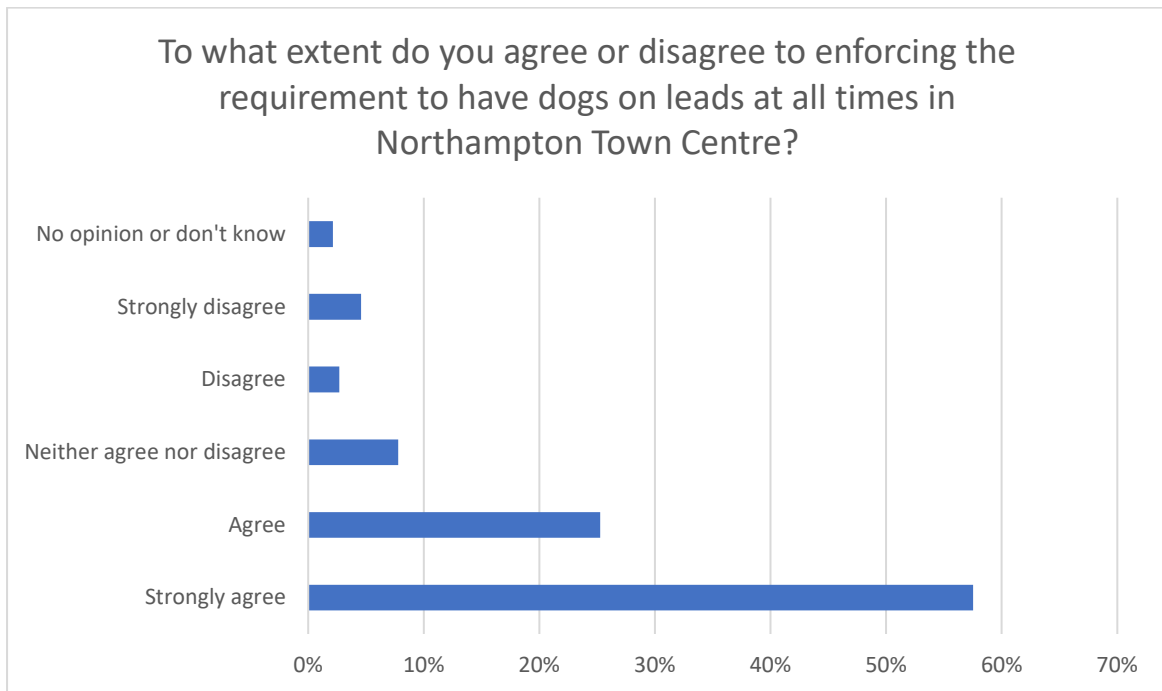


Table 9f: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the PSPO for Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking which is now in force in the Daventry and South Northants Areas should be varied to include dogs on leads at all times at Upton Country Park Phase 2?

Response	Count	Percentage
Strongly agree	130	35%
Agree	51	14%
Neither agree nor disagree	58	16%
Disagree	40	11%
Strongly disagree	50	13%
No opinion or don't know	44	12%
Total	373	100%

Chart 9f.

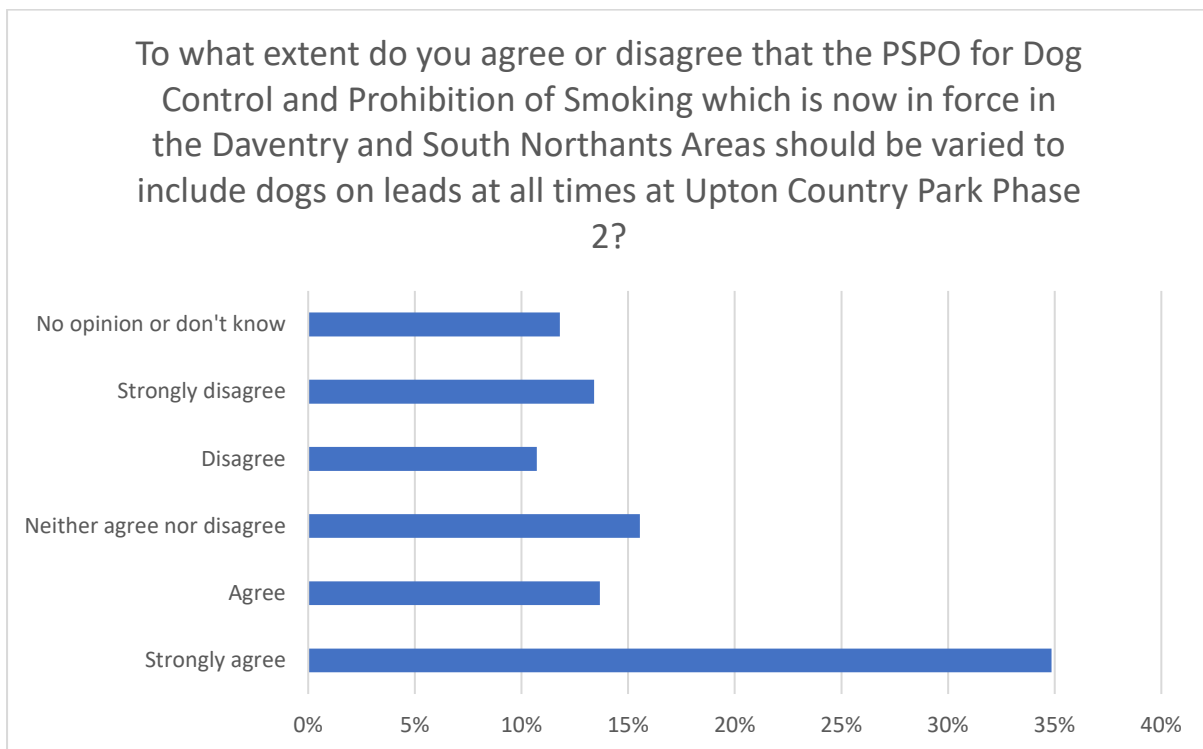
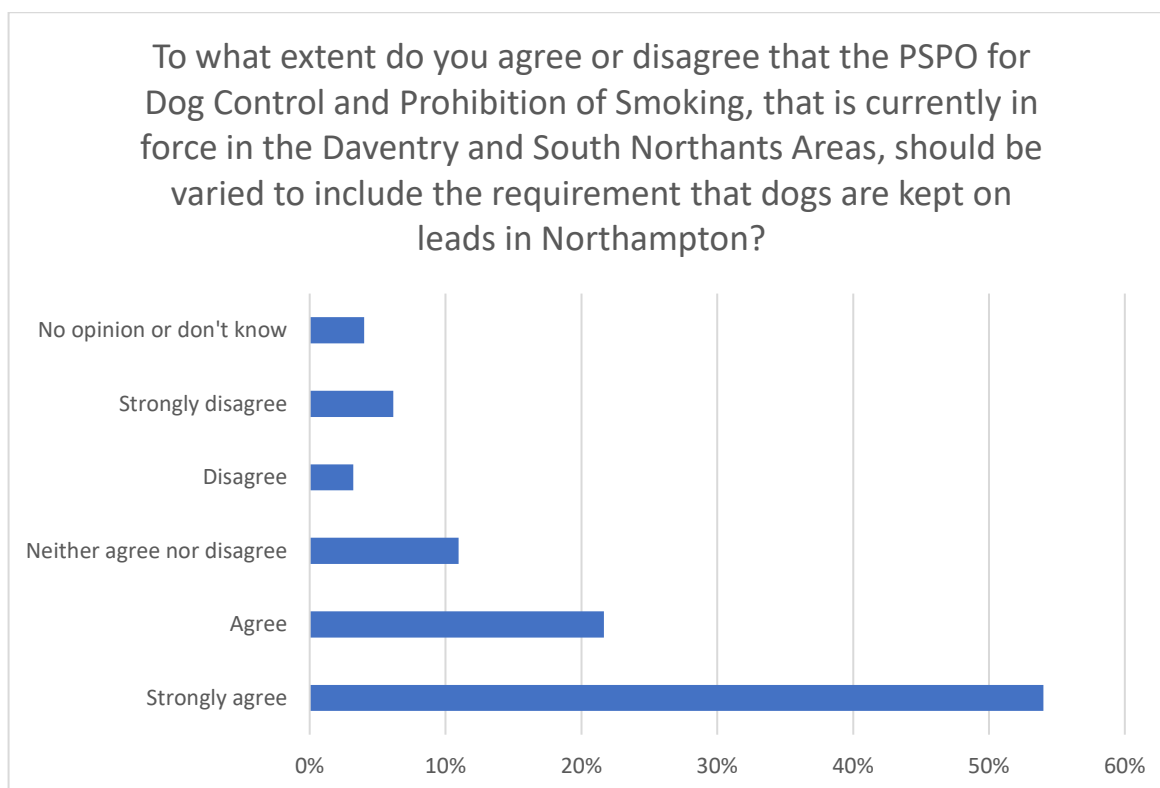


Table 9g: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the PSPO for Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking, that is currently in force in the Daventry and South Northants Areas, should be varied to include the requirement that dogs are kept on leads in Northampton Town Centre?

Response	Count	Percentage
Strongly agree	202	54%
Agree	81	22%
Neither agree nor disagree	41	11%
Disagree	12	3%
Strongly disagree	23	6%
No opinion or don't know	15	4%

Total	374	100%
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Chart 9g.



10 About you

Table 10a: Respondent type (multi-select option)

Respondent type	Count	Percentage
A Daventry Area resident	65	11.7
A Northampton Area resident	215	38.7
A South Northants Area resident	62	11.2
Employed in the Daventry Area	11	2.0
Employed in the Northampton Area	60	10.8
Employed in the South Northants Area	16	2.9
A visitor to the Daventry Area	22	4.0

A visitor to the Northampton Area	25	4.5
A visitor to the South Northants Area	18	3.2
An owner or representative of a local business	22	4.0
A councillor or representative for a town/parish council	12	2.2
A representative of a community or voluntary group	11	2.0
Other	16	2.9
Total	555	100.0

Chart 10a.

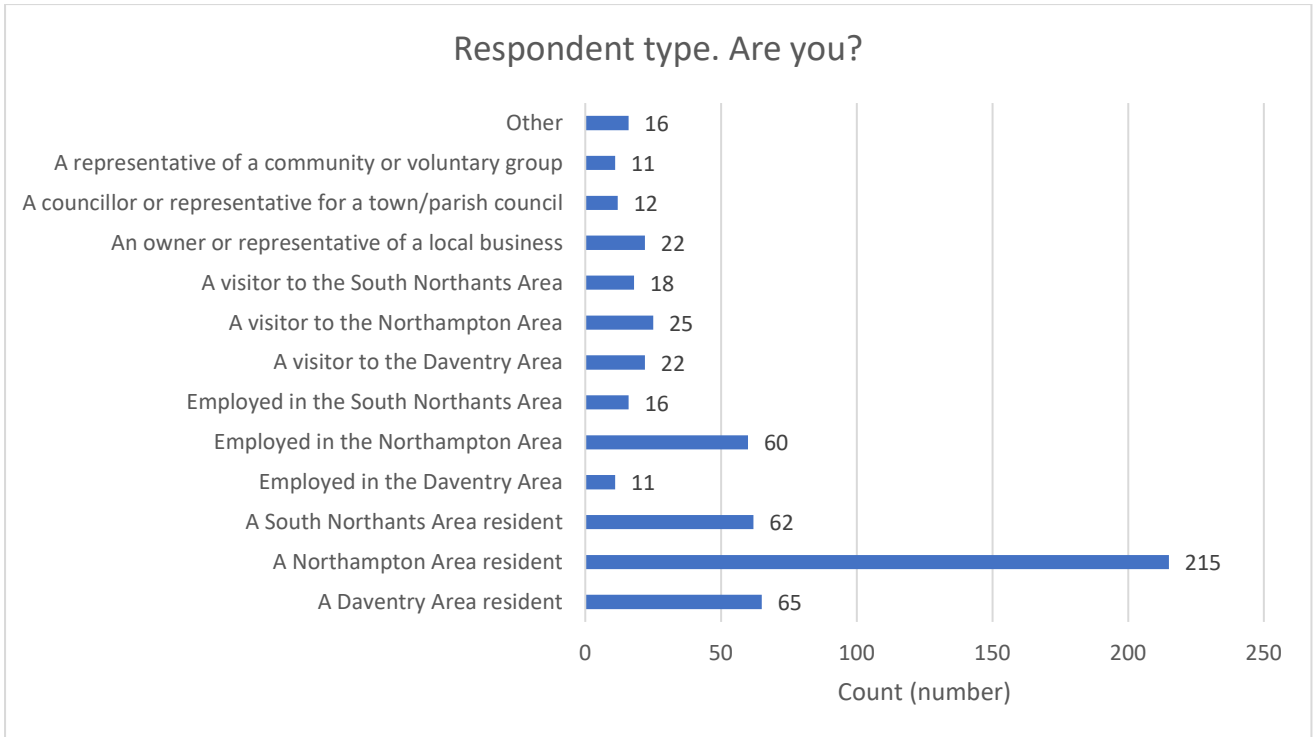


Table 11: Do you have any dogs yourself (including assistance dog/s)?

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	214	59%

No	133	37%
Prefer not to say	17	5%
Total	364	100%

Chart 11.

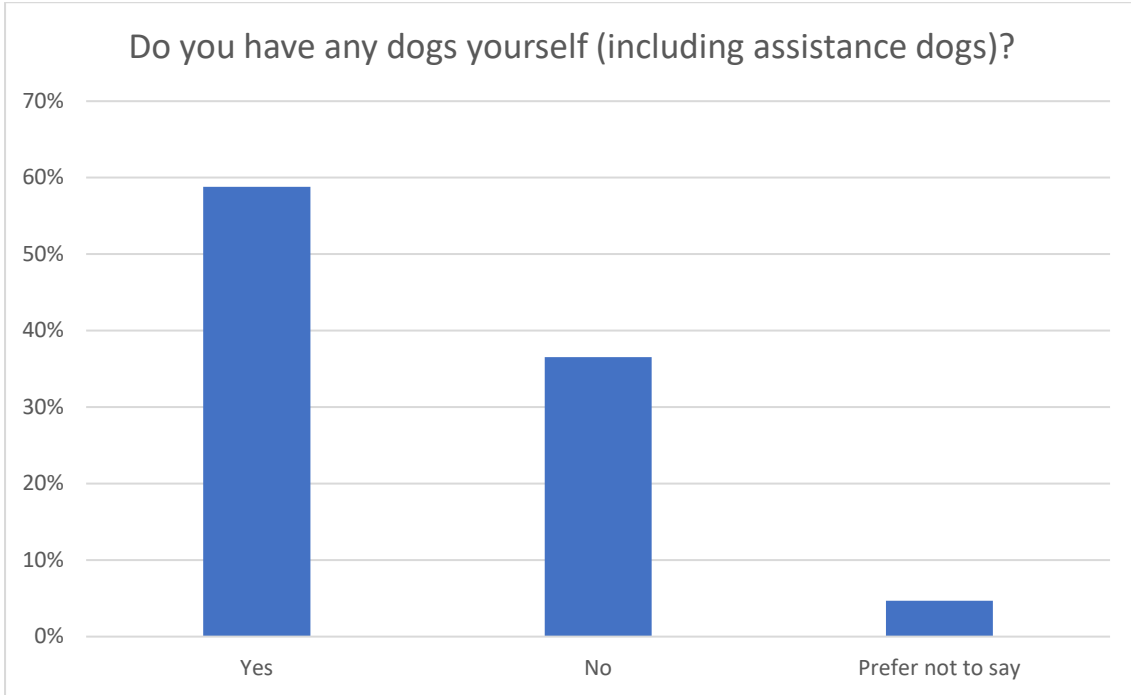


Table 12: Do you have an assistance dog?

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	2	1%
No	221	95%
Prefer not to say	9	4%
Total	232	100%

Chart 12.

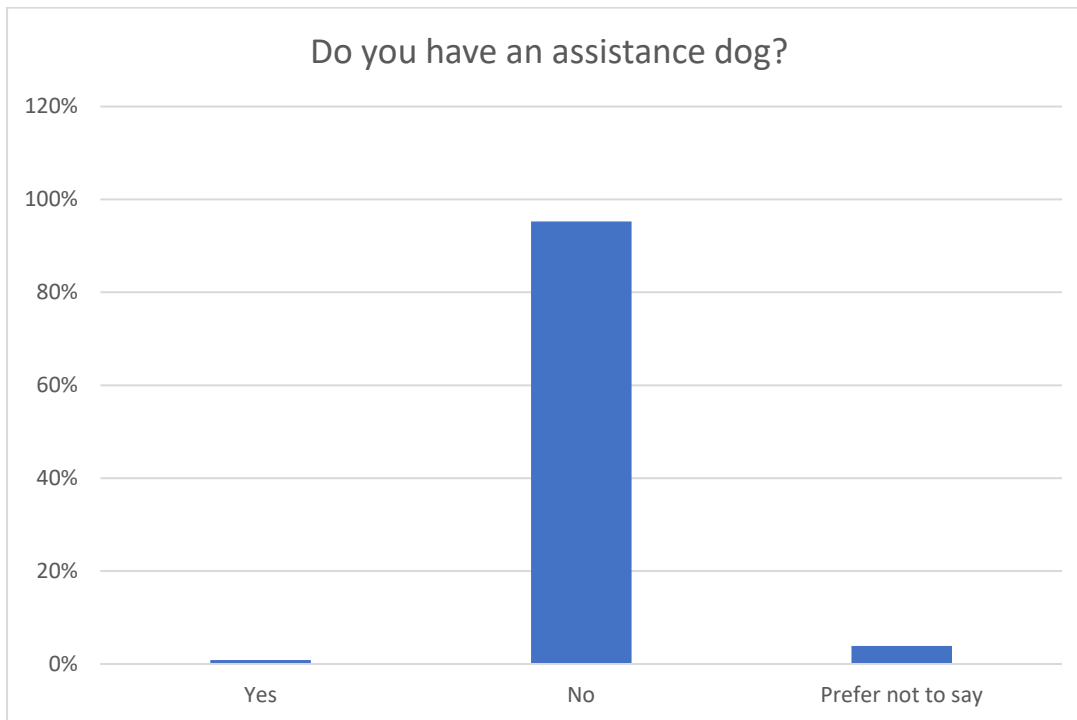


Table 13: Do you have any disability or health conditions that restricts your ability to walk and clean up after your dog?

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	8	3%
No	211	91%
Prefer not to say	14	6%
Total	233	100%

Chart 13.

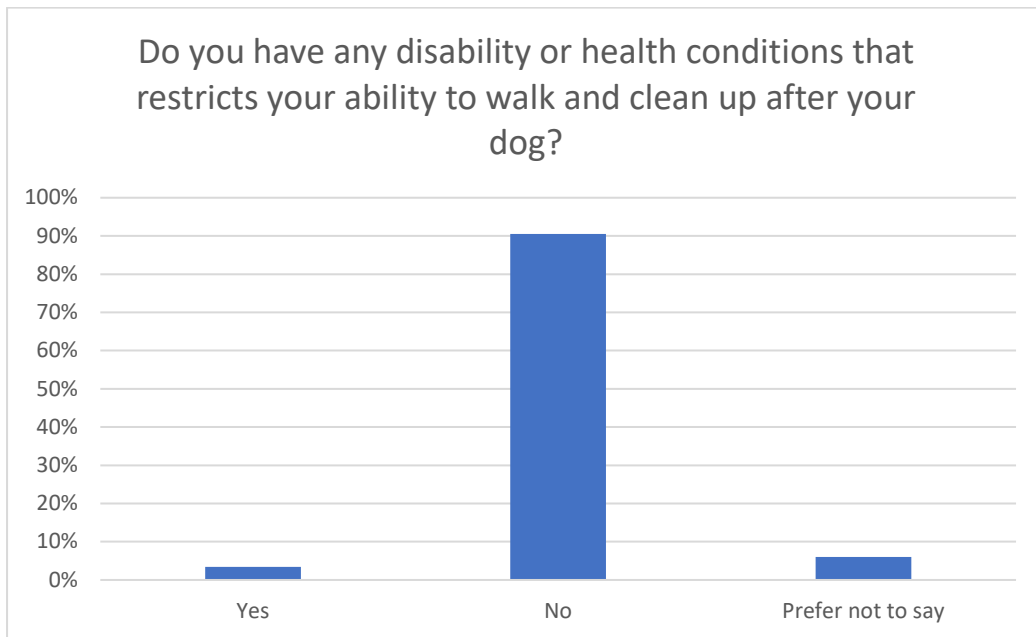


Table 14: If you have your own dog or dogs (including assistance dog/s), how many do you have?

Response	Count	Percentage
I don't have a dog	11	5%
1	127	58%
2	58	26%
3	12	5%
4	4	2%
5	6	3%
6	1	0%
More than 6	1	0%
Total	220	100%

Chart 14.

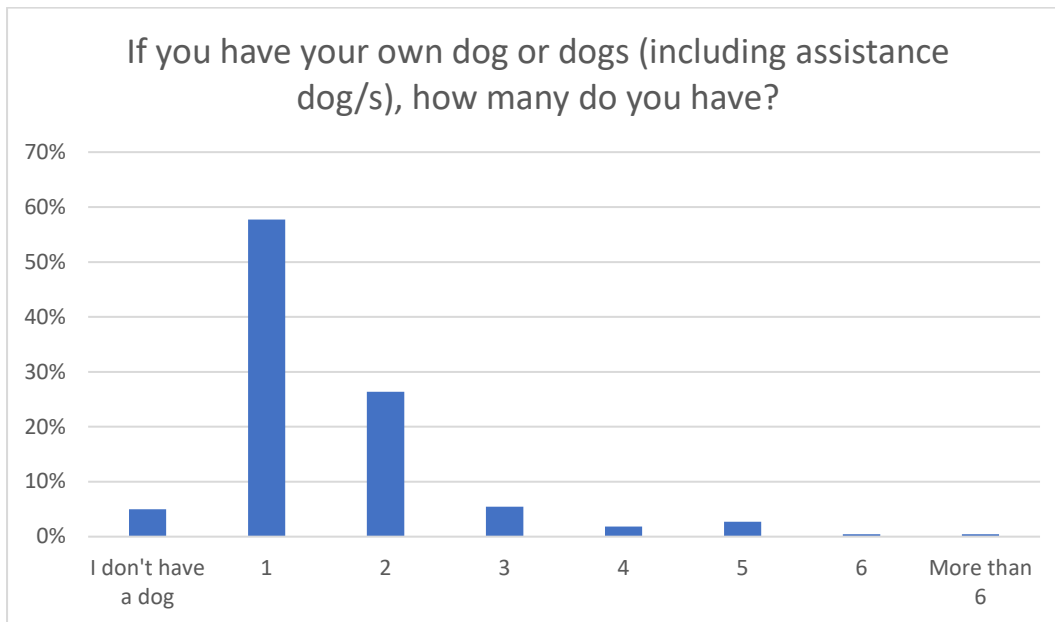


Table 15: If someone else walks your dog/dogs, which of the following best describes them? If more than one of the below options apply, please select the one you use most often

Response	Count	Percentage
A friend or a family member	57	25%
Professional dog walker	63	28%
Dog walker for a charity or voluntary group	0	0%
Would rather not say	1	0%
Not applicable	102	45%
Other	2	1%
Total	225	100%

Chart 15.

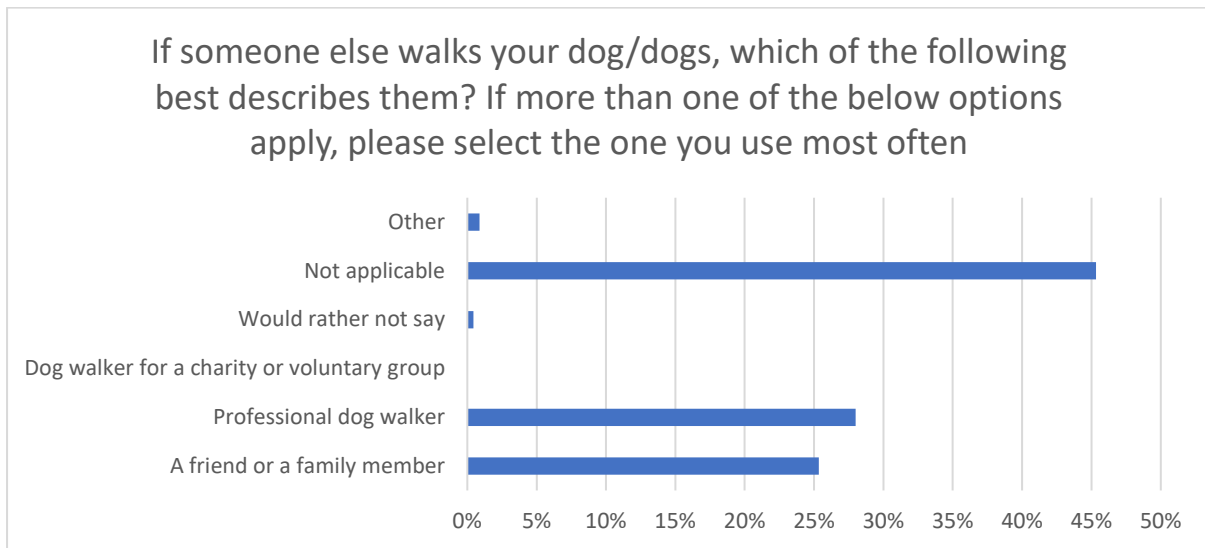


Table 16: If you use a dog walking business or charity, how frequently do you use it?

Response	Count	Percentage
Daily	25	11%
Weekly	25	11%
Fortnightly	2	1%
Monthly	1	0%
When needed	18	8%
Would rather not say	2	1%
Not applicable	148	67%
Total	221	100%

Chart 16.

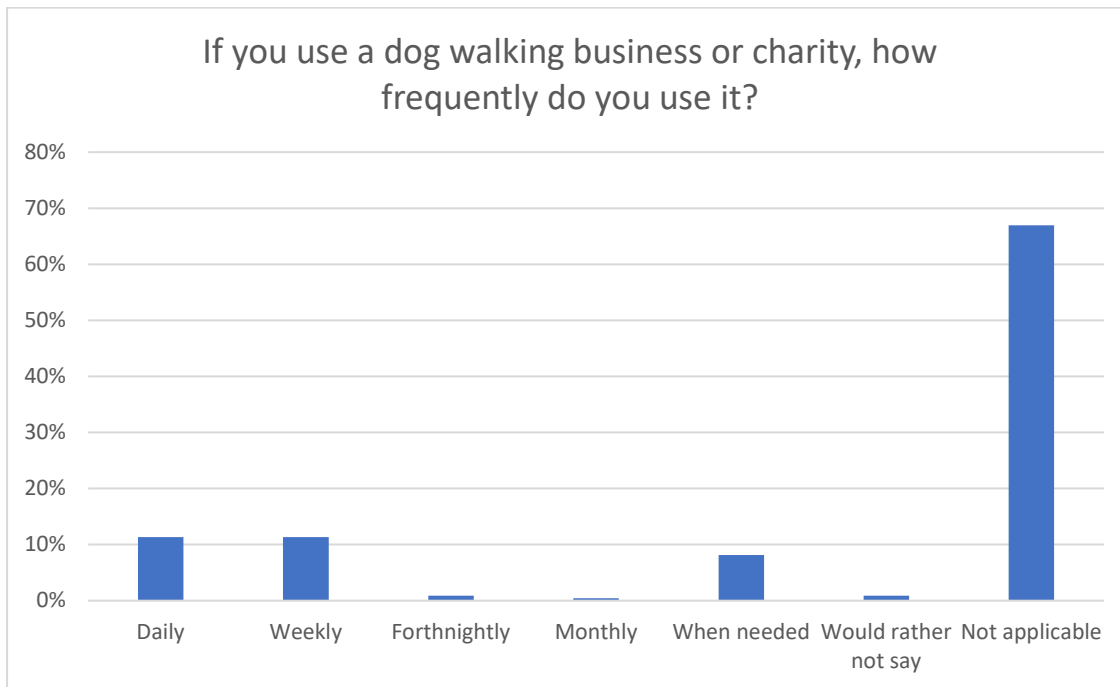


Table 17: Of the Organisations who responded, which best represents your organisation, business or community group?

Response	Count	Percentage
Charity	5	15%
Public sector	7	21%
Education sector	3	9%
Dog related business	16	47%
Non-dog related business	0	0%
Other	3	9%
Total	34	100%

Chart 17.

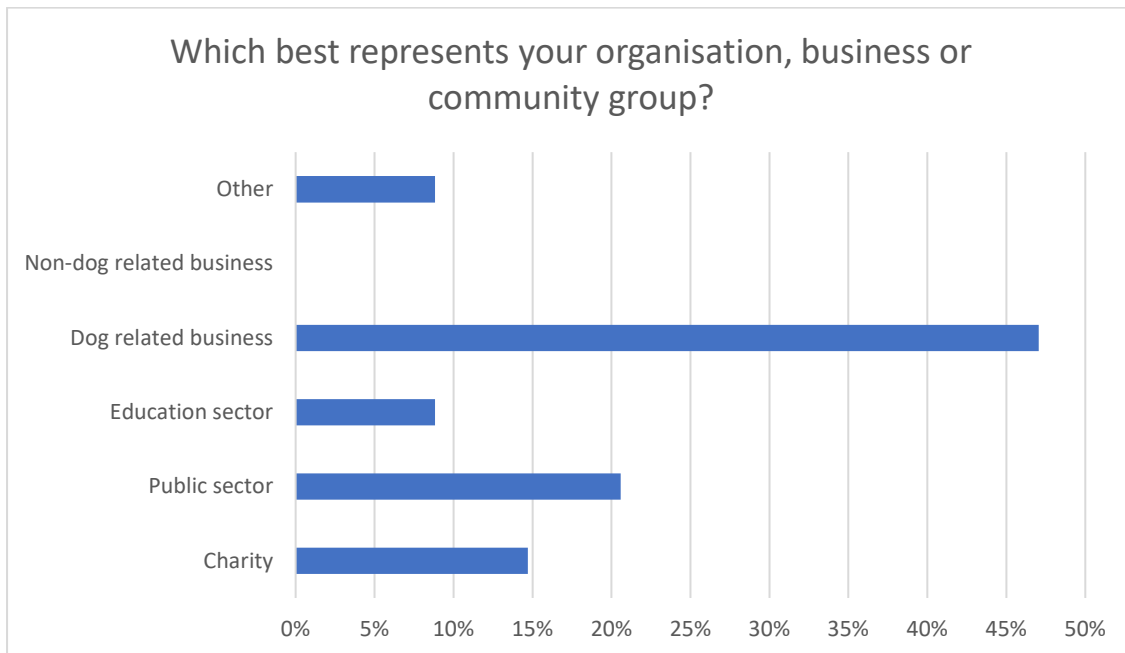


Table 18: If you regularly walk dogs as part of your role, how many do you usually walk?

Response	Count	Percentage
1	1	4%
2	0	0%
3	1	4%
4	0	0%
5	3	11%
6	6	21%
More than 6	1	4%
I do not walk dogs as part of my role	13	46%
Not applicable or would rather not say	3	11%
Total	28	100%

Chart 18.

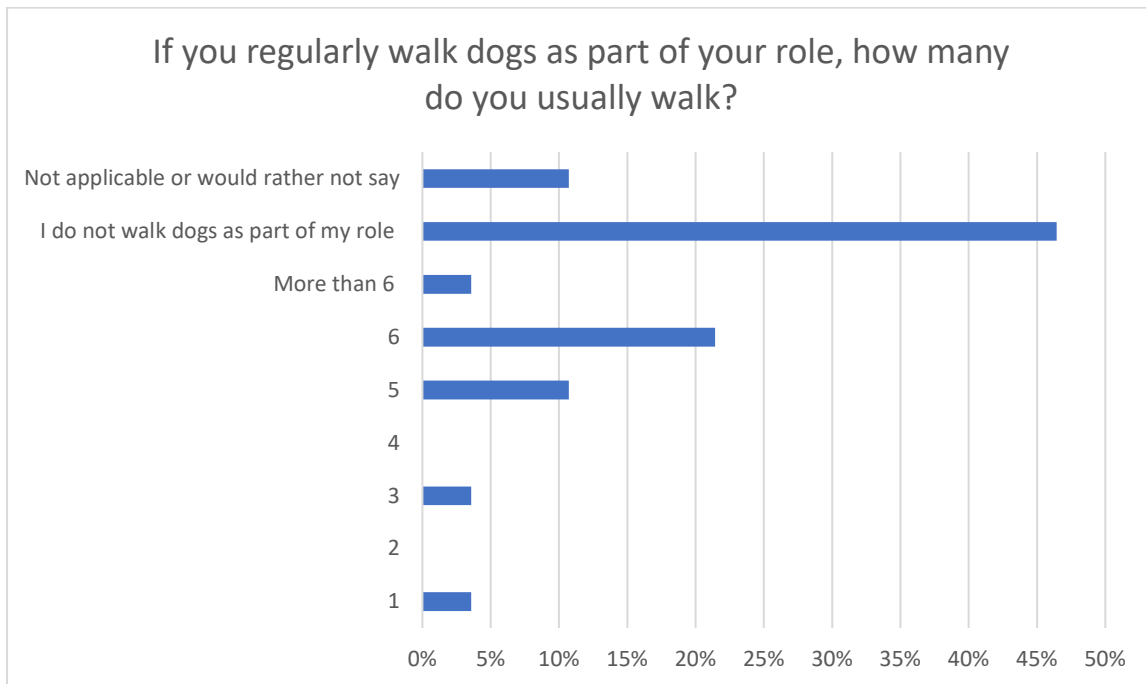


Table 19: Do you operate in the West Northamptonshire administrative area?

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	24	83%
No	2	7%
Not applicable	3	10%
Total	29	100%

Chart 19.

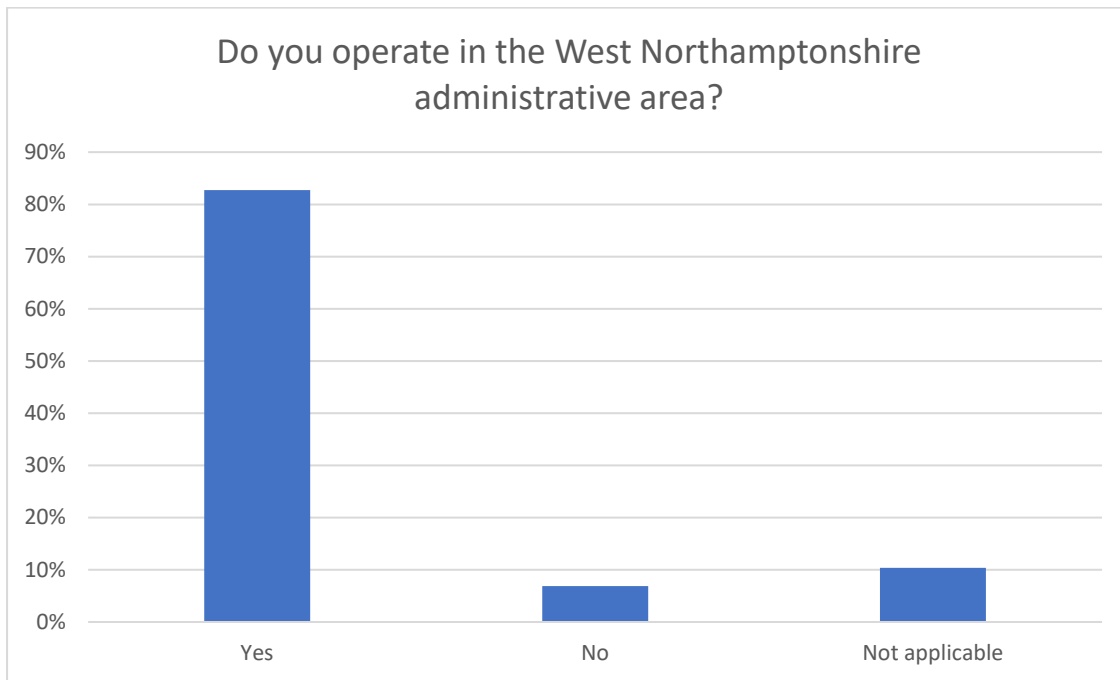


Table 20: More about you: How would you describe yourself?

Response	Count	Percentage
Male	90	27%
Female	212	64%
Other	1	0%
Prefer not to say	27	8%
Total	330	100%

Table 21: How old are you?

Response	Count	Percentage
18 and under	1	0%
19 to 25	5	2%
26 to 35	31	9%

36 to 45	64	19%
46 to 55	88	27%
56 to 65	59	18%
66 to 75	43	13%
76 and over	10	3%
Prefer not to say	31	9%
Total	332	100%

Table 22: Are you currently pregnant or have you had a baby in the last 6 months?

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	9	3%
No	264	82%
Prefer not to say	49	15%
Total	322	100%

Table 23: Do you consider yourself to be disabled or as having a long-term physical or mental health condition?

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	56	17%
No	222	69%
Prefer not to say	44	14%
Total	322	100%

Communications

Press release:

[Residents invited to have their say on new measures for public open spaces in Northampton | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](#)

Articles:

Town and Parish Briefing article (sent to all parishes in West Northants)

Members' Briefing newsletter (sent to all WNC councillors)

Social media:

6 posts

Reach: 16,725

Engagement (reactions, comments, shares): 194

PSPO variation comments:

Comments from respondents have been redacted to remove personal information but are otherwise untouched to preserve transparency and openness.

Respondents were able to make comments about the PSPO, dog related issues or smoking and were prompted with a list of suggestions, these included:

Common themes

The comments could refer to anything related to the Order. A list of common themes that were listed include:

Proposals or themes relating to dogs:

- Dog fouling
- Dog owners having the appropriate means to pick up after their dog
- Areas that dogs are excluded from such as play areas, schools, skate parks, tennis courts, multi-use games areas, bowling greens
- Requiring dogs to be kept on leads in cemeteries, memorial gardens, allotments, car parks, sports pitches, land near school entrances and exits.
- Dogs to be placed on lead when directed by a Council Authorised person
- Number of dogs being walked by a person at any one time
- Exemption from the existing WNC PSPO requirements i.e., if disabled, using assistance dog
- Proposal to vary the PSPO for dogs on lead in Northampton town centre
- Proposal to vary the PSPO for dogs on lead in Upton Country Park Phase 2
- Out of control dogs

- Irresponsible dog ownership (generally)
- Professional dog walkers
- Licensing schemes relating to the number of dogs permitted to be walked by one individual. i.e., possible professional dog walker licensing or animal boarding/day care licensing
- Dog waste bins/bags
- Length of dog leads
- Dog welfare concerns

Proposals or themes relating to smoking:

- Prohibiting of smoking or vaping in areas i.e., play area, land near school entrances and exits, skateparks, tennis courts, multi-use games areas, bowling greens

General themes:

- Geographic area covered by the PSPO
- Proposal to extend the existing PSPO to the Northampton Area
- Enforcement of the PSPO
- Fine/penalty charge related to the PSPO
- Education or signage of the PSPO requirements and prohibition
- Current PSPO in Daventry and South Northants

Of the 436 responses received, 211 (48%) made comments, 225 (52%) respondents chose not to make any. The comments received are as follows:

Dog fouling:

- Dog fouling is a growing issue. Each time I go out I see more on footpaths, immediately next to footpaths, in bags hanging in hedges or cast aside next to footpaths. It's a disgrace and I really hope to see some positive action to stop this. Dog owners need to be spoken to and reminded of their responsibilities as dog owners.
- In Kingsley, where I live, there is repeated dog fouling. Today, I walked 100yards and saw 10 lots of dog poo, including outside my house. Around Kingsley, dog fouling has become an increasingly bad issue.
- Thank you for this survey and allowing me to comment as I now pay over £2k in Council Tax and I really do feel that I deserve a nicer and cleaner place to live.

- Where I live there is an enormous increase of dogs. Their owners are allowing them to foul the pavements, private drives / gardens and public walkways and grassed areas - it really is quite disgusting and stressful. Thankfully when I called Northampton Council a lovely lady took my call and got the mess cleared away the same day and on other occasions too. Fouling of our public spaces is happening now on a very regular basis.
- Dog fouling is prevalent in my area of Little Billing/Great Billing/Bellinge. My enjoyment of walking my dog is ruined while I'm constantly having to dodge dog faeces. So many people don't pick up and some use a bag but don't use a bin, leaving it on the ground.
Loose dogs foul and their owners just let them, they aren't bothering or often not noticing as they're using their phones. Also people with several dogs are not able to deal with the fouling. I definitely agree with the 4 dog limit.
- This is a big problem, not only on the country park at Upton, but on the pathways on the Upton estate - some dog owners have let their dogs foul outside people's front doors without picking up (caught on ring cam)! A FPN would likely act as a deterrent.
- It would be great if dog owners would be encouraged to dispose of their own dog's poo in dog bins. There are not enough dog bins in the estate. Being on Ashby Wood Drive means that people walk past our house to go to the park and they dispose of their dog's poo in our bins, sometimes right at the bottom so it gets squashed by our rubbish and stinks our bins for days. I have had a dog poo right on our doorstep too.
- On dog-fouling, this is a common problem and some owners would be blatantly refusing to pick-up even when asked by another person. They don't even budge even if they are caught on camera! There should be a hefty fine for this! This happens at Upton Country Park so often!
- We have a dog and always pick up after her. We are shocked by the number of people who don't do this, however, it is less likely that people will comply if there aren't any bins in the area. At Towcester Water Meadows, virtually everyone picks up, but the bins are only near the entrance and are often overflowing- this doesn't encourage the good behaviour exhibited thus far
- Owners letting dogs foul front lawn - on a corner plot and part out of sight.
- I am a long term daily dog walker, I find it totally annoying and vexatious to find there are other dog walkers, casual and/or professional, who let their charges deposit their excrement on walkways, footpaths or an area nearby and leave it! It is totally inconsiderate and antisocial as well as disgusting and unhygienic.

I also live near a very large School (circa 2000 students) and I am not impressed that they all face the threat of dog faeces becoming attached to their shoes and being walked into the school rooms as well as into their homes.

There is no excuse and we are long overdue some kind of enforcement action on dog owners. I accept that registered blind people cannot pick up after their guide dogs if they have an accident, I have picked up after them in the past and continue to be willing so to do, but please, not in the centre of the path.

Finally, we should not overlook the dangers of Toxocara or Toxocariasis.

There is a health risk.

- Dog fouling increasing in streets in and around Bouverie Estate, Northampton and surrounds.
- Dog fouling has blighted our lives. We can hardly walk a few yards in Northampton streets without coming across dog faeces in the public footpath. Likewise, it is very difficult to enjoy our lovely Northampton parks and green spaces with children without having to worry about the countless dogs that are running wild without leads.
- People picking up their dogs poo and then dumping the poo bags in hedges or trees. More poo bins are needed
- Persistent issues with dog fouling in the Queen's Park area and around Malcolm Arnold Academy including Bunting Road
- This should also apply to private property and streets around Upton. Dog walkers leave poop near houses and on paths
- Upton estate has a persistent and constant problem with dog owners not picking up after their dogs, leaving mess on the pavements. It is disgusting and looks awful. People who fail to pick up after their dogs should be fined and notices should be prominently displayed in order to secure prosecutions
- Belling/Billing. Dog fouling very prevalent in these areas, particularly the green spaces.

Used bags frequently left on the ground.

- Rules regarding pick up of dog waste already exist with possibility of fines. This apparently does not prevent or deter the act. How will it be improved if the area is extended? What additional measures will be taken to enforce and implement the prevention of dog fouling?
- Please can we have a campaign to make it clear why it is unacceptable for dog owners to leave their dog poo, bagged or unbagged anywhere at any time
- I live in Lorraine Crescent and we get lots of people walking round the Crescent who don't actually live here letting their dogs foul ..Just today I had to pick up after a dog had been let to foul right on the entrance to my property. Twice this week I have been behind people walking their dog..don't pick up poop and see me coming and ask me for a poop bag as I have my dog. They let their dogs poop on the grass and pee with no thought for the person who tends the grass .Also there are people who take their dogs at night into Billing Road Cemetery ..off lead and they run up to you barking .People should not be taking their dogs to consecrated ground full stop there

is no need .Also we never see Park Rangers on Parklands where the Community Centre and that would be helpful indeed Can we have signs at all in Lorraine Crescent about dog fouling please.Its constant and disgusting.I hope Northampton actually bring something in to make these people who let their dogs foul everywhere a hefty fine 100 pounds is not enough...One thousand pounds is better .if there are no consequences then it won't stop people also if it's brought in your rule then it needs to be enforced or there is no point at all ..

Means to pick up:

- I think having means to pick up dog waste is extremely important and will hopefully encourage responsible ownership.

Dog poo bins:

- More poo bins needed now more people own dogs. Posters needed to remind people to pick up poo.

General and unrelated to the PSPO:

- I never knew dogs were such a big problem that you had to have a survey about them. Surely teh council have better things to bother themselves with, like what about the HUGH impact new homes are having on the area when there aren't the resources to cope with them..... nah we'll twitter on about dogs and fags.
- The time and money spent on this could have been better spent on mending the enormous pot holes that Northants road are plagued with.

Other anti-social behaviour:

- There is no effective policing to stop drugs or bikes/scooters in public places and now you intend to add more unenforced regulation?
Have you considered asking why people no longer have any inclination to report illegal activity because, when you dial 999 and wait in a queue... Your always told there are no officers available!

For 4 years I have reported drug dealers selling and using in Dallington park changing rooms but nothing has or will be done.

- We need to have more police presence in Upton, especially near the primary school because recently there are some groups of young teenagers doing drugs around the area. Some are locals, but some are not, they just choose this location especially because police don't bother them.

- General smell of cannabis when walking through most parts of the town particularly in the Summer months is very unpleasant
- Discarded canisters are strewn everywhere in parks, footpaths, car parks

Irresponsible dog owners:

- "There is so much dog mess on the pavements around Abington and also on the paths in Abington Park that I really welcome these measures. I also have a child that is scared of dogs and making sure that people are not allowed to bring their dogs into the play area is a good thing. I welcome making owners put their dogs on the lead, as I have had dogs come up to me and jump up me. I like dogs, but I don't want them coming up to me when they aren't familiar to me. These measures need to be well advertised to ensure people follow them."
- Its a shame that a few spoilbit for the rest a little respect for peoples personal space and training of thete dogs would make a big difference.

Dog control/aggression:

- It's usually the dog owners with the one dog they cannot control who has a problem with a group of dogs who are in control. Surely, this should be about whether you can control a dog or group of dogs? I mean it's just like saying, just because your dog is on a certain length lead, it means the owner will pick up their dog's poo. It's also like saying that because there are some rotten politicians that they should all be thought of in the same way. Most people walking groups of dogs are doing nothing wrong.
- Please kindly make this a priority, people and dogs need the protection. To walk their dogs in peace, recovering from surgery or whatever the vulnerabilities, without feeling constantly under threat is a basic foundation for looking after our mental health. Please make this so and thank you for your efforts.
- I have had issues with dogs off leads on multiple occasions, their owners clearly have no control over them. They are a ménace. I ask owners to put dogs on a lead, they often ignore this request. Dog mess is everywhere owners do not care.
- When Dogs appear out of control with running and Barking, this can be a very terrifying experience for children, making them afraid of dogs for the rest of their life.

Dogs off leads:

- I have a long-standing fear of dogs after being attacked as a baby. I have real difficulties with dogs off leads, as they sense my fear and frequently approach me. As a result I am unable to use various public spaces, and struggle to take my grandchildren to playgrounds because of owners ignoring rules relating to leads. This is a perpetual problem.
- I live in a row of terraced town houses in Wootton Fields with open plan gardens and an open green space to the front of these houses used by the residents children to play on constantly. There are several dog owners who use the open space on a daily basis as a toilet for their off lead dogs, while they do pick the fouling up it will leave residue to come in contact with children's hands.

My other issue is that they seem to think our open plan gardens are an extension of the area that their dogs can use as a toilet. I have doorbell footage of their dogs and several random dog walkers standing watching their dogs urinating over plants in my garden some of which are up close to my door. [location information]. I've tackled some of the local dog owners as my topiary shrubs are dying due to being urinated on by upto 4 plus dogs 2/3 times daily.

So basically while you are putting something into place to tackle dog owners you might want to consider situations like mine

- Seen several attacks by dogs off leads in the Wootton parks in the last 12 months and owners struggling to retrieve their off led dogs in Upton Park
- My child is fearful of dogs and I've stopped going to certain parks, in particular Abington park and Upton country park because they're always off the lead. He's so frightened
- I was going for a run through Upton country park when a dog tried to bite my ankle as it was off lead and wouldn't respond to the owner. Also my son is afraid of dogs so we can't use that area just in case as there are a lot of dog walkers that use that area that let their dogs run loose. It would be nice if we could use that space without fear
- Dogs off leads in Billing Road Cemetery, Northampton can be intimidating; we know people who will no longer visit as a result. When asked to control their dogs (eg please stop them jumping up) a minority of owners become abusive and threatening. The same occurs when owners asked to clear up after their dogs in local streets.
- I would much rather it be an offence to have your dog off lead. I live in Upton and regularly use the Upton country park when walking my sisters dog. He is not violent or antisocial but does not like being approached by other dogs. I always keep him on a lead but he gets incredibly distressed by other dogs approaching off lead. I also have children and do not trust dogs in general

around my children and would never want an unleashed dog around my children in a park due to them being so unpredictable.

- My son has been chased and jumped at many times in Upton country park, leading him to have a severe fear of all dogs.
- Lots of owners let the dogs off leads so they do not need to clean up after them

In car parks the dogs run in and around the cars so cars being driven have to break suddenly

- I let my dog out of the car in a car park then leave it off lead to as I get to the park does this would make me against these guidelines ? I am careful of my dog and do not put others at risk ? I think these rules are a little vague and open to criminalising people who are not breaking any rules. Not sure the rules on regulating how many dogs one person can walk, penalising those with well behaved dogs but have a few

Dogs on leads:

- I feel that dogs should be on leads at all times as not everyone is a dog lover - some people are scared to be near them, despite an owner saying 'don't worry, it's very friendly'. Having them constrained on a lead would still allow them to be out whilst making everyone feel happier in their presence. In addition a dog may be 'friendly' one minute but not the next as, sadly, so many cases in the press have reported.
- Why did you not include the Northampton Washlands as an area in which dogs must be on leads? The Environmental Agency has a rule that dogs must be on leads there because it is an area of international environmental significance for the protection of birds species but most dog owners ignore it. As a result, dogs off the lead chase and scare birds at the Washlands, kill them, and they have killed sheep as well. Dogs have attacked humans as well at the Washlands, leading to police investigations. Upton Park is important but so too is the Washlands. You must make it illegal for a dog to be off the lead in the Washlands, impose a £100 penalty for non-compliance, patrol the area, put CCTV and put up clear signage.
- A ban on off lead dogs MUST be extended to Hunsbury Hill Country Park as well. Why are the Hunsburys consistently left out of decision making? My dog has been persistently attacked and harassed on Hunsbury Hill Country Park. Which is far more widely used than Upton.
- Want the Council to introduce FINES for people who do not have Dogs on leashes at the Northampton Washlands.
- There are many who will say its ok my dog is friendly, they don't seem to understand that all dogs are not necessarily friendly, I know of many people who walk their dogs off lead and yes they are friendly, however when I walk my dog is not dog or people friendly he is always on a lead he wears basically

a hi-vis coat as I see it as a warning to other dog walkers, I always avoid other dogs, the law should be were ever dogs should be on lead regardless, you are not in control of your dog unless its on a lead.

- I think that dog owners should have their dogs on a lead in residential areas at all times.
- Dogs should always be on the lead no matter where that is, have experienced plenty times dogs attacking individuals and children. Also dog owners not cleaning dog fouls is absolutely disgusting.
- Requiring dogs to be kept on leads in cemeteries, memorial gardens, allotments, car parks, sports pitches, land near school entrances and exits. I disagree with the PSPO covering cemeteries and memorial gardens across the whole of West Northamptonshire. In many smaller towns and villages, the churchyard is one of the few places where there is little risk to children from dogs, the land is easily accessible on foot by elderly/infirm people, the landscaping is well maintained, the area is somewhat enclosed and there are places to sit. For these reasons, they are popular places for elderly people who keep dogs as companions to take their dogs for exercise, and this order bans them from doing so.
- Knee jerk reaction to a very few problems
- Requirement for dogs to be on lead should be extended to any area that is used by the general public and is not specifically designated for dog walkers. Tho it is right to seek to ensure and prioritise the safety of children it is the case that out of control dogs are also dangerous to other vulnerable people and adults. So while the numbers of responsible dog owners appear so low, we need to protect the bulk of the population the best we can over the whole area.
- We have a play area in Hunsbury Hill Country Park. It is impossible to fence the area off, and although there are notices asking dog owners to put their dogs on the lead this rarely happens. How can this possibly be managed!!!

Dog leads:

- There should be a restriction on the size of dog that is on a retractable lead. I don't actually agree with retractable leads at all but my dog was recently attacked by a Belgian Malinois type of dog on one of these leads, the dog ran away from the owner who could not control it because the handle does not allow for a secure grip and then attacked my dog.
- The requirement to have a dog/dogs on leads should specifically say an individual fixed lead no more than 4 feet in length must be used - many people use extendable leads that allow dogs to be up to 20 feet away from the owner. These leads are used by people who have not trained their dogs and they often cause hazards to other walkers and cyclists and allow dogs to run up to other dogs and children. Dogs cannot be controlled on this type of

lead, Similarly people use dog leads where several dogs are attached to a single lead - again they obviously cannot be controlled on this type of lead.

Variation:

- My answers are with respect to the proposal becoming effective for the wider Northamptonshire area, which I would like to see. Currently I live [location information] in Grange Park. Since living [location information] the country park the fence on the boundary between is a 3 bar fence i.e. somewhat open, in this time I have had multiple dogs cross the side and front area of my property where owners clearly don't have them on a lead and/or in control of them. I would estimate this is a least once per month that I see and I am sure there are many more that I don't see. On one particular occasion one dog was aggressive towards my son who was approximately 3 years old at the time and fortunate I was there to protect him. So the takeaway I would hope councils and parish councils take from this is that the impacts aren't just limited to the park areas they can cause potential safety issues for near by residents and others where out of control dogs shouldn't have to be accounted for. I would also go further and say perhaps more consideration needs to be given to the type of fencing to boundaries to ensure neighbors to the country parks are protected should an aggressive dog be loose.

I would also say that whilst picnicking I have had dogs steal food, which is amusing sometimes, but more infuriatingly many of the owners may apologize but often you don't see them putting their dog back on lead, it seems the onus is on you to protect what you have rather than being able to enjoy it freely.

Regarding leads I would also say that extendable leads are a constant trip hazard when walking, so on the lead isn't necessarily constrained.

I have grown up with dogs and like animals, I don't want the world to be policed to micro detail so that no one can enjoy it, however, unfortunately by a considerable number of people there is a distinct lack of thought for others, common sense and awareness of their own dogs, which as outlined leads to significant safety concerns.

As a suggestion perhaps designated areas that are fenced off can be provided to allow dogs to be off lead.

On a separate issue, smoking is becoming a major concern, particular cannabis the later is particularly more pungent and regularly I can walk out my front door and smell someone before you can see them, often way in the distance in the country park and I am not even in the country park yet. I feel as smoking has been removed in history from so many public places it should

be removed from public open areas also. There is some irony to go for a walk and get some fresh air only to meet someone head on smoking freely. it is quite obvious you can't avoid inhaling some of the smoke. Overall this really deters me accessing open spaces and I am sure many others would view the same.

Again similar to the above proposal, as a suggestion could an smoke permitted area be constructed/designated.

- Upton Country Park. I don't know why Phase 2 is. I think there could be some dog on lead zones at the country park but definitely not totally on lead.

Unfair on responsible dog owners living locally to Upton as a dog needs some off lead exercise so long as safe to be off lead.

Town centre dogs best on lead as potentially unsafe environment with traffic and more visitors

- Upton Country Park Phase 2 variation. Dog owners need somewhere to exercise their dogs off lead. Whilst I appreciate that there are always some irresponsible dog owners not everyone is. I know that there is sometimes livestock grazing in this area, in which case, make it compulsory for dogs to be on leads, but if there is no livestock I see no reason to keep dogs on leads and allow them to run around and get the exercise that they need.
- Upton Country Park- If there isn't a football match being played there then I don't understand why dogs should be kept on a lead in a wide open space. Dogs need their exercise too which they don't get if on a lead.
- I despise cigarettes/vapes and smoking and don't have a dog, but I despair at the growing interference in everyday life by authorities. It is bordering on [profanity]. We have to draw the line somewhere or we'll have "15 minute" areas forced on us next. The [profanity] you employ to enforce these petty, pathetic, rules, would be unemployable in any other job. Stop this nauseating, petty, bureaucracy.

Northampton area variation:

- How is this to be consistently enforced? Surely not reliant on people lodging complaints. Are play areas to be fenced? If not what are the boundaries? Too subjective without definition.

What constitutes Northampton Town centre? What streets mark the boundaries? Again without definition it is too subjective.

- Many people walk dogs and let them off lead on the racecourse. There are only limited places dog owners can do this. As far as I recall the basketball pitches are not fenced off so it would be impossible to keep dogs off them. Similarly it would be impossible to keep dogs off the football and rugby pitches, bike park etc.

If wnc proceeds to make this order they should make it possible for dog owners to comply by fencing these areas. This of course would change the aesthetic of the park completely and should be subject to further consultation.

I personally do not have a dog although I occasionally walk a dog for a friend. Responsible dog ownership has been shown to have very positive health benefits such as exercise and we should not effectively remove that from dog owners or force them to drive out to the country in order to exercise their dogs every day.

Upton Country Park variation:

- I live in Upton. I enjoy the country park but the number of dogs not on leads scares me. I am constantly aware of dogs running free or walking off lead and feel anxious..... it spoils my enjoyment and causes me to be fearful
- Dog's should be allowed to run in open spaces, but should be on a lead when entering or exiting the area, and when in the vicinity of other users. Public spaces are as the title suggests - for public use and users should be firmly aware of the expectation of use. Clean up after any dogs, and take all rubbish home or place in bins and treat other users with courtesy and respect.
- Dogs on leads at all time in Upton Country Park - I would disagree with this point - I would feel the park is an appropriate place for dogs to be off lead, but have the provision for enforcement to be carried out by officers to instruct owners to put dogs on lead if deemed necessary. I disagree with the blanket rule that all dogs should be on the lead in the park.

The PSPO:

- "Dog waste not being picked up in Kingsthorpe has significantly increased in the last 2-3 years & needs a public campaign / enforcement particularly on school routes.

With reference to dogs/smoking being banned from children's play areas, you need to be explicit about what this means for open play areas (non-fenced) such as the play areas on Kingsthorpe Rec, Thornton's Park & the Pastures where there isn't a defined boundary line between where a person can walk with a dog/smoke & where they cannot. The play area at Bradlaugh Fields has a clearly defined boundary fence with a sign that states no dogs

allowed to enter & I feel that the PSPO will be unenforceable / open to challenge if boundaries are not clearly defined around non-fenced play areas for both dogs & smoking. I don't personally have an issue with dogs close to a play area so long as they're on a lead/under owner control."

- "Often play areas have to be passed to reach areas suitable for dog exercise. Surely if under control and on a suitable lead (not a wander lead) you can pass a play area.

Dog excrement In public parks needs ONE law not piecemeal patches. Take note of Forestry Commission rules where it is advised to move excrement into undergrowth To support other animal life. They do not appear to have a problem to my knowledge and probably are popular with dog owners and family exercise. Seems very sensible.

There is a considerable risk here of covert watching and vigilante action by some sectors of the public who like being barrack room lawyers."

- I still see no alteration to the order that allows dog walkers in the wide open countryside to remove dog mess from the footpath but allow it to be in the hedgerow or long grass where it can cause no offence. In fact it is a food source for slugs snails etc. and is soon cleared and becomes part of the eco system. We often see fox poo an badger poo rabbits etc. and that is a fact of life of living in the countryside. I always carry a pick up bag just in case but I should not be under threat of a £100 fine for walking in the countryside and not carrying a bag of faeces for the whole walk. You are just encouraging the awful scourge of poo bags being left hanging in trees which is much more offensive. This is an urban problem not applicable to the open countryside. Please can you address this grey area in your review.
- In my experience of using the parks around Northampton and surrounding areas, that dogs are not usually a problem..Most if not all owners or dog walkers are responsible people and both walk or exercise their dogs with sense. Any area around schools etc it should be more important to prevent people smoking than worrying about the odd dog on or off a lead.. But 99% of responsible dog owners always keep their dogs on leads in built up areas. If the councils wish to do something useful they should be looking at fly tipping as this is a massive problem. Start sorting out the aggressive nature of fly tippers and fine or jail those who do this and you show some way towards cleaning up the countryside for everyone to use..
- There needs to be more done to educate owners, dog walkers etc. it seems really unfair to have to keep well behaved dogs on a lead, this restricts their exercise, they are bred to run around and confined to a lead is not the answer. Have more dog wardens to educate others before fines, create free enclosed dog spaces

Surely you should focus your attentions on irresponsible dog owners instead of tarring everyone with the same brush!

If a dog is well behaved and kept in good/safe control with a responsible owner why does it have to have a lead?

If someone has six dogs that are all well socialised why can't they be walked together?

It seems more like you insist the public pay more council tax each year yet you aren't prepared to direct those extra funds to police/educate the few who need it. Instead you are insisting on a blanket approach where the majority can be punished because of the minorities downfall and your lazy attitude. How much has this process cost, couldn't you have employed a dog warden instead?

As for smoking, I think it's horrid. But why is it being discussed with a dog walking issue?

If people want to smoke outside the boundaries of a premises who are you to say no that? Why not try educating?

- I feel you are using a very large brush to tar everyone with. Owning a dog is meant to be a pleasure and good for us but you seem to be trying to make it a hardship. Yes I agree dog owners need to know where and when it's appropriate to let their dogs off the lead and I'm totally on your side with regards to cleaning up immediately after fouling but really 'limiting' the amount of dogs one person can walk! What about people who have a dog walking business! Are you really in a position to say 'I'm going to cut your earnings by half everyday because I consider you not responsible'. There are only so many daylight hours they can walk so will you or the government be giving them a subsidy as an allowance to live? I don't know of one professional walker or boarder who would allow the dogs, that they are responsible and insured for, off the lead, to run wild and foul in any park, cemetery, Upton 2 or any of the other places on your list. Drunken yobs I can't speak for! Maybe instead of paying someone to drive around trying to catch a dog owner or walker out your monies would be better spent on more bins and someone checking areas carry a bag and a scoop, clearing up if they come across any dog poop. Joking aside maybe there is a place for owners and professional walkers, of more than four dogs, to be registered or carry a permit. Maybe everyone would be happy with that but definitely dogs on leads in town centers etc. How you'll keep the foxes and other wild animals off football pitches and such places is beyond me!
- British law requires owners/carers/walkers of dogs to have dogs under effective control. PSPOs were introduced to stop anti social behaviour in designated areas where evidence could be provided that a PSPO was needed. There is absolutely no evidence to support a blanket ban on responsible dog owners or those walking more than 1 dog. The Kennel Club and DogsTrust should have been consulted on the provisions of the PSPO as provided for in

the Local Government Act relating to PSPOs. It is not a Council's job to victimise, marginalise and criminalise law abiding members of the public. You do not ban all drivers of cars because one driver causes an accident. Use the law that is available to you and stop adding unnecessary layers of law at a local level. You are [Profanity] implementing laws against groups of people just because.....Gary Linekar stood up to be counted and I am standing up to be counted in this matter also.

- There are already UK laws in place to deal with dog related antisocial behaviour. It doesn't need councils micro managing this with unevidenced and disproportionate PSPO'S
Dog fouling needs to be addressed by Enforcement Officers patrolling areas effectively and efficiently so that the actual perpetrators can be dealt with appropriately
Education about placing dogs on leads around other dogs/children is important but is a PSPO regarding this evidenced and proportionate?
Responsible dog owners will not go into areas that you describe. If the evidence is that there are a majority of people violating these areas then a PSPO could be appropriate. However if it is a minority then deal with them specifically.
Multiple dog owners are an extreme minority in this country which therefore, concludes your area will only have a handful if that. As per the guidelines of implementing a PSPO please consider what evidence the council has to victimise these owners. If this is aimed at dog walkers, then deal with them appropriately. Dog walkers insurance will allow 6 dogs to be walked at any one time. The Kennel Club concur with this amount. Please research this part of the PSPO and ensure you have based your decision on factual evidence and not one or two anecdotal stories.
- How is WNCgoingto implement this. I never see anybody about that would be able to tell somebody to stop smoking. It's a farce.
There is also no statistical evidence to show a need for a draconian and restrictive PSPO to be implemented to limit the number of dogs one person can safely walk at any one time. British Law covers out of control dogs and local PSPOs were never designed to cover anything other than anti social behaviour in a defined place that detrimentally impacts on residents. Until West Northants can apply those guidelines to dog walkers/owners they should not even think of a PSPO.
- Northants is extremely dog unfriendly as it is.
- Bring back dog licences and the fee increases with the increase of problems, poo bins needed etc. People could then be vetted for dog ownership as they are the problem, not the dogs. There is little to no knowledge of the pspos and one never sees any enforcement of it especially in the villages, you can't walk anywhere without your head down to try and spot it especially with children.

- This will affect dog walking businesses within the area and thus affect income and then spend back into society. Also not sure why Upton country park was on the same list as burials and cemetery. A open space park is a completely different environment to burial grounds.
- such draconian ideologies are been proposed here. Majority of dog owners are responsible people and this I once again sounds like it's a group of people who hate dogs. Those who don't control dogs or pick up after them will continue regardless
- I think if you intend to make Upton phase 2 a dogs on lead space only there will be no where to walk a dog off lead locally. I am from a farming family and understand the need for dogs to be on leads around livestock however if a dog has good recall and is not a danger to others then why should they not be permitted to be off lead where it is away from a public highway and safe to do so.

Totally agree that is caught not picking up after your dog you should be fined, however to allow someone to fine you for not having your dog on a lead where they are not a danger to road users or other park users and the park is not in use for sporting events is subjective and unfair.

where a green space is not in use by others for sporting purposes why should responsible dog owners lose the opportunity to allow happy dogs to make use of the space.

- Most dog owners are responsible people and are happy to clean up after their dogs, and part of responsible dog ownership is the necessity to exercise dogs. Trying to restrict dogs to being on leads only - especially in parks - is ludicrous and totally unfair to the welfare of the animals; as is the carte blanche ban on smoking products. People should still have the right to choose what they put in their bodies - yes smoking is unhealthy, but alcohol is the number 1 killer drug, and no one's banning that! These proposals seem totalitarian - and how would they be enforced? It's a bit much.
- Out of control dogs and smoking/vaping are both anti social behaviours. They should never be seen near schools or play areas. I have lost count of the amount of times dogs have jumped up me when out running. (why do dog owners think its ok for their dirty muddy smelly dog to do that, 'he was just being friendly' is the constant refrain) My horse was attacked by a dog in Salcey Forest and threw me and ran across 2 roads to get away. Imagine if that was a child. Dog poo is disgusting and the fine should be £500. Not only do we have to put up with the smell and disease, the plastic bags destroy the environment. Nothing worse than a full bag left in a tree, what sort of [expletive] does that?

The constant plume of smoke from vapes and cigarettes is very unpleasant to breathe in especially if you are outdoors to get fresh air.

- As a manager involved in the oversight of issues relating to environmental crime and antisocial behaviour in West Northants I am aware of a number of

complaints about dog fouling, control of dogs and smoking in public locations within the Northampton area.

I have personal experience of ongoing problems with dog fouling in various locations around the town, particularly in areas around schools and on footpaths. I also have personal experience of dogs being poorly controlled in the town centre and in some parks in the town. I have also seen people smoking around schools and in children's play areas and the health impacts of this concern me.

- Smoking and dogs - you are eroding freedoms, you don't even enforce the laws we do have, why add to that problem, we don't need further laws we just need to enforce what we have first then there won't be a problem, to normal people this is just extra hassle, to those already ignoring the current restrictions won't take any notice of new restrictions, use a bit of simple logic please, I fully comply so why do I have to be restricted more and more when I'm not the problem, no wonder you go bust.
- The current trial - I live in South Northamptonshire and totally unaware this was happening.
Who is policing this? Who is issuing fines? How many fines have been issued. I'll raise a FOI request for this and look forward to the response.
- Dogs - With the increase in dog ownership I think this is especially important as sadly not all dogs are friendly and not all owners are responsible.
- I'm unhappy that areas where responsible owners can exercise their dogs off lead are being restricted, and that dog ownership is being linked in such a way to antisocial behaviours such as smoking. These are two separate issues and should not be linked together. Why are you not tackling the issue of littering, especially from smoking/vaping related products, where dropping fag ends, empty wrappers or packets and vape items is commonplace. Most dog owners pick up after their pets, only the irresponsible ones who will ignore your PSPO anyway, leave behind a mess; can the same be said of most smokers (do most smokers clear away spent fag butts).
- There are no prohibitions in South Northamptonshire and neither should there be, we are a rural area and we enjoy the freedom ourselves and our dogs are allowed.
Why is this all about Northampton AGAIN, what is the point in there being a unitary council when all they care about is Northampton.
It's about time councillors from WNC actually started looking at rural areas being different from Northampton, we aren't Northampton and we never will be.
Absolute disgrace.
- How is the council enforcing the new rules? Previous PSPO in Daventry has been in place for years and fouling is still a major issue as no enforcement at all! Also, rule of maximum of 4 dogs is totally stupid, as it's never the large groups of dogs causing issues. They often seem to be well socialised and

mostly friendly. It's usually individuals with 1 or 2 dogs that are unfriendly, antisocial and aggressive. Again, why is that not being tackled by the council?

- This consultation has been written with a negative bias - pushing people to answer in the way you demand.

Linking dog walking with smoking is another proof of negative bias.

It is perfectly reasonable for an officer to ask for a dog to be put lead if the dogs behaviour merits it but that must be stated in the PSPO.

You are demonising dog owners, dog walkers here - yes tackle irresponsible dog owners and dog walker with the LAWS you currently have - there is no need for further restrictions.

Why are you targeting people who have more multiple dogs ? - These people are more likely those who work with dogs, training them to a high standard of obedience and have them under proper control. If you have a few that are not in that category then tackle them using what is already in place rather than forcing the responsible to pay for the irresponsible few. Control of behaviour orders, the Dogs Act , the Dangerous Dogs act are only a few that come to mind - you have so many other options.

Sadly councillors only seem to act on negative and not on the positive and they bring in sweeping control orders when no were needed and any dog issue could easily have been tackled on a case by case basis.

Re bringing in an order to insist someone has means to pick - sounds great - but totally unnecessary - if a responsible dog owners misplaces a bag they will FIND a way to clear up after their dogs. This rule will not stop the irresponsible ones so TACKLE them by enforcing the laws you have already in place.

- Dog related issues and smoking. All the above should be enforced to all public spaces in Northampton eg Dogs should be on a lead in all public spaces and smoker shouldn't be able to smoke outside entrances to shopping centres etc
- Dogs should always be kept on leads unless in a designated dog exercise area/paddock.

Smoking is NOT a crime – [profanity] you are NOT.

Do NOT make yourself them.

- Smoking outside my kids school prolific and totally uncalled for dog fouling on street a regular problem on school route Wellingborough Road as is smoking and bad driving and parking on a major town road that is home to 3 primary schools the path outside my home is a through way from kettering road to wellingborough road but why does that mean i have to put up with bad habits of smokers and dog owners on my doorstep street cleaning is non existent in this area
- I feel you are discriminating against responsible dog owners. By all means take action against irresponsible behaviour but do not spoil it for everyone just because of the actions of a minority. For example... There is a difference between a responsible dog owner walking their six rescue greyhounds on a

lead and an unlicensed dog walker letting six dogs from different households run riot with no control. Too many people see dog walking as easy money, do not have the necessary experience and skills and make poor choices. Also in terms of the playing fields... where I walk there are kids football matches at certain times and responsible dog owners who have control of their dogs can walk around the perimeter or in neighbouring space with no problems. Again you are proposing to penalise the majority for the actions of the minority which is outrageous.

- My house fronts onto the Eastfield Park and I regularly on a daily basis see dogs fouling and owners that ignore their dogs toileting and walk on past, making no attempt to clean it up. I also see owners that pick up and bag their dogs faeces then proceed to dump the bag of dog mess under and on trees, hedges and by peoples houses. My husband and I have confronted dog walkers on more than one occasion, but quite frankly they don't care! Even denying what they have done, despite being caught on CCTV. I am a responsible dog owner. I always carry bags to clean up after my dogs, but my dogs rarely toilet outside our garden. Dogs that don't come to recall and run at other dogs and people should be kept on a lead in public parks. My dogs have been attacked more than once. You can not walk along the path on the park in front of the houses without smelling the pungent smell of marijuana. The awful smell wafts into my home from the park and surrounding properties. Who is going police this? Mr Nobody as usual! We pay our taxes and are just as entitled to have our parks and estates policed as any other park or estate in Northamptonshire. We See nobody but drug dealers taking over our park. It's disgusting! What are we paying our council tax for? We see very few services. I for one won't be voting for more of the same, that's for sure! I want to see real change and the services we pay for first.

Dog exclusion in schools:

- I have experienced significant issues with dogs on school grounds. Ignoring the fact that we have a pupil who has been mauled by a dog and sustained life changing facial injuries (not on the school grounds) it is extremely difficult to deal with dog owners who refuse to manage their dog safely. It would be much easier to have a blanket ban of dogs on school premises (except for guide dogs and other assistant dogs). Even when dogs are on leads, the leads are often let out to long lengths which trip up children, get entangled and otherwise are a safety concern. Children will go up to dogs and you are never quite sure how they are going to react. Dogs on school grounds should be prohibited for the safety of all.

- Dogs are often used in school to support children in a variety of ways including therapy, wellbeing, reading ect. It must be made clear that school dogs are not included in any new rules as they do extremely important work.

Fines:

- What actually is ever done about these violations? Fines for dog fouling have been in place for years. How many dog owners are ever actually caught and fined? The same goes for smoking.
- Proposed £100 charge is too much.
Taxpayers see these as just another cash cow.
Since converting to a Unitary system many Northampton taxpayers now have to fund:
 - . Council tax
 - . Adult Social Care Precept
 - . Police Fire Crime Commissionery
 - . Northampton town councily
 - . Parish council precept
 We are being held dry by you people.
- This is just another excuse to get money out of Northampton residents again, the council should be ashamed of themselves
- Another money making exercise by a unelected council. How about fining people who don't control their children in public places
- Should be higher than £100
- As usual, these penalty fines are only for people who can't afford them. You don't care about fines when you have money.
- I feel the fine should be higher, say £120-£150 as a bigger deterrent but also will there be signage to show this?
- £100 fine isn't much of a deterrent. I think it should be at least £500 and persistent offenders have their dog taken away.

Enforcement:

- Broadly the ideals behind the PSPO seem reasonable, but are not required as there are robust provisions already in place for control of dogs. I have no interest in the smoking provisions but do not understand why the council should be involved. There is a fine-for-profit company milking the system in the town centre and your PSPO will only potentially improve their revenue whilst having zero impact on behavior and simultaneously damaging the Northampton economy. Private companies should not be able to compel residents to prove that they will not commit an offense in the future. The fines are disproportionate to the potential offense.
- As the parent of a dog phobic autistic person, I think that anything which helps to control dog behaviour is potentially useful and cleaning up of dog

mess and cigarette butts is essential, but I worry that the current measures and the new proposals are pointless unless they are properly resourced with enough officers to ensure they can be enforced.

- What is the point of these proposals when there will be no-one around to enforce them? Fines are great but offenders will escape them with no enforcement officers to follow through.
- This legislation is not enforceable without investment or police support
- There are no means to enforce these penalties, and it appears pointless with no means of enforcement, how this will be effective. Dog fouling blights many parts of West Northamptonshire and it is appalling that the council are simply unable or unwilling to enforce this.
- I am a dog owner myself and it really annoys me that other so called owners refuse to pick up after their dog, wardens should be out and about in ALL public areas, not just the "posher" areas of town, I live in Briar Hill and the pocket park by The Causeway is littered with irresponsible dog owners mess, wardens need to come here too
- The rules that exist now are seldom enforced so I'm not sure why this is a proposal unless it is an attempt at distraction from the other serious issues that the council are not dealing with. People drink frequently during the summer in my local park but I have never seen an enforcement person there. These new proposals are an attempt to control my actions and an infringement of my personal freedom to exercise my dog where and how I want to. My dog is often off lead, returns when called, never fouls without me picking up after him and is put on a lead if I am concerned that he will not return when called, i.e. when I consider it appropriate not some one who has no knowledge of myself or my dog. Restricting responsible dog owners is not how you deal with problem dog owners because they will carry on regardless.

Misdirection of the council's limited efforts and resources:

- I read with interest on the local BBC website that WNC are "consulting" on the above measure which was brought in under the radar last year, then temporarily suspended as a result of the quite justifiable backlash from residents.

As a responsible dog owner and resident of South Northamptonshire, I can say with resigned certainty that the ONLY noticeable change brought about by WNC since it took over from the previously failed regimes of NCC and SNC, has been the imposition of extra charges for collecting green bins, bad enough in itself, but unforgivable when passed off as "levelling up" with Daventry and Northampton Borough.

You asked for feedback (although the feedback form was well hidden on your website), so here it is: Stop insulting and patronising your charge payers,

stop harassing dog owners, the vast majority of whom are responsible, and devote your energies to something useful! After all, it's not as if we are receiving the services that we are paying so dearly for. The roads are like something from the 3rd world and roadside hedges throughout the area are festooned with litter. Get a grip on the real problems or risk becoming NCC mk2.

Breach of PSPO:

- I Strongly disagree with being asked to provide evidence of the means to pick up after my dog. I am a responsible female dog owner and often walk my dog alone. I would be very uncomfortable about being approached by someone demanding to know what I had in my pockets/bag. Will officers be approaching people in other exclusion areas demanding to know if they have cigarettes/vapes/illegal substances on them?

With regards to dogs being off lead. Billing Road cemetery has not been used for burials for decades. It is more frequently used by dog walkers and unfortunately drug dealers and vandals. It is the responsible dog walkers who are keeping the more anti social behaviour at bay. They call the police/fire brigade when necessary, generally pick up broken glass and rubbish and stop the area from becoming a drug dealing den. I would like to propose that as an inactive cemetery Billing Road is excluded from the cemeteries list. I have been walking my dog there for many years and can not remember any problems with dogs being off lead. Most responsible dog walkers put their dogs on lead if they are approaching another dog on lead or a family with children.

Authorised person:

- Who exactly is an authorised council person

Assistance dogs:

- The use of the wording 'prescribed charity' overlooks those assistance dogs that are trained by non charitable status organisations and owner trained dogs. My understanding is that there is still legal protection for these dogs under the Disability discrimination act. Having said this I believe currently that only guide dogs for the blind are exempt from clearing up their dogs excrement (I could be mistaken)

Specific location issues and comments:

- Hunsbury Hill Children's Play area - I have a long-standing fear of dogs after being attacked as a baby. I have real difficulties with dogs off leads, as they

sense my fear and frequently approach me. As a result I am unable to use various public spaces, and struggle to take my grandchildren to playgrounds because of owners ignoring rules relating to leads. This is a perpetual problem.

- Upton - I have personally experienced dogs poo in front of my house I live near the Upton Square, Dog owners when confronted, very abusive and ignorant. Also way too many parents doing school runs with their dogs who are then just tied up to trees and barking at children. In my opinion school, park, children play areas, Upton Square are currently abused by dog owners, who are very rude and aggressive. I live in Upton and look after my area, do not understand such anti social behaviour. Lots of parents let their dogs off the lead and let dogs play with children. I was personally attacked by dogs while walking my children from school across Upton Square. Dog owners said dog was friendly. I was scared to death. Also I contribute towards maintenance of green areas of Upton but dog owners just let their dogs to poo where they like and leave the mess behind. I have to clean regularly [location information] and have someone's dogs poo on my doormat. I have toddler and school children at home and I am really concerned for them to step into someone's dogs mess. I fully support councils proposal to tackle this massive problem in Upton estate. Especially, when Upton Park has become a spot for dog owners from whole Northampton. Over the 15 years, since I moved to Upton, it turned into dog's wasteland. I stopped taking my children to Upton Park solely due to too many aggressive dogs without leads and too much dogs waste left behind.
- Daventry Country Park - [personal details removed] virtually every day the dogs on leads is breached and regularly more than 4 dogs beyond waked, see same people in a morning walking dogs in the play area and regularly smoking around the cafe, these laws need to be enforced regularly or people just laugh about them and continue to abuse the system. Get them enforced around the café
- Abington Park - There are clear breaches of dogs being let off leads in the smaller part of the park and this causes distress and anxiety to many park users - most dog walkers are very responsible. However a small number could not care less and have little or no control over their animal(s) which can upset both young children and many others.
There are also many, many instances of illegal substances being smoked in particular around the whole park and surrounding area - the stench from these products cannot be disguised and is becoming more and more noticeable at all times of the day.
- Spring Park, Kingsthorpe - there is a lack of enforcement in this area , never seen an officer in Kingsthorpe parks in the 12 years I've had a dog. Those with misbehaving dogs should be kept on a lead, yet I have trained working dogs that are obedient

if dogs are to be kept on a lead during football matches on this park, then the PSPO needs to be enforced for the teams & spectators that leave rubbish after the matches ,drinks bottles , orange skins electrical tape for holding their socks up is routinely discarded , i have even seen people & footballers urinating in the hedges . treat everyone equal litter is litter whether its dog mess or rubbish , even urinating

it has been going on to long & I agree to a crackdown, but for everyone.

- Brackley -I have been rounded on by dogs on the field walks at the back of the rug by club where there is a narrow path but dogs off leads, owners have no control and often let their dogs pop in the crops and run within them. Brackley is almost too dog friendly, it's difficult to go into a shop or cafe now without negotiating space around a dog, this must be very difficult for partially sighted people or disabled people to cope with, again owners of dogs now see this as their right. Walking round the lake is a nightmare as some dog owners insist their dog has right of way on foot paths and many let their dog off the lead to explore,chase geese etc.

I have a huge problem with smoking having just recovered from cancer, years of treatment and therapy only to open my patio doors at home and have my neighbours cigarette smoke coming in every half hour,this terrifys me to the extent I can't open my windows or doors at the back of the house when shes home even in 39° heat, weve had to buy an aircon. The smoke travels 35 ft. In public places this should definitely be band, particularly in pubs surrounding play areas like the Chequered flag! They e just installed extra seating which will be for smokers and non smokers alike. It's becoming almost impossible to avoid smoke either from newly installed log burners or cigarette smoke in this area as well as increased pollution from the leisure centre and new build traffic. We've lived on [address] for 20 years and since 2020 my breathing has been so badly effected that we're now considering moving from our forever home.

Why not have just dog friendly walks or parks, places?

Why not warn people dogs might be in the premise?

Insist that pubs move their smoking areas well away from children's play areas and that neighbours who smoke in their garden build a shelter to house their habit!

- Bowling Greens. So I'm guessing once again the local council were at hard at work again when they noticed a dog walker with a cigarette whilst they were either playing tennis or lawn green bowling. Why punish the majority for a minority,
Just another way of taking money from generally people with [expletive] and sending it to another company which you probably have interests in out of this town
Draconian to be honest.

- Eastfield Park (Northampton). I have personal experience of both smoking and dogs not being on leads in the Junior Play Area in Eastfield Park. I have plenty of experience of dogs' mess not being picked up in Eastfield Park and some experience of uncontrolled dogs in the park. I do not believe that controlled dogs should always be on a lead in the park but I do believe that dogs should always be under the control of the owner or another responsible person. (Dogs are sometimes allowed to run wild in the park.)
- Eastfield Park. I am a responsible dog owner who uses Eastfield Park regularly. I have had issues with out of control dogs with owners who stand at the edge of the park letting them defaecate where they like, and causing problems with other dog walkers. There is broken glass in the park and also dog faeces that has not been picked up. The friends of Eastfield Park work so hard to give us a lovely place to walk, but there is no one around to enforce any of the measures that are either in place or being proposed. The park also needs more dog waste bins especially at the entrance to Baldwin close. I often see dogs in the fenced off play area.
- Nature reserves. I was somewhat concerned that the changes may push the prohibited behaviour to other sites instead (such as our ecologically sensitive reserves like Everdon Stubbs) but as the areas proposed are limited to specific locations and there are other options available, this shouldn't be an issue. If, in the future, there is the opportunity for these measures to cover nature reserves (even if just for specific sites, rather than blanket prohibition), I feel that that would be additionally beneficial.

Dog areas:

- Some playbacks also have a dog bin. I walk my dog in a play park but early at 4 am I always pick up my dogs faces and use the bin provided. I do not want to be stopped using this park because my dog is not good with other dogs, is a rescue and only will go to this small park because of his anxiety he is always kept on a lead also I walk him at 4am so that the park wold not have children in it at that time. If it is banned I will have no where to walk my dog responsibly as I do now. However there is an issue with dog fouling all over the town and people not clearing up after their dogs it ruins it for the rest of us responsible owners maybe people like us could buy a licence to use these parks for our dogs if they are going to look at a full ban. People that pay will be more likely to be decent people like us that pick up after our dogs and keep them on a leash at all times in the town.
- I would like to see some enclosed areas where dogs can be let off their leads safely otherwise you are penalising all dogs for the bad behaviour of the few. Please remember that iys usually the owners who are to blame for most incidents involving dogs

Equality Impact:

- Currently this part of the PSPO refers to people with mobility issues who have a trained assistance dog. Some people who have mobility issues do not have an assistance dog but have problems picking up dog waste, especially those with mobility scooters. For some people getting off the scooter and bending over to pick up the dog mess is not possible, for example they may suffer issues re bending over and pain. One other thing to take into account is that some people will suffer dizzy spells when bending over and may fall over. I regard this part of the PCPO as restrictive and discriminates against those type of people.

Smoking:

- First I want to say that I am a non smoker and I agree with banning smoking in certain public spaces. However, to ban smoking near schools or unfenced sports areas can be very subjective. i.e. At what point are you near a school or sports ground? For example is a person walking down the street smoking passing a school deemed to be near enough to be given a fixed penalty? In the same way someone walking in a park where there is a football game being played, would they be penalised if they were smoking? How close or far do they have to be to be deemed near?
Personally as a non smoker these issues won't affect me, but recently I have been following a link on line where a member of the public claims to have been wrongly accused of committing a similar type of offence and is having difficulty proving his innocence.
- Smoking : I live very close to a Junior school, [school name]. The STAFF are the main culprit of smoking. They are not allowed to smoke on the actual site of the school, so what do they do, the staff come outside the school gate and stand on the corners outside our homes on the pavements Smoking. They drop their cigarette ends on the pavements - there is always a group of them from the school. I have E mailed the Headmaster of this school to complain about his staff smoking and leaving their cigarette ends on our residential street which is our home. Most of us in my immediate area of my home actually go out and sweep the pavements and the road in an effort to keep our estate clean and tidy.
Should you wish to increase revenue, then please do come to my area and you will catch many people dropping cigarette ends.
Whilst I write this, I feel compelled to enquire -" just when is the Council going to addresses parking on pavements !!? It's chaos around here at school pick up and drop off times .. there are so many cars parked three quarters on the pavements that there is nowhere for parents and their children who "do " walk their kids to this school.

Please West Northampton, we must have some discipline and respect installed for our environment and your residents. Thank you for reading.

- I mainly wanted to answer this consultation as I can't stand people smoking around places where there are children. I really don't care about where the people have their dog on or off the lead and they certainly shouldn't have to have them on the lead in a country Park. What is the council thinking trying to restrict people from exercising their dogs in an open green space. Anyway I don't think there is enough questions about the smoking issue in this consultation which is what I came here to answer it's all about dogs
- I think it is common sense that people who smoke shouldn't do it in front of children AND by the school gates. Certain schools already have no smoking signs on their gates so I would have thought that the school itself can already impose this. So I definitely strongly agree (I'm a smoker and don't do this!). However, i think for this rule to be imbided, at the start, there should be an enforcement officer that will appear at certain periods during school hours to check. Mostly, I've seen parents do this at drop off and pick-up. Perhaps especially at the date of launch.
- Smoking in open areas. I believe we live in free country, not George Orwellian state give people the choice !! I don't smoke it dose not bother me if you are in open spaces smoke vanishes straight away
- All public areas and streets should be smoke free
- Smoking, vaping and the reckless discard/negligent disposal of related waste products in public spaces should be more closely policed, and the penalties associated with being caught breaching the rules should be both significant and enforced.
- Please can you consider extending the smoking prohibition to the area outside of the hospital. I hate having to walk through thick smoke with my children when approaching the main entrance to the hospital. It's awful, unfair and a health risk too. There needs to be a designated area for them to congregate that is not directly on the road outside the hospital. Please!!
- Smokers and people who smoke the things that go in balloons just simply discard their litter.
It's awful.
It's unsightly.
It's antisocial.
- Parents outside school gates smoking but irresponsible parking outside schools more of a issue than dogs
- Seem a bit ridiculous to fine people for smoking in an area during school hours on a week day when the children you're trying to protect should be in school, rather than fining the people using those facilities perhaps you should fine children's parents for not having them in school and use that money to purchase more bins for all public spaces.

- Those that vape produce clouds of vape and I think they should be included in this scheme.
- I would extend this to outside schools, hospitals, outside workplaces, shops and shopping centres. In fact, the only place should be inside a person's own home except where children or vulnerable persons live. An exception would be a room inside/outside a place mentioned above where polluted air inside the place/room is carried away via forced extraction away from public areas.

Consultation questionnaire/process:

- A cemetery is different to a play area for example, but they are all grouped together so it wasn't possible to answer appropriately.
- For example multi use sports area? This could be a very large open space that would be suitable for dogs to be off lead when not be used for sport or to smoke without effecting others.
The question relating to fines categorised both dog walking and smoking which should be treated separately.
- I have noticed that the council put keeps putting out these questionnaires in regards to dogs. It's coming across very auntie dog especially as this is not the first time this type conversation is going to held for Northamptonshire
- So many of these questions are jumbled and I find them leading to the point where I cannot give my opinion on money. Why is the issue of smoking for example being put in with Dog Walking. I would like to answer questions on smoking and drug use in public places but I can't give the answer I would like as this would also implicate that I have a problem with Dog Walker is which I do not.
- Fair enough on the smoking but leave the dog walkers alone please. Yes there's some badies but most a good. Why not crack down on those people Why doesn't the council provide an easier consultation process for different subjects so that people can give their answers freely about each subject.
- You can't answer the questions in this pspo fairly as too many things are linked in together. The questions are not specific and should not include issues about smoking, country parks and dog fowling altogether! Who on earth wrote this!

Dog on dog attacks:

- "My dog, [dog's name] was attacked by a fierce mastiff off lead. While that dog now has an enforcement notice requiring it to be muzzled and on lead at all times when outside their home, I've had no recompense for the £735 the vets charged for [dog's name] treatment
There is a petition to government to make dog on dog attacks illegal"

Business impact:

- I have a small business [name of business] and paid a small fortune for licence to have daycare dog up to 6 and now it would mean 2 dogs would have to stay in my house alone while I walk the others and that's not the service I offer nor would it work leaving 2 dogs behind

Professional/dog walkers:

- I use profession dog walkers to help me while I work. Without their services I would have to rehome my dogs. This would have a significant impact on me and my mental health bit to mention it's incredible cruel to out people in this situation because if a few bad dog owners. Profesional dog walkers are often in more control of their charges than many owners. It is their livelihood and our life line and should not be reduced.
- If you control 4 dogs walked and do not offer a licence to professional dogs walks you are impacting the local community, business and peopled mental health, freedom to roam. Risking the quality of dogs excite and the mental health of the owners. People often own 4 or more dogs. Also this blanket ban will risk isolating huge parts of rhe community. My question is how would this be policed?? Ig your officers are only going to protol upton park and central Northampton? Im a local dog walker and rarely see anyone while out walking and believe it will be one of them rules out there that are just ignored by the general public.

Most of your questions are related to dogs poo and on lead walking. And offering no veration in dogs behaviours. Remembering dogs poo on or off lead.

- Most responsible dog owners should not be punished as a result of the small number that can't control their dogs they should be independently prosecuted which should not effect others who abide by safety
- I think that registered dog walkers I use are sensible and ensure their dogs are kept under control at all times. To restrict them to 4 (given their professionalism) may mean some go out of business with impact on the owners who might rely on them so they can go to work.

Professional Dog Walker Licensing:

- Dog businesses with a licence should be treated separately, we have had to demonstrate ability via training and so forth, I think it would be a real shame to wreck this for the minority. I mean what pervsions are being put in place? Are the council going to have enclosed off lead spaces for dogs? There are 13 million dogs in the Uk all to have behavioural issues if can't run off lead. Punish those who fail to train

Number of dogs walked:

- The survey does not give the option for people to choose a number higher than 4 so any professional dog walkers or licensed boarders cannot choose an option most suited to their needs.

I would fully concede that a limit of 4 dogs is sensible in parks and towns regardless of whether a professional person is present but to have those limits set for open countryside including some public footpaths and bridleways is excessive and unnecessary in relation to professional dog walkers.

I would fully support the idea of licensing professional dog walkers and boarders to enable them to walk 6 dogs under standards mutually agreed with the council, including strict penalties for anyone breaching these limits, as the blanket limit of 4 dogs is severely restrictive to current business practises and will cause many conscientious professionals to go out of business or lose a third of their income.

Do the council have any evidence of problems regarding numbers or behaviour of dogs in relation to professional dog walkers and if so what action has been taken?

- I don't agree to restrictions on 4 dogs only, as many people own more than 4 dogs and dog walkers sometimes walk more than 4 dogs. I think the limit should stay at 6.
- Professional dog walkers with insurance that covers up to 6 dogs should be able to walk up to 6 dogs. It's not the number of the dogs that are an issue rather specific owners or a specific dog, none of these proposals will address this issue
- Dog walkers/boarders should not be restricted to only four dogs at once. This restriction would make their business unviable. This could then force owners to use less reputable boarders or kennels which are not suitable for many dogs. I have no issue with any of the other proposals.
- The No of dogs walked should along tk the licence of 6.
- Please do not limit this to 4. As a professional Walker of 6+ years this will massively effect my business and the businesses of others. A better solution would be a license. A competent Walker will have control over all their dogs and will take them to the appropriate places to walk them.
- Professional dog walkers usually have insurance for 6 dogs. Below that number means that their business is no longer viable.
- This proposal only gives a maximum option of 4 dogs to be walked at any one time whilst my insurance as a professional dog walker supports 6 dogs and, in a lot of circumstances, 6 is the number many professional walkers and boarders need to be able to walk to have a viable business. I have been walking dogs professionally for 5 years and have never had any issues or complaints, lowering the number allowed at once would reduce my income by

a 3rd, which would not be viable to continue with. I have worked really hard to build my business as have a lot of other walkers, lowering the number to 4 max would be detrimental to many of us.

- I strongly disagree that the number of dogs allowed to be walked by one person being capped to four. Some people have more than four dogs and some people walk dogs as a way to make a living this would not be fair to them.
- More than 4 dogs being walked by a responsible dog walker are not a problem. The problem is with a single dog being walked by an irresponsible dog owner/walker who does not know how to control a single dog
- "As an owner of a dog care business I find the worrying trend of councils playing god with people's livelihood without a thought for the sometimes devastating consequences, appalling. Animal welfare is not paramount in this decision making."
- There is absolute no need to restrict the amount of dogs 1 person can walk, especially for professional dog walkers. It is often 1 private individual with just 1 or 2 dogs whose dogs are aggressive, unsocialised or out of control. It is also much more likely to be a private individual not picking up after their dog(s), rather than a professional dog walker
- I believe that limiting the number of dogs to be walked by one person will not decrease the issues caused by out of control dogs as usually these issues are caused by irresponsible owners with 1-2 personal dogs
- I rely heavily on a dog walker who takes my dog and others out whilst I'm working. She is absolutely fantastic and takes the dogs to quiet areas when they can be exercised. I trust her whole heartedly and I think a blanket ban on having more than 4 dogs under your control is unfair.
- Professional and qualified dog walkers who can control a pack of 6 should be allowed. Sometimes there is no room to shuffle the dogs so more than 4 have to be walked. Restrict the smokers but not the qualified and professional dog walkers who do a great job, and must have so much patience. So NO do not restrict the dog walkers.
- I am a small breeding and show kennel who walks multiple dogs at one time both on the lead in public places and off lead in bridle ways. To implement a max number of dogs walked would impact my daily life dramatically
- There is no evidence at all that people walking more than 4 dogs are causing more issues than people walking less than 4 dogs. In fact, all I hear about is incidents with 1 or 2 dogs that the owner can't control! Professional walkers tend to have well socialised and friendly dogs, so they are able to walk 4, 5, 6 or even more dogs without any problems.
- Surely you should focus your attentions on irresponsible dog owners instead of tarring everyone with the same brush!
If a dog is well behaved and kept in good/safe control with a responsible owner why does it have to have a lead?

If someone has six dogs that are all well socialised why can't they be walked together?

It seems more like you insist the public pay more council tax each year yet you aren't prepared to direct those extra funds to police/educate the few who need it. Instead you are insisting on a blanket approach where the majority can be punished because of the minorities downfall and your lazy attitude. How much has this process cost, couldn't you have employed a dog warden instead?

As for smoking, I think it's horrid. But why is it being discussed with a dog walking issue?

If people want to smoke outside the boundaries of a premises who are you to say no that? Why not try educating?

- Why would the council want to restrict the amount of dogs walked by 1 person? It's always the irresponsible owners with just one dog who they can't control. I've seen so many incidents with inexperienced owners, who don't seem to socialise their dogs at all and who don't seem to read their dog's body language! My dog walker gives my Poodle a great time with his friends and often meets up with other dog walkers. I get photos of 10-15 happy, playful dogs and this is what I want for my dog and what all dogs should be able to experience! Scrap the limit of dogs please!
- There should be NO limit on the number of dogs you are allowed to walk because that number is dictated by your competence as a dog handler and the training of the dogs. Specifying a number criminalises those who have trained their dogs well but have more than the specified number to walk. It also encourages people who aren't competent and have untrained dogs to walk more than they are competent to walk because the council have specified how many it is safe to walk irrespective of any other factor
- My dog walker operates with 6 dogs, we rely on this to be able to work full time. Without this service I don't know what we will do. She won't be able to operate with only 4 dogs.
- "Dog walking numbers should be limited to 4 in public parks and the areas mentioned in the survey but should be allowed to increase to 6 in less populated areas in line with most dog walking insurance policies
How is the PSPO going to be enforced if all open countryside is covered by the limit of 4?"
- What a ridiculous suggestion that no more than 4 dogs can be walked by any person and that pack mentality could be an issue. We're talking about dogs, not wolves! Also, practically all incidents with dogs are in either a home situation or with owners who only have 1 or maybe 2 dogs that they haven't trained and are either aggressive or out of control. My dog walker regularly takes 6 dogs in one go and they are all friendly and well behaved. Being in these groups has really helped my own dogs with how they behave around other dogs!

- I don't see how this benefits anyone. Most professional dog walkers' insurance allows them to walk up to 6 at a time. A single dangerous dog is far more concerning than 6 docile dogs being walked at once. If the plan goes ahead I won't be able to afford my dog walker anymore as they'll have to increase their costs, meaning we'll have to carefully consider whether we can afford to provide a good life to our dog any more.
- The proposal says "Consideration is being given to the development of a licensing scheme and associated code of conduct for professional dog walkers", until this is concluded it is not appropriate to limit to everyone to 4 dogs. Licensed dog boarders have insurance to walk 6 dogs so should be able to do so.
- I don't think this is fair, our dogs are walked with other dogs and enjoy socialising and our dog walker is brilliant, making her walk less dogs will mean her business will suffer and so will the interaction our dogs have with others. I feel this needs to be the same as it is now as she is fully insured to take 6 dogs out at one time and restricting this is a huge shame!
- What is wrong with this council. Leave people alone with their dogs. Yes agree about smoking but why limit dog owners in with them?
- I believe that anyone that is professional dog Walker with appropriate insurance should be allowed to walk more than 4 dogs and should be allowed to walk 6 dogs. To stop professional dog walkers walking no more than 4 dogs will be very short sighted of the council. There are enough dogs abandoned at dogs shelters. If professional dog walkers are stopped to walk more than 4 dogs their businesses will be at risk, dogs being left at shelters will increase. As per everything with new laws/rules etc, the sensible are always penalised. You won't stop unsociable dog owners by introducing these rules/laws, they will just carry on BUT you will stop decent, law abiding, sensible, professional, trained dog walkers to continue their business and destroy many people's livelihoods. Not forgetting an increase in dog abandonment because no one can get help to walk their dogs.
- Dog owners should be responsible for their own dogs and not have restrictions put on them by the council. Dog walkers should be able to walk more than 4 dogs if required firstly so it's a financially viable business and secondly to support dog owners to be able to work. In these economic times it would be crazy to restrict this and potentially cause further financial misery for walkers and owners
- There are many more responsible dog owners/walkers that will take 5/6 dogs out without any issues than irresponsible owners. The dog attacks that I am aware of always relate to a lone dog rather than anyone walking multiple dogs. Maybe there can be a compromise that if anyone is walking more than four, up to six dogs they then have to be on a leash but one person can still walk them.

- Licensing schemes relating to the number of dogs permitted to be walked by one individual. i.e., possible professional dog walker licensing or animal boarding/day care licensing. As a professional dog walker for 6 years, I feel personally affected by the limiting of the number of dogs walked at one time. This section of the PSPO will be detrimental to our business and therefore, the dogs and owners, should this limit be enforced again. If dog walkers are limited to the number of dogs they are able to take care of, this leaves owners in the difficult position of safeguarding their dogs welfare when they are working. Dogs left for long hours, or without adequate exercise and socialisation can quickly become frustrated, leading to dogs developing undesirable behaviours (likely to add to issues this order is trying to control) and/or the owners having to relinquish their pets.

Responsible dog walkers use their knowledge, experience and care to make sure dogs are grouped appropriately so there is no 'pack mentality' and a level of calm and good manners can be upheld.

As a professional who has put a lot of time, money, and passion into gaining knowledge and experience, I fully agree with the need for a licensing scheme for professionals, that can provide the appropriate guidelines for dog walkers, and owners to look for when enquiring about a dog walker. This will also ensure that standards are upheld and monitored.

By limiting dog walkers to 4 dogs per walk, it will cap our incomes considerably, making the profession almost unrealistic in the current financial climate. I, myself, am a single income household and it would have a hugely detrimental affect on my ability to stay afloat.

I have a waiting list of clients that would have to go to other walkers if I was limited, however, if this order stays at a 4 dog limit, they would struggle to find a professional walker with availability, making the possibility of under-experienced and/or less responsible walkers worsening the issues the PSPO is seeking to resolve, rendering it counterproductive.

I ask you to please revisit the prospect of a licensing scheme for professional dog walkers, guided by those that know the profession, and the areas we cover, rather than a blanket restriction that will have a hugely negative effect on the dog walking, and pet ownership industry of our area.

Yours sincerely,

[name]

[business name]

- If the number of dogs is limited to only 4 then I will be unable to walk all of my dogs together as I own 5. They are all highly trained dogs who compete nationally in obedience, agility and canicross. It's unfair to limit those responsible dog owners when I have not experienced myself, nor heard from anyone else, of issues with someone walking more than 4 dogs. I can fully understand licenses for dog walkers/those running a business and feel that

this rule you wish to implement should be split between general dog owners and those receiving money from walking dogs.

- Allowing only 4 dogs per dog Walker would put a strain on a small dog business and I disagree strongly that this comes into force. It should be allowed that a dog Walker can walk more than 4 dogs
- I strongly believe that professional dog walkers should be allowed to walk more than 4 dogs at one time.
- 4 dogs is plenty. Any more would be dangerous for the public, the dog walker and other dogs in the area. How would pop be picked up? Thank you.
- I run my own dog boarding and walking service and some breeds of dog require off lead walks, I do agree that if your walking your dog or dogs you should at all times be responsible for them and you should always place your dog on lead if there's another on lead near by, I have over the last few years notice alot of dog mess not being picked up and do feel this should be addressed , regarding smoking outside I don't smoke myself but do feel that this is a person's right to do,so as long as they discard waste properly.
- People are walking far too many out of control dogs. Most handlers cannot handle the 5-6 they currently walk, and plenty of walkers flout the rules and time out 8-10. The rules for walking should be far more stringent to keep both the dogs and the public safe.
- This is an impractical rule for dog breeders, show persons and dog walkers who do this as a business
- I am in strong favour of dog walkers walking a maximum of 4 dogs at any one time, unless on private property with no public access.
I am also in strong favour of professional dog walkers having a licence to trade and this industry being regulated. Thank you [name and business name]
- Should be 2
- Dog owners should be limited to 4 dogs. Professional walkers should be allowed to remain at 6 dogs per walk to ensure we continue the essential dog socialisation needs. And to not cause further socialisation and emotional issues in dogs by making it difficult and unaffordable for owners to engage the services if dog walkers.
- Dogs should be on lead at any time in a residential area
- I am a pet service provider and I do not walk multiple dogs together, as I strongly believe that dog walking should be focused at all times on the needs of the individual dog and can't see how one person can safely control more than 4 dogs at a time on the lead and certainly cannot watch and control more than 4 dogs off lead and see where they all are at once and if they have fouled. Walks with one person and more than 4 dogs are purely for money and not for the welfare of the dogs.

- Strongly suggest a regulation system for dog walkers. I have seen 8/9 dogs being walked by one individual which is highly risky and does not promote animal welfare or responsible dog ownership.
- Dog walking companies have too many dogs on walks. They don't keep eyes on them when they let them off lead which then means they are not observing dog's behaviour towards people and other animals Also they cannot control large groups on or off leash Also so many do not pick up dog mess. They seem to offload the dogs out of vans and it becomes a fee for all. Large groups of dogs being walked by dog walkers needs to be stopped
- I strongly believe that professional dog walkers should be allowed to walk more than 4 dogs at one time.
- Some of my friends and responsible small business owners who run dog walking businesses providing a vital service for working people with dogs. In seeking to reduce their working capacity you will not only be letting them down but also letting down the residents of this town who rely on them. I think it's awful what you are proposing to do to these peoples livelihoods.

Responses from professional bodies/charities/organisations:

Dog Walkers and Sitters Association (DWSA):

- The DWSA (Dog Walkers & Sitters Association) have a code of conduct for members, and all dog walkers listed on the DWSA site are qualified, insured and DBS checked. We are working hard to attempt to regulate and improve the safety and standards of this rapidly growing industry. We welcome being consulted on such issues and our own code of conduct includes dog walkers not walking more than 4 dogs at a time, always having the means to clean up after dogs, having a first aid kit, always having dogs under control, and other steps to ensure the safety of the dog walker, the dogs and the public. Unscrupulous sites such as rover.com are littered with hundreds if not thousands of people offering dog walking and sitting services. Most are dog lovers offering services in their spare time for extra cash with little or no dog related courses or qualifications, no insurance and no DBS check.

Ultimately, the dog owning public have a part to play in improving standards, by only employing/hiring suitably qualified, insured and security checked professional dog walkers. Supply will sadly meet demand. If demand improves its standards, then so will supply.

We welcome the proposal/idea of a dog walking licence for professional dog walkers, obtained by demonstrating membership to an organisation such as DWSA, where members have all completed a course written and delivered by the British College of Canine Studies. Any reputable and responsible dog

walker worth their salt is only too happy to join such a group and meet the standards, adhere to the code of conduct, have the insurance and the DBS check.

Sulby Parish Meeting:

- I am a dog owner and have been around animals all my life. I understand the responsibilities of dog and other ownership, which unfortunately doesn't seem to be the case with some other owners.

The Covid epidemic and increase in the number of households in this area has with it, brought a dramatic increase in the number of people walking with their dogs. Also, the demographic distribution of town folk visiting the area with little or no idea of the countryside code.

This has resulted in seeing a lack of control of dogs as well as irresponsible professional dog walkers with up to 6 dogs without leads, The consequence of all this is potential confrontations with other walkers and an increase in the dog fouling that is well documented to be harmful, especially to children.

To help improve the dog ownership behaviour, more signage to remind dog owners of their responsibilities and more dog bins so that people don't have to carry the bags of poo for miles, as for example on the Jurassic way between Naseby Road and Sibertoft. In addition I believe it's time to put some rules in place to highlight the responsibility the both dog owners and professional dog walkers and the consequences of this unsociable behaviour.

Catesby Parish Meeting:

Litter! That's my response. Clear it up and provide adequate bins, emptying of bins and enforcement.

As a rural parish the litter on our roads and verges, thrown from cars, is ridiculous and needs sorting.

East Hunsbury Parish Council:

- East Hunsbury Parish Council have discussed the issue of dog control in public open spaces in relation to some recent complaints received from residents. However parish councillors were reluctant to have a formal order in place across public open spaces in East Hunsbury as the majority of dog owners are law abiding and able to to keep their dog under control.

We feel that a broader message and awareness campaign regarding responsible dog ownership and "park etiquette" should be adopted.

If the PSPO was to be adopted across the Northampton area this would include open spaces in East Hunsbury, regardless of the opinion of the parish council. While we accept that this would be the case, we would need to understand fully how the PSPO would be enforced in our parish. It is not sufficient to put the PSPO in place and rely on residents to report incidents.

Information on the resources that will be available for patrol of open spaces, education of users, and issuing fines, should be declared prior to the adoption of the PSPO so that communities can see that this will be enforced effectively.

Billing Parish Council:

- Billing Parish Council currently have a big issue across the Parish of dog fouling. Whilst we feel that the people who are caught not picking up after their dogs and who do not carry the means to pick up should be fined we are at a loss on how this will be successfully monitored and implemented when their is already limited staff.

Brixworth Parish Council:

- We believe that Nitrous Oxide canisters should be banned from all areas that involve minors.

Northampton Town Council:

- The Environmental Services Committee of Northampton Town Council recently considered the consultation on varying public spaces and protection orders.

The Town Council is supportive of the proposals regarding dogs, and also those to be imposed regarding tobacco, tobacco related products and smokeless tobacco products.

Regarding dog control, the town council particularly support the introduction of a maximum limit that one person can walk at a time. The uptake in the dog walking industry needs some regulation and the intention to introduce a licence and/or code of conduct is welcomed.

Regarding the orders on smoking, again the council is supportive of these proposals. Children are influenced by their parents/carers and minimising their exposure to smoking will have beneficial effects in supporting healthy living and setting a good example. It was suggested that the dropping of cigarette butts should be included in the proposal as these have an environmental impact both from a visual standpoint and in terms of making their way into streams and rivers, etc.

When this order is agreed then we would encourage WNC to publicise it widely so that the various groups that will be impacted by this are fully aware of it and how their actions could contravene the order. In addition it is believed that enforcement is key and we would encourage WNC to enforce these new orders wherever possible.

Kennel Club:

Dog fouling

- The Kennel Club strongly promotes responsible dog ownership, and believes that dog owners should always pick up after their dogs wherever they are, including fields and woods in the wider countryside, and especially where farm animals graze to reduce the risk of passing Neospora and Sarcocystosis to cattle and sheep respectively.

We would like to take this opportunity to encourage the local authority to employ further proactive measures to help promote responsible dog ownership throughout the local area in addition to introducing Orders in this respect. These proactive measures can include: increasing the number of bins available for dog owners to use; communicating to local dog owners that bagged dog faeces can be disposed of in normal litter bins; running responsible ownership and training events; or using poster campaigns to encourage dog owners to pick up after their dog.

Means to pick up

Whilst we support proactive efforts on behalf of local authorities to encourage responsible dog ownership, measures to require owners to pick up after their dogs must be fair and proportionate. We would not like to see responsible dog owners penalised unfairly. The Kennel Club has concerns regarding the proposal to introduce an offence of not having the means to pick up. Responsible owners will usually have dog waste bags or other means to clear up after their pets. However, if dog owners are approached at the end of a walk they may have already used the bags that they have taken out or given a spare bag to someone who has run out, for example. Such behaviour is encouraged by Green Dog Walker schemes.

It is also plausible that such proposals could, in certain circumstances, perversely incentivise dog walkers to not pick up after their dog. Dog walkers could be made to decide between using their final waste bag and risk being caught without means to pick up, or risk not picking up in order to have a means to pick up should they be stopped later on their walk. It is reasonable to assume a proportion of dog walkers would choose the second option if they believed this was the least likely route to being caught, especially if the penalty for not picking up was the same as not being in possession of a means to pick up.

Local authorities may wish to consider introducing a clause which provides an exemption for those who have run out of bags but are able to prove that they were in possession of and made use of these during their walk. It is essential that an effective communication campaign is launched in the local area to ensure that people are aware of the plans and have an excess supply of dog waste bags with them.

On lead

We can support reasonable 'dogs on lead' Orders which can, when used in a proportionate and evidence-based way, include areas such as cemeteries, picnic areas, or on pavements in proximity to cars and other road traffic.

On lead by direction

The Kennel Club strongly welcomes 'On lead by direction' Orders. These allow responsible dog owners to exercise their dogs off lead without restriction providing their dogs are under control, whilst simultaneously giving the local authority powers to restrict dogs not under control.

We recommend that the authorised officer enforcing the Order is familiar with dog behaviour in order to determine whether restraint is necessary. There exists the possibility that a dog, through no fault of its own, could be considered a 'nuisance' or 'annoyance' to someone who simply does not like dogs.

We encourage local authorities to make use of more flexible and targeted measures at their disposal, including Acceptable Behavioural Contracts and Community Protection Notices. Kennel Club Good Citizen Training Clubs and our accredited trainers can assist owners whose dogs run out of control due to them not having the ability to train a reliable recall.

Exclusions

We do not normally oppose Orders to exclude dogs from playgrounds or enclosed recreational facilities such as tennis courts or skate parks. It is important that alternative provisions are made for dog walkers in the vicinity to avoid displacement or the intensification of problems in nearby areas. However, we will oppose PSPOs which introduce blanket restrictions on dog walkers accessing public open spaces without specific and reasonable justification. Dog owners are required to provide their dogs with appropriate daily exercise, including "regular opportunities to walk and run" – in most cases, this will be off the lead while still under control.

When seeking to restrict access to playing fields, local authorities should consider whether or not it is absolutely necessary. When they are not in use, they can be a vital resource for dog owners to ensure that their dogs get their required daily exercise. As such, time and/or seasonal restrictions may be more appropriate than a continuous exclusion order.

With regard to the proposed exclusion of dogs from schools while 'open and in use by pupils', we would encourage the Council to include an exemption where the dog owner has permission from the Head Teacher of the school. Various charities, such as Pets As Therapy (<https://petsastherapy.org/>) and The Bark and Read Foundation (<https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/about-us/charity-work/bark-and-read/>), take specially trained dogs into schools and other settings by request of the school, for the benefit of the pupils within the school. Without a clear legal exemption from the PSPO, charitable volunteers may be put off from offering this beneficial service.

Displacement

A common unintended consequence of restrictions is displacement onto other pieces of land, resulting in new conflicts being created. It can be difficult to predict the effects of displacement, and so the council should consider whether alternative sites for dog walkers are suitable and can support an increase in the number of dog walkers using them.

The All-Parliamentary Group for Animal Welfare (AGPAW) published a report which provides guidance to local authorities considering PSPOs, highlighting the increased risk to livestock if dog walkers are displaced to farmland.

"When reviewing Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs), local authorities should be careful to consider the availability of open space for use by dogs off lead. To restrict such areas or remove them via a PSPO may increase the risk to livestock in the countryside as more owners and walkers find that location as the only alternative. APGAW believes that local authorities should carefully consider alternative locations for dog owners and walkers to take their dogs when looking at issuing PSPOs and other measures such as introducing car parking charges and conservation grazing.

Given that there is a dog in around a quarter of all homes, as normal good practice, local authorities should seek to ensure adequate provision of green space for dog walkers during planning applications for new developments to avoid adjacent farmland becoming in effect local public amenity areas. Good practice already exists in the provision of such green space when planning to minimize any impacts on sensitive wildlife areas adjacent to new homes arising from dog walking." (Tackling livestock worrying and encouraging responsible dog ownership, 2017 Page 6 - <http://www.apgaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/APGAW-Livestock-Worrying-Report-2017.pdf>)

Maximum number of dogs

An arbitrary maximum number of dogs that a person can walk is an inappropriate approach to dog control that will often displace and intensify problems in other areas. The maximum number of dogs a person can walk in a controlled manner depends on a number of factors relating to the dog

walker, the dogs being walked, whether leads are used, time of day and the location where the walking is taking place.

As such we advise against the use of arbitrary numerical limits. Instead we suggest that the behaviour of individual commercial dog walkers is considered on a case by case basis, with Community Protection Notices used to tackle those behaving in anti-social manner.

If a maximum number of dogs measure is being considered due to issues arising from commercial dog walkers, we instead suggest that councils look at accreditation schemes – as seen in places such as the East Lothian Council area. These can be far more effective than numerical limits as they can promote good practice, rather than just curb the excesses of one aspect of dog walking. Accreditation can also ensure that dog walkers are properly insured – which will typically cap the number of dogs that they can walk at any one time – and act as advocates for good behaviour by other dog owners.

Government guidance has been relatively consistent that the maximum number of dogs being walked should not exceed six dogs. This is in line with typical limits imposed by insurance companies, for which annual dog walking insurance for walking up to six dogs on or off lead, is readily available for under £100 per annum. Councils should be clear as to what behaviour they're aiming to address when introducing PSPOs to regulate the behaviour of commercial dog walkers. As there is a high chance rogue operators will make a financial calculation that the risk of being caught and maximum fine under a PSPO, is outweighed by the income generated by exceeding the numerical limit set out in the PSPO. Or indeed, it may encourage multiple dog walkers to share a single vehicle and walk in groups, resulting in larger groups of dogs being walked together.

Appropriate signage

It is important to note that in relation to PSPOs, The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (Publication of Public Spaces Protection Orders) Regulations 2014 makes it a legal requirement for local authorities to –

“cause to be erected on or adjacent to the public place to which the order relates such notice (or notices) as it considers sufficient to draw the attention of any member of the public using that place to -

(i) the fact that the order has been made, extended or varied (as the case may be); and

(ii) the effect of that order being made, extended or varied (as the case may be).”

Regarding dog access restrictions, such as a 'Dogs on Lead' Order, on-site signage should clearly state where such restrictions begin and end. This can be achieved with signs that say on one side, for example, 'You are entering [type of area]' and 'You are leaving [type of area]' on the reverse.

While all dog walkers should be aware of their requirement to pick up after their dog, signage must be erected for the PSPO to be compliant with the legislation.

Assistance dogs

We urge the Council to review the Equality and Human Rights Commission's guidance for businesses and service providers when providing any exemptions for those who rely on assistance dogs. The guidance can be viewed here:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/assistance-dogs-a-guide-for-all-businesses.pdf>

We would therefore encourage the Council to allow for some flexibility when considering whether a disabled person's dog is acting as an assistance dog. The Council could consider adopting the definitions of assistance dogs used by Mole Valley District Council, which can be found below from their 2020 PSPO which included the following exemption provisions on dog control:

Nothing in this Order shall apply to a person who –

a) is registered as a blind person on a register compiled under section 29 of the National Assistance Act 1948; or

b) is deaf, in respect of a dog trained by Hearing Dogs for Deaf People (registered charity number 293358) and upon which he relies for assistance; or

c) has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, in respect of a dog trained by any current or future members of Assistance Dogs UK or any other charity registered in the UK with a purpose of training assistance dogs and upon which he relies for assistance

d) has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities and in the reasonable opinion of the Council that person relies upon the assistance of the dog in connection with their disability. or that of Northumberland County Council:

“(4) The term “Assistance Dog” shall mean a dog which has been trained to assist a person with a disability.

(5) The expression "disability" shall have the meaning prescribed in section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 or as may be defined in any subsequent amendment or re-enactment of that legislation"

Dogs Trust's:

1. Re; Fouling of Land by Dogs Order:

Dogs Trust consider 'scooping the poop' to be an integral element of responsible dog ownership and would fully support a well-implemented order on fouling. We urge the Council to enforce any such order rigorously. In order to maximise compliance we urge the Council to consider whether an adequate number of disposal points have been provided for responsible owners to use, to consider providing free disposal bags and to ensure that there is sufficient signage in place.

We question the effectiveness of issuing on-the-spot fines for not being in possession of a poo bag and whether this is practical to enforce.

2. Re; Dog Exclusion Order:

Dogs Trust accepts that there are some areas where it is desirable that dogs should be excluded, such as children's play areas, however we would recommend that exclusion areas are kept to a minimum and that, for enforcement reasons, they are restricted to enclosed areas. We would consider it more difficult to enforce an exclusion order in areas that lack clear boundaries.

Dogs Trust would highlight the need to provide plenty of signage to direct owners to alternative areas nearby in which to exercise dogs.

3. Re; Dog Exclusion and sport pitches

Excluding dogs from areas that are not enclosed could pose enforcement problems - we would consider it more difficult to enforce an exclusion order in areas that lack clear boundaries.

We feel that exclusion zones should be kept to a minimum, and that excluding dogs from all sports pitches for long stretches of the year is unnecessary. In some cases sports pitches may account for a large part of the open space available in a public park, and therefore excluding dogs could significantly reduce available dog walking space for owners.

We would urge the Council to consider focusing its efforts on reducing dog fouling in these areas, rather than excluding dogs entirely, with adequate provision of bins and provision of free disposal bags

4. Re; Dogs on Leads Order:

Dogs Trust accept that there are some areas where it is desirable that dogs should be kept on a lead.

Dogs Trust would urge the Council to consider the Animal Welfare Act 2006 section 9 requirements (the 'duty of care') that include the dog's need to exhibit normal behaviour patterns – this includes the need for sufficient exercise including the need to run off lead in appropriate areas. Dog Control Orders should not restrict the ability of dog keepers to comply with the requirements of this Act.

The Council should ensure that there is an adequate number, and a variety of, well sign- posted areas locally for owners to exercise their dog off-lead.

5. Re; Dogs on Lead by Direction Order:

Dogs Trust enthusiastically support Dogs on Leads by Direction orders (for dogs that are considered to be out of control or causing alarm or distress to members of the public to be put on and kept on a lead when directed to do so by an authorised official).

We consider that this order is by far the most useful, other than the fouling order, because it allows enforcement officers to target the owners of dogs that are allowing them to cause a nuisance without restricting the responsible owner and their dog. As none of the other orders, less fouling, are likely to be effective without proper enforcement we would be content if the others were dropped in favour of this order.

6. Re; Taking more than a specified number of dogs onto a land:

The behaviour of the dogs and the competency of the handler need to be taken into consideration if considering this order. Research from 2010 shows that 95% of dog owners have up to 3 dogs. Therefore the number of dogs taken out on to land by one individual would not normally be expected to exceed four dogs.

The Dogs Trust, Community Engagement:

- Dear Environmental Improvement Team,
Thank you for inviting us to respond to the consultation to vary the Order to cover the Northampton Area and include the requirement to keep dogs on leads in Northampton town centre and also at Upton Country Park Phase 2 and exclude dogs from certain public open spaces such as play areas and schools.

If you would like to discuss your proposed varying of the Order in more detail, then we would happily attend an online meeting with yourselves, to talk through the proposal from an animal welfare perspective. Please let me know if you would like that meeting with us.

As the UK's largest dog welfare charity, we would initially like to make the following comments for consideration:

1.Re; Dog Exclusion and sport pitches

Excluding dogs from areas that are not enclosed could pose enforcement problems - we would consider it more difficult to enforce an exclusion order in areas that lack clear boundaries.

We feel that exclusion zones should be kept to a minimum, and that excluding dogs from all sports pitches for long stretches of the year is unnecessary. In some cases, sports pitches may account for a large part of the open space available in a public park, and therefore excluding dogs could significantly reduce available dog walking space for owners.

We would urge the Council to consider focusing its efforts on reducing dog fouling in these areas, rather than excluding dogs entirely, with adequate provision of bins and provision of free disposal bags.

2. Re; Dogs on Leads Order:

Dogs Trust accept that there are some areas where it is desirable that dogs should be kept on a lead.

Dogs Trust would urge the Council to consider the Animal Welfare Act 2006 section 9 requirements (the 'duty of care') that include the dog's need to exhibit normal behaviour patterns – this includes the need for sufficient exercise including the need to run off lead in appropriate areas. Dog Control Orders should not restrict the ability of dog keepers to comply with the requirements of this Act.

The Council should ensure that there is an adequate number, and a variety of, well sign- posted areas locally for owners to exercise their dog off-lead.

The PDSA's 'Paw Report 2018' found that 89% of veterinary professionals believe that the welfare of dogs will suffer if owners are banned from walking their dogs in public spaces such as parks and beaches, or if dogs are required to be kept on leads in these spaces. Their report also states that 78% of owners rely on these types of spaces to walk their dog.

We believe that the vast majority of dog owners are responsible, and that the majority of dogs are well behaved. In recognition of this, we would encourage local authorities to exercise its power to issue Community Protection Notices, targeting irresponsible owners and proactively addressing anti-social behaviours.

Dogs Trust works with local authorities across the UK to help promote responsible dog ownership. Please do not hesitate to contact should you wish to discuss this matter.

We would be very grateful if you could inform us of the consultation outcome and subsequent decisions made in relation to the Public Space Protection Order.

Yours sincerely

[name] Community Engagement

North Northamptonshire Council, Regulatory Services:

- Following a review of the WNC consultation documentation with relevant colleagues I can confirm that there would not be any anticipated impact upon us as NNC and on this basis we would not propose to make any representation.



Public Spaces Protection Order Variation Consultation: ownership of dogs and prohibition of smoking in certain places

Overview

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) is seeking to vary the Public Spaces Protection Order (Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking in Public Places) 2022. We want to continue to promote responsible dog ownership and also to prohibit smoking in certain public spaces in West Northamptonshire area. The council is now seeking to vary the Order to cover the Northampton Area and include the requirement to keep dogs on leads in Northampton town centre and also at Upton Country Park Phase 2.

A Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO) allow councils to impose restrictions or requirements on public and some privately owned land to which the public have access to, with or without payment of a fee. A PSPO can deal with persistent and unreasonable nuisances and anti-social behaviour that has a detrimental effect on the quality of life for the local community in a particular area. They are intended to help ensure that the public can use and enjoy public spaces and can help to make West Northamptonshire a better and safer place to live, work and visit.

Background

In October 2022, WNC introduced a new PSPO across the Daventry and South Northants Areas. The Order promotes responsible dog ownership and requires no smoking in certain publicly accessible open spaces.

The requirements and restrictions of the PSPO are summarised as follows. Anyone who is in control of a dog (or dogs) in a public place must:

- Pick up after the dog immediately
- Have the appropriate means to pick up after that dog
- Not take or allow the dog/s to enter the following: children's play areas; schools when open and in use by pupils; skate parks; tennis courts; multi-use games areas (MUGAs) and bowling greens
- Keep the dog on a lead when in: Cemeteries; burial sites; graveyards; memorial gardens; allotments; car parks; sports grounds, fields, and pitches, when in use for authorised sporting activity; land near the café area at Daventry Country Park and near schools when open and in use by pupils
- Put the dog on a lead when requested to do so by an Authorised person
- Restrict the number of dogs that can be walked by one person to a maximum of 4 dogs at any one time. Consideration is being given to the development of a licensing scheme and associated code of conduct for professional dog walkers.

Additionally, the requirements and restrictions also cover:

The smoking of tobacco, tobacco related products, smokeless tobacco products including electronic cigarettes, herbal cigarettes or any illegal substances is prohibited in the following areas:

- Children's play areas
- land outside school entrances and exits when open and in use by pupils
- skate parks
- tennis courts
- multi-use games areas (also known as MUGAs), and
- bowling greens

A £100 fixed penalty notice (FPN) may be issued for failure to comply with any of the requirements or restrictions contained within the PSPO in line with the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, section 68(2).

Note: A registered blind person, or a person with a disability affecting their mobility, manual dexterity, or ability to lift, carry or move everyday objects and who relies upon a dog trained by a prescribed charity for assistance would be exempt from any Order.

We have produced some further information on the measures and proposals which can be found as an Appendix to this questionnaire.

Gathering evidence

There is a legal requirement for the council to have evidence to show the need for orders to be adopted, varied, or extended. The activities controlled by the PSPO need to have had, or be likely to have, an unreasonable and detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality and are, or are likely to be, persistent and continuing in nature.

We are using this consultation to gather evidence and information.

How the feedback will be used

The responses to this consultation will be collated and analysed and will be used to help draft the variation to the Order which will then be published and taken to a Cabinet meeting for approval. Should the order be made by Cabinet, it will then be introduced across the entire West Northamptonshire Area with further communications and campaigns to support this.

The feedback we receive during this consultation can form part of the evidence we need to extend and vary the PSPO to cover the whole of West Northamptonshire for a maximum of 3 years, prior to this it will be reviewed.

How to share your views

We are keen to hear from the public, interested parties and organisations. We are inviting you to read further information about the measures and proposals and complete this consultation questionnaire which is also available online at: https://westnorthants.citizenspace.com/place/pspo-dog-ownership-smoking-prohibition_2023

If you have any queries, comments or would like a copy of this questionnaire in another format (including easy read, or large print) you can contact us by email or telephone. Our contact details are as follows:

Email address: environmentalimprovement.ddc@westnorthants.gov.uk

Telephone: 01327 302260

The consultation will close at midnight on 17 April 2023.

Your opinion is very important to us, so if you would like to have your say, please complete the questionnaire. You do not have to answer all questions if they do not apply, or you do not wish to. There is opportunity to provide comments within part of the survey.

For information about how consultation and engagement responses are managed, please see the consultation and engagement privacy notice available at <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/service-privacy-notices/consultation-and-engagement-privacy-notice>

You can view maps of the areas the proposed varied PSPO would apply to at request using the contact information above:

- Area covered by existing order includes Daventry and South Northants.
- Daventry Area showing villages and towns covered by the existing Order.
- South Northants Area showing villages and towns covered by the existing Order.
- West Northamptonshire Council administrative area proposed to be covered by the varied PSPO - Northampton Area shown within black border.
- Upton Country Park – proposed dogs on leads area to be covered by varied PSPO.
- Northampton Town Centre - proposed dogs on leads area to be covered by varied PSPO.
- Northampton Area to be covered by the proposed varied Order.

Taking part in the consultation

We want to know how you feel about:

- WNC extending the area covered by the Public Spaces Protection Order (Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking in Public Places) 2022, to also cover the Northampton Area and,
- Requiring dogs to be kept on leads in Northampton Town Centre, and Upton Country Park Phase 2.

We also want to know if you have been adversely affected by the following in the Northampton Area:

- dog foul left in public places by irresponsible owners,
- off lead and/or out of control dogs walked in public places or
- the smoking of tobacco, tobacco related products, smokeless tobacco products (including electronic cigarettes), herbal cigarettes or any illegal substances in the following public places; Children’s play areas; land outside school entrances and exits when open and in use by pupils; skateparks; tennis courts; multi-use games areas, and bowling greens

The proposed varied Order would not apply to anyone who may use an assistance dog which has been trained to assist a person with a disability as defined under section 6 of the Equality Act 2010.

Thank you for taking part.

Questions

The geographic extension of the PSPO

The PSPO (Dog Control and the Prohibition of Smoking in Public Places) 2022, that is in place in the Daventry and South Northants Areas would be extended to cover the Northampton Area.

1) To what extent do you agree or disagree with this?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No opinion or don't know

Failure to clean up after your dog

This places a requirement on dog owners and walkers to immediately pick up after the dog they are responsible for.

Further information: This measure will apply to any place within the Northampton Area to which the public or any section of the public has access, on payment or otherwise, as of right or by virtue of express or implied permission, including privately owned land with permitted public access, as is currently the case in the former Daventry and South Northants Areas. This also applies to all public footpaths and bridlepaths. There are many bins specifically for dog waste located in West Northamptonshire and should there not be one nearby, it is permitted to put dog waste in a public bin, alternatively owners can take it home for disposal with their household waste.

2) To what extent do you agree or disagree that it's important for dog owners and walkers to clean up after their dog in the Northampton Area of West Northants?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No opinion or don't know

3) Have you experienced issues with dog fouling in the Northampton Area within the last 6 months?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

4) To what extent do you agree or disagree that it's important to have the means to pick up after your dog when in the Northampton Area?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree

- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No opinion or don't know

5) Have you experienced issues with dog owners or walkers failing to remove their dog's waste from public places and/or not carrying the means to do so in the Northampton Area in the last 6 months?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

Dog exclusion zones

This measure provides that dogs are excluded from the following areas: Children's play areas, educational institutions, skateparks, tennis courts, multi-use games areas, and bowling greens.

Further information: Dogs are currently excluded from all children's play areas containing children's play equipment such as slides, swings, climbing frames, and which are either enclosed on all sides by fences, or by other structures or markings that define the boundary of the play area such as wood chip or safety surface, within the former Daventry and South Northants Areas. These described boundaries make it easy for people to identify the extent of the dog exclusion area. By describing the types of areas where dogs are not allowed, rather than by specifying named and mapped areas, we ensure that newly created or developing play areas, educational institutions, skateparks, tennis courts, multi-use games areas and bowling greens, fenced or otherwise, are included, ensuring a common approach across the area covered by the current WNC PSPO and giving residents certainty should future planned development take place.

6) To what extent do you agree or disagree that dogs should be excluded from the following locations in the Northampton Area: children's play areas, educational institutions, skateparks, tennis courts, multi-use games areas, bowling greens.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No opinion or don't know

7) Have you experienced issues with off lead and/or out of control dogs in any of the following locations in the Northampton Area:

- **Children's play areas**
- **Educational institutions**
- **Skateparks**
- **Tennis courts**
- **Multi-use games areas**
- **Bowling greens**

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

Dogs on leads in specific open spaces

This proposal requires persons in control of a dog to ensure that it is kept on a lead at all times whilst in the following: Cemeteries, burial sites, graveyards, memorial gardens, allotments, car parks to which the public have access to, sports grounds, fields, and pitches when in use for an authorised activity, land near schools when open and in use by pupils, Northampton Town Centre and Upton Country Park Phase 2.

Further information: Allowing dogs to enter cemeteries, burial sites, graveyards and/or memorial gardens and allotments whilst on a lead, means owners could keep their dogs with them to ensure their dog may not be stressed by separation and it may also reduce risk of theft of the dog if it would otherwise be left unattended.

Authorised sporting activity means an organised sporting event such as an amateur football or rugby games, taking place on land which is owned, operated, managed, or maintained by the Council, Parish, Town or Community Council or any amateur sporting club. This proposal seeks to prevent dogs from running onto pitches during play and spoiling enjoyment for other users of the public open space.

Where there are is a high prevalence of children, such as in schools, it is sensible to place dogs on a lead to ensure proper control and to minimise the chance of a dog fouling in the immediate area and it being trodden into buildings.

Requiring dogs to be walked on leads in Northampton town centre and at Upton Country Park has reduced the number of dog related incidents in these areas.

8) To what extent do you agree or disagree that dogs should be kept on a lead in all the following locations within the Northampton Area:

- Cemeteries
- Burial sites, Graveyards, memorial gardens
- Allotments
- Car parks
- Sports grounds, sports fields and pitches when in use for authorised sporting activity
- school entrances/exits when open and in use by pupils
- Northampton town centre and Upton Country Park [\[link map\]](#)

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No opinion or don't know

9) Have you had any issues where dogs have been off the lead in any of the following locations within the Northampton Area:

- Cemeteries, burial sites, graveyards, memorial gardens
- Allotments
- Car parks
- Sports grounds, sports fields and pitches when in use for authorised sporting activity

- **Educational settings, for example school grounds, entrances and exits when open or in use**
- **Northampton town centre and Upton Country Park**

- Yes
 No
 Not applicable

Dogs on leads by direction

This measure requires those responsible for the dog or dogs to place them on a lead when asked to do so by an authorised person.

Further information: For animal welfare reasons, it is advantageous for dog owners to be able to exercise their dogs off lead in open spaces. WNC recognises that most dog owners act responsibly and keep their dogs under the appropriate level of control when they are out. However, if they are not properly supervised and controlled, dogs that are allowed off a lead in public areas can cause nuisance or even injury to members of the public or other animals and could cause road traffic accidents. In such circumstances, we believe the option should exist for authorised person to require a dog to be put on a lead. Authorised persons will carry appropriate identification.

This proposal will help WNC to deal with any behaviour by a dog that is likely to cause annoyance or disturbance without introducing overly restrictive measures on all dogs and dog owners at all times. This flexible approach will also allow officers to address issues that arise in any area at any time during the lifetime of the Order.

10) To what extent do you agree or disagree that persons in charge of a dog must put the dog on a lead if asked to do so by an authorised officer when in the Northampton Area?

- Strongly agree
 Agree
 Neither agree nor disagree
 Disagree
 Strongly disagree
 No opinion or don't know

11) Have you had any issues where dogs have been off lead and not under proper control by the person responsible for them anywhere in the Northampton Area?

- Yes
 No
 Not applicable

Maximum number of dogs permitted to be walked at any one time

This measure will limit the maximum number of dogs walked by any one person at any one time to 4. This applies to those who professionally walk dogs including charities, and dog owners, unless they are permitted by the council to walk more.

Conversations are currently taking place with representatives of professional dog walkers and consideration is being given to the development of a licensing scheme and associated code of conduct for professional dog walkers.

Further information: This could potentially apply to all dog walkers; those who walk dogs professionally and dog owners, unless expressly permitted or authorised by WNC.

A maximum number of 4 dogs has been recommended in [Professional Dog Walker Guidelines](#) produced by The Pet Industry Federation, RSPCA, and The Dogs Trust.

Dogs Trust research from 2010 shows that 95% of dog owners have up to 3 dogs. Therefore, the number of dogs taken out on to land by one individual would not normally be expected to exceed four dogs.

The intended effect of limiting the number of dogs to be taken onto a public place to 4 will help minimise risks associated with 'pack mentality', and to reduce the impact on pedestrians and other dog walkers, whilst still affording those with multiple dogs and/or those who walk dogs on behalf of others the opportunity to exercise their dogs.

12) To what extent do you agree or disagree that persons in charge of a number of dogs should not be allowed to walk any more than 4 dogs at any one time in the Northampton Area unless expressly permitted or authorised by WNC?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No opinion or don't know

13) Have you had any problems caused by a number of dogs being walked at the same time by one person in the Northampton Area?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

Prohibition of smoking in certain public open spaces

This requirement disallows smoking (of any kind including electronic and herbal) in the following areas: Children's play areas, land near schools when open and in use by pupils, skate parks, tennis courts, multi-use games areas, and bowling greens.

Further information: In Northamptonshire there are approximately 96,000 smokers, with the County seeing more than 7,000 hospital admissions, 300,000 GP appointments and more than 1,000 smoking related deaths each year. As part of The Council's commitment to public health in Northamptonshire, we need to do all we can to reduce exposure to second-hand smoke and make smoking less visible to children.

Children's play areas, playgrounds, educational institutions, skateparks, tennis courts, multi-use games areas, bowling greens, (fenced or otherwise) are all public places for residents to visit and use to maintain and enjoy a healthy lifestyle, this can be supported with the banning of smoking in these areas.

A no smoking requirement has already been adopted across all Country Park play areas in West and North Northamptonshire and across Daventry and South Northants. A common approach across the whole of West Northamptonshire to include the Northampton Area should give residents certainty and clarity of the requirement. The prohibiting of smoking in these areas will help reduce littering of cigarettes and associated items and will help keep open spaces safer, cleaner, and greener for all.

14) To what extent do you agree or disagree that all persons are prohibited from smoking tobacco, tobacco related products, smokeless tobacco products including electronic cigarettes and herbal cigarettes or any illegal substances in the Northampton Area in all the following locations, whether fenced or otherwise:

- Children's play areas
- Land near an entrance or exit of a school when open and in use by pupils
- Skateparks
- Tennis courts
- Multi-use games areas
- Bowling greens

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No opinion or don't know

15) Have you had any issues where there have been persons smoking tobacco, tobacco related products, smokeless tobacco products including electronic cigarettes and herbal cigarettes or any illegal substances within the following locations in the Northampton Area, whether fenced or otherwise:

- Children's play areas
- Land near an entrance or exit of a school when open and in use by pupils
- Skateparks
- Tennis courts
- Multi-use games areas
- Bowling greens

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

Breach of the PSPO

The maximum fixed penalty charge for breaches of the PSPO permitted by the Act is £100 which can help act as an effective deterrent against non-compliance of the PSPO. Any enforcement including the issuing of fixed penalty notices will be undertaken in line with the Council's Enforcement Policy. The penalty charge for breach of the current WNC PSPO is £100, and this will now apply to all of West Northamptonshire.

16) To what extent do you agree or disagree that the fixed penalty charge should be set at £100 in the Northampton Area, in order to match the charge in the former Daventry and South Northants Areas?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No opinion or don't know

Variation of the existing PSPO

The following questions relate to dogs on lead and applies to Northampton Town Centre and Upton Country Park.

Further information: Requiring dogs to be walked on leads in Northampton Town Centre and also at Upton Country Park has reduced the number of dog related incidents in these areas. This requirement already applies to these areas because of an existing PSPO but this expires in September 2023 unless included within a varied WNC Order.

17) How often do you tend to use the Upton Country Park Phase 2? (Select one answer)

- Daily
- Several times a week
- Once or twice a week
- Once or twice a month
- Rarely
- Never

18) Have you had any issues with dogs off the lead in the following areas in the last 6 months:

Location	Yes	No	Not applicable
Northampton Town Centre			
Upton Country Park Phase 2			

19) To what extent do you agree or disagree to enforcing the requirement to have dogs on leads at all times in Upton Country Park Phase 2?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No opinion or don't know

20) To what extent do you agree or disagree to enforcing the requirement to have dogs on leads at all times in Northampton Town Centre?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree

- Strongly disagree
- No opinion or don't know

21) To what extent do you agree or disagree that the PSPO for Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking which is now in force in the Daventry and South Northants Areas should be varied to include dogs on leads at all times at Upton Country Park Phase 2?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No opinion or don't know

22) To what extent do you agree or disagree that the PSPO for Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking, that is currently in force in the Daventry and South Northants Areas, should be varied to include the requirement that dogs are kept on leads in Northampton Town Centre?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No opinion or don't know

Further comments

23) If you have any comments to make about the PSPO, dog related issues or smoking, then please tell us here:

Common themes

Your comment can refer to anything related to this order. Below shows a list of common themes that may help you in providing your comments.

Proposals or themes relating to dogs:

- Dog fouling
- Dog owners having the appropriate means to pick up after their dog
- Areas that dogs are excluded from such as play areas, schools, skate parks, tennis courts, multi-use games areas, bowling greens
- Requiring dogs to be kept on leads in cemeteries, memorial gardens, allotments, car parks, sports pitches, land near school entrances and exits.
- Dogs to be placed on lead when directed by a Council Authorised person
- Number of dogs being walked by a person at any one time
- Exemption from the existing WNC PSPO requirements i.e., if disabled, using assistance dog
- Proposal to vary the PSPO for dogs on lead in Northampton town centre
- Proposal to vary the PSPO for dogs on lead in Upton Country Park Phase 2
- Out of control dogs
- Irresponsible dog ownership (generally)
- Professional dog walkers

- Licensing schemes relating to the number of dogs permitted to be walked by one individual. i.e., possible professional dog walker licensing or animal boarding/day care licensing
- Dog waste bins/bags
- Length of dog leads
- Dog welfare concerns

Proposals or themes relating to smoking:

- Prohibiting of smoking or vaping in areas i.e., play area, land near school entrances and exits, skateparks, tennis courts, multi-use games areas, Bowling Greens

General themes:

- Geographic area covered by the PSPO
- Proposal to extend the existing PSPO to the Northampton Area
- Enforcement of the PSPO
- Fine/penalty charge related to the PSPO
- Education or signage of the PSPO requirements and prohibition
- Current PSPO in Daventry and South Northants

If you have any comments to make about the PSPO, dog related issues or smoking, then please tell us here:

My comment refers to:

Comment:

About you

This survey is submitted anonymously; however, we want to know more about you to have an understanding of our respondents.

24) Are you? Please select all that apply

- A Daventry resident
- A Northampton resident
- A South Northants resident
- Employed in the Daventry Area
- Employed in the South Northants Area
- Employed in the Northampton Area
- A visitor to Daventry Area
- A visitor to Northampton Area
- A visitor to South Northants Area
- An owner or representative of a Local business
- A councillor or representative for a town/parish council
- A representative of a community or voluntary group
- Other (please give details below):

25) Do you have any dogs yourself (including assistance dog/s)?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

26) Do you have an Assistance Dog?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

27) Do you have any disability or health conditions that restricts your ability to walk and clean up after your dog?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

28) If you have your own dog or dogs (including assistance dog/s), how many do you have?

- I don't have a dog
- 1
- 2
- 3

- 4
- 5
- 6
- More than 6

29) If someone else walks your dog/dogs, which of the following best describes them? If more than one of the below options apply, please select the one you use most often

- A friend or family member
- Professional dog walker
- Dog walker for a charity or voluntary group
- Would rather not say
- Not applicable
- Other

30) If you use a dog walking business or charity, how frequently do you use it?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Fortnightly
- Monthly
- When needed
- Would rather not say
- Not applicable

31) Are you responding to this questionnaire as an individual or on behalf of a, business, organisation, community or voluntary group? Please select one answer

- As an individual
- On behalf of a business, organisation, community or voluntary group

32) Please tell us the name of your organisation, business or community group and your job title / role (if applicable):

Name of organisation:

Job title / role:

33) Which best represents your organisation, business, or community group (if applicable)?

- Charity
- Public sector
- Education sector

- Dog related business
- Non-dog related business
- Other, please specify below
- Please select only one item
- Other, please specify

34) If you regularly walk dogs as part of your role, how many do you usually walk?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- More than 6
- I do not walk dogs as part of my role
- Would rather not say or not applicable

35) Does your organisation operate in the West Northamptonshire administrative area?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

More about you

As an organisation, we collect specific demographic information from individuals who participate in our consultations or complete surveys to build up an accurate understanding of the communities that we serve so that services and policies can be delivered to meet the needs of everybody and ensure that everybody has an opportunity to have their voice heard.

Please feel free to leave any questions which you do not wish to answer. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please leave this section blank.

Any information you chose to provide will be treated confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation.

36) How would you describe yourself?

- Male
- Female
- Other, please state below
- Prefer not to say
- Other, please state:

37) How old are you?

- 18 and under
- 19 to 25
- 26 to 35
- 36 to 45
- 46 to 55
- 56 to 65
- 66 to 75
- 75+
- Prefer not to say

38) What is your religion or belief?

- None
- Christian
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Buddhist
- Prefer not to say
- Any other religion (please state):

39) How would you describe your ethnic origin?

- White: White British
- White: White Irish
- White: White Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- White: Other White Background
- Asian or Asian British: Indian
- Asian or Asian British: Pakistani
- Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi
- Asian or Asian British: Chinese
- Asian or Asian British: Other Asian Background
- Black or Black British: Caribbean
- Black or Black British: African
- Black or Black British: Other Black Background
- Mixed / Multiple ethnic Background: White & Black Caribbean
- Mixed / Multiple ethnic Background: White & Black African

- Mixed / Multiple ethnic Background: White & Asian
- Mixed / Multiple ethnic Background: Other mixed / multiple background
- Other ethnic group: Arab
- Other ethnic group: Other (please state below)
- Prefer not to say
- Any other ethnic group (please state):

40) What would you describe your marital status as?

- Married
- Single
- Civil Partnership
- Co-habiting / Living together
- Widow / Widower
- Other
- Prefer not to say

41) If you are 16 or over which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?

- Bisexual
- Gay Man
- Gay Woman / Lesbian
- Heterosexual
- Prefer not to say

42) Is your gender identity the same as the sex you were registered with at birth?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

43) Are you currently pregnant or have you had a baby in the last 6months?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

44) Do you consider yourself to be disabled or as having a long-term physical or mental health condition?

Further information: The Equality Act 2010 describes a person as disabled if you have a physical or mental health impairment, including some illnesses, which have a substantial and long-term negative effect on your ability to do daily activities.

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Please return completed questionnaire to:

PSPO Variation Consultation
West Northamptonshire Council
The Guildhall
St Giles' Square
Northampton
NN1 1DE

Thank you for taking part in this consultation



Public Spaces Protection Order Variation Consultation: ownership of dogs and prohibition of smoking in certain places

This document provides further information (including some background) to the measures and proposals the Council is consulting on.

You may wish to keep this document open when considering your responses.

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Introduction

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) is proposing to vary the Ownership of Dogs and Prohibition of Smoking in certain places Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO).

There is a legal requirement for the council to have evidence to show the need for orders to be adopted, varied, or extended. The activities controlled by the PSPO need to have had, or be likely to have, an unreasonable and detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality and are, or are likely to be, persistent and continuing in nature.

What is a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)?

The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 introduced new powers to tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB). This legislation also replaced the Dog Control Orders made under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.

PSPOs can be used to address nuisance or problems in public places that have a "detrimental effect on the local community".

Failure to comply with the conditions of a PSPO may result in an order to pay a fine, otherwise known as a fixed penalty notice.

A PSPO allows councils to impose conditions on any public space within its area. A public space is anywhere that the public has use of land by rights or by permission. A PSPO can deal with nuisance and anti-social behaviour that has a detrimental effect on local community's quality of life and can help to ensure people can use and enjoy public spaces, therefore helping to make West Northamptonshire a better and safer place to live, work and visit.

PSPO's can be in place for a maximum of 3 years, prior to expiry it is reviewed.

The current PSPO for Daventry and South Northants

In October 2022, WNC introduced a new PSPO across the Daventry and South Northants Areas. The Order promotes responsible dog ownership and prohibits smoking in certain publicly accessible open spaces.

The full **West Northamptonshire Council PSPO (Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking in Public Places) 2022** can be viewed at <https://cms.westnorthants.gov.uk/media/3304/download>.

What does the current PSPO cover?

The requirements and restrictions of the PSPO are summarised as follows. Anyone who is in control of a dog (or dogs) in a public place must:

- Pick up after the dog immediately
- Have the appropriate means to pick up after that dog
- Not take or allow dog/s entry to the following: children's play areas; schools when open and in use by pupils; skateparks; tennis courts; multi-use games areas (MUGAs) and bowling greens
- Keep the dog/s on a lead when in: Cemeteries; burial sites; graveyards; memorial gardens; allotments; car parks; sports grounds, fields, and pitches, when in use for authorised sporting activity; land near the café area at Daventry Country Park and near schools when open and in use by pupils
- Put the dog on a lead when requested to do so by an Authorised person
- Restrict the number of dogs that can be walked by one person to a maximum of 4 dogs at any one time. Conversations have taken place with representatives of professional dog walkers and consideration is being given to the development of a licensing scheme and associated code of conduct for professional dog walkers. However, this proposal is currently in very early development and also pending the possibility of national proposals and will be reviewed in autumn 2023.

Additionally, the requirements and restrictions also cover:

The smoking of tobacco, tobacco related products, smokeless tobacco products including electronic cigarettes, herbal cigarettes or any illegal substances is prohibited in the following areas:

- Children's play areas
- land outside school entrances and exits when open and in use by pupils
- skateparks
- tennis courts
- multi-use games areas, and
- bowling greens.

Failure to comply with any one of the requirements or restrictions contained within this PSPO carries a £100 fine in line with the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, section 68(2).

Information on the proposals to extend and vary the existing PSPO

The Council is now seeking to:

1. Vary the existing Daventry and South Northants Area [PSPO \(Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking in Public Places\) 2022](#), to cover the entire West Northamptonshire Council area, therefore including the Northampton Area.

This will bring consistency and alignment across the whole of the administrative area making it easier for those who live, work, and visit West Northants to know what the requirements of the Order are, thereby improving compliance and reducing the number of incidents of that may cause detriment to an individual who may be otherwise affected by the anti-social behaviour of dog fouling, dog control, and smoking. It will also reduce incidents of related anti-social activities.

2. Vary the PSPO to include a requirement to keep dogs on leads in Northampton town centre and at Upton Country Park Phase 2. These requirements are currently contained in as existing PSPO for Northampton only: [Northampton Borough Council Public Spaces Protection Order](#) (as varied on 26 March 2021)

Exemptions to the PSPO

A registered blind person, or a person with a disability affecting their mobility, manual dexterity, or ability to lift, carry or move everyday objects and who relies upon a dog trained by a prescribed charity for assistance would be exempt from any Order.

Geographical locations to which this PSPO relates

You can view maps of the areas the proposed varied PSPO would apply to:

- [Area covered by existing order, includes Daventry and South Northants.](#)

- [Daventry Area showing villages and towns covered by the existing order.](#)
- [South Northants Area showing villages and towns covered by the existing order.](#)
- [West Northamptonshire Council administrative area proposed to be covered by varied PSPO – Northampton Area shown with black border.](#)
- [Upton Country Park – proposed dogs on leads area to be covered by varied PSPO.](#)
- [Northampton Town centre - proposed dogs on leads area to be covered by the proposed varied Order](#)
- [Northampton Area to be covered by the proposed varied Order](#)

Why is this happening?

Dog Control

There are now estimated to be 13m dogs in the UK and that 34% of all households in the UK own a dog, with 3.2 million households in the UK having acquired a pet since the start of the pandemic in 2020. In further research conducted by The Dogs Trust, a quarter of owners also reported their dog has developed a new behaviour problem during pandemic lockdowns. It is estimated that dogs produce more than 1,000 tonnes of waste each day, and 31% of dog owners admit to not cleaning up after their dogs.

In 2022, West Northamptonshire Council received more than 1097 complaints about dog fouling and dog control issues and, whilst most dog owners are caring, responsible individuals, there are still some who are irresponsible.

Whilst WNC receives many dog fouling complaints each year, it believes that the true number of incidents is far greater than the number reported. Dog fouling is not only deeply unpleasant, but it can also be dangerous. Whilst rare, contact with dog excrement or contaminated soil can cause toxocariasis – a nasty infection that can lead to dizziness, nausea, asthma and even blindness and seizures. Dog foul can also pass Neospora and Sarcocystosis to cattle and sheep respectively if left on land which is grazed by farm animals. Neospora can cause abortions in cattle or result in weak calves, and Sarcocystosis can cause neurological disease and death in sheep.

Incidents of livestock worrying by dogs (when a dog chases or attacks farm animals such as sheep and cattle) have increased over recent years. The National Farmers Union estimates that farm animals worth £1.52 million were injured or killed by dogs in the UK in 2021.

Several high-profile dog attacks across the United Kingdom, some resulting in fatalities, have brought the issue of dog control sharply into focus. Northamptonshire Police reported more than 400 dog attacks were recorded between October 2021 and November 2022 with 40 against other dogs and 399 against humans, 155 of those occurring across West Northamptonshire.

A PSPO, including some dog control measures such as requiring dog owners to remove their dog's foul, already operates in the Northampton Area, this will expire 18 September 2023. One of the requirements of this Order is that dogs must be kept on leads in Northampton town centre and Upton Country Park Phase 2. The latter was introduced in 2020 after a number of livestock worrying incidents in the area which resulted in the injury or death of sheep grazing in that area of the park.

Prohibition of smoking in certain public spaces

In Northamptonshire there are approximately 96,000 smokers, with the County seeing more than 7,000 hospital admissions, 300,000 GP appointments and more than 1,000 smoking related deaths each year. As part of the Council's commitment to Public Health Northamptonshire, we need to do all we can to reduce exposure to second-hand smoke and make smoking less visible to children. Children's play areas, playgrounds, educational facilities, skateparks, tennis courts, multi-use games areas, bowling greens, fenced or otherwise, are all public places for residents to go to maintain and enjoy a healthy lifestyle which can be supported with the banning of smoking in these specific areas. This no smoking policy has already been adopted across all these places in the former South Northants and Daventry Areas of West Northamptonshire, including all Country Park play areas.

Cigarette butts are the most prevalent form of litter in England and account for 68% of all littered items. Most cigarette filters are single-use plastic and contain hundreds of toxic chemicals once smoked. Littered cigarette filters can persist in the environment for many years and release these chemicals into air, land, and water, harming plant growth and wildlife.

What can be done?

WNC is keen to take measures to combat these problems by proposing to use powers contained in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 Act ("the Act") to give its enforcement officers powers to deal with dog owners who fail to properly control their dogs in public places, and those who fail to refrain from smoking in specific public places throughout the WNC administrative area.

The Council is now seeking to extend and vary the current Daventry and South Northants PSPO (Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking in Public Places) 2022 to also cover the Northampton Area. By doing so, it will:

- Bring consistency and alignment across West Northamptonshire making it easier for those who live, work, and visit the area to know what the requirements of the Order are.
- Improve compliance with the requirements of the PSPO.
- Reduce the number of incidents that may cause detriment to an individual who may be affected by the anti-social behaviour.
- Reduce incidents of any displacement of the activities addressed by the Order, which has been highlighted to the Council as a concern since its introduction in November 2022.

- Reduce visibility of smoking to children.
- Reduce the littering of discarded cigarettes, filters and vapes within certain areas of open space.
- Ensure that dogs are under proper control by being kept on a lead in Northampton Town Centre and Upton Country Park Phase 2, thereby reducing the number of incidents relating to out-of-control dogs. This requirement currently applies to those areas because of an existing PSPO but expires in September 2023 unless included within a varied WNC Order.



West Northamptonshire Council

West Northamptonshire Council Public Spaces Protection Order (Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking in Public Places) 2022

West Northamptonshire Council ("the Council") makes the following Public Spaces Protection Order under section 59 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 ("the Act").

The land described in this Order and outlined in blue on the plan at Appendix 1, which includes the land described on the plans at Appendices 2, 3 and 4, being land in the administrative area of the Council to which the public or any section of the public have access, on payment or otherwise, as right or by virtue of express or implied permission, is land to which the Act applies and will be protected by this Order.

The Order may be cited as the West Northamptonshire Council Public Spaces Protection Order (Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking in Public Places) 2022.

Articles

1. If a dog defecates at any time on land to which this Order applies, any person who is in control of the dog at the time must remove the faeces from the land forthwith unless;
 - (i) there is a reasonable excuse for failing to do so; or
 - (ii) the owner, occupier or other person or authority having control of the land has consented (generally or specifically) to the failure to do so.

2. All persons in control of a dog on land to which this Order applies must have with them an appropriate means to pick up dog faeces deposited by that dog unless;
 - (i) there is a reasonable excuse for failing to do so; or
 - (ii) the owner, occupier or other person or authority having control of the land has consented (generally or specifically) to the failure to do so.

The obligation is complied with if, after a request from an Authorised Person, the person in control of the dog produces an appropriate means to pick up dog faeces.

3. All persons in control of a dog must not take it onto or keep it on any of the following

land, irrespective of whether it is enclosed or fenced on all sides or not or whether the dog is kept on a lead;

- (a) Children's play areas which are designated and marked for children's play,
- (b) Any Educational Institution, when open and in use by pupils.
- (c) Skateparks,
- (d) Tennis Courts,
- (e) Multi-use games areas (MUGA) and
- (f) Bowling greens

Unless;

- (i) there is a reasonable excuse for doing so; or
- (ii) the owner, occupier or other person or authority having control of the land has consented (generally or specifically) to doing so.

4. All persons in control of a dog must ensure that it is kept on a lead at all times whilst it is on the following land, irrespective of whether it is enclosed or otherwise fenced on all sides or not;

- (a) Cemeteries,
- (b) Burial sites,
- (c) Graveyards,
- (d) Memorial gardens,
- (e) Allotments,
- (f) Car parks and other off-street parking places,
- (g) Sports grounds, fields and pitches, when in use for authorised sporting activity,
- (h) Land at Daventry Country Park as detailed on the plan at Appendix 2.
- (i) Land at Northampton town centre within the area outlined in red on the plan at Appendix 3.
- (j) Land at Upton Country Park within the area outlined in red on the plan at Appendix 4.
- (k) Any land within 50 metres of any entrance or exit of an Educational Institution, when open and in use by pupils.

Unless

- (i) there is a reasonable excuse for failing to do so or
- (ii) the owner, occupier or other person or authority having control of the land has consented (generally or specifically) to the failure to do so.

5. All persons in control of a dog on land to which this Order applies must comply with a direction given to them by an Authorised Person to put and keep the dog on a lead unless
 - (i) there is a reasonable excuse for failing to do so or
 - (ii) the owner, occupier or other person or authority having control of the land has consented (generally or specifically) to the failure to do so.

An Authorised Person may only give a direction under this Order if such restraint is reasonably necessary to prevent a nuisance or behaviour by the dog that is likely to cause annoyance or disturbance to any other person, or to a bird or another animal.

6. A person in charge of multiple dogs is not permitted to walk more than 4 dogs at any one time on land to which this Order applies unless;
 - (i) there is a reasonable excuse for doing so,
 - (ii) the owner, occupier or other person or authority having control of the land has consented (generally or specifically) to the failure to do so.
7. All persons are prohibited from smoking tobacco, tobacco related products, smokeless tobacco products including electronic cigarettes, herbal cigarettes or any illegal substances within the boundaries of the following land and whether it is enclosed or otherwise fenced on all sides or not;
 - (a) Children's play areas which are designated and marked for children's play,
 - (b) Any land within 50 metres of any entrance or exit of an Educational Institution, when open and in use by pupils,
 - (c) Skateparks,
 - (d) Tennis Courts,
 - (e) Multi-use games areas (MUGAs) and
 - (f) Bowling greens.

For the purposes of this Order;

- (i) Any person who habitually has a dog in their possession shall be taken to be in control of the dog at any time unless at that time some other person is in control of it.
- (ii) Placing the faeces in a receptacle on the land, which is provided for the purpose, or for the disposal of waste, shall be sufficient removal from the land.
- (iii) Being unaware of the defecation (whether by reason of not being in the vicinity or

otherwise), or not having a device for or other suitable means of removing the faeces shall not be a reasonable excuse for failing to remove the faeces.

(iv) Articles 1 to 6 shall not apply to any person who;

- (a) is registered as a blind person in a register compiled under section 29 of the National Assistance Act 1948, is deaf, in respect of a dog trained by Hearing Dogs for Deaf People (registered charity number 293358) and upon which a person relies for assistance,
 - (b) has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, in respect of a dog trained by any current or future members of Assistance Dogs UK or any other charity registered in the UK with a purpose of training assistance dogs and upon which that person relies for assistance or
 - (c) has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out common day-to-day activities and in the reasonable opinion of the Council that person relies upon the assistance of the dog in connection with their disability.
- (v) For the avoidance of doubt with regard to Articles 1, 2, 5 and 6, “Land in the administrative area of the Council to which the public or any section of the public have access, on payment or otherwise, as right or by virtue of express or implied permission” includes, but is not limited to;
- (a) all roads, footpaths, pavements, alleyways and grass verges maintained at public expense as well as any bridleway or other public right of way over privately owned land and
 - (b) all parks and open spaces, including commons, grounds and wooded areas, owned, operated, managed or maintained by the Council or any Parish, Town or Community Council.
- (vi) For the avoidance of doubt with regard to Articles, 3, 4 and 7, the categories of land set out therein are those which are owned, operated, managed or maintained by the Council, any Academy, any Parish, Town or Community Council or any amateur sporting club.
- (vii) For the avoidance of doubt with regard to Article 6, “authority” includes, but is not limited to, West Northamptonshire Council and any relevant consent issued by any authority having control of the land includes, but is not limited to, any licence or permit issued by it in accordance with legislation other than the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

Interpretation

- (i) "Authorised Person" means an employee of the Council, or any employee of a partnership agency or contractor, who is authorised in writing by it for the purposes of giving directions under the Order.
- (ii) "Assistance Dog" means a dog which has been trained to assist a person with a disability.
- (iii) "Disability" has the meaning prescribed in section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 or as may be defined in any subsequent amendment or re-enactment of that legislation.
- (iv) "Authorised sporting activity" means an organised sporting event, including but not limited to amateur football, rugby and cricket games, taking place on land owned, operated, managed or maintained by the Council, any Parish, Town or Community Council or any amateur sporting club, with its implied or express consent.
- (v) "Educational Institution" means any school, academy or college that provides primary or secondary education as defined by section 2 of the Education Act 1996.

Enforcement

- (i) Any person who fails to comply with Articles 1 to 7 above without a reasonable excuse for doing so commits an offence.
- (ii) A person committing an offence may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice ("FPN") of £100.00 by a Constable or Authorised Person, payment of which will discharge liability to conviction for that offence.

In consulting upon the prohibitions and requirements within this Order and upon making it, the Council has had particular regard to the rights of freedom of expression and freedom of assembly as set out in Articles 10 and 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

This Order came into force on 1st November 2022 and lasts for a period of three years. A varied version of the Order incorporating Appendices 1, 2, 3 and 4 and other consequential amendments was made on the following date and comes into force on **xxx** 2023 for the remainder of the three-year period.

Dated: **xxx** 2023

Signed:

Stuart Timmiss

Executive Director of Place and Economy

For and on behalf of West Northamptonshire Council

Appendix 1 - Land to which the Order applies



West Northamptonshire Council Public Spaces Protection
Title: Order (Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking in Public
Places) 2022

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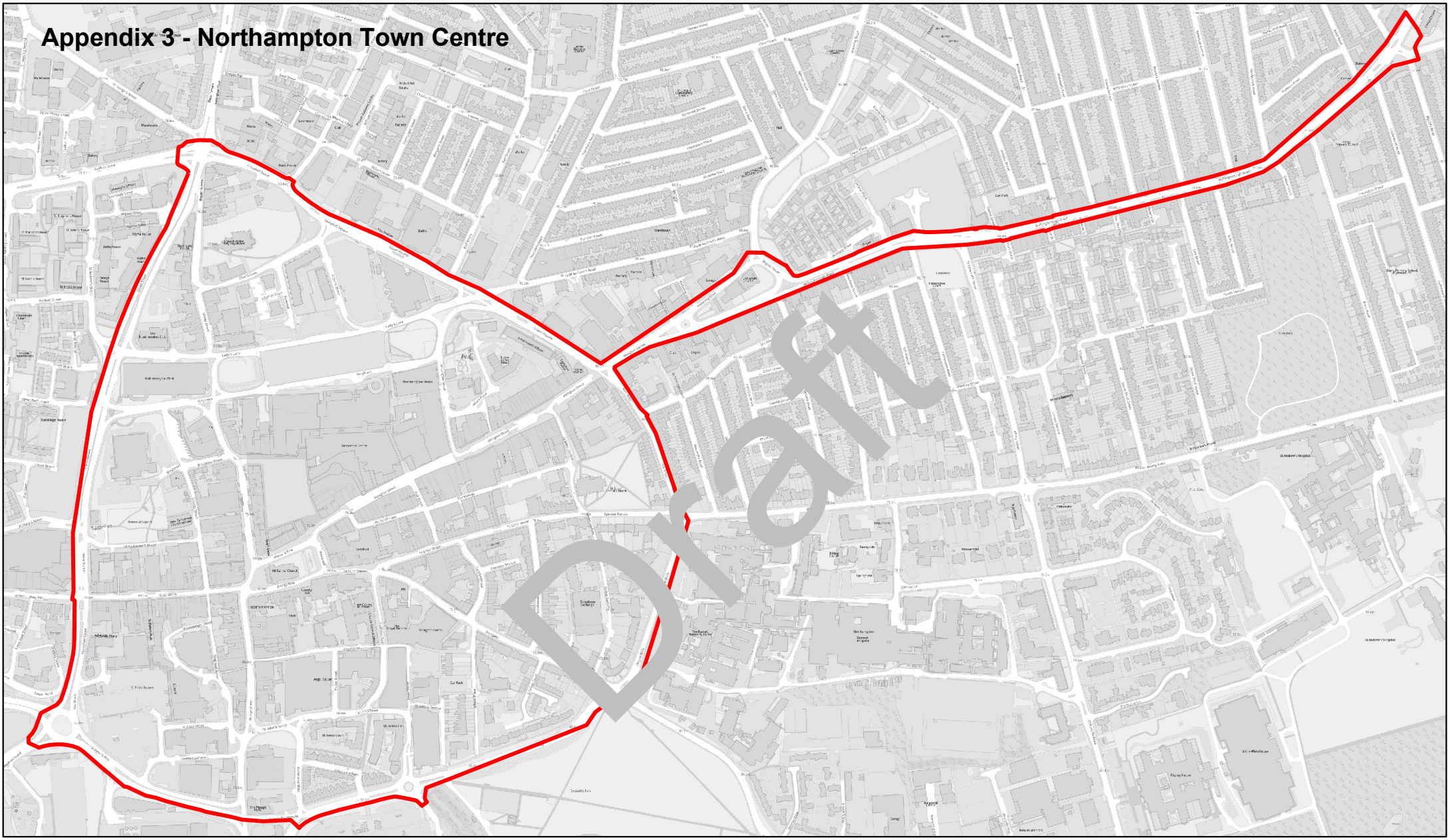
Scale: 1:240,587 @A4
Page 448

Appendix 2 - Daventry Country Park



 Dogs to be kept on leads within marked areas

Appendix 3 - Northampton Town Centre

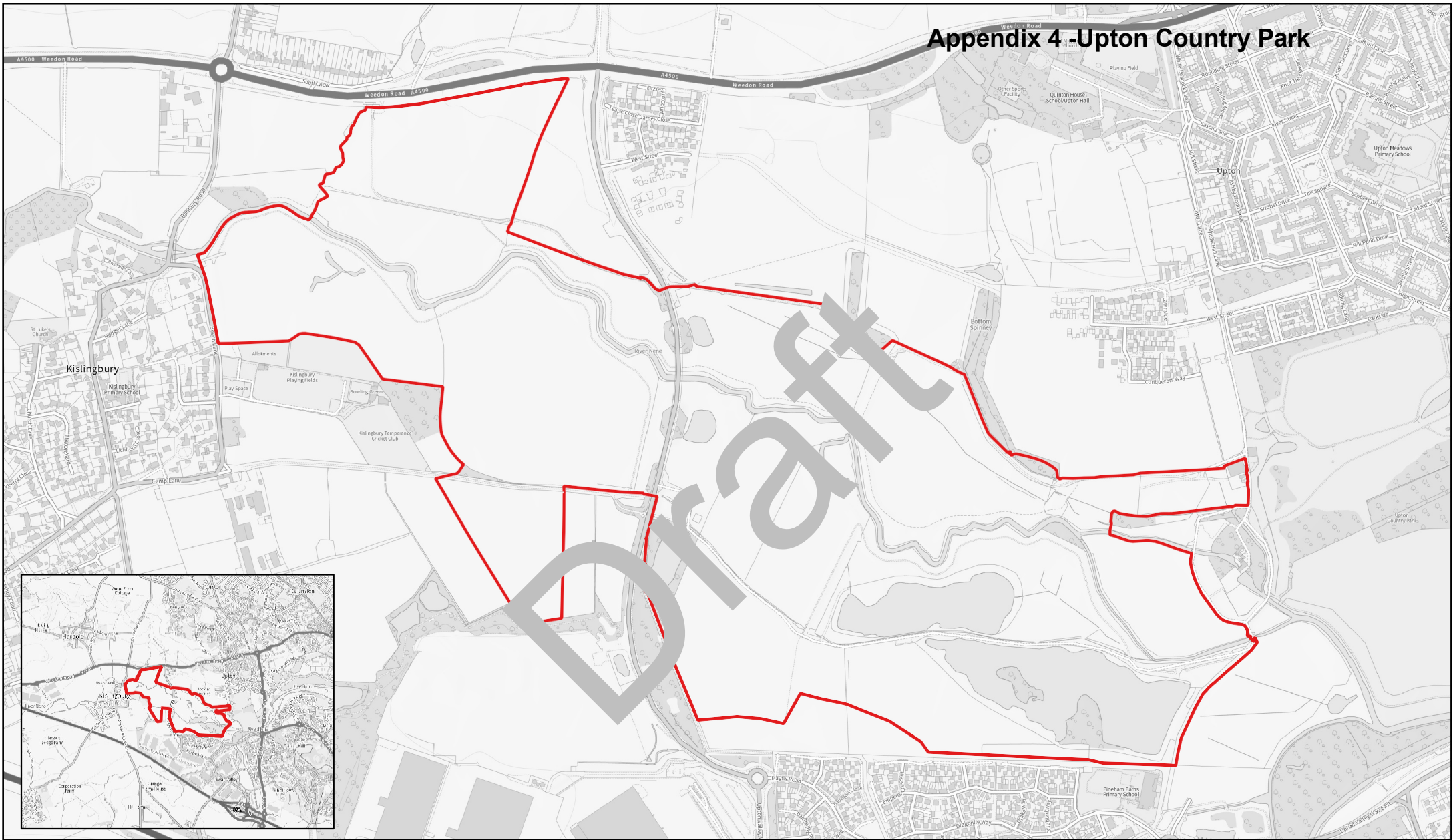


**Title: West Northamptonshire Council Public Spaces Protection Order
(Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking in Public Places) 2022**

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Appendix 4 -Upton Country Park

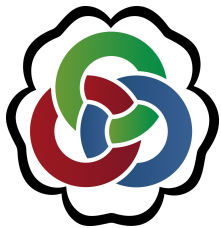
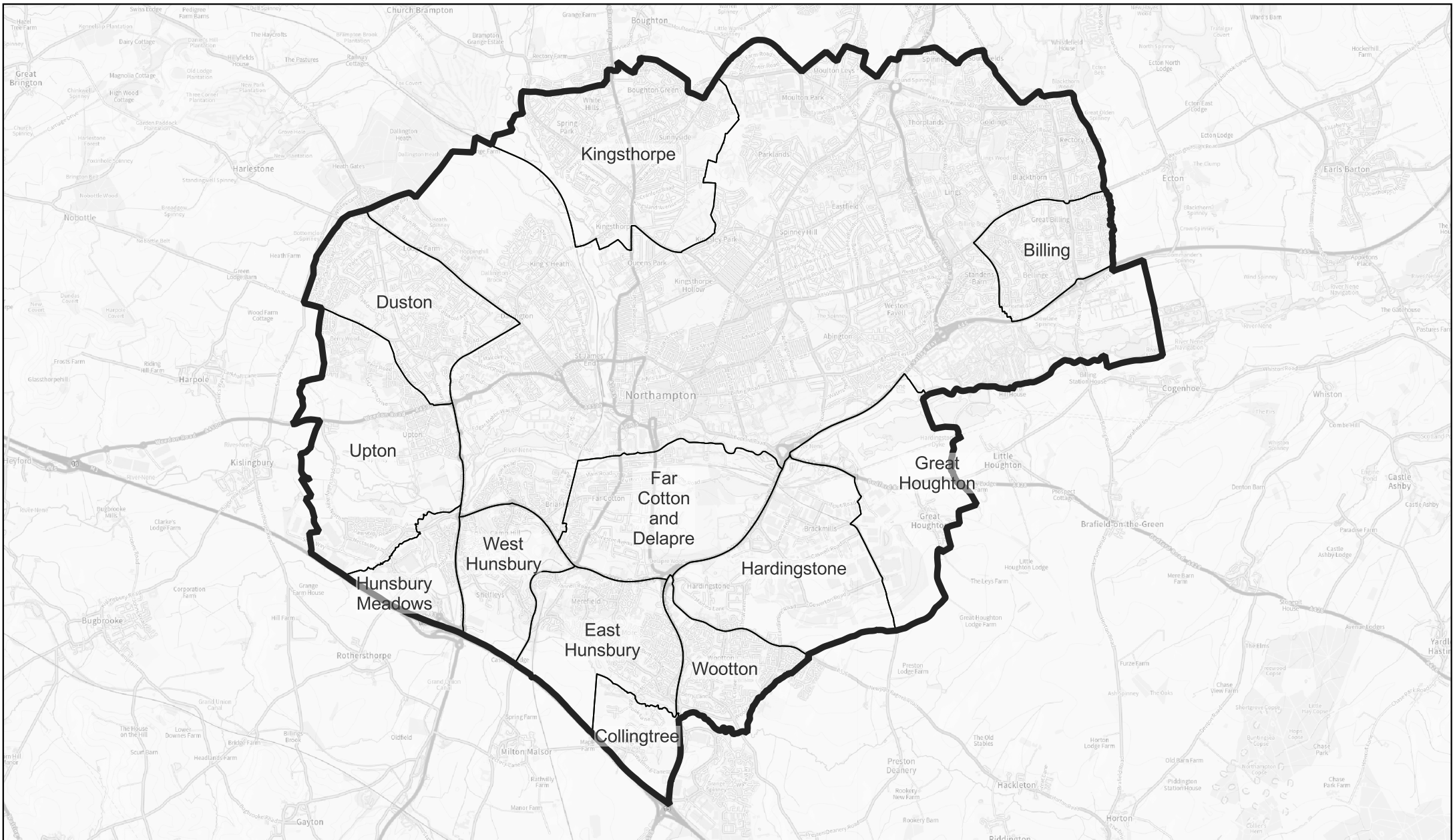


**Title: West Northamptonshire Council Public Spaces Protection Order
(Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking in Public Places) 2022**

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Title: NORTHAMPTON AREA TO BE COVERED BY THE PROPOSED VARIED ORDER.

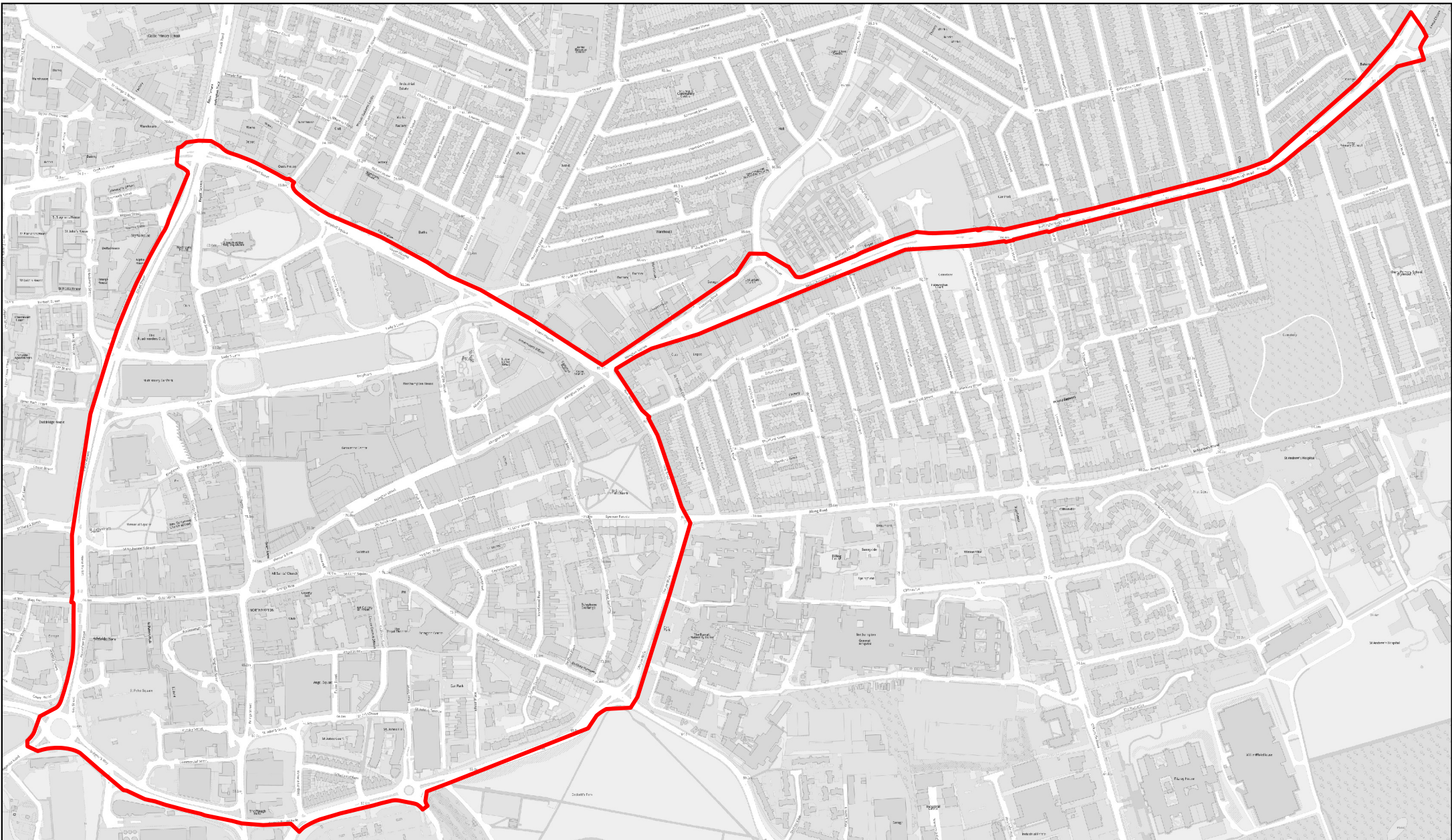
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Title: NORTHAMPTON TOWN CENTRE - PROPOSED DOGS ON LEADS AREA TO BE COVERED BY VARIED PSPO.

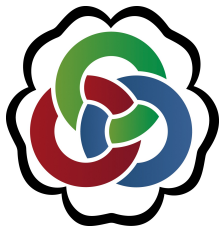
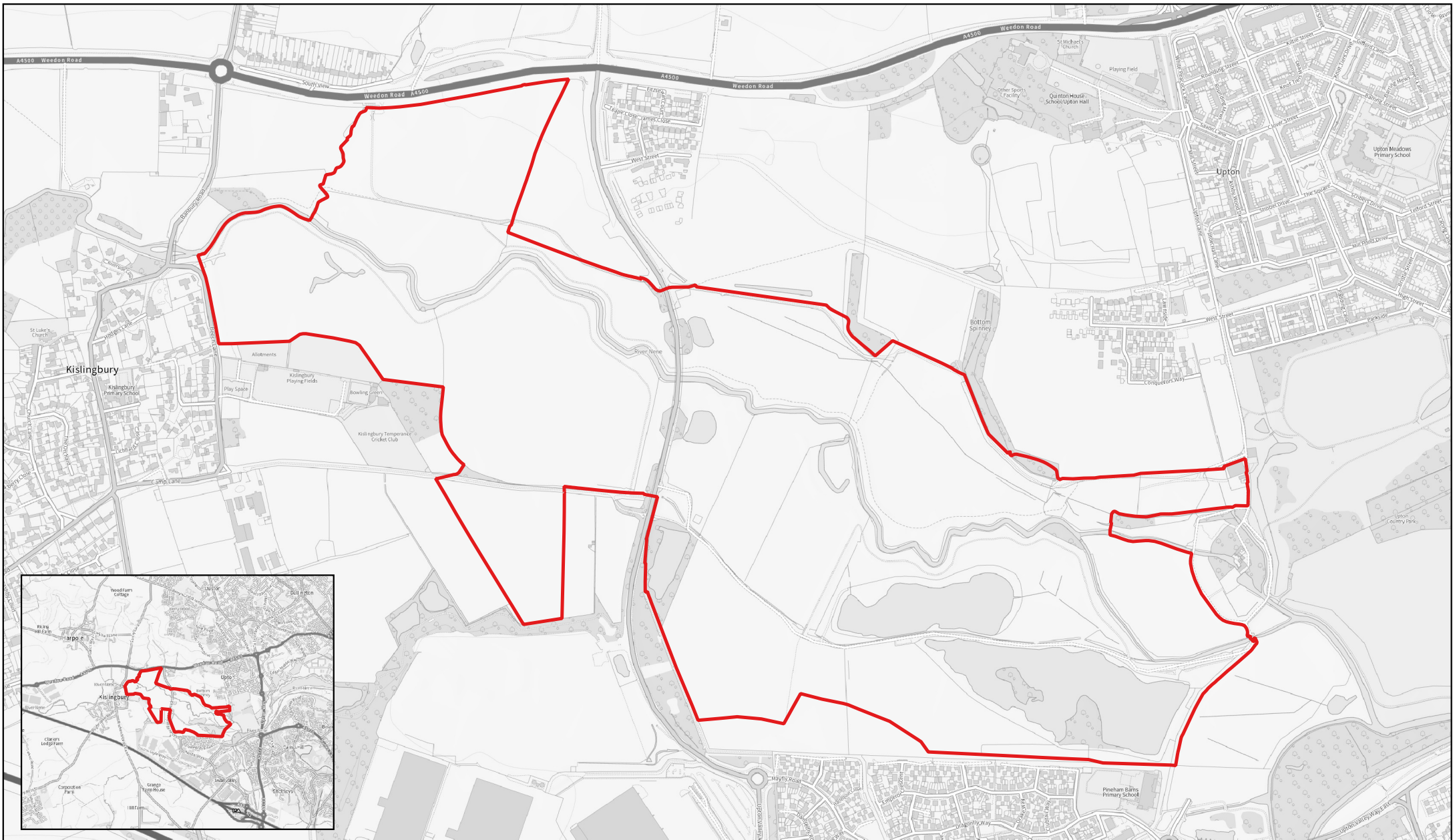
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Date: 01-03-2023

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Title: UPTON COUNTRY PARK – PROPOSED DOGS ON LEADS AREA TO BE COVERED BY VARIED PSPO.

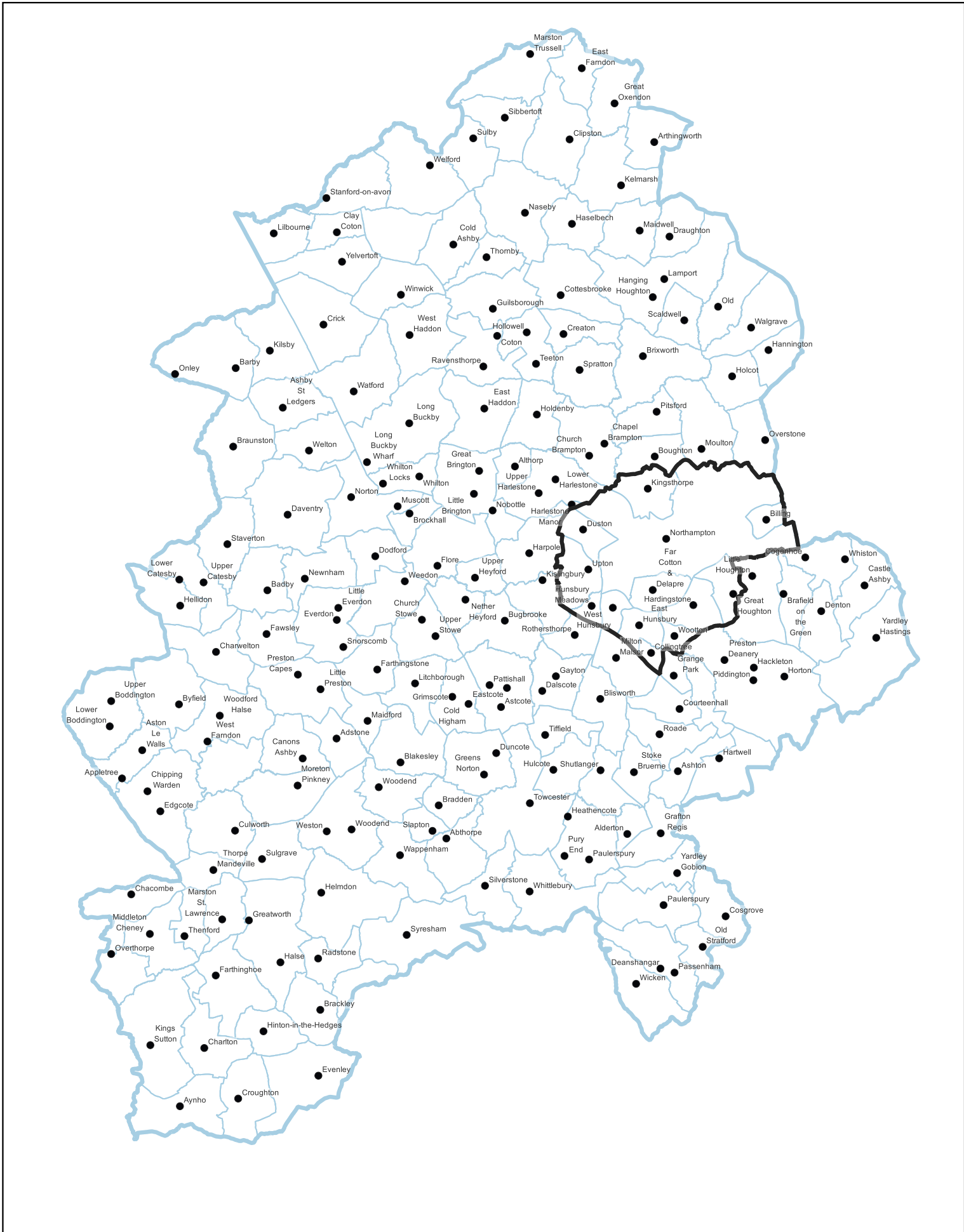
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Date: 01-03-2023

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Title: WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL ADMINISTRATIVE AREA PROPOSED TO BE COVERED BY THE VARIED PSPO - NORTHAMPTON AREA SHOWN WITHIN BLACK BORDER.

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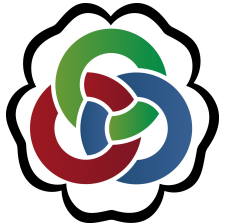
Date: 01-03-2023

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Page 459

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Title: SOUTH NORTHANTS AREA SHOWING VILLAGES AND TOWNS COVERED BY THE EXISTING ORDER.

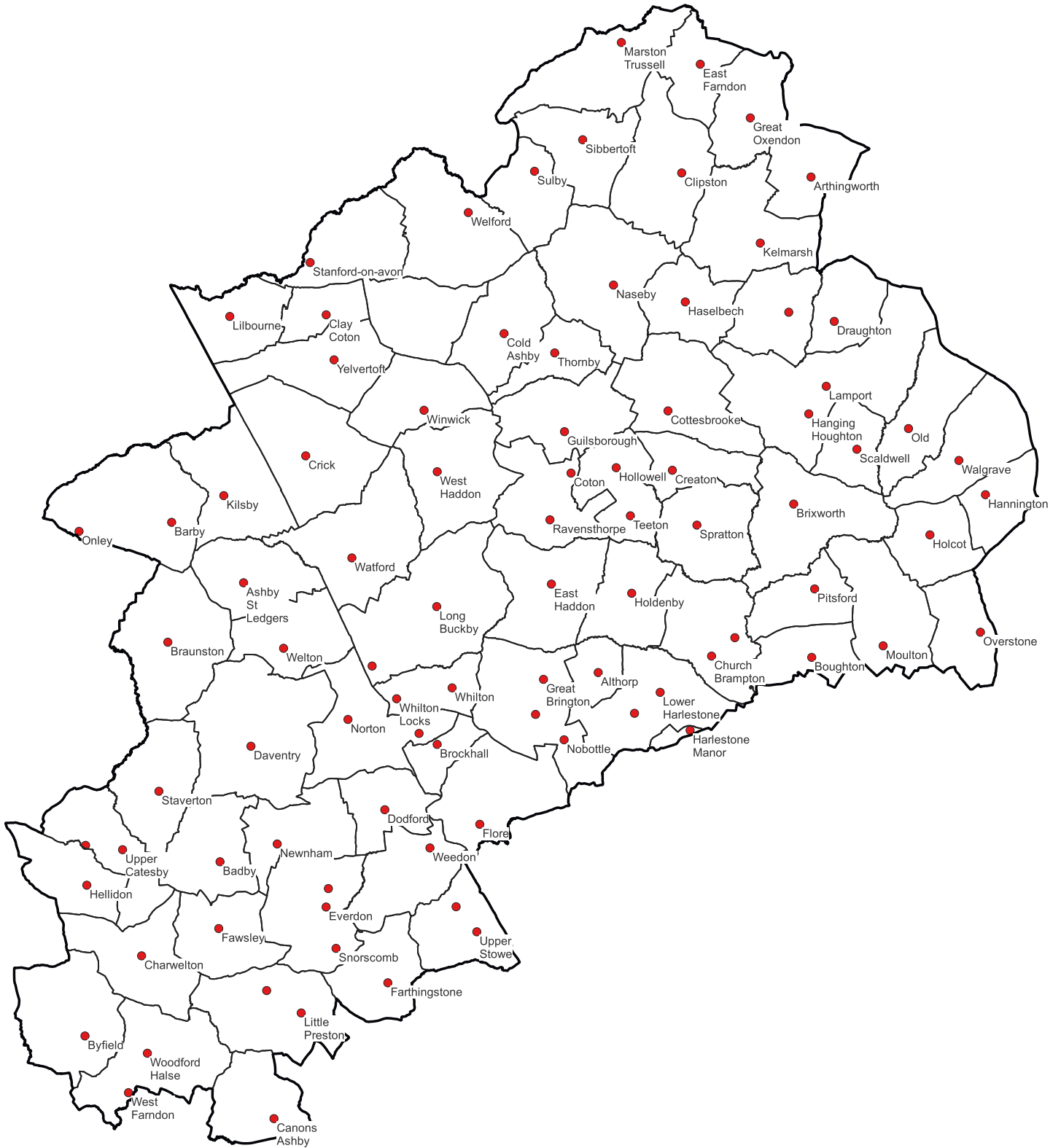
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Date: 01-03-2023

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Title: DAVENTRY AREA SHOWING VILLAGES AND TOWNS COVERED BY THE EXISTING ORDER.

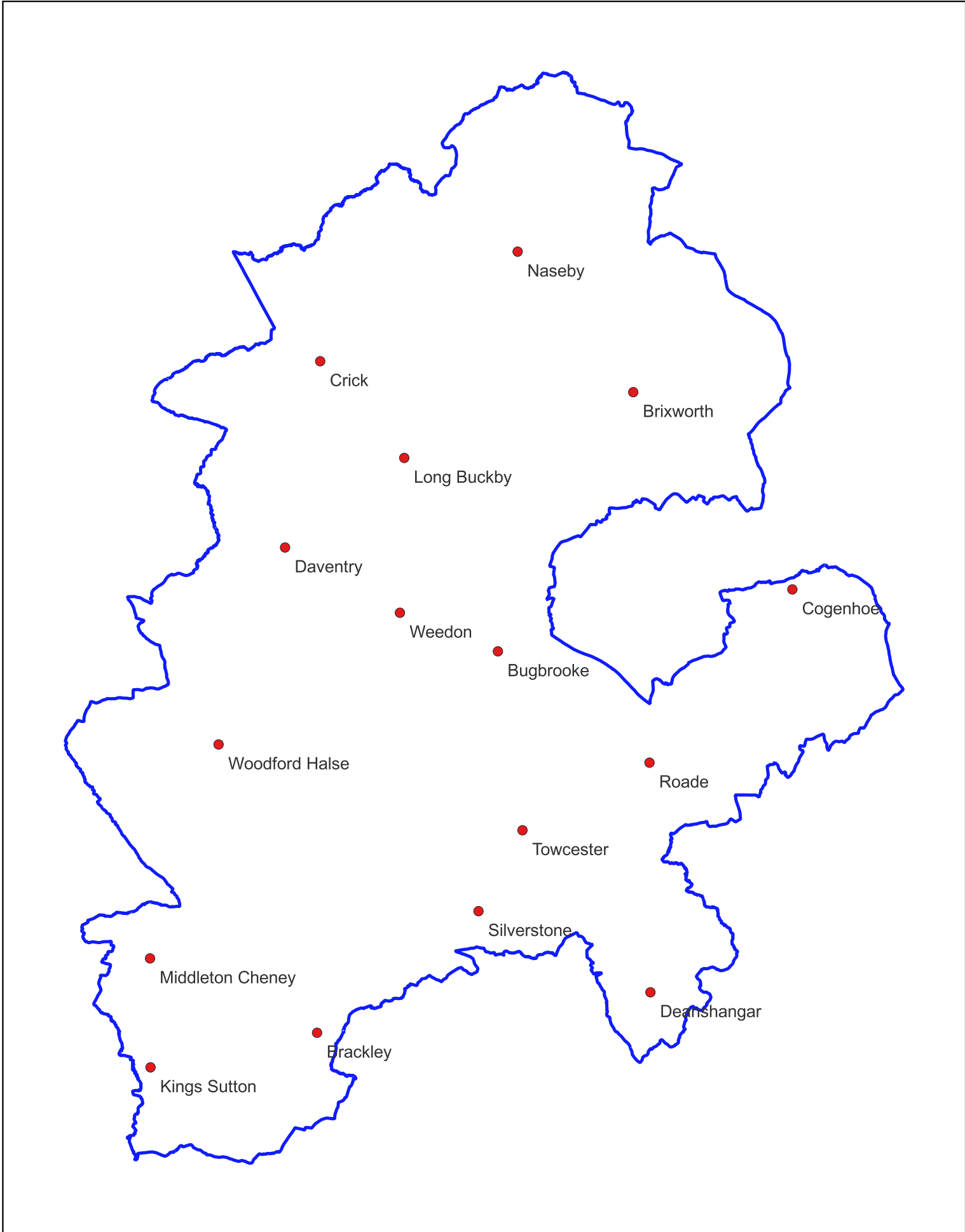
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Date: 01-03-2023

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Page 463
Drawn: Simon Hume

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Title: **AREA COVERED BY EXISTING ORDER INCLUDES DAVENTRY AND SOUTH NORTHANTS.**

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Date: 28-02-2023

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Page 465
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Professional **Dog Walkers'** Guidelines

Endorsed by:





Professional **Dog Walkers'** Guidelines

This document has been prepared in the best interests of animal welfare and to assist those involved with professional dog walking. It is based on good practice and can help professional dog walkers meet the requirements of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 which covers England and Wales. It is essential that professional dog walkers are aware of this Act and are compliant with other relevant pieces of legislation as well as local council laws and bylaws relating to dog walking. In some areas a licence will be required.

These guidelines are intended as general information only about potentially relevant law, welfare and behaviour, and other issues. Nothing in this guide is intended to constitute legal advice. If you want to know how to meet your legal requirements as a professional dog walker, you should consult a qualified legal professional for specific advice in your circumstances. No liability rests with contributing bodies for any circumstances arising out of the application of the information contained within the document.

The groups consulted included:

Dogs Trust

Pet Industry Federation

RSPCA

Tailster

Introduction

Professional dog walking is becoming an increasingly common service due to the changing habits of the general population and a heightened awareness of animal welfare. This document aims to provide guidelines that professional dog walkers should conform to, ensuring standards of welfare for the dog, respect for the environment and peace of mind for the owner.

The Animal Welfare Act sets the minimum standard required in relation to the welfare of animals.

Animal Welfare Act 2006

As domesticated animals, dogs are protected under the Act. The law says an owner of a dog is always regarded as responsible for him/her. A dog walker is also identified as being responsible for it - whilst he/she is in charge of the dog. So, a dog walker has legal responsibilities and can also be held criminally liable under the Act.



There is a range of current relevant regulations and legislation which a professional dog walker may find relevant:

- **Animal Welfare Act 2006²**
- **Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014**
- **The Control of Dogs Order 1992**
- **Countryside & Right of Way Act 2000**
- **Dangerous Dogs Act 1991**
- **The Dangerous Dogs (Amendment) Act 1997**
- **Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996**
- **Dog Fouling – Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005**
- **Dogs Protection of Livestock Act 1953**
- **Environmental Protection Act 1990**
- **Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981**
- **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**
- **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**
- **The Microchipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2015**
- **The Microchipping of Dogs (Wales) Regulations 2015**
- **Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992**
- **Regulation on the protection of animals during transport (EC) 1/2005**
- **Welfare of Animals (Transport)(England) Order 2006**
- **Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992**

² This act and the subsequent information in this document applies to England and Wales only. There is separate, but similar legislation that covers Scotland (the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006) and also Northern Ireland (the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011). It is strongly recommended that professional dog walkers are aware and fully understand the legislation within their own jurisdiction.

These guidelines have been divided into three sections to cover all aspects of dog walking and should provide a clear set of procedures, which all professional dog walkers should follow:

Dog welfare
and behaviour 6

Impact on the
environment
and others 12

Professional
conduct 14

Welfare and behaviour
- ensuring **dogs** are
protected





Understanding a dog's individual needs

The dog's physical health and mental wellbeing should be the priority at all times.

Dogs may have individual conditions that will affect their ability to go for walks, as will their age; and all dogs have their own individual personalities and characteristics which will affect how they are walked, who they can be walked with and where they can be walked. This is of particular importance if dogs do not interact well with other dogs, people or other species. Additionally some dogs will become afraid or worried in some situations e.g. with loud noises.

- The dog walker should meet the dog prior to taking them for a walk so that the walker can become familiar with the dog's needs and that a pre-assessment can be made to evaluate their personality and behavioural characteristics.
- The individual needs of the dog should be discussed and agreed with the owner, and the instructions followed, unless they would cause unnecessary suffering to the dog. This discussion should include the timing, knowledge of the dog's training and the cues used and the duration of the walk.
- The dog walker should be familiar with any medical issues for individual dogs. This should include any medication the dog is on, allergies that might be present and the dog's veterinary practice, including contact details.
- Any walks should be planned with consideration of the dog's age, health, behaviour and fitness.
- Any dog that exhibits fearful, anxious or aggressive behaviour towards other dogs or people should be walked independently and on an appropriate lead and lead length at all times. Consideration should be given to avoid walking in areas where meeting other dogs is likely. An appropriate (basket type) well-fitting and secure muzzle which allows panting, drinking and vomiting might be considered if necessary and with the owner's permission.



Transport

Transporting dogs in vehicles allows an increased variety of walks and interest for the dogs. Dogs can be distracting to the driver and, if loose in a vehicle, can cause accidents. Vehicles are also a source of infection and can result in spread of disease. The interior of vehicles can heat up very quickly, particularly on warm days, and become dangerous to dogs.

- All transport legislation must be followed (Welfare of Animals (Transport)(England) Order 2006).
- Dogs should be transported in vehicles with adequate ventilation and temperature control, with water available.
- Vehicles should be fitted with suitable caging or containment to ensure comfortable and safe transport of the dogs. Restraining with leads or chains must not be used.
- Where more than one dog is transported at the same time, the walker should ensure that the welfare of each dog is safeguarded and that no dog is at risk of injury.
- During extremes of weather consideration should be given to the distance and time travelled in a vehicle and it should be limited, e.g. where a dog is particularly susceptible to heat stroke.
- Dogs should not be left unattended in a vehicle other than for short periods whilst collecting or dropping off. This period should be the absolute minimum time and the vehicle should be locked when unattended.
- All equipment should be capable of being cleaned and be cleaned and disinfected regularly. For example, steam cleaning of upholstery. This is particularly important if there has been an outbreak of disease.



Providing exercise

The equipment used, the way in which the walker interacts with the dogs and how they are walked can have a significant impact on their welfare.

- The dog walker should not conduct any behaviour modification or offer any advice unless they are, in combination, suitably qualified, experienced and knowledgeable. The walker must obtain the owner's express permission.
- The dog walker should not use any equipment which could cause fear, anxiety or distress. For example, electric shock, prong, spray or choke collars.
- The dog walker should check all equipment is well fitting and fit for purpose at the start of each walk.
- The dog walker should not act in any way which would cause fear, anxiety or distress.
- Dog walkers should try to vary the dog's walk to increase interest and stimulation.
- Dog walkers should give full attention at all times to the dog/s under their control.
- Dogs should only be allowed off the lead if prior written permission is obtained from the owner.
- Dogs that are allowed off the lead should be able to be called back to the walker reliably and immediately. If this is not possible, then dogs should be walked on a lead. When dogs are walked on a lead, ideally they should be trained to walk calmly, on a loose lead. The lead should be held in a secure manner, and be maintained at an appropriate length for the situation.
- Bitches in season should be walked in quiet areas and on the lead and walked alone, unless with prior written consent from the owner detailing which dogs the bitch can be walked with.
- Dogs should be provided with adequate fresh water as needed.
- Feeding of treats/food should only be given with prior agreement by the owner.



Group walking

Walking dogs, particularly in groups, results in exposure to infections and disease and not every dog is suitable to be walked with others. Steps should be taken to minimise the risk of disease spreading between animals and to ensure all dogs interact amicably.

- The walker should check that all dogs are vaccinated, wormed and treated for fleas regularly, unless, certified exempt by a veterinary surgeon.
- Dog walkers should be familiar with signs of disease, infection and illness so that dogs showing signs of infectious disease, such as kennel cough, are not walked or socialised with other animals.
- Where dogs are to be walked in pairs or groups, the dog walker should assess each dog's suitability and be assured that each dog will be relaxed and happy during transportation and the walk.
- The maximum number of dogs that can be walked at any one time should not exceed the number stated in the walker's insurance policy and comply with local authority requirements regarding the number of dogs. It is recommended that no more than four dogs are walked at any one time. ALL dogs under a dog walker's care should be reliably under control at all times and transported in accordance with the guidance in this document.
- Dog walkers should ensure they have a lead for each dog.

Returning home

Every effort should be made to ensure the dog is comfortable including towelling down, if appropriate, after the walk.

- Dog walkers should report any concerns about the health, behaviour or welfare of the dog to the client.
- Dog walkers should ensure they securely lock the property when they leave, as instructed by the client.



Lone walking

As a lone worker, dog walkers should take extra precautions to ensure their personal safety. When using a vehicle, full breakdown cover should be in place and any valuables kept out of sight. When walking dogs, walkers should not enter any area where there is a perceived threat and should leave the area if a risk becomes apparent.

- There should be a daily schedule in place documenting where and when pickups, drop offs and walks will take place.
- Dog walkers should carry a charged, mobile phone with them at all times and have emergency numbers on speed dial. Various tracking / locating apps are now available and it is recommended that dog walkers make use of this new technology.

Emergencies

Unforeseen incidents may happen on walks and it is essential that dog walkers are prepared for this eventuality to maintain the welfare of all dogs in their care.

- Dog walkers should have emergency contact details of all owners accessible at all times.
- Prior written agreement should be made between the owner and dog walker over actions if a dog becomes sick or injured during a walk. This should include the authority to seek veterinary attention and the level of decision-making agreed to by the owner, if the owner is not contactable. It should also be confirmed in which veterinary practice this treatment should take place.
- Dog walkers should own a first aid kit designed for dogs and should keep this in a convenient location (ideally the transport vehicle). The dog walker should be trained in canine first aid.

Dog walking - minimising its impact on the environment, other people and animals.



Impact on the environment

Taking dogs for regular walks is essential for the mental and physical well-being of the animals by providing exercise, stimulation and interest to their daily routine. However, walking can impact on the local environment and professional dog walkers should minimise this and show care and respect for the environment whilst also meeting all legal requirements.

Dog waste left in the environment is unhygienic, a health and safety risk for humans and other animals and can cause serious damage to plant and animal communities.

- Dog walkers must pick up faeces from all dogs in their care and ensure this is appropriately sealed and disposed of in suitable dustbins following the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996.
- Dog walkers should have sufficient poo bags on them at all times for the numbers of dogs they are exercising.



Impact on people

Dog walkers should be aware that some members of the public may feel scared and intimidated by, or dislike dogs. This can particularly be the case around children or if walking groups of dogs.

- Dog walkers should avoid areas that are heavily populated with children e.g. playgrounds. In some cases these areas will be covered by local bylaws preventing access for dogs, which must be followed at all times.
- Dog walkers must follow restrictions on the number of dogs to be walked, for example, in Royal Parks.
- Members of the public should be given right of way at all times and if walking with groups of dogs the dog walker should, wherever possible, avoid bottleneck points and narrow pathways.
- Dog walkers exercising groups of dogs should avoid meeting up with other dog walkers unless they are able to control each and every dog reliably and immediately.

Impact on other animals

Dog walking will be prohibited in certain locations dependent on local bylaws. These might be at certain times of year if this relates to wildlife or tourism.

- Dogs must not be allowed to frighten, threaten or interfere with wildlife.

Dogs must be kept on leads in this environment but could be released in some emergency situations if chased by cattle as dropping the lead may help dogs and walkers to get away.

Professional
Conduct – ensuring
walkers are skilled,
knowledgeable and
competent





Complying with legislation

Professional dog walkers should have the safety, comfort, welfare and security of dogs above commercial interest at all times. Dog walkers should be professional and courteous to members of the public, set good examples of animal welfare and dog walking and comply with the relevant legislation.

As dog walkers are in charge of the dog, they could be found liable for an accident or injury occurring or being caused by the dog whilst in their care. This could result in civil and criminal proceedings by those affected.

- All professional dog walkers should have adequate third party liability insurance, and wherever possible insurance that covers the dog in the walker's custody. Whether the insurance needs to also cover emergency veterinary fees depends on the prior written agreement between the dog walker and dog owner regarding whose responsibility it is to cover veterinary fees in an emergency.
- If a dog under the care of a dog walker is involved in an incident with another dog then the dog walker needs to fully document the incident and inform the owner.

National and local council regulations vary significantly and dog walkers should contact the local council for advice prior to undertaking such activities to ensure they comply with the law.

- Dog walkers must have licences if required by local councils and/or follow local council codes of conduct if present.
- Dog walkers must only walk up to the number of dogs covered by their insurance policy and allowed by the local council authority.
- Dog walkers must keep dogs on a lead in designated areas.
- Dogs must be on a lead on public highways even if the owner has granted permission for the dog to be allowed off lead when in the care of the walker.
- Dog walkers must put dogs on a lead when asked to do so by an authorised officer – this will vary depending on local council bylaws.

It is a legal requirement to have a dog microchipped (unless it has an exemption certificate issued by a veterinary surgeon) and wear a collar and tag with the owner's name and address present, to aid identification if the dog is lost.

- All dogs walked must wear a collar and tag with the dog's owner's name and address. It is recommended this contains the walker's contact details alongside the owner's details.
- The dog walker should check that the dogs in their care are microchipped by checking relevant paperwork and that there is an exemption certificate issued by a veterinary surgeon if not.
- If a dog gets lost, dog walkers should contact the dog's owner and the dog warden immediately.
- Dog walkers should ensure dogs are never left unattended in public places.

Training of Dog Walkers

All dog walkers who exercise and handle dogs should be adequately trained to ensure the dog's welfare and their safe handling.

- Dog walkers should be suitably trained prior to undertaking dog walking. This should include up-to-date evidence based knowledge of dog behaviour and sound handling abilities.
- Training courses and dog walking certificates of competence are available and should be undertaken. It is recommended that professional dog walkers undertake regular CPD activities to ensure their knowledge is current. Accredited courses are available including the City & Guilds Level 2 Certificate of Competence in Dog Walking.
- Dog walkers should have canine first aid certificates.
- No person under 16 can be in charge of a dog.

Termination of dog walking arrangements

The owner should be given reasonable notice when a dog walking arrangement is to be terminated. It is recommended that dog walkers have a written cancellation policy and clients are made aware of this prior to booking.

- If keys were provided, appropriate arrangements should be made with the owner for them to be returned in person.
- All of the dog's belongings, such as leads and coats, should be returned.



Pet Industry Federation

Unit A, Bedford Business Centre
170 Mile Road
Bedford
MK42 9TW

info@petfederation.co.uk
Tel: 01234 273933

*For further details about each organisation,
please visit their individual websites*

www.cfsg.org.uk
www.rspca.org.uk
www.dogstrust.org.uk
www.petfederation.co.uk

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

11th October 2022

Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Engagement, and Regulatory Services: Councillor David Smith,

Report Title	New Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for the former Daventry District and former South Northants administrative areas of West Northamptonshire Council.
Report Author	Joanna Oakes, Community Projects Officer, joanna.oakes@westnorthants.gov.uk

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	16/08/2022
Chief Finance Officer (S.151)	Martin Henry	23/08/2022
Other Director/SME	Stuart Timmiss – Place and Economy	16/09/2022
Communications Lead/Head of Communications	Bethany Longhurst	16/08/2022

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Order

Appendix B – PSPO Consultation Questionnaire, Results and Comments

Appendix C – Dog related Council complaints 2018-2021 for former Daventry and South Northants Council Administration areas

Appendix D – Press release – Northamptonshire implements a no smoking policy for Country Park Play Areas

Appendix E – LGSCO Report: <https://www.lgo.org.uk/assets/attach/6252/Focus-Report-Reasonable-Adjustments-F.pdf>

Appendix F – Currently in-force former Northampton Borough Council PSPO

Appendix G – Equality Impact Assessment

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report is to provide feedback on the results of the public consultation for a proposed Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for the former administrative areas of Daventry and South Northants which make up part of the West Northamptonshire Council Unitary Authority.
- 1.2. The report also seeks Cabinet approval of the draft proposed PSPO at Appendix A and a resolution delegating the formal making of that Order, as well as the necessary compliance with the remaining statutory requirements to bring it into force, to the Executive Director for Place and Economy.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 gave powers to local authorities to introduce Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) to control a range of issues linked to anti-social behaviour, including the control of dogs. Although the vast majority of dogs cause no problems and the vast majority of owners look after their pets in a responsible manner, the control of dogs remains a significant issue to the public with dog fouling being a particular concern to many.
- 2.2 As part of the Councils commitment to the Public Health Northamptonshire plan and other statutory public health requirements, it needs to do all it can to reduce exposure to second-hand smoke, make smoking less visible to children and address the anti-social issue of smoking associated litter.
- 2.3 By introducing the proposed PSPO, WNC would introduce powers to require dog owners to comply with certain requirements across those parts of its administrative area which were formerly comprised of Daventry and South Northants Districts, in order to encourage more responsible dog ownership. In addition, there is a proposed requirement to prohibit smoking in certain public spaces - children's play areas, playgrounds, educational facilities, skateparks, tennis courts, multi-use games areas (MUGA), bowling greens, fenced or otherwise – across the same geographic areas. As well as reducing passive smoking in these areas, the prohibiting of smoking will help reduce littering of cigarettes and associated items and will help keep open spaces safer, cleaner and greener for all.
- 2.4 The nine proposed measures are:
 - Proposal 1 - Failure to clean up after your dog. Persons in control of a dog must clean up and remove its faeces from the area and place it in a bin or take it home for disposal.
 - Proposal 2 – Dog exclusion zones. Persons in control of a dog must not take it into or onto any of the following areas, fenced or otherwise: Children's play areas; Educational facilities; playgrounds; skateparks; tennis courts; multi-use games areas (MUGA); bowling greens.
 - Proposal 3 – Dogs on leads. Persons in control of a dog must ensure the dog is on a lead in cemeteries, burial sites, graveyards and/or memorial gardens, allotments, car parks to which the public have access and sports grounds, sports fields and pitches when in use for authorised sporting activity.

- Proposal 4 – Dogs on leads by direction. Persons in charge of a dog must put the dog on a lead if asked to do so by an authorised officer.
- Proposal 5 – Dogs on leads near schools. Persons in control of a dog must put their dogs on leads near school entrances or exits during school days.
- Proposal 6 – Appropriate means to pick up dog faeces. Persons in charge of a dog must carry a poop bag or other appropriate means for clearing up after their dog.
- Proposal 7 – Prohibition of smoking. All persons are prohibited from smoking tobacco, tobacco related products, smokeless tobacco products including electronic cigarettes, herbal cigarettes or any illegal substances within the following areas, whether fenced or not: children’s play areas, playgrounds, educational facilities, skateparks, tennis courts, multi-use games areas (MUGA) and bowling greens.
- Proposal 8 – Fixed Penalty Charge. The maximum fixed penalty charge for breaches of the PSPO shall be £100 as the maximum permitted by legislation.
- Proposal 9 – Maximum number of dogs. Persons in charge of multiple dogs shall not be allowed to walk any more than four at any one time.

2.5 A consultation exercise has taken place and responses were strongly in favour of the Council implementing all nine proposed measures.

2.6 Additional concern regarding dog fouling on sports pitches has been raised. Further evidence and consultation is needed to ascertain if additional measures may be required. The implementation of the PSPO should be progressed in the meantime to prevent further detriment from occurring in the locality.

2.7 This report recommends implementing a new PSPO across the former administrative areas of Daventry and South Northants Districts, which now form part of West Northamptonshire Council. It sets out the nine proposals which, if adopted, would be in place for a statutory maximum period of three years, unless reviewed and the subject of a further report to Cabinet to vary or replace.

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- a) Approve the introduction of a new Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) across the former Daventry and South Northants District administrative areas of WNC with all nine proposed measures set out at paragraph 2.4 above to be included, to remain in force for a period of three years until September 2025.
- b) Resolve that the Draft PSPO at **Appendix A** shall be made by the Council as a result.
- c) Delegate the power to formally make the PSPO and to comply with the remaining statutory requirements to bring it into force (as set out in the legal implications at paragraph 7.2 below) to the Executive Director for Place and Economy.
- d) Agree to the gathering of further evidence take place between October and December 2022 and consultation to commence in January 2023 to determine if additional measures may be required regarding dog fouling on sports pitches. The consultation to be agreed with the Portfolio Holder prior to start.

4. Reason for Recommendations (NOTE: this section is **mandatory and must be completed**)

- 4.1 Section 59 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 provides local authorities with powers to create a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) where they are satisfied that activities carried out in a public place:
- Have had, or likely to have, a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality.
 - Is, or is likely to be persistent or continuing in nature.
 - Is, or is likely to be unreasonable.
 - Justify the restrictions to be imposed.
- 4.2 Not having a PSPO currently in place makes it more difficult for the Council and Police Officers to control dog-related nuisance across the area or to enforce the prohibition of smoking in specific open spaces.
- 4.3 The proposed draft PSPO at **Appendix A** is considered to be an appropriate and proportionate response to dog control issues which are being experienced across the former administrative areas of Daventry and South Northants Districts. It is also deemed an appropriate way to attempt to reduce littering of cigarettes and associated items and to help support the Councils commitment to the Public Health Northamptonshire plan to reduce exposure to second-hand smoke and make smoking less visible to children.
- 4.4 All nine proposals have been strongly supported in the public consultation, as shown by the material included within **Appendix B**.
- 4.5 Introducing the proposed new PSPO across the area will bring consistency for residents who live, work and visit public open spaces in the former administrative areas of Daventry and South Northants Districts. It will also make consistent messaging easier.
- 4.6 It reinstates many of the proposals that were contained within Daventry District Councils Dog Control PSPO, which expired in 2021, so many residents and visitors to much of the area proposed to be covered are already familiar with the proposed requirements and prohibitions.
- 4.7 It will provide a degree of consistency across the whole of West Northamptonshire Council's administration area, as the former Northampton Borough currently has a PSPO which is due to expire on 18th September 2023, it contains similar measures to control dog related nuisance.
- 4.8 By implementing the proposed new PSPO until September 2025, it provides the opportunity to extend the PSPO across the former Northampton Borough area once it expires in September 2023. This will bring alignment and consistency to the whole of the WNC administrative area.
- 4.9 By approving the prohibition of smoking proposal, this will bring all children's play areas into alignment with the ban on smoking that is already in effect in West and North Northamptonshire Council Country Park play areas. In addition to children's play areas, by prohibiting smoking across playgrounds, educational facilities, skateparks, tennis courts, multi-use games areas (MUGA), bowling greens, fenced or otherwise, it will help make smoking less visible to children and residents can continue to use the facilities to help maintain and enjoy a healthy lifestyle without being negatively impacted by second-hand smoke and associated littering.

- 4.10 By approving and implementing this PSPO, West Northamptonshire Council will be taking steps towards achieving some of its Corporate Strategy priorities, specifically:
- **Clean and Green** – helping maintain our parks and green spaces to a high standard with accessible green space for all.
 - **Thriving Villages and Towns** - helping to raise standards in our communities, improve the towns and villages and reducing anti-social behaviour.
 - **Improved Life Chances** - The banning of smoking in specific open spaces and the Dog Control PSPO will take steps towards improving health of children, some adults and reduce pressure on the health service.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 Section 59 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (“the Act”) introduced new powers to tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB). This legislation also replaced the Dog Control Orders made under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. The Police and Local Authorities are responsible for tackling anti-social behaviour.
- 5.2 Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) can be used to address particular nuisance or problems in public places that have a “detrimental effect” on the local community.
- 5.3 PSPOs may lawfully impose legally enforceable restrictions on certain activities or conduct of any person in the area to be covered. They may also lawfully impose legally enforceable specific restrictions on persons engaged in certain activities or conduct in the same area. A PSPO is designed to ensure that residents and visitors can use and enjoy public spaces without experiencing anti-social behaviour and suffering detrimental impact.
- 5.4 Following an extensive consultation exercise in 2015, the former Daventry District Council introduced a PSPO to tackle irresponsible dog ownership. This was further extended following subsequent consultation in 2018. Its extension saw a 36% decline in dog related complaints over 3 years (**see Appendix C**). Enforcement Officers noted that the presence of the Order across the former Daventry District area provided a robust footing for them to engage with members of the public who may benefit from words of advice and encouragement in assisting them to control their pets effectively and to refrain from smoking in children’s play areas. Due to the impact of Covid and the formation of the new unitary council, WNC, this PSPO has now expired but many residents are still familiar with its requirements as responsible dog owners and responsible citizens.

The problem

- 5.5 Research suggests that there are now estimated to be 12.5m dogs in the UK and that 33% of all households in the UK own a dog, with 3.2 million households in the UK having acquired a pet since the start of the pandemic in 2020. In further research conducted by The Dogs Trust, a quarter of owners also reported their dog has developed a new problem behaviour during the pandemic lockdown. It is estimated that dogs produce more than 1,000 tonnes of waste each day, with up to 31% of dog owners admitting to not cleaning up after their pets. 13% of owners nationally now use professional dog walking services.

- 5.6 In 2021, the former Councils of Daventry District and South Northants received more than 230 complaints about dog fouling and dog control issues and, whilst the majority of dog owners are caring, responsible individuals, there are still some who are irresponsible.
- 5.7 Dog mess is the most unacceptable and offensive type of litter on our streets. Whilst WNC receives many dog fouling complaints each year, it believes that the true number of incidents is far greater than the number reported.
- 5.8 Many specific public open spaces are also affected by dog fouling such as sports grounds and pitches but again, the true extent of the issue is not known as the evidence is lacking due to organisations and clubs clearing it away and not reporting to the Council.
- 5.9 Dog fouling is not only deeply unpleasant, but it can also be dangerous. Whilst rare, contact with dog excrement or contaminated soil can cause toxocariasis – a nasty infection that can lead to dizziness, nausea, asthma and even blindness and seizures. Dog faeces can also pass Neospora and Sarcocystosis to cattle and sheep respectively if left on land which is grazed by farm animals. Neospora can cause abortions in cattle or result in weak calves and Sarcocystosis can cause neurological disease and death in sheep.
- 5.10 In Northamptonshire there are approximately 96,000 smokers, with the County seeing more than 7,000 hospital admissions, 300,000 GP appointments and more than 1,000 smoking related deaths each year. As part of The Council's commitment to the Public Health Northamptonshire plan, we need to do all we can to reduce exposure to second-hand smoke and make smoking less visible to children. Children's play areas, playgrounds, educational facilities, skateparks, tennis courts, multi-use games areas, bowling greens, fenced or otherwise, are all public places for residents to go to maintain and enjoy a healthy lifestyle which can be supported with the banning of smoking in these specific areas. This no smoking policy has already been adopted across all Country Park play areas in West and North Northamptonshire (**Appendix D**).
- 5.11 Cigarette butts are the most prevalent form of litter in England and account for 66% of all littered items. The vast majority of cigarettes butts are single-use plastic and contain hundreds of toxic chemicals once smoked. Littered cigarette filters can persist in the environment for many years and release these chemicals into air, land and water, harming plant growth and wildlife. Littering is a separate criminal offence under section 87 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, so the Council cannot lawfully prohibit littering of any kind within its area, but it can impose restrictions with a view to proactively preventing the littering of discarded cigarettes taking place in the first place within certain areas.
- 5.12 WNC is keen to take measures to combat these problems and is proposing to use a new PSPO to give its enforcement officers the power to deal with dog owners who fail to properly control their dogs in public open spaces across the former Daventry and South Northants District areas and to prohibit smoking in the specific public spaces outlined in 5.9.
- 5.13 WNC sought the views of members of the public and other interested parties by running a 6-week statutorily required consultation process from 21st February 2022, with the aim of

considering whether to make a new PSPO to encourage responsible dog ownership and to prohibit smoking in certain public open spaces across the former administrative areas of Daventry and South Northants Districts. Many of the proposals were in place in the former Daventry District until December 2021. The geographic scope of any new PSPO would cover a combined area of five hundred square miles with a population of 177,000. It is a largely rural area which includes 130 Parishes, three towns and 104 schools. The results of this consultation, the questionnaire and comments can be found at **Appendix B**.

- 5.14 Breach of any PSPO prohibition or failure to comply with a requirement is a criminal offence under the Act, punishable upon conviction in the Magistrates' Court by a maximum £1,000 fine. However, Council officers and other authorised persons and Police officers can issue a person with a fixed penalty notice (FPN) of no more than £100 for a breach as an alternative to being prosecuted. It is proposed that there is no reduction of the fine for early payment.
- 5.15 The proposal is for the Order to take effect for the maximum period of 3 years until September 2025. A PSPO currently covering the former Northampton Borough Council administrative area currently remains in force and is due to expire on 18th September 2023. It currently contains some dog control measures and can be viewed at **Appendix F**. When that Order expires in September 2023, the intention would be to review any PSPO made as a result of this report and explore extending it to cover the entire WNC area, subject to another public statutory consultation process, to be commenced in Spring 2023.
- 5.16 The original proposal was to make an Order to remain in force for a period of only 1 year. However, upon consideration of the consultation responses and the risk of reoccurrence of the conduct and activities proposed to be restricted and prohibited by the Order after one year, the proposal is now to make an Order for the statutory maximum term of 3 years. This change to the duration of the proposed Order has been taken after seeking legal advice and takes into account the strong public support received from the consultation exercise and the length of time taken to collate and analyse the results due to the high number of responses and comments received. It also provides more efficient use of Council resource.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 *The Committee could choose not to approve a new PSPO covering the proposed area and designed to encourage more responsible dog ownership, as well as furthering the requirements of the Public Health Northamptonshire Plan.*

This is not recommended because of the potentially serious impact which a small number of irresponsible or inconsiderate dog owners and smokers could have on the wider community. Education and encouragement regarding responsible dog ownership and control would be made more difficult. Messaging of the requirements across different parts of the West Northamptonshire authority would also be more difficult to achieve. Over time, there is a concern that levels of anti-social behaviour regarding dog control and ownership would increase. The consultation exercise has demonstrated public support for the introduction of a PSPO in the proposed terms.

- 6.2 *Wait until the former Northampton Borough PSPO is due for renewal or extension in September 2023.*

This is not recommended. Implementation of a PSPO is a lengthy process and will leave authorised Council officers and Police officers in the former Daventry and South Northants District areas without any means to try and encourage responsible dog ownership. It is anticipated that there would be a greater risk of more people experiencing a greater detrimental impact on the wider community of those who live, work or visit the areas where the PSPO would be enforced.

6.3 *Approve the making of the proposed draft PSPO at Appendix A to cover the former Daventry and South Northants Districts administrative area until 18th September 2023 only.*

This is not recommended. As set out above at paragraph 6.2, implementation of a PSPO is a lengthy process. The large number of consultation responses received has taken longer to collate and analyse than anticipated. Once approved, PSPO signage needs to be printed and erected around the WNC area which covers approximately five hundred square miles, three towns and 130 parishes. The PSPO would only be in effect for a relatively short duration of time before the Council would be required to consider whether to extend the Order, which would involve undertaking another statutory consultation process again. This would be an inefficient use of resource, may damage the reputation of the Council and may not allow enough time for adequate education and enforcement before it expires. This may lead to an increased detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality.

6.4 *Approve the making of the proposed draft PSPO at Appendix A to cover the former Daventry and South Northants Districts administrative area until September 2025.*

For the reasons outlined in paragraph 4 above, **this is the preferred recommendation.**

6.5 *Delegate authority to make the PSPO approved at either paragraph 6.3 or 6.4 above and to carry out the remaining necessary statutory processes to bring it into force, outlined at paragraph 7 below, on behalf of the Council, to the Executive Director for Place and Economy.*

This is recommended. Cabinet cannot in practice carry out the remaining necessary statutory processes set out in the legal implication comments below, which are required to be completed in order for any PSPO to be formally made and lawfully brought into force. These tasks will have to be completed by Council officers and so a formal delegation to do so is required once Cabinet approves the draft Order at **Appendix A.**

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

7.1.1 The consultation has been undertaken using existing resource and existing budgets.

7.1.2 Signage for the resulting PSPO will need to be printed and installed at each of the sites across the Parish and Town Councils. The cost will be covered from existing budgets.

7.1.3 Due to the formation of the new Unitary Authority of West Northamptonshire any existing signage will need to be replaced as it is old, not fit for purpose and no longer valid. This will take time due to the large geographical area.

- 7.1.4 The placing of signage will be undertaken by existing officers who work out in the community. Some signage may be supplied directly to schools, Town and Parish Councils for them to site.
- 7.1.5 It is proposed that the signage scheme will be supplemented by notices and public information to enhance public understanding of the requirements of the PSPO. This will be undertaken by WNC Communications Team and will use existing resource.
- 7.1.6 An indicative print cost for signage of £6,336 has been identified for the scheme; however, this is prior to tender for supply and subject to the PSPO measures decided upon.
- 7.1.7 Enforcement of the new PSPO will be undertaken within existing resources and budget. Kingdom LA Support, an Environmental Enforcement Contractor will also be used to support enforcement and help provide a visible presence across the former South Northants and Daventry District area. Kingdom is already working in the former Northampton Borough area; their contract is due to expire in January 2023.
- 7.1.8 Targeted, intelligence-led enforcement activity will continue to be carried out by Council officers and the Police where possible. Officers already deal with a wide range of environmental enforcement issues and are specifically trained in carrying out enforcement activities in a sensitive and proportionate manner.

7.2 Legal

- 7.2.1 The making of a PSPO is power available to the council under statute. In making an order, the local authority must be satisfied that what has been happening in the relevant area has had or will have a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality and that it has been persistent or is likely to continue. The provisions within the Order must then address that specific activity and take into account the matters required by statute and as set out in this report. Consultation and Publication is required before an Order can be made and the Order can be subject to appeal. There are therefore a number of risks associated with the making of a PSPO which Members should be aware of. Those risks are set out below alongside the mitigations that have been put in place to minimise those risks.

7.3 Risk

- 7.3.1 *Risk 1 – Appeal against the making of a PSPO.*

Risk mitigation - Is by ensuring that the Order is legally robust by consultation and is compliant with the legal requirements.

- 7.3.2 *Risk 2 – The PSPO and its measures cannot be enforced adequately.*

Risk mitigation – Ensuring that the PSPO is robust and its implementation is subject to a plan of execution, which will include the installation of signage, education and sufficient publicity of the Order, clear instruction to officers responsible for its enforcement and a proportionate response as those affected by the introduction of the PSPO become aware of its requirements.

7.3.3 *Risk 3 - Inadequately delivered public awareness and promotion campaign of the PSPO's implementation fails to raise public awareness.*

Risk mitigation – The Council will deliver a comprehensive promotion campaign once the Order is made and following its implementation and will ensure the publicity and notification of the Draft Order through August 2022 prior to any decision to make the Order.

7.3.4 *Risk 4 - Reputational damage to WNC if the PSPO is not introduced.*

Risk mitigation – The consultation has been undertaken with those likely to be impacted by introduction of the Order. There is strong support for all of the proposed restrictions and requirements. PSPOs are intended to prevent anti-social behaviour and other unreasonable conduct from detrimentally affecting the lives of people who live in areas affected by such things, as well as those who work in and visit them. Consulting the public and organisations in the proposal area has informed WNC that a PSPO is required to restrict the conduct and activities addressed by the proposed Order or introduce specific requirements to control them.

7.4 **Consultation**

7.4.1 In accordance with statutory guidelines and required by Section 72 of the Act, the Council has conducted a public consultation. The consultation ran for 6 weeks from 21st February 2022 to midnight, 4th April 2022. The results of the consultation have been crucial in developing the draft PSPO set out at **Appendix A**. The consultation results and comments are provided in **Appendix B**.

7.4.2 The consultation was carried out online through the West Northamptonshire Council Consultation Hub. It was supported by a West Northamptonshire Council communications campaign to raise awareness and encourage participation.

7.4.3 More than one hundred businesses were notified in the proposal area including vets, dog trainers, behaviour experts, groomers, WNC animal licensees – dog boarders, kennels, breeders and pet shops.

7.4.4 All Parish Councils and Town Councils in the proposal area were notified and asked to share with residents, clubs, organisations and groups in their area.

7.4.5 Over twenty different animal welfare and animal assistance charities and organisations were notified. These included The Kennel Club, The Dogs Trust, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, Guide Dogs for the Blind, Assistance Dogs UK, Autism Dogs, Canine Partners, Dog Aid - Assistance in Disability, Dogs for Good, Medical Detection Dogs, Support Dogs, The Seeing Dogs Alliance, RSPCA, Association of Professional Dog Walkers and Sitters, National Association of Pet Sitters and Dog Walkers (NARPS UK), Canine and Feline Sector Group.

- 7.4.6 All primary and secondary schools in the former administrative areas of Daventry District and South Northants were notified and asked to share details of the consultation with parents and carers.
- 7.4.7 Libraries across West Northamptonshire were asked to support and promote the consultation and accessing of it for residents.
- 7.4.8 Notification of the consultation was sent to those on the WNC Consultation Register and the WNC Resident's Panel.
- 7.4.9 Statutory partners were notified including Northamptonshire Police Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner along with other interested groups including Northamptonshire Football Association, Ramblers Association, Keep Britain Tidy, The Canal and Rivers Trust, National Trust, Northamptonshire Police Dog Legislation Officer, Community Safety partners. WNC staff including the Chief Executive, Senior Leadership Team, Assistant Directors, Environmental Health and Environmental Crime Officers, Neighbourhood Wardens, Dog Wardens, Rangers, Regulatory Services Lead Officers and the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Engagement and Regulatory Services. All were given the opportunity to comment on the consultation.
- 7.4.10 Results of this consultation have shown strong support for all nine proposals which were proposed for inclusion within a new PSPO. The full report, including the consultation questionnaire, can be found at **Appendix B**.
- 7.4.11 The Council received 1,275 responses to the consultation. 3% of all those that responded were organisations, Charities, Parish/Town Councils and businesses. 97% were individuals.
- 7.4.12 Consultees were asked to comment on nine specific proposals:

Proposal 1 - Failure to clean up after your dog. 74% of consultees responded to this proposal. 93% of responses strongly agreed or agreed that persons in control of a dog must clean up and remove its faeces from the area and place it in a bin or take it home for disposal. 58% stated that dog fouling was a very big or fairly big concern in their area. Of those that stated it was a very big or fairly big concern, 89 different villages and towns across the former administrative areas of Daventry and South Northants were identified and over 180 locations given. Dog fouling was the main concern (68%) with an additional 11% citing dumped dog poo bags and an additional 12% citing irresponsible dog owners as the concern.

Proposal 2 – Dog exclusion zones. Persons in control of a dog must not take it into or onto any of the following areas, fenced or otherwise: Children's play areas; Educational facilities; playgrounds; skateparks; tennis courts; multi-use games areas (MUGA); bowling greens. 889 people (70%) responded to this question, of those, 71% strongly agreed or agreed with this proposal with the worst affected areas being Children's play areas 38%, playgrounds 25% and multi-use game areas (MUGA) 19%, educational facilities 10%. However, these are also the most common facilities found within most villages and towns, skate parks were cited in 4% of cases, tennis courts in 2% and bowling greens 2%. Fouling, loose dogs and irresponsible owners were given as the most common reasons for this and accounted for 58% of responses.

Proposal 3 – Dogs on leads. 67% of people responded to this question with 83% of responses strongly agreeing or agreeing that persons in control of a dog must ensure the dog is on a lead in cemeteries, burial sites, graveyards and/or memorial gardens, allotments, car parks to which the public have access and sports grounds, sports fields and pitches when in use for authorised sporting activity. 62% of respondents stated that in their area, dogs not being under adequate control was a very big, fairly big or a small concern to them, although 33% stated this was not a concern in their area. Sports grounds (34%), car parks (18%) and all forms of burial sites (16%) accounted for 68% of responses where an issue with dogs off lead had been identified within the last 12 months with loose dogs accounting for 41% of problems faced and out of control dogs accounting for 33%.

Proposal 4 – Dogs on lead by direction 66% of people responded to this question with 80% strongly agreeing or agreeing that persons in charge of a dog must put the dog on a lead if asked to do so by an authorised officer. Although 65% of respondents have not had concerns about owners not putting dogs on leads in the past 12 months. Of the remaining 35%, those that did have concerns were relating to poor dog control issues 39%, loose dogs 21% and irresponsible owners 21%. There were an additional 181 comments about the proposal to put dogs on leads when asked, 50% of these were relating to enforcement.

Proposal 5 – Dogs on leads near schools. 65% of people responded to this question with 84% agreeing strongly or agreeing that persons in control of a dog must put their dogs on a lead near school entrances or exits during school days. Dogs not being kept under control near a school was considered a very big concern or fairly big concern for 20% of those that commented on this question. Of those residents that had concerns, loose dogs accounted for 30%, out of control dogs 18% and irresponsible owners accounting for 21%.

Proposal 6 – Appropriate means to pick up dog faeces. 65% of people responded to this proposal, of those that did respond, 95% strongly agreed or agreed that persons in charge of a dog must carry a poop bag or other appropriate means for clearing up after their dog. 67% of responses suggested that it was a very big concern or a fairly big concern. In excess of 40 different villages and towns across the former administrative areas of Daventry District and South Northants were identified as places where residents had a concern about dog owners not having the appropriate means to pick up dog faeces in the last 12 months.

Proposal 7 – Prohibition of smoking. 64% of people and organisations responded to this proposal, of those that did, 78% strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal to prohibit all persons from smoking tobacco, tobacco related products, smokeless tobacco products including electronic cigarettes, herbal cigarettes or any illegal substances within the following areas, whether fenced or not: children's play areas, playgrounds, educational facilities, skateparks, tennis courts, multi-use games areas (MUGA) and bowling greens. Smoking in these areas was considered a very big concern or fairly big concern or small concern for 57% of respondents with the remaining responders stating that they did not know or that it was not a concern for them. In the last 12 months, 32% of people stated that they had had concerns about smoking in a play area, 13% in an educational facility, 22% in a playground, 13% in a MUGA, 11% in a skatepark, 5% in a tennis court and 4% in a bowling green. Of those respondents 15% that stated that they had concerns, 185 comments were received, of those, 26% were concerns relating to smoking around children in play areas and schools, 6% of comments were concerns relating to second-hand smoke, 7% to illegal substances, 10% to litter and 8% related to teenagers smoking.

Proposal 8 – Fixed Penalty Charge. This proposal received a 63% response rate. The proposal states that the maximum fixed penalty charge for breaches of the PSPO permitted by The Act is £100. 70% strongly agreed or agreed with this proposal. 30% of people and organisations made 266 additional comments relating to the fixed penalty charge with 38% of comments relating to enforcement, 23% stated the fine was too low and 7% stating the fine was too high.

Proposal 9 – Maximum number of dogs. 63% of those that took part in this consultation responded to this question. 57% strongly agreed or agreed that persons in charge of multiple dogs should not be allowed to walk any more than four at any one time with 20% of responses neither agreeing or disagreeing or did not know. 50% of those that were concerned about a person walking too many dogs said it was either a very big concern (11%), a fairly big concern (13%) or a small concern (26%), however, 86% of people stated that they had not had any concerns in the last 12 months where a person was walking too many dogs for them to control well. Of those that did state they had problems with a person walking too many dogs, 129 comments were received, 46% of those related to issues surrounding dog control.

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.5.1 Not considered. None received.

7.6 Climate Impact

7.6.1 The Council has made a commitment in the Corporate Plan to use resources wisely to protect the environment, where everyone can live well and safely together and be a place where everyone thrives. It aspires to be an authority that puts the environment first and encourages and supports others to do the same to help shape a cleaner, greener West Northants. Although the proposed PSPO is not lawfully capable of being created and in order to assist the Council in achieving any of its environmental goals, it is anticipated that this will be a knock-on effect should the Order be brought into force.

7.6.2 The Order needs to be maintained at all times to ensure sufficient education and enforcement can take place if necessary.

7.7 Community Impact

7.7.1 The former administrative areas of Daventry District and South Northants are largely rural with 3 towns, 130 parishes and cover an area of approximately 500 square miles. There are miles of public footpaths, bridle paths and byways which cross fields and private land. Whilst the scope of a PSPO does not extend to private land to which the public do not have access, with or without a fee, including agricultural land, it does cover the public footpaths, bridle paths and byways that may cross that land. WNC will endeavour to support this message with a targeted communications education campaign to advise and remind owners about responsible dog ownership. Some of these requirements will fall outside of the scope of the PSPO i.e. dog identification, microchipping, livestock worrying etc. All are requirements of responsible dog ownership and are covered by their own legislation.

- 7.7.2 As a result of the consultation, a list of “areas of concern” for dog fouling have been gathered across the affected area, these will be used for targeted patrol, education, appropriate signage and enforcement.
- 7.7.3 Following concerns that the requirement to put dogs on leads on sports grounds, fields and pitches when in use for authorised sporting activity may not reduce the amount of dog fouling, it is intended that an additional consultation and evidence gathering will be undertaken to identify if there is a need for further restrictions to be brought in.
- 7.7.4 During the public consultation, the Council received a complaint advising that a telephone number was omitted, thereby making the Consultation inaccessible to them. The complainant was spoken with to capture their views, a Service telephone number was added, an internal review took place with the Equalities Officer and the Consultation and Engagement Team. The complaint has been shared with the Consultation and Engagement Service to make sure that their procedures are robust if future errors occur. The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Service (LGSCO) also released a focus report in May 2022. This pays reference to the way that Councils support customers with equal access and reasonable adjustments and this learning and best practise has been incorporated into the review of the complaint. A copy of the LGSCO report can be found at **Appendix E**.
- 7.7.5 Feedback was provided by the consultation to ensure that due regard was given to the Equality Act 2010. See **Appendix G** for the full Equality Screening Assessment for the impact of any resulting PSPO on protected groups, a summary is provided:
- **Age** - will be mitigated against by using Officer discretion or exemption from the requirements of the PSPO to pick up after their dog if affected.
 - **Disability** - nothing in the proposed PSPO shall apply to a person who is registered as a blind person on a register compiled under section 29 or the National Assistance Act 1948; or is deaf, in respect of a dog trained by Hearing Dogs for Deaf People (register charity number 293358) and upon which the person relies for assistance; or has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on the ability to carry out common day-to-day activities in respect of a dog trained by any current or future members of Assistance Dogs UK, or any other charity registered in the UK with a purpose of training assistance dogs and upon which the person relies for assistance. Has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities and in the reasonable opinion of the Council that person relies upon the assistance of the dog in connection with their disability.
 - **Pregnancy and maternity** – will be mitigated against by using officer discretion or exemption from requirements of the PSPO to pick up after the dog if affected.

7.8 Communications

- 7.8.1 During August 2022, and prior to this Cabinet meeting, sufficient publicity and notification has been provided by the WNC Communications team to promote and inform those living, working or visiting the area that could potentially be affected by the introduction of the new Order. A press release supported by social media has been issued. Town and Parish Councils have also been supplied a copy of the Draft Order. The Draft Order has also been put on the WNC website.

- 7.8.2 The implementation of the PSPO will be fully supported by another Communications campaign once the new PSPO has been approved, this will be a mixture of press release, social media, Parish and Members briefing paper, posters, information on the WNC website including the Order and frequently asked questions (FAQs). Signage will also be printed and positioned across the affected area and in specific locations such as graveyards, near schools etc.
- 7.8.3 A Communications campaign will also be run to advise and remind owners about responsible dog ownership which fall outside the scope of a PSPO. i.e. dog identification, microchipping, livestock worrying etc.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1 West Northamptonshire Council Corporate Strategy: [Our strategy | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/our-strategy)
- 8.2 Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 – Legislation.gov.uk: [Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/12)
- 8.3 Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, guidance: [Home Office Statutory Guidance for frontline Professionals](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/anti-social-behaviour-crime-and-policing-act-2014-guidance)
- 8.4 Local Government Association Guidance: [Public spaces protection orders: guidance for councils \(local.gov.uk\)](https://www.local.gov.uk/public-spaces-protection-orders-guidance-for-councils)
- 8.5 Equality and Human Rights Commission - [Assistance dogs: a guide for all businesses | Equality and Human Rights Commission \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/assistance-dogs-a-guide-for-all-businesses)
- 8.6 Professional Dog Walkers' Guidelines: [dog walking guide online.pdf \(dogtrust.org.uk\)](https://www.dogtrust.org.uk/dog-walking-guide)
- 8.7 Daventry District PSPO (Expired December 2021): [Daventry District Council - Public Spaces Protection Order - Enhanced Dog Control Powers \(daventrydc.gov.uk\)](https://www.daventrydc.gov.uk/public-spaces-protection-order-enhanced-dog-control-powers)
- 8.8 West Northamptonshire Council Northampton area PSPO: [PSPO - Variation March 2021 | West Northamptonshire Council - Northampton Area](https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/pspo-variation-march-2021)
- 8.9 Keep Britain Tidy Report: [20200330 KBT Litter Composition Report - FINAL.pdf \(keepbritaintidy.org\)](https://www.keeppbritaintidy.org/20200330-KBT-Litter-Composition-Report-FINAL.pdf)
- 8.10 Dog ownership statistics, Pet Food Manufacturing Association: [Pet Population 2021 | PFMA](https://www.petfoodmagazine.com/pet-population-2021)
- 8.11 Dog ownership statistics, The Dogs Trust: [How dogs helped us through the pandemic | Dogs Trust](https://www.dogs-trust.org.uk/how-dogs-helped-us-through-the-pandemic)
- 8.12 Dog problem behaviour, The Dogs Trust: [Dogs Trust Lockdown Behaviour | News | Dogs Trust](https://www.dogs-trust.org.uk/dogs-trust-lockdown-behaviour)
- 8.13 Dog waste statistics, Keep Britain Tidy: [Dog fouling & the law | Keep Britain Tidy](https://www.keeppbritaintidy.org/dog-fouling-the-law)

- 8.14 PSPO Daventry and South ELT Report September 2021.
- 8.15 Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) Infographic for Northamptonshire: [ASH Ready Reckoner 2022 - Action on Smoking and Health](#)
- 8.16 Public Health call to Action for Tobacco: <https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/health/Pages/smoking.aspx>

Appeal for information after sheep dies following livestock worrying incident

Rural crime officers are reminding dog owners to keep their pets under control and appealing for information after an incident of livestock worrying led to the death of a pregnant sheep in Upton.

Between 4pm on Wednesday, March 1, and 4pm on Thursday, March 2, a French bulldog was seen off the lead in Upton Country Park, where it chased a group of heavily pregnant ewes.

One of the sheep later died, along with its unborn triplet lambs, with its death believed to have been due to a heart attack caused by the stress of being chased.

The dog owner is described as a white man of European appearance. Anyone who saw the incident, or who has information about the identity of the dog owner, is asked to call Northamptonshire Police on 101, regarding incident number 23000133073.

With sheep now out in the fields with their young lambs, dog owners across the county are asked to keep their pets on a lead and under control – farmers are legally allowed to shoot a dog to prevent livestock worrying.

Tips for safe and responsible dog walking around livestock:

- Keep dogs on a lead and under control when walking through fields of livestock
- Always stick to public rights of way and leave all gates as you found them
- If you live beside land where livestock is grazed, ensure you know where your dog is always, and keep your property secure so your dog cannot escape
- Cows can be curious and may follow walkers. If this happens, keep facing the animal and move calmly and slowly, don't turn your back to it or run
- Steer well clear of young animals and do not try to pet them. Cows and calves will be protective and may become aggressive
- If you feel threatened by cattle when with a dog, let go of the lead so you and the dog can get to safety separately
- Dog owners **MUST** bag and bin their dog's poo - it carries a parasite called neospora which causes abortions in animals and the bags left on the ground can be ingested and cause slow painful deaths, or bailed into silage and eaten that way

Incidents of livestock worrying should be reported online to the police or by calling the non-emergency 101 number. If the dog is in the process of worrying livestock and cannot be stopped, please call 999.

Anyone who shoots a dog to prevent livestock worrying must notify the police within 48 hours.

For more information on the Countryside Code visit:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code

Source: [Appeal for information after sheep dies following livestock worrying incident | Northamptonshire Police \(northants.police.uk\)](#)

Posted: 5th April 2023.



Dog-related Reports for West Northamptonshire - Daventry, South and Northampton 2018-2022

Total West Northamptonshire figures

Case type reports	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total over 5 years
Stray Dogs	42	41	27	24	21	155
Dog fouling reports	305	424	366	426	434	1,955
Dog other (large number walked, rehome enquiries, general advice)	24	17	16	14	13	84
Dog Lost	63	59	62	69	87	340
Dog Found	249	210	109	112	143	823
Dog Barking	243	262	229	273	361	1,368
Dog attack – dog	29	33	42	28	24	156
Dog attack – person	6	14	8	8	10	46
Dog attack – other animal	2	4	1	0	4	11
Dog chipping	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	946	1,064	860	954	1,097	4,939



South figures

Case type reports	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total over 5 years
Stray Dogs	30	29	17	14	16	106
Dog fouling	N/R	N/R	13	107	107	227
Dog other (large number walked, rehome enquiries, general advice)	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R
Dog Lost	N/R	N/R	N/R	16	46	63
Dog Found	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	3	3
Dog Barking	80	83	81	82	102	428
Dog attack – dog	2	2	9	3	4	20
Dog attack – person	N/R	N/R	1	3	3	7
Dog attack – other animal	2	0	0	0	3	5
Dog chipping – not provided by South	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R
Total	114	114	121	225	284	858

Notes:

- N/R = Not recorded.
- New recording system introduced end of 2021 for improved data capture.
- Dog fouling figures recorded from July 2020 onwards.
- Fouling cases are those reported for clearance.



Daventry figures

Case type reports by calendar year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total over 5 years
Stray Dogs	12	12	10	10	5	49
Dog fouling	118	91	63	72	54	398
Dog other (large number walked, rehome enquiries, general advice)	19	11	10	10	11	61
Dog Lost	18	21	24	11	12	86
Dog Found	42	35	19	12	31	139
Dog Barking	48	41	26	41	36	192
Dog attack – dog	27	31	33	25	20	136
Dog attack – person	6	14	7	5	7	39
Dog attack – other animal	0	4	1	0	1	6
Dog chipping	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	291	260	193	186	177	1,107

Notes:

- PSPO in place since 2015.



Northampton figures

Case type reports by calendar year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total over 5 years
Stray Dogs	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R
Dog fouling	187*	333	290	247	273	1,330
Dog other (large number walked, rehome enquiries, general advice)	5	6	6	4	2	23
Dog Lost	45	38	38	42	29	192
Dog Found	207	175	90	100	109	681
Dog Barking	115	138	122	150	223	748
Dog attack – dog	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R
Dog attack – person	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R
Dog attack – other animal	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R
Dog chipping – Not provided by Northampton	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R
Total	559	690	546	543	636	2,974

Notes:

- N/R = Not recorded.
- * = Dog fouling stats since 4th June 2018.
- Fouling cases are those reported for clearance.



Equality Screening Assessment

The Equality Screening Assessment form must be completed to evidence what impact the proposal may have on equality groups within our community or workforce. Any proposal that results in a negative impact must have a full Equality Impact Assessment completed before approval is sought.

1: Proposal

Requirement	Detail
Title of proposal	Consultation for variation of the West Northamptonshire Council Public Spaces Protection Order (Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking In Public Places) 2022.
Type of proposal: New policy / change to policy / new service / change to service / removal of service / project / event	Variation of Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO).
What is the objective of this proposal?	Using powers contained in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, vary the PSPO to cover the entire West Northamptonshire Council area to include the former Northampton Borough geographic area and vary the PSPO to include a requirement to keep dogs on leads in Northampton town centre and also at Upton Country Park Phase 2.

Requirement	Detail
<p>Has there been any consultation on this proposal? (list all the groups/ communities, including dates)</p>	<p>Yes, this took place for a period of 4 weeks starting 16 March until 17 April 2023. The consultation was carried out through the WNC Consultation Hub. Interested persons and statutory consultees could view the details and make representation.</p> <p>The following consultees were notified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Town Councils (Northampton, Daventry, Towcester and Brackley) and Parish Councils in WNC. • All schools in the WNC area. • WNC licenced dog breeders, pet shops, home boarders, performing animals and animal boarders. • Police – Police Crime Commissioner, Chief Constable, ASB Sergeant for West Northants area, Daventry and South Northants Community Police, Rural Crime Team. • Dog welfare charities – The Kennel Club, The Dogs Trust, RSPCA. • Assistance Dog Charities - Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, Guide Dogs for the Blind, Assistance Dogs UK, Autism Dogs, Canine Partners, Dog Aid - Assistance in Disability, Dogs for Good, Canine Partners, Medical Detection Dogs, The Seeing Dogs Alliance, Support Dogs For Autism, For Epilepsy, For Disability.

Requirement	Detail
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog related businesses who operate in the Northampton area. – dog groomers, professional dog walkers, vets and dog trainers. • Trade and industry bodies - National Association of Pet Sitters and Dog Walkers (NARPS UK), Association of Professional Dog Walkers and Sitters (APDWS), Professional Dog Walkers Association (PDWA), Dog Walkers and Sitters Association (DWSA), British College of Canine Studies, Canine and Feline Sector Group. • Landowners – WNC, National Trust, Diocese of Peterborough. • Other interest groups – Ramblers Association, Keep Britain Tidy, Community Groups and Residents Associations, Northants FA. National Farmers Union. • West Northants Council Officers/contractors: Chief Executive, Executive Director Place, Economy & Environment, Assistant Director Assets (parks and open spaces), Assistant Director Highways & Waste, Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic, Assistant Director Customer Services, Community Partnerships Manager, Community Safety Officers, Senior Licensing and Litigation Solicitor, Director of Public Health, Assistant Director for Regulatory Services, waste, cleansing,

Requirement	Detail
	<p>environmental protection and environmental crime, dog warden, pest control, Park Rangers, Ideverde.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillors including Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Engagement, and Regulatory Services. • Residents and users of public open space in WNC. • Residents Associations in Northampton area. • Neighbouring authority Chief Executives. • WNC Residents' Panel members and consultation panel members.
<p>Did the consultation on this proposal highlight any positive or negative impact on protected groups? (if yes, give details)</p>	<p>None noted after undertaking the consultation that hadn't already captured and included when the current Order was made in 2022. Consideration has been given to protected groups who may be affected by dog related issues that the PSPO seeks to address and those who may be restricted by the terms of any resulting PSPO. Exemption for protected groups that may be otherwise negatively impacted is written into the current Order.</p>
<p>What processes are in place to monitor and review the impact of this proposal?</p>	<p>Consultation with specific persons and organisations (outlined above) who may be affected by the introduction of the PSPO.</p> <p>If authorised, the variation will apply until October 2025 at which point, there is a legal requirement to carry out a review.</p>

Requirement	Detail
	The consultation was hosted online and was promoted and could be accessed in all WNC libraries. It could also be provided in a number of other formats if required including paper, easy read or large print, contact by email or telephone.
Who will approve this proposal? Committee, CLT	Cabinet.

2: Equality Consideration

Consider in turn each protected group to ensure we meet our legal obligations of the Equality Act (2010).

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations:	Changes	Impact
Age Different age groups that may be affected by the proposal in different ways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include factual evidence of how some people in this group may be affected. • Consider the outcomes and processes. • Does this seek to eliminate discrimination? • Does this promote fostering good relations? <p>Some elderly people may be unsteady on their feet/lose balance when picking up after their dog leading to falls and injury.</p> <p>Dogs being placed on leads by direction, keeping dogs on leads in specific areas and having dog exclusion zones is likely to be beneficial to all but particularly the elderly and young as dogs can be</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes can be made to mitigate any negative impact. • Are there opportunities to remove possible barriers or disadvantages that a group may face. <p>Officer discretion or exemption from the requirements of the PSPO to pick up after their dog if affected.</p>	<p>Delete as appropriate.</p> <p>There can be more than one answer per protected group.</p> <p>Neutral</p> <p>Positive</p>

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include factual evidence of how some people in this group may be affected. • Consider the outcomes and processes. • Does this seek to eliminate discrimination? • Does this promote fostering good relations? 	Changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes can be made to mitigate any negative impact. • Are there opportunities to remove possible barriers or disadvantages that a group may face. 	Impact Delete as appropriate. There can be more than one answer per protected group.
	kept under the appropriate level of control reducing the chance of injury.		
Sex Is one sex affected more than another or are they affected the same?	None known.	N/A	Neutral
Disability It is likely to have an affect on a particular type of disability? why?	Yes, however, nothing in the varied PSPO shall apply to a person who is registered as a blind person on a register compiled under section 29 or the National Assistance Act 1948; or is deaf, in respect of a dog trained by Hearing Dogs for Deaf People (register charity number 293358) and upon which the person relies for assistance; or has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on the ability to carry out common day-to-day activities in respect of a dog trained by any current or future members of Assistance Dogs UK, or any other charity registered in the UK with a purpose of training assistance dogs and upon which the	Exemption from the requirements of the PSPO. This is already written into the current PSPO that the council is seeking to vary. The consultation was hosted online, however it was also made available in a number of other formats if required including paper, easy read or large print, contact by email or telephone.	Neutral

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include factual evidence of how some people in this group may be affected. • Consider the outcomes and processes. • Does this seek to eliminate discrimination? • Does this promote fostering good relations? 	Changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes can be made to mitigate any negative impact. • Are there opportunities to remove possible barriers or disadvantages that a group may face. 	Impact Delete as appropriate. There can be more than one answer per protected group.
	person relies for assistance. Has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out common day-to-day activities and in the reasonable opinion of the Council that person relies upon the assistance of the dog in connection with their disability.		
Gender Reassignment Will there be an impact on trans males and/or trans females?	None known.	N/A	Neutral
Race Are people from one ethnic group affected more than people from another ethnic group?	None known.	N/A	Neutral
Sexual Orientation Are people of one sexual orientation affected differently to people of another sexual orientation?	None known.	N/A	Neutral
Marriage & Civil Partnership	None known.	N/A	Neutral

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include factual evidence of how some people in this group may be affected. • Consider the outcomes and processes. • Does this seek to eliminate discrimination? • Does this promote fostering good relations? 	Changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes can be made to mitigate any negative impact. • Are there opportunities to remove possible barriers or disadvantages that a group may face. 	Impact <p>Delete as appropriate. There can be more than one answer per protected group.</p>
Does the proposal affect people differently depending on whether they have or do not have a religion or a belief?			
Health & Wellbeing <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Health behaviours: diet, exercise, alcohol, smoking. 2. Support: community cohesion, rural isolation. 3. Socio economic: income, education. 4. Environment: green spaces, fuel poverty, housing standards) 	<p>The proposed varied PSPO may reduce the amount of dog fouling and littering of discarded cigarettes and associated items in Northampton. This would improve public health and the surrounding environment, making it more pleasant and enjoyable.</p> <p>The varied PSPO would improve public safety from the adverse actions of uncontrolled dogs and less responsible dog owners in Northampton.</p> <p>The varied PSPO would make public open spaces in Northampton cleaner, improve mental wellbeing for all - dog owners and their dogs, non-dog owners and those who may be fearful of dogs.</p>	None required.	<p>Positive</p> <p>Positive</p> <p>Positive</p>

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations:	Changes	Impact
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include factual evidence of how some people in this group may be affected. • Consider the outcomes and processes. • Does this seek to eliminate discrimination? • Does this promote fostering good relations? <p>The varied PSPO would improve the WNC area and increase enjoyment levels for all people who live, work, visit and use the public opens spaces.</p> <p>The varied PSPO would reduce the propensity to smoke or suffer the associated effects of second-hand smoke which is also beneficial to health and household finances.</p> <p>The varied PSPO would reduce visibility of smoking to children which would benefit their health as they are less likely to emulate behaviour.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes can be made to mitigate any negative impact. • Are there opportunities to remove possible barriers or disadvantages that a group may face. 	<p>Delete as appropriate. There can be more than one answer per protected group.</p> <p>Positive</p> <p>Positive</p> <p>Positive</p>

3: Equality Impact

Question	Response
What overall impact does the proposal have on the protected groups? If a negative impact is identified in section 2, the response will be a Negative Impact.	No Impact / Positive Impact / Negative Impact
Does a Equality Impact Assessment need to be completed? (Yes, if any negative impact is found)	Yes / No

Question	Response
	If yes, this Assessment must be adjoined to the Equality Impact Assessment.
Copy attached to Committee Report?	Yes / No
Copy attached to Options Appraisal?	Yes / No

4: Ownership

Question	Response
Department	Regulatory Services
Section	Environmental Health - Environmental Improvement
Lead Officers Name	Joanna Oakes
Lead Officers Title	Community Projects Officer
Lead Officers Contact Details	Joanna.oakes@westnorthants.gov.uk 01327 302259
Lead Officers Signature	
Date completed	27.04.23

Completed forms must be sent to the Equality Office via email to equalities@westnorthants.gov.uk

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West Northamptonshire Council

West Northamptonshire Council Public Spaces Protection Order (Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking in Public Places) 2022

West Northamptonshire Council ("the Council") makes the following Public Spaces Protection Order under section 59 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 ("the Act").

The land described in this Order and outlined in blue on the plan at Appendix 1, which is described in greater detail at Appendices 2 and 3 and which includes the land described on the plan at Appendix 4, being land in the administrative area of the Council to which the public or any section of the public have access, on payment or otherwise, as right or by virtue of express or implied permission, is land to which the Act applies and will be protected by this Order.

The Order may be cited as the West Northamptonshire Council Public Spaces Protection Order (Dog Control and Prohibition of Smoking in Public Places) 2022.

Articles

1. If a dog defecates at any time on land to which this Order applies, any person who is in control of the dog at the time must remove the faeces from the land forthwith unless;
 - (i) there is a reasonable excuse for failing to do so; or
 - (ii) the owner, occupier or other person or authority having control of the land has consented (generally or specifically) to the failure to do so.
2. All persons in control of a dog on land to which this Order applies must have with them an appropriate means to pick up dog faeces deposited by that dog unless;
 - (i) there is a reasonable excuse for failing to do so; or
 - (ii) the owner, occupier or other person or authority having control of the land has consented (generally or specifically) to the failure to do so.

The obligation is complied with if, after a request from an Authorised Person, the person in control of the dog produces an appropriate means to pick up dog faeces.

3. All persons in control of a dog must not take it onto or keep it on any of the following land, irrespective of whether it is enclosed or fenced on all sides or not or whether the dog is kept on a lead;
 - (a) Children's play areas which are designated and marked for children's play,
 - (b) Any Educational Institution, when open and in use by pupils.

- (c) Skateparks,
- (d) Tennis Courts,
- (e) Multi-use games areas (MUGA) and
- (f) Bowling greens

Unless;

- (i) there is a reasonable excuse for doing so; or
- (ii) the owner, occupier or other person or authority having control of the land has consented (generally or specifically) to doing so.

4. All persons in control of a dog must ensure that it is kept on a lead at all times whilst it is on the following land, irrespective of whether it is enclosed or otherwise fenced on all sides or not;

- (a) Cemeteries,
- (b) Burial sites,
- (c) Graveyards,
- (d) Memorial gardens,
- (e) Allotments,
- (f) Car parks and other off-street parking places,
- (g) Sports grounds, fields and pitches, when in use for authorised sporting activity,
- (h) Land at Daventry Country Park as detailed on the plan at Appendix 4.
- (i) Any land within 50 metres of any entrance or exit of an Educational Institution, when open and in use by pupils.

unless

- (i) there is a reasonable excuse for failing to do so or
- (ii) the owner, occupier or other person or authority having control of the land has consented (generally or specifically) to the failure to do so.

5. All persons in control of a dog on land to which this Order applies must comply with a direction given to them by an Authorised Person to put and keep the dog on a lead unless;

- (i) there is a reasonable excuse for failing to do so or

- (ii) the owner, occupier or other person or authority having control of the land has consented (generally or specifically) to the failure to do so.

An Authorised Person may only give a direction under this Order if such restraint is reasonably necessary to prevent a nuisance or behaviour by the dog that is likely to cause annoyance or disturbance to any other person, or to a bird or another animal.

- 6. A person in charge of multiple dogs is not permitted to walk more than 4 dogs at any one time on land to which this Order applies unless
 - (i) there is a reasonable excuse for doing so; or
 - (ii) the owner, occupier or other person or authority having control of the land has consented (generally or specifically) to doing so.

- 7. All persons are prohibited from smoking tobacco, tobacco related products, smokeless tobacco products including electronic cigarettes, herbal cigarettes or any illegal substances within the boundaries of the following land and whether it is enclosed or otherwise fenced on all sides or not;
 - (a) Children's play areas which are designated and marked for children's play,
 - (b) Any land within 50 metres of any entrance or exit of an Educational Institution, when open and in use by pupils.
 - (c) Skateparks,
 - (d) Tennis Courts,
 - (e) Multi-use games areas (MUGAs) and
 - (f) Bowling greens

For the purposes of this Order;

Any person who habitually has a dog in their possession shall be taken to be in control of the dog at any time unless at that time some other person is in control of it.

Placing the faeces in a receptacle on the land, which is provided for the purpose, or for the disposal of waste, shall be sufficient removal from the land.

Being unaware of the defecation (whether by reason of not being in the vicinity or otherwise), or not having a device for or other suitable means of removing the faeces shall not be a reasonable excuse for failing to remove the faeces.

Articles 1 to 6 shall not apply to any person who;

- (a) is registered as a blind person in a register compiled under section 29 of the National Assistance Act 1948,

- (b) is deaf, in respect of a dog trained by Hearing Dogs for Deaf People (registered charity number 293358) and upon which a person relies for assistance,
- (c) has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, in respect of a dog trained by any current or future members of Assistance Dogs UK or any other charity registered in the UK with a purpose of training assistance dogs and upon which that person relies for assistance or
- (d) has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on the ability to carry out common day-to-day activities and in the reasonable opinion of the Council that person relies upon the assistance of the dog in connection with their disability.

For the avoidance of doubt with regard to Articles 1, 2, 5 and 6, “Land in the administrative area of the Council to which the public or any section of the public have access, on payment or otherwise, as right or by virtue of express or implied permission” includes, but is not limited to;

- (a) all roads, footpaths, pavements, alleyways and grass verges maintained at public expense as well as any bridleway or other public right of way over privately owned land and
- (b) all parks and open spaces, including commons, grounds and wooded areas, owned, operated, managed or maintained by the Council or any Parish, Town or Community Council.

For the avoidance of doubt with regard to Articles, 3, 4 and 7, the categories of land set out therein are those which are owned, operated, managed or maintained by the Council, any Academy, any Parish, Town or Community Council or any amateur sporting club.

Interpretation

“Authorised Person” means an employee of the Council, or any employee of a partnership agency or contractor, who is authorised in writing by it for the purposes of giving directions under the Order.

“Assistance Dog” means a dog which has been trained to assist a person with a disability.

“Disability” has the meaning prescribed in section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 or as may be defined in any subsequent amendment or re-enactment of that legislation.

“Authorised sporting activity” means an organised sporting event, including but not limited to amateur football or rugby games, taking place on land owned, operated, managed or maintained by the Council, any Parish, Town or Community Council or any amateur sporting club, with its implied or express consent.

“Educational Institution” means any school, academy or college that provides primary or secondary education as defined by section 2 of the Education Act 1996.

Enforcement

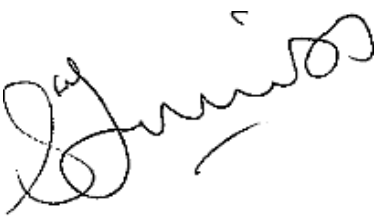
Any person who fails to comply with Articles 1 to 7 above without a reasonable excuse for doing so commits an offence under section 67 of the Act.

A person committing an offence under Section 67 of the Act may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice ("FPN") of £100.00 by a Constable or Authorised Person, in accordance with section 68 of the Act, payment of which will discharge liability to conviction for that offence.

In consulting upon the prohibitions within this Order and upon making it, the Council has had particular regard to the rights of freedom of expression and freedom of assembly as set out in Articles 10 and 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

This Order comes into force on 1st November 2022 and lasts for a period of three years from that date. This Order can be extended pursuant to section 80 of the Act.

Dated: 17th October 2022

Signed: 

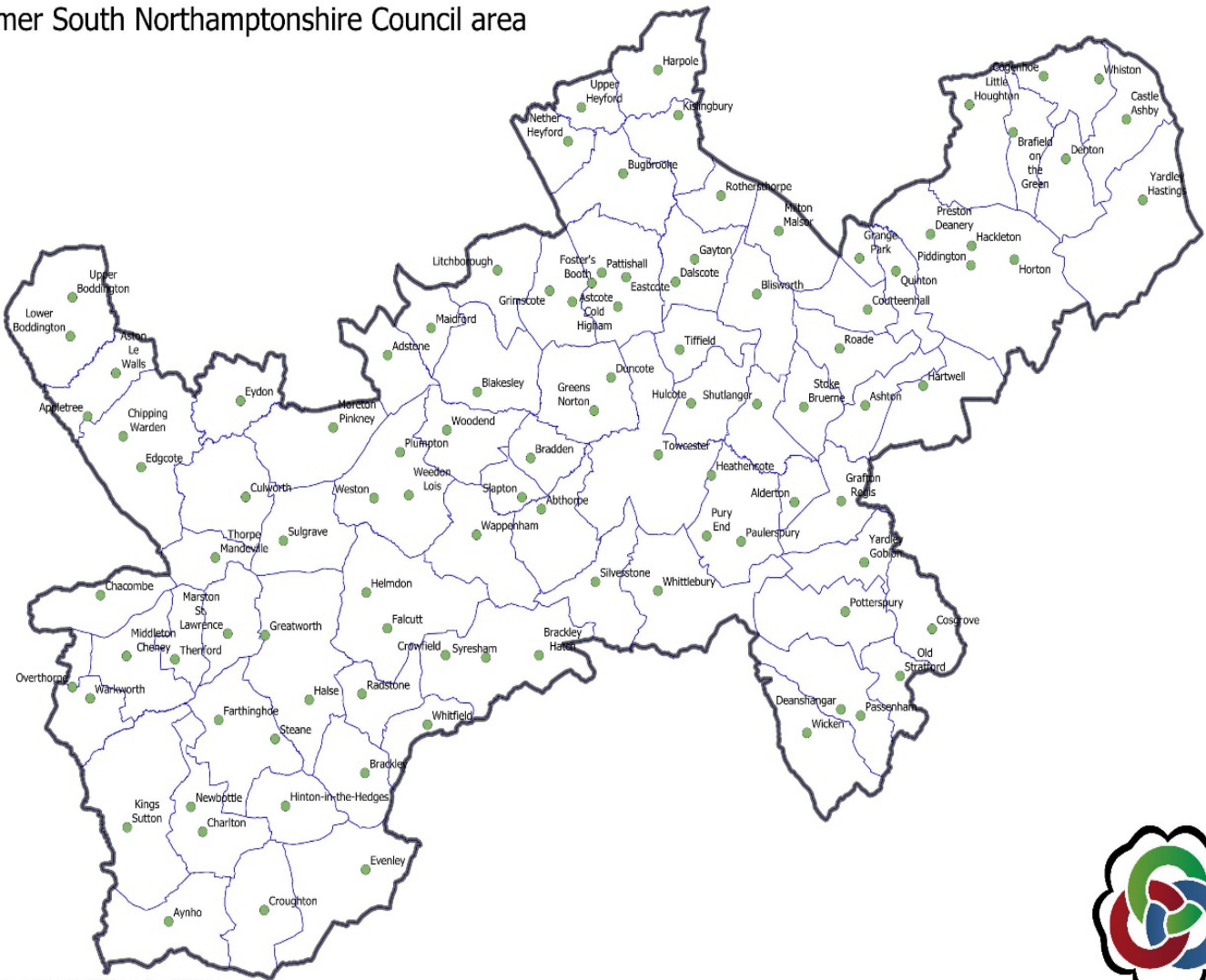
Stuart Timmiss
Executive Director of Place and Economy
For and on behalf of West Northamptonshire Council

Contact details:
West Northamptonshire Council
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NN1 1ED
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APPENDIX 1



Former South Northamptonshire Council area



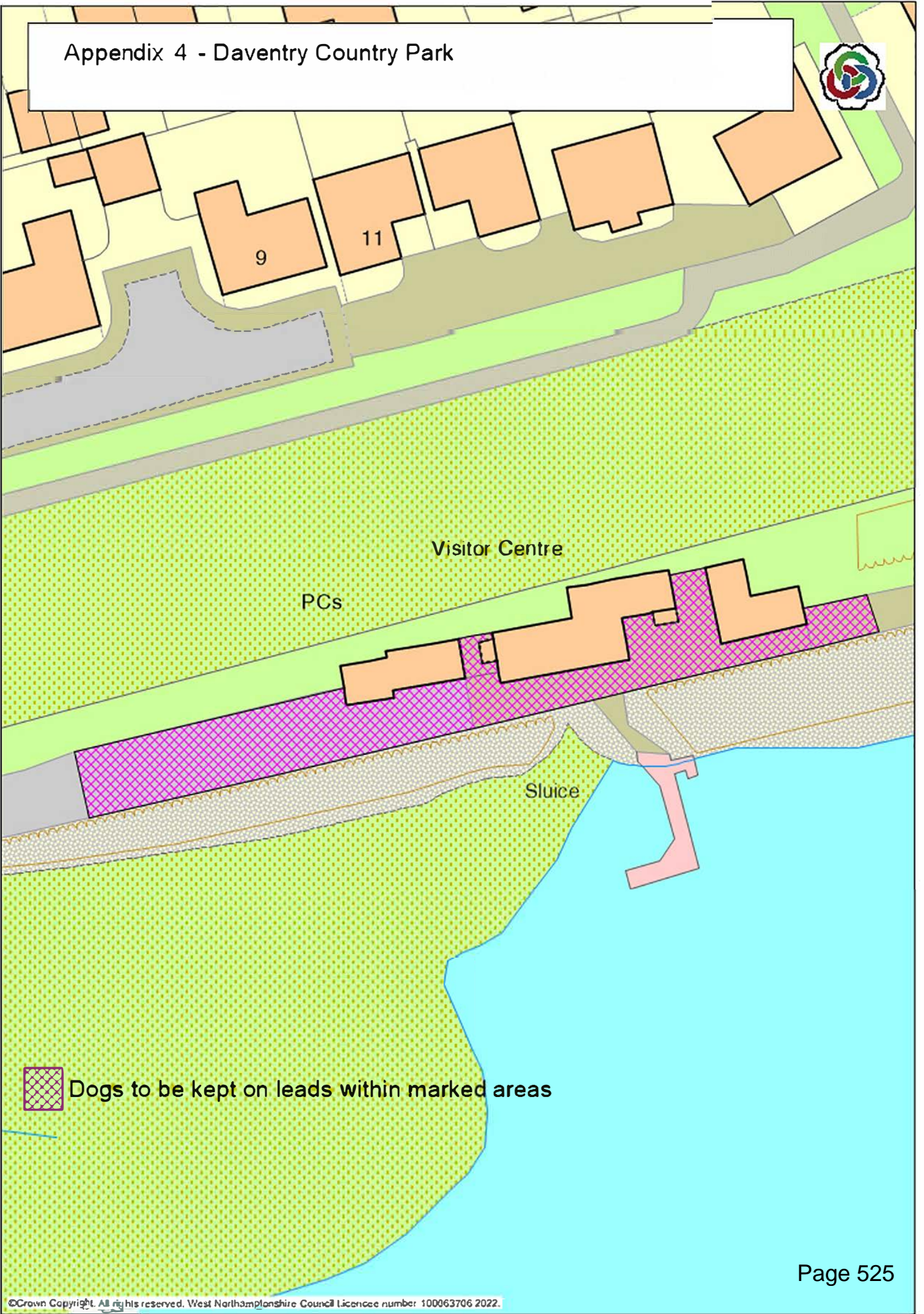
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Former Daventry District Council area



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Appendix 4 - Daventry Country Park



 Dogs to be kept on leads within marked areas

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

29th September 2023

Cllr Matt Golby, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Public Health

Report Title The closure of Boniface House, Brixworth

Report Author Neil Cox, Assistant Director – Safeguarding & Wellbeing Services
neil.cox@westnorthants.gov.uk

List of Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	23/08/2023
Chief Finance Officer (S.151)	Martin Henry	23/08/2023
Other Director	Stuart Lackenby	23/08/2023
Communications Lead/Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	23/08/2023

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Consultation Report

Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment – Residents

Appendix C – Equality Impact Assessment - Staff

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Cabinet is asked to support the proposal to close Boniface House, a council owned residential care home based in Brixworth, which has become unsustainable due to the inability of the home to meet the increasingly complex needs of people requiring residential care and support.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Boniface House is based in Brixworth; the home has 46 rooms and as of the date of this paper had 13 people resident at the home. The home has an allocation of 22.65 fte cares staff to support full occupancy and it currently has 9.87 fte care vacancies with agency staff and overtime used to maintain safe staffing levels.
- 2.2 In October 2022 the building roof failed leading to an internal leak. The incident led to residents being moved to safe areas in the building however it was identified the door frames of the rooms where too narrow for profiling beds to be moved without being taken apart.
- 2.3 The service has the lowest occupancy across the four homes and has an overall inspection rating as “requires improvement” with the last inspection published 16th December 2022.
- 2.4 Infection Control audits carried out by CQC have highlighted challenges with the environment and insufficient facilities to offer personal care to customers. None of the rooms have ensuite facilities and require up to eight people to share bathrooms reducing the ability of staff in the home to support people’s dignity and respect.
- 2.5 There are longstanding and considerable difficulties in the recruitment and retention of staff across all four of the internal care homes, including Boniface House. The recent pay increases put in place by Council for front line workers and ongoing recruitment initiatives have meant that the workforce numbers have remained stable. However, this activity has not provided the increase in numbers that are required to deliver a full staffing establishment meaning the home is unable to utilise its full bed capacity. There remains a considerable high dependency on agency staff to support the safe staffing levels in the home.
- 2.6 The buildings is over 40 years old and whilst it would have been compliant at the time of build it would not meet today’s CQC accessibility of facility requirements for new build care homes due to the lack of ensuite facilities and reduced accessibility for wheelchairs/hoists. Added to this there is insufficient space for the environment to be improved or increased in size. The home requires increasing intervention just to maintain it as a safe environment. A condition survey in 2020 highlighted that to maintain the home at just a basic habitable standard would require a minimum investment of approximately £1 million over the next 10 years.
- 2.7 The number of people who need registered care home provision has remained at a consistent level through the transition from Northamptonshire County Council to West Northants Council. However the needs of people in registered care homes are now more complex with an increasing number of people requiring nursing care rather than the residential care which Boniface House is registered to deliver. Whilst the work force is skilled and able to meet these more complex needs the environment and building limits the ability to meet these high needs or vary the CQC registration.
- 2.8 Following a consultation process which sought feedback from key stakeholders to gain an understanding of their experience of Boniface House, their priorities on options to influence future service design, and to ascertain how best to mitigate impact of proposals the recommendations outlined in section 3 of this report have been put forward.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Cabinet approve:

- a) The commencement of safe closure programme with immediate effect, which will support residents to move to alternative residential care accommodation within the area.
- b) The commencement of formal consultation with affected staff members on their redeployment into other council services in accordance with established HR policies and processes.

4. Reason for Recommendations

4.1 The recommendations seek:

- a) To enable the Council to prevent Boniface House becoming both unsustainable and unsafe to the point that there is risk to the wellbeing of the care homes residents.
- b) To ensure that residents receive the high quality of care in a setting that is suitable and meets both their needs and the needs of future residents.
- c) To ensure the Council is able to deliver best use of its available adult social care budgets in meeting its statutory duties.

5. Report Background

5.1 The Care Act 2014 places a statutory duty on West Northamptonshire Council to provide care and support to people that have assessed and eligible social care needs alongside responsibilities to ensure a sufficient supply of residential and nursing care services through effective market development activities. It is important to note that the Care Act also requires the Authority to offer choice so that people have reasonable options in the type and location of care they need when this is arranged and paid for by the Council.

5.2 The Council's strategic objective, through the existing Adult Social Care Transformation Programme, is to support people to live independently within the community for a long as possible. While there are a broad range of services to fulfil this objective, including home care and extra care housing, there are a number of people whose care and support needs are such that long-term residential and nursing care services are required.

5.3 Permanent residential and nursing care is only considered for those with the most complex needs that cannot be supported within alternative care settings such as home care or independent living with on-site care through extra care housing schemes.

5.4 Typically needs may include frailty and mobility, advanced dementia, highly complex physical care needs around physical disability or the requirement for on-site nursing support, and in a number of cases all of these combined. In line with national trends, there is an increasing need for more complex care within residential and nursing settings. This is partly related to national demographic changes associated with an ageing population living longer with ongoing care needs but also the positive impact of social care strategy to increase the number of people remaining

independent at home for longer with more complex conditions, which can mean that when they need residential or nursing care a greater intensity of care and support is required.

- 5.5 WNC, along with most other local authorities, supported the care home sector with covid grant funding including the workforce development fund during the pandemic. Despite increased levels of demand the additional grant funding during the pandemic did support short term sustainability in the care home sector. Post pandemic the enhanced levels of demand linked to the NHS recovery plan and the associated high Discharge to Assess (D2A) activity combined with a slowdown in ability to recruit care workers has led to a more unstable care home market in many parts of the UK including West Northamptonshire.
- 5.6 Across WNC there is a total supply of 2787 bed places for all forms of residential and nursing care services across 107 Care Quality Commission (CQC) registered care homes. These include the 6 homes provided/run by the Council.

Fair Cost of Care (FCoC)

- 5.7 In recognition of the imminent Adult Social Care Reforms (Proposed reforms to adult social care (including cap on care costs) - House of Commons Library (parliament.uk) WNC, alongside several other East Midlands local authorities, commissioned the services of Care Analytics , a specialist in the financial analysis of care markets and the cost of care, to undertake a 'Fair Cost of Care' (FCoC) detailed cost analysis exercise.
- 5.8 All providers operating in the care home market within the area of the local authority were sent a detailed survey designed to capture the necessary operational and contextual detail to draw out the inherent costs of delivering care in the local market.
- 5.9 In compliance with the latest language contained within the guidance and resulting grant conditions for additional funding, WNC is committed only to "moving towards" the calculated FCoC rates (including any future inflationary uplift as negotiated). Guidance is published on the Government: [Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund 2022 to 2023: guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/market-sustainability-and-fair-cost-of-care-fund-2022-to-2023)
- 5.10 The Council's Fair Cost of Care Rates applicable to Boniface House is £840 per week for 2023/2024. As a result of the issues detailed within this paper and the resulting impact on occupancy Boniface House is currently operating at a rate of £1,430 per week, significantly in excess of the Council's established rate.

Public consultation

- 5.11 A 28 day public consultation on the future options for Boniface House took place between 3rd July and 30th July 2023
- 5.12 The consultation was conducted by the Adult Social Care Team, with support from the Council's Communications Team, who carried out the consultation in compliance with WNC's Consultation and Engagement Policy.

- 5.13 Identified stakeholders included: residents, residents' family carers, WNC employees, Councillors, local health partners and interested members of the public. Due to the breadth of potential stakeholders a questionnaire was devised to capture feedback.
- 5.14 To ensure those affected were informed, meetings were held with the affected staff group, residents and family members to explain the reasons for consultation, the process that would be followed and answer any questions they may have. All parties were also all offered the opportunity of a 1:1 meeting to discuss the consultation further or receive support submitting their responses.
- 5.15 An online version of the questionnaire and details of the consultation, was made available on a dedicated internet page on WNC's consultation hub. The online questionnaire was open to all. However, it was set up in a way which distinguished respondents who were residents and/or their family carers, who were able to answer specific questions about their experience of the care provided within Boniface House.
- 5.16 The consultation was designed to gather stakeholder feedback on the experience of life in Boniface House, to gain an understanding of future aspirations and priorities on options to influence future service design, and ascertain how best to mitigate impact of proposals.
- 5.17 46 people responded to the consultation through a mixture of paper and online submissions of questionnaires, with:
- 28% of responses coming from staff
 - 28% of responses coming from residents and their families
 - 33% of responses coming from interested members of the public
 - 11% coming from other stakeholders such as Councillors and other professionals.
- 5.18 All responses from the people who have experienced life at Boniface House commented on how satisfied they were as a result of the quality of care they receive.
- 5.19 The top aspects of a good quality care home identified by respondents were:
- Feeling safe
 - People being treated with respect and dignity
 - Staff being helpful and caring
 - Visitors being able to come when they want to
 - Having privacy when wanted
- 5.20 Respondents we all asked to consider three proposed options, as outlined in section 6 of this report, to gain an understanding of future aspirations and priorities on options to influence future service design, and ascertain how best to mitigate impact of proposals.
- 5.21 When asked questions about the three proposed approaches to the future of Boniface House, the responses were:

- **Approach 1 – No change:** There was a fairly balanced response to this proposal, with a slight majority of respondents, 56%, disagreeing with this as an approach; the most frequent reason cited was the need for the facilities in the building to improve and the associated safety issues with the design and layout of the building. Of the people agreeing with this approach the main reason cited was that this option created the least amount of upheaval for residents.
- **Approach 2 – Refurbish / redevelop:** The majority of respondents were in favour of this approach, 82%, however a significant proportion of these responses supported this option on the basis that residents remained in the home whilst building work was carried out. The response from residents/families to this option identified that less than half of the respondents “agreed/strongly agreed” with this approach. Those respondents who showed support for this option commented on the need for better facilities over the longer term and the impact on the local community of closing the home. Comments from the respondents who were not supportive of this approach highlighted a concern about the unsettling impact on residents if they needed to move twice (to leave and then return when building work had been completed).
- **Approach 3 – Safe closure programme:** 62% of responses, largely from staff and other stakeholders strongly disagreed with this approach, citing the impact on residents, staff, and the local community as well as the need for care home beds locally as being their reason for holding this view. The main support for this option came from the resident/families’ group with 42% “agreeing/strongly agreeing” with this option, with a preference for only moving once and residents receiving the best possible care being given as the main reason for this.

5.22 Whilst the consultation identified the refurbishment and the development of Boniface House as the preferred approach of responders it is recognised that this was on the basis that residents remain living in the building whilst this work is undertaken.

5.23 As remodelling the home would involve major building works to change the structure of the building by increasing the size of rooms and ensuring all rooms had access to suitable ensuite facilities, doing this would generate a significant amount of dust and noise and require periods where the home would be disconnected from utility networks such as water and electricity. On this basis it would not be a suitable environment to provide ongoing care for vulnerable elderly people and manage any health conditions they may have. In addition to this access to the building is very limited, and trying to keep residents in the home, whilst also ensuring contractors have the access to the building they would require would be impractical.

5.24 It should also be noted that the residents and families were not strongly in favour of the option to refurbish and redevelop the building.

- 5.25 Whilst a significant number of respondents disagreed with the recommended option of implementing a safe closure programme the reasons for their disagreement did not identify any challenges of a significant nature which could not be addressed or mitigated through a careful and appropriate implementation of this approach.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 No change : The utilisation of the care home would continue to decline and the service would have an increasing difficulty in providing safe staffing levels. The condition of the building is likely to result in an issue similar to the water leak which happened at Boniface in October 2022 and residents would need to be moved to alternate provision at the point of crisis.
- 6.2 Refurbish/develop the home: The council could invest in the remodelling of the care home to create ensuite capacity. This level of work would however require the residents to be relocated for the duration of the redevelopment. Any redevelopment of the homes within the existing footprint would reduce the number of rooms, thus increasing the unit cost and making the Council even further out of step with its own Fair Cost of Care rate.
- 6.3 Safe closure programme: A programme of safe closure would involve, stopping new admissions to the service and recruitment to any staff vacancies within the home. Residents' needs would be reviewed and we would work with them and their families to identify alternative arrangements for their care. For the affected staff group we would engage the council's appropriate HR policies and undertake a process of redeployment of staff into our other care settings, with redundancy only where unavoidable. As far as possible we would seek to resettle people with the redeployed staff into Council delivered homes to support continuity of care and maintain friendship groups as far as possible.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1 Closure of Boniface House would result in a saving of £1.53m which is the current operating budget of the home. However, there may be a consequential impact on the Independent Care budget in Adult Social Care should residents in Boniface choose to be placed in a residential care home within the independent care sector. This, however, is likely to be minimal given the number of residents who are affected by the proposal and the availability of support in the Council's other internal care homes. It will not be possible to quantify this impact until residents have been supported through the process of finding a suitable alternative care provision.
- 7.1.2 The council will seek as far as possible to redeploy affected staff into alternative roles in line with the existing HR policies and procedures that are in place.
- 7.1.3 Separate decisions would be taken on the use or disposal of the site if closure is approved. It is likely demolition costs would be incurred, but these should be offset by the value of re-use or disposal of the site.

7.2 Legal

7.2.1 The Council has a statutory duty to provide care and support for people who meet the eligibility criteria as set out in the Care Act 2014 and supporting legislative framework. This duty sits alongside both Council and NHS strategies and plans. The Council's statutory duty extends to the provision or arrangement of services that could help prevent people developing needs for care and support or delay people deteriorating such that they would need ongoing care and support.

7.2.2 The Council may meet that duty by providing the care and support itself or by arranging for a person other than it to provide a service. The legislation anticipates that needs for care and support can be met in a variety of ways, including Council- funded long-term care and support packages, i.e., community care, residential and nursing care and the provision of homecare.

7.3 Risk

7.3.1 Risk(s) associated with the proposal:

Risk	Mitigation	Residual Risk
The movement of residents into a new care setting has a detrimental impact on their health and wellbeing.	All residents will be supported to find a new home which is suitable to meet their needs. For residents moving into any of the councils other internal care homes, as far as possible we will support people to move with friendship groups and staff who have been supporting them during their time at Boniface House.	Amber
Staff start to leave the service once the safe closure programme begins resulting in an inability to ensure safe staffing.	Agency staffing will need to be utilised to ensure that the home continues to operate with a safe staffing level that can provide the required level of care and support for the remaining residents.	Amber
Building issues arise during the programme.	Building maintenance will continue with regular condition reports will be updated to ensure that the programme is informed	Amber
The refusal of residents/families to relocate to alternative accommodation	The council would need to follow the necessary legal processes available to authorise the conveyance of residents to alternative accommodation	Amber

7.3.2 Risk(s) associated with not undertaking the proposal

Risk	Mitigation	Residual Risk
-------------	-------------------	----------------------

<p>The occupancy at the care home continues to decline to a level which makes it unsustainable.</p>	<p>Staffing levels will need to be adjusted according to the number of residents who reside in the home.</p> <p>Residents may need to be relocated in the home to ensure they can be supported at the same time with a reduced number of staff.</p>	<p>Amber</p>
<p>Further buildings issues arise which require residents to either be relocated within the home or temporarily relocated elsewhere</p>	<p>Building maintenance will continue to monitor the condition of the building and carry out essential maintenance as required.</p> <p>Plans will be developed in conjunction with Health & Safety and Resilience colleagues to ensure plans are in place to support the safe movement of residents should the need arise.</p>	<p>Red</p>

7.4 Consultation and Communications

7.4.1 As outline in section 5 of this report a public consultation has been undertaken to gather stakeholder feedback on the experience of life in Boniface House, to gain an understanding of future aspirations and priorities on options to influence future service design and ascertain how best to mitigate impact of proposals. A copy of the full report outlining the details and results of this consultation can be found at appendix A of this report.

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.5.1 No comments received.

7.6 Climate Impact

7.6.1 The existing building is not designed or constructed to meet modern standards of insulation and airtightness. Removing it from the Council’s estate would support progress towards the Council’s 2030 net zero operations goal. Conversely, it does represent a significant amount of embedded carbon. Therefore, as part of considering options for the future of the site these factors would be taken into account.

7.7 Community Impact

7.7.1 There are no community or community safety implications from the recommendations set out in the cabinet report.

8. Background Papers

8.1 None

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**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

**Proposed Future of Boniface House
Residential Care Home**

Consultation Analysis Report

July 2023

Author: Assistant Director – Safeguarding & Wellbeing Services, People Directorate, West Northamptonshire Council

Owner: People Directorate, West Northamptonshire Council

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1. Introduction

On the 3rd July 2023 West Northamptonshire Council commenced with a public consultation exercise on the options for the future of the council owned residential care home at Boniface House, Brixworth.

West Northamptonshire Council wants to be able to ensure it is in a position to offer high quality care which continues to meet the changing needs of its residents both now and in the future.

Boniface House has 46 rooms; however it is significantly under occupied as the design of the building means that the facilities available within the home are unable to meet the needs of an increasing number of people who require residential care. Similar to other care settings the home has also experienced recruitment challenges and has been carrying a significant number of staffing vacancies for some time.

The Council wanted to seek views on its proposals for the future of Boniface House. It wanted to hear about the experiences of people who reside in the home and their families, along with staff and other interested stakeholders. This report is the analysis of the consultation results received.

2. Background

Boniface House has the lowest occupancy across the council's four internal care homes and the building is in poor condition following a flood that occurred in October 2022

The building is over 40 years old and whilst it would have been compliant at the time it was built it would not meet today's CQC accessibility of facility requirements for new build care homes. There are no ensuite facilities, reduced accessibility for wheelchairs/hoists. Added to this there is insufficient space for the environment to be improved or increased in size. The home requires increasing intervention just to maintain it as a safe environment. A condition survey in 2020 highlighted that to maintain the home at just a basic habitable standard would require a minimum investment of approximately £1 million over the next 10 years.

In October 2022 the building roof failed leading to an internal leak. The incident led to residents being moved to safe areas within the building, however this identified that the door frames of the rooms were too narrow for modern profiling beds to be moved without being taken apart. Infection Control audits carried out by CQC have highlighted challenges with the environment and the insufficient facilities to offer personal care to customers. Up to 8 people have to share bathrooms reducing the ability of staff in the home to support people's dignity and respect.

The number of people who need registered care home provision has remained at a consistent level through the transition from Northamptonshire County Council to West Northants Council. However, the needs of people in registered care homes are now more complex with an increasing number of people requiring nursing care rather than the residential care which Boniface House is registered to deliver.

Whilst the work force is skilled and able to meet these more complex needs the environment/buildings limit the ability to meet these high needs or vary the CQC registration.

3. Consultation Methodology

The following outlines the methods of consultation used to generate the material/ data for analysis.

The consultation was conducted by the Adult Social Care Team, with support from the Council's Communication Team, who carried out the consultation in compliance with WNC's Consultation and Engagement Policy.

Identified stakeholders included: residents, residents' family carers, WNC employees, Councillors, local health partners and interested members of the public. Due to the breadth of potential stakeholders a questionnaire was devised to capture feedback.

At the outset of the consultation period the Assistant Director – Safeguarding & Wellbeing Services met with both the affected staff group, residents and family members to explain the reasons for consultation, the process that would be followed and answer any questions they may have. Paper copies of the consultation questions were made available within the Care Home to all residents, relatives and staff members. (Appendix A). All parties were also offered the opportunity of a 1:1 meeting to discuss the consultation further or receive support submitting their responses.

An online version of the questionnaire and details of the consultation, was made available on a dedicated internet page on WNC's consultation hub, which is where all of the Council's consultations are published. www.westnorthants.citizenspace.com

The online questionnaire was open to all. However, it was set up in a way which distinguished respondents who were residents and/or their family carers, who were able to answer specific questions about their experience of the care provided within Boniface House.

The questionnaire was broken down into two main sections. The first section sought to gain a qualitative and quantitative understanding of residents, and residents' families, experiences of the Care Home, whilst the second section sought to gain an understanding of future aspirations and priorities on options to influence future service design and ascertain how best to mitigate

the impact of proposals. In this section respondents were asked to consider and respond to three proposed options:

- The first option was to make no change to the existing facilities; It was explained that this was highly likely to result in the utilisation of the care home continuing to decline and that the service would have increasing difficulty in providing safe staffing levels. The condition of the building is likely to result in an issue similar to the water leak which happened in October 2022, and this may result in residents needing to be moved to alternate provision at the point of crisis.
- The second option was to invest in remodelling the home; It was explained that the council could invest in the remodelling of the care home to create ensuite capacity and address the current structural deficits the building has which means it is not possible to provide care for people with more complex and higher-level needs. This level of work would require the residents to be relocated for the duration of the redevelopment which it is likely would take a significant amount of time to complete. Any redevelopment of the home within its existing footprint would reduce the number of rooms, thus increasing the cost that would need to be charged for the provision of care.
- The third option was to implement a programme of safe closure; It was explained that this would involve, stopping new admissions to the service and recruitment to any staff vacancies within the home. Residents needs would be reviewed and WNC would work with them and their families to identify alternative arrangements for their care. For the affected staff group we would engage the council's appropriate HR policies and undertake a process of redundancy or redeployment of staff into our other care settings. As far as possible will seek to resettle people with the redeployed staff into Council delivered homes to support continuity of care, friendship groups and the change in environment and care arrangements as much as possible.

An offer was made to translate the questionnaire into another format, including easy read, however no requests were made for a translated version.

The consultation and online questionnaire were also promoted to a large number of key stakeholders, including:

- Members of West Northamptonshire Council's Consultation Register
- Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board
- Healthwatch Northamptonshire
- Local Councillors
- Other interested parties

This consultation was also posted and publicised via the Council's Facebook, Twitter and other social media accounts.

As the closure of the Care Home was one of the three proposed approaches, WNC Adult Social Care staff offered to meet with every resident and/or their family carer on an individual basis to explain the situation to them and to seek their views on the proposals.

The consultation began on 3rd July 2023 and ended on 30th July 2023, giving 28 days of consultation.

4. Summary of Feedback

The following is a short summary of the findings. A copy of the paper questionnaire can be found in appendix A.

A total of 46 people responded to the consultation via the questionnaire, 28 of which were completed online. No requests were received for a one-to-one discussion from any of individuals within the groups who received this offer.

Amongst the 46 returned questionnaires, we received 12 responses from either residents and/or their families, 12 from staff employed by WNC, 18 from interested members of the public, 2 from elected members and 2 from other professionals.

Not all responders answered all of the questions within the questionnaire which creates a disparity in the total number of responses against some questions when compared to the overall breakdown of returned questionnaires. Within the responses from residents/families' multiple family members of individuals living in the home were able to submit responses and the results outlined are based totality of responses received from this group.

Experience of Boniface House

Residents and their families were asked an additional set of questions about their experience of the Care Home.

- 5 respondents stated they/their relative has lived in Boniface House for between 4 – 5 years, 1 had lived there for 2 years, and 2 had lived there for 2 years.
- 3 of these responses related to a resident/residents who had been a long-term resident in another care home other than Boniface House.
- The main reason residents/their families chose Boniface House was because of the affordability and it was close to the community the person moving in had resided in previously.
- When asked what they like about living at Boniface House most respondents highlighted the quality of the care provided, and the company it provides for residents.

- All of the respondents stated they were satisfied with the quality of care received at Boniface House with all respondents who answered the question scoring it as either 9 or 10 out of 10.

Most important features of a Care Home

All respondents were asked what they thought were the most important features of a good quality care home.

- The following statements are listed in order of the weighted score they received, this was calculated by multiplying the frequency of responses against the rating they received as follows.
 - 1 = Not at all important
 - 2 = Not very important
 - 3 = Quite important
 - 4 = Very important

There were 18 Responses to this question.

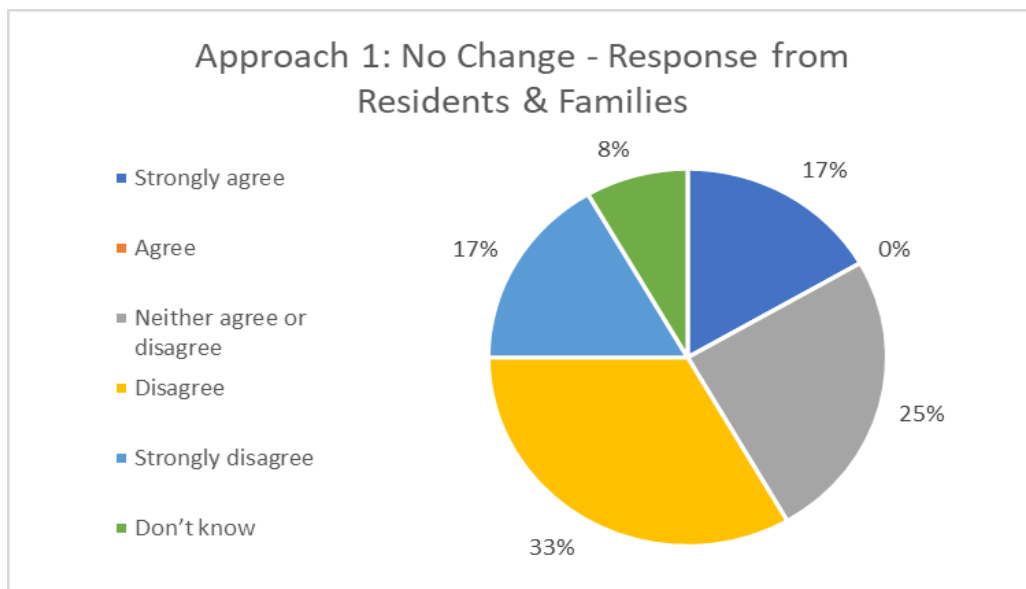
	Weighted Score
Feeling safe	71
People who live here are treated with respect and dignity	71
Staff are helpful and caring	71
Visitors can come when they want to	70
Having some control over how people in the home live their lives	69
To have privacy when wanted	69
The home can meet the needs of residents as they change	68
Feeling comfortable in shared and private locations	67
There is good quality food and drink available	67
Accessible bathroom and toilet facilities	66
People who live here can be sociable when they want to	64
There are things to do	63
The building looks good and is well looked after	61
Making and having friendships	61
People from outside the home can come in for events	59
The home is close to where relatives live	59
To have gardens / outside space	58
The bedrooms have plenty of space	57
People who live in the home are helped to do things outside the home	57

- A small number of respondents provided further comments as to what other features help to make a good quality care home, this included continuity of staff, good interaction between staff and residents and well-trained staff.

Proposed approaches.

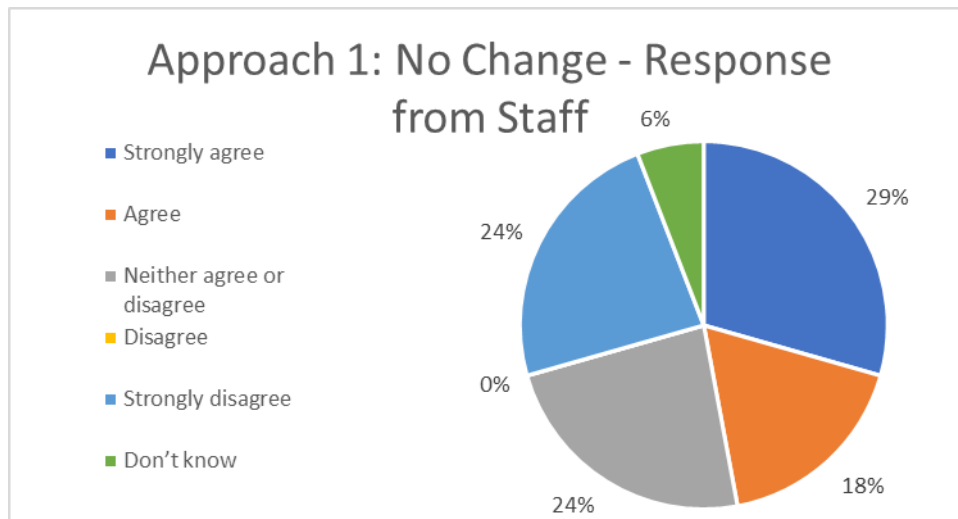
Approach 1 – No change

Response from Residents/Families



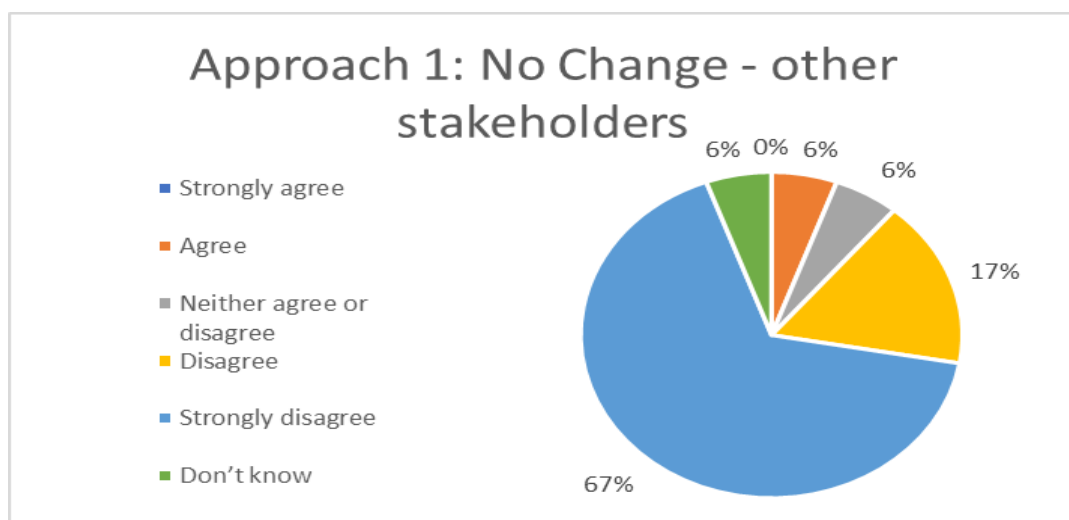
- There were 12 responses to this option from Residents/Families with a range of views expressed within them. Cumulatively “strongly disagree/disagree” to making no changes made up 50% of the responses received, with a further 17% “strongly agreeing” and the remaining 33% opting for “neither agree or disagree” or “don’t know”.
- Of those that “disagreed/ strongly disagreed” with making no changes they cited the need to improve facilities in the building and concerns about the design of the building and its implications for safety as being the main reason for this. Others identified the desire for residents to receive the best possible care in future as being the reason for holding this position.
- Those that “agreed/strongly agreed” with making no change identified that they felt the current situation in the home could be managed and a concern about being able to afford increased costs of care that may result from the other options as being a reason for doing so.

Response from Staff



- There were 17 responses to this option from staff which expressed a range of views with 47% who “strongly agreed/agreed” with no changes being made. A further 24% “strongly disagree” with the option of no change whilst the remaining 30% either opted for “neither agree or disagree” or “don’t know.”
- Those that “agreed/strongly agreed” provided a range of reasons for holding this position which included a feeling the that lack of en suite facilities wasn’t an issue, the home being able to support people with low level needs to a good standard, a desire not to disturb residents for whom Boniface House is there home and a place they have settled and that the maintenance issues could be managed.
- Of those that “disagreed/ strongly disagreed” with making no changes they cited the need for better facilities as being the main reason for this.

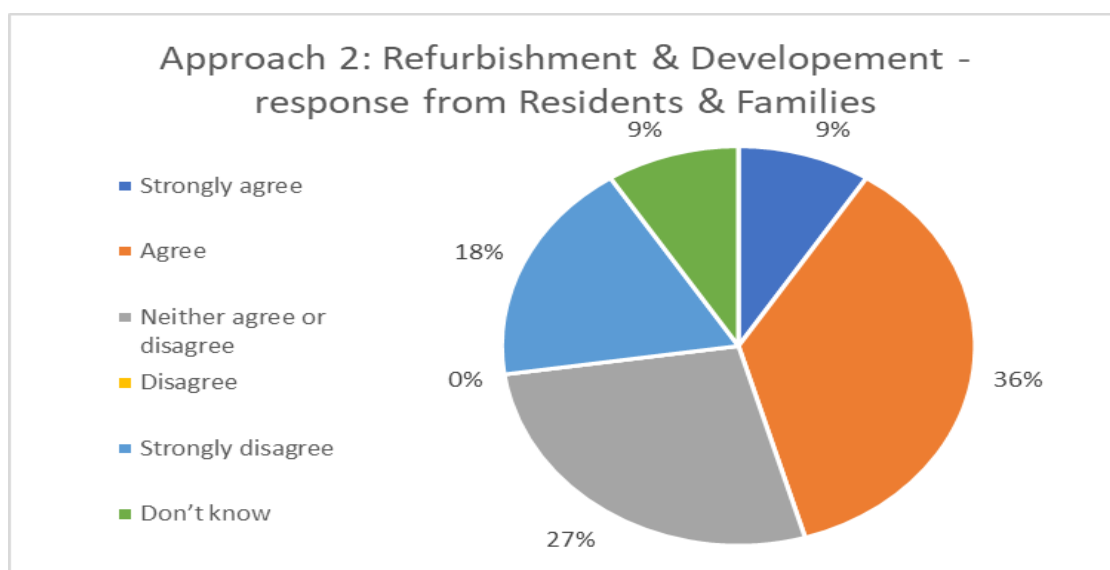
Response from other stakeholders



- There were 18 responses to this option from other stakeholders which were largely made up of responses from interested members of the public.
- The vast majority of responses from people within this group, 67%, “strongly disagreed” with no changes being made at the home with a further 17% “disagreeing” with this option.
- Of those that “disagreed/ strongly disagreed” with making no changes they cited the need for better facilities as being the main reasons for this. A smaller proportion of respondents also identified the need to make better use of a public facility as the reason for their view.

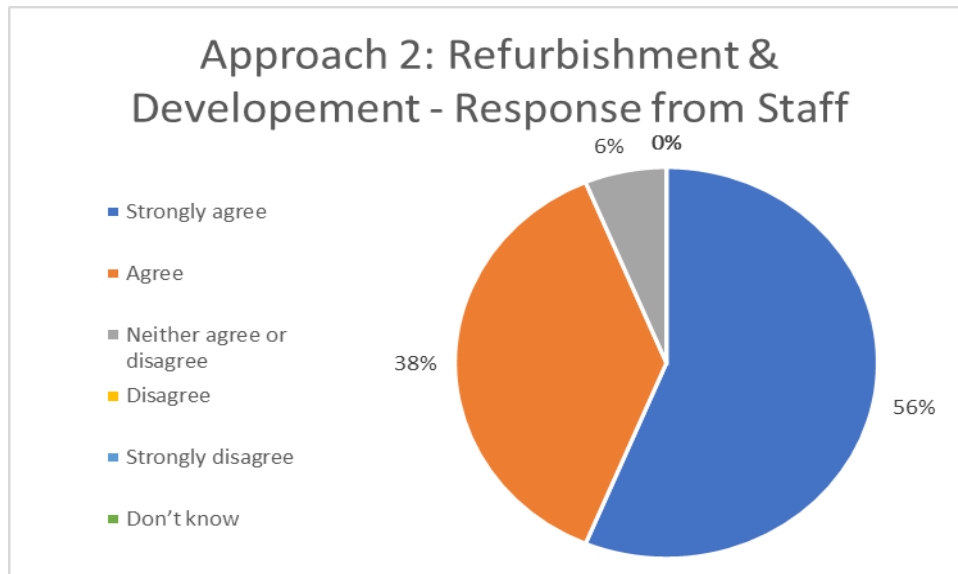
Approach 2 – Refurbish/ redevelop to facilitate new models of care.

Response from Residents/Families



- There were 11 responses to this option from Residents/Families with a range of views expressed within them. Cumulatively “strongly agree/agree” made up 45% of responses, “strongly disagree” accounted for another 18% of responses and a further 36% of respondents opted for “neither agree or disagree” or “don’t know”.
- Those that “agreed/strongly agreed” with the refurbishment and development option identified that better facilities in the home being beneficial over the long term and the general need for care home beds locally as being their reason for this response.
- Those that “disagreed/ strongly disagreed” with this option cited the unsettling impact on residents and the need for them to move twice as being their reason for holding this view.

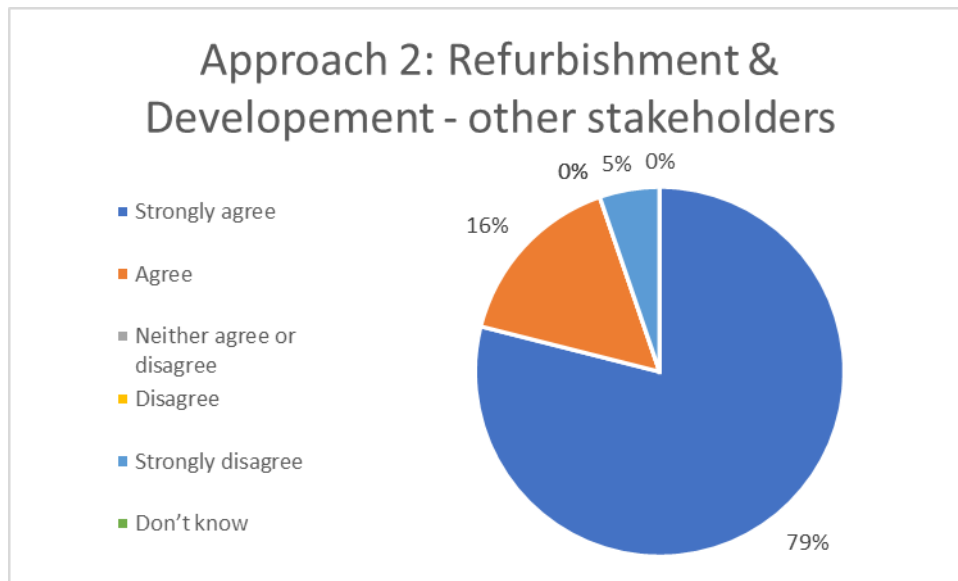
Response from staff



- There were 16 responses to this option from staff with a strong majority of 94% opting for “strongly agree/agree” and the remaining 6% opting for the “neither agree or disagree” response.
- The reasons for agreement with this option were largely on the basis that it was felt this approach could be implemented on a phased basis utilising empty space in the building to enable this approach. A number of respondents also identified the need to retain care home beds locally as being their reason for supporting this approach.

Response from other stakeholders

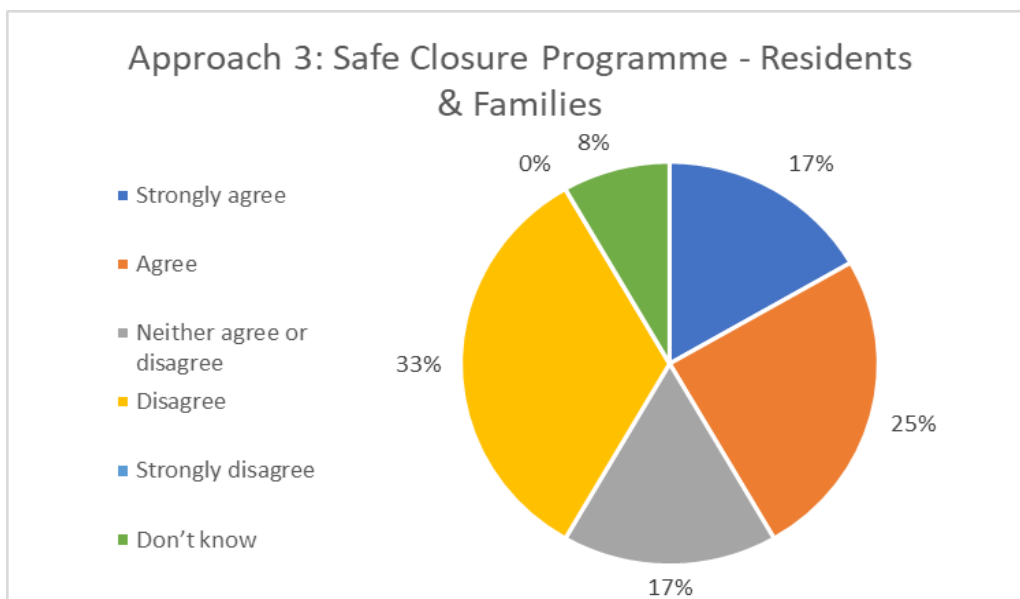
- There were 19 responses to this option from other stakeholders which were largely made up of responses from interested members of the public.
- The majority of responses from people within, 95%, “strongly agreed/agreed” with refurbishing & developing the home, with the remaining 5% strongly disagreeing with this as an approach.



- Of those respondents that “strongly agreed/agreed” they identified the need for care homes locally and the impact on the wider community as their reason for doing so. Comments also reflected that the vast majority of respondents response was based on the required work being carried out whilst residents remained in the building.

Approach 3 - Close and move residents to alternative provision.

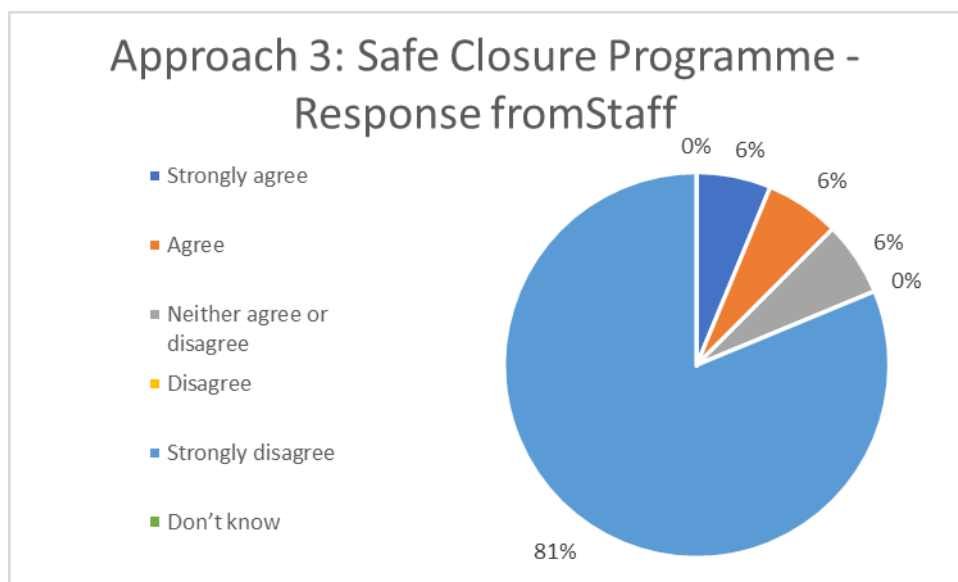
Response from Residents/Families



Proposed future of Boniface House - Consultation Report

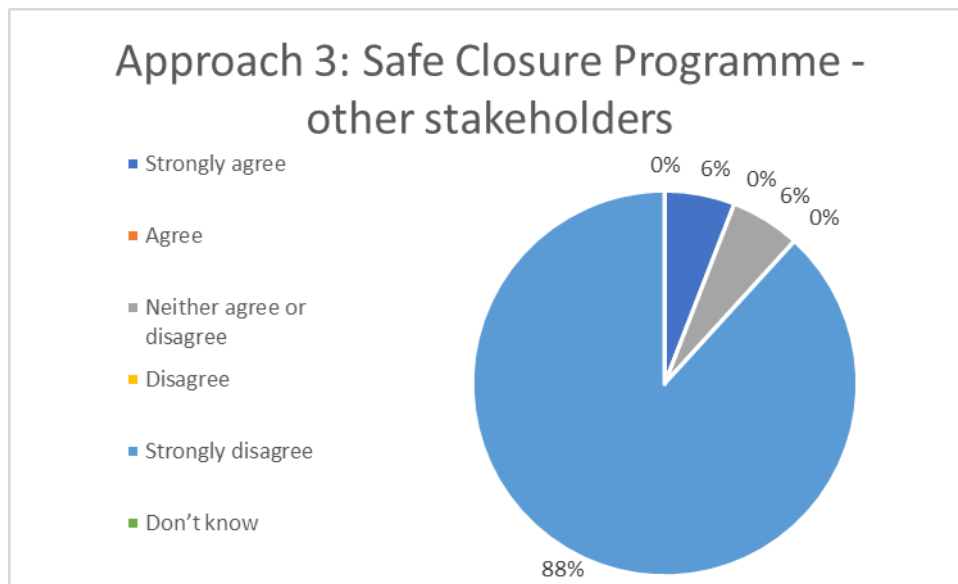
- There were 12 responses to this option from Residents/Families with a range of views expressed within them. Cumulatively “strongly agree/agree” made up 42% of responses, whilst “disagree” accounted for 33% of responses and a further 17% of respondents opted for “neither agree or disagree.”
- Those that “agreed/strongly agreed” with the safe closure programme made a number of different comments alongside their response, which included a preference for residents to only have to move once and preferring an option which kept residents together in future.
- Of those that “disagreed/ strongly disagreed” with this option they cited the unsettling impact on residents and the loss of the home to the local community as being the main reasons for doing so.

Response from Staff



- There were 16 responses to this option from staff with the majority of respondents, 81%, opting for “strongly disagree” as a response. 12% opted for “strongly agree/agree” with the 6% of respondents opting for “neither agree or disagree.”
- Those that “strongly disagreed” with the safe closure programme put forward a number of different comments alongside their responses which included a recognition of Boniface House as people’s home, the detrimental impact of closure on staff and residents alike and the impact on the wider community.
- Of those that “agreed/ strongly agreed” with this option they cited the cost of needing to invest in the current building to bring it up to the required standard as being the main reason for holding this view.

Response from other stakeholders



- There were 17 responses to this option from other stakeholders which were largely made up of responses from interested members of the public.
- The majority of responses from people within this group, 88%, “strongly disagreed” with a safe closure programme, with 6% “strongly agreeing” and the remaining 6% “neither agreeing or disagreeing.”
- Of those respondents that “strongly disagreed” with this approach they identified the need for care homes locally and the impact on the wider community as their reason for doing so.

5. Conclusion

This consultation was designed to gather stakeholder feedback on experience of life in Boniface House, to gain an understanding of future aspirations and priorities on options to influence future service design and ascertain how best to mitigate impact of proposals.

33% of the responses received were from interested members of the public, with 28% of responses coming from staff and residents/families respectively.

All responses from the people who have experienced life at Boniface House commented on how satisfied they were as a result of the quality of care they receive.

The top aspects of a good quality care home identified by respondents were:

- Feeling safe
- People being treated with respect and dignity.
- Staff being helpful and caring.
- Visitors being able to come when they want to
- Having privacy when wanted

When asked questions about the three proposed approaches to the future of Boniface House, the responses are summarised as follows:

- **Approach 1 – No change:** There was a fairly balanced response to this proposal, with a slight majority of respondents, 56%, disagreeing with this as an approach; the most frequent reason cited was the need for the facilities in the building to improve and the associated safety issues with the design and layout of the building. Of the people agreeing with this approach the main reason cited was that this option created the least amount of upheaval for residents.
- **Approach 2 – Refurbish / redevelop:** The majority of respondents were in favour of this approach, 82%, however a significant proportion of these responses supported this option on the basis that residents remained in the home whilst building work was carried out. The response from residents/families to this option identified that less than half of the respondents “agreed/strongly agreed” with this approach. Those respondents who showed support for this option commented on the need for better facilities over the longer term and the impact on the local community of closing the home. Comments from the respondents who were not supportive of this approach highlighted a concern about the unsettling impact on residents if they needed to move twice (to leave and then return when building work had been completed).
- **Approach 3 – Safe closure programme:** 62% of responses, largely from staff and other stakeholders strongly disagreed with this approach, citing the impact on residents, staff, and the local community as well as the need for care home beds locally as being their reason for holding this view. The main support for this option came from the resident/families’ group with 42% “agreeing/strongly agreeing” with this option, with a preference for only moving once and residents receiving the best possible care being given as the main reason for this.

Appendix A: Copy of the Paper Version of the Consultation Questionnaire

Consultation on the future of Boniface House

We are reviewing the current and future usage of its residential care service at Boniface House in Brixworth, which is wholly owned by the Council.

West Northamptonshire Council wants to be able to ensure it is in a position to offer high quality care which continues to meet the changing needs of its residents both now and in the future.

The home has 46 rooms; however it is significantly under occupied as the design of the building means that the facilities available within the home are unable to meet the needs of an increasing number of people who require residential care. Similar to other care settings the home has also experienced recruitment challenges and has been carrying a significant number of staffing vacancies for some time.

Background

Boniface House has the lowest occupancy across the council's four internal care homes and the building is in poor condition following a flood that occurred in October 2022

The building is over 40 years old and whilst it would have been compliant at the time it was built it would not meet today's CQC accessibility of facility requirements for new build care homes. There are no ensuite facilities, reduced accessibility for wheelchairs/hoists. Added to this there is insufficient space for the environment to be improved or increased in size. The home requires increasing intervention just to maintain it as a safe environment. A condition survey in 2020 highlighted that to maintain the home at just a basic habitable standard would require a minimum investment of approximately £1 million over the next 10 years.

In October 2022 the building roof failed leading to an internal leak. The incident led to residents being moved to safe areas within the building, however this identified that the door frames of the rooms were too narrow for modern profiling beds to be moved without being taken apart. Infection Control audits carried out by CQC have highlighted challenges with the environment and the insufficient facilities to offer personal care to customers. None of the rooms have ensuite facilities and require up to 8 people to share bathrooms reducing the ability of staff in the home to support people's dignity and respect; there is also reduced accessibility for wheelchairs/hoists. Added to this there is insufficient space for the environment to be improved or increased in size.

The number of people who need registered care home provision has remained at a consistent level through the transition from Northamptonshire County Council to West Northants Council. However, the needs of people in registered care homes are now more complex with an increasing number of people requiring nursing care rather than the residential care which Boniface House is registered to deliver.

Whilst the work force is skilled and able to meet these more complex needs the environment/buildings limit the ability to meet these high needs or vary the CQC registration.

We are seeking views from stakeholders on the future options for Boniface House to enable decision makers to understand the impact of any future decision that is made.

Proposed Options for the future.

We have identified three options for the future of Boniface House and is seeking views on these three options and/or any alternative options that it should consider. The three options are listed below, and further details about each of the options is outlined within the questionnaire; the options being considered are:

1. To make no change to the existing facilities.
2. Invest in remodelling the home.
3. Commence a safe closure programme.

Please could you take about **15-20 minutes** to tell us your views on the options put forward for Boniface House by completing this questionnaire. Your feedback will be used to help us gain a better understanding of our opinions on the options for the future and will help inform any future decision-making process. Your feedback will be part of a report with other people's feedback, so you will not be personally identified.

You do not have to answer all of the questions. If you don't want to answer a question, or don't know the answer, then move on to the next question.

You can ask a friend, relative or an advocate to help you complete the questionnaire, but please remember that it is your views and your experiences that are important to us, rather than the views of anyone that helps you.

If you prefer, you can also get in touch using the below contact details for someone independent from social services and your care provider (e.g., an independent advocate) to help you to complete this questionnaire.

We really would like to hear your views, however, if you do not wish to take part in this survey then please discard this questionnaire.

Once completed please return this questionnaire in the pre-paid envelope (you don't need to put a stamp on the envelope) by **30th July 2023** to:

Consultation on future of Boniface House 2023
Assistant Director – Safeguarding & Wellbeing Services
Boniface House
Spratton Road
Brixworth
Northampton
Northamptonshire
NN6 9DS

Please contact us either by email care.feedback@westnorthants.gov.uk or telephone on 01604 883800 if you have any queries, comments or would like a copy of this questionnaire in another format, including easy read or large print.

Thank you for helping us by completing this questionnaire.

1) In what respect are you answering this questionnaire?

Please tick (√) relevant answer

I live at this home permanently	<input type="checkbox"/>
I live at this home temporarily or use it for respite care	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am a family carer of someone living at this home	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am a friend of someone living at this home	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am a member of the public	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am a member of staff employed by West Northamptonshire Council	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am a Councillor	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am a business supplier to home	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am a professional e.g., GP, district nurse, etc	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am a member of a voluntary or community organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other, please specify.

2) Which borough or district of Northamptonshire do you live in?

Please tick (√) relevant answer

Corby	<input type="checkbox"/>
Daventry	<input type="checkbox"/>
East Northamptonshire	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kettering	<input type="checkbox"/>
Northampton	<input type="checkbox"/>
South Northamptonshire	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wellingborough	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify)

We are interested to hear about what it is like to live in Boniface House Care Home. If you are not a resident/family member of a resident of Boniface care Home, please go to question 8.

3) How long have you/ your family member been a resident in Boniface House Care Home?

4) Has you/ your family member ever been a long term resident in another Care Home, other than Boniface House Care Home? (Please do not include any time spent in respite care)

5) Why did you choose Boniface House Care Home?

6) What do you like about living at Boniface House Care Home?

7) On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is 'very dissatisfied' and 10 is 'very satisfied', overall, how dissatisfied or satisfied are you with the care you receive at Boniface House Care Home?

Very dissatisfied	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very satisfied	Don't Know

We would be interested to find out what you think are the most important features of a Care Home like Boniface House.

8) What do you think are the most important features of a good quality Care Home?

	Not at all important	Not very important	Quite important	Very important	Don't know
Having some control over how people in the home live their lives					
Accessible bathroom and toilet facilities					
Feeling comfortable in shared and private locations					
Feeling safe					
The building looks good and is well looked after					
The bedrooms have plenty of space					
To have privacy when wanted					
To have gardens / outside space					
The home can meet the needs of residents as they change					
There is good quality food and drink available					
There are things to do					
People who live here can be sociable when they want to					
Making and having friendships					
Visitors can come when they want to					
People who live here are treated with respect and dignity					
Staff are helpful and caring					
People from outside the home can come in for events					
The home is close to where relatives live					
People who live in the home are helped to do things outside the home					

8a) Are there any other features that you think help to make a good quality Care Home that are not listed above?

The future of Boniface House

When considering the future of each of the home we believe there are three different options that need to be considered.

The first option would be to make no change to the existing facilities; it is highly likely that this would result in the utilisation of the care home continuing to decline and the service would have increasing difficulty in providing safe staffing levels. The condition of the building is likely to result in an issue similar to the water leak which happened in October 2022, and this may result in residents needing to be moved to alternate provision at the point of crisis.

The second option would be investment in remodelling the home; the council could invest in the remodelling of the care home to create ensuite capacity and address the current structural deficits the building has which means it is not possible to provide care for people with more complex and higher-level needs. This level of work would require the residents to be relocated for the duration of the redevelopment which it is likely would take a significant amount of time to complete. Any redevelopment of the home within its existing footprint would reduce the number of rooms, thus increasing the cost that would need to be charged for the provision of care.

The third option would be to implement a programme of safe closure which would involve, stopping new admissions to the service and recruitment to any staff vacancies within the home. Residents needs would be reviewed and we would work with them and their families to identify alternative arrangements for their care. For the affected staff group we would engage the council's appropriate HR policies and undertake a process of redundancy or redeployment of staff into our other care settings. As far as possible will seek to resettle people with the redeployed staff into Council delivered homes to support continuity of care, friendship groups and the change in environment and care arrangements as much as possible.

9) Approach 1 – No change.

The first approach would be to make no change to the existing facilities, and for the home to continue to operate in the same manner that they do now.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this approach.

Please tick (✓) relevant answer

Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither agree or disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't Know	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please tell us why?

10) Approach 2 – Refurbish/ redevelop to facilitate new models of care.

The second approach would be to invest in remodelling the home to address existing structural deficiencies and improve the facilities available for residents of the home. This would mean people living in the home would need to be relocated for the duration of the building work and that the remodelled home would operate at a reduced capacity and consequently need to charge increased rates for the provision of care.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this approach?

Please tick (✓) relevant answer

Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither agree or disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't Know	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please tell us why?

11) Approach 3 – Implement safe closure programme.

The third approach would be to implement a safe closure programme; this would result in stopping new admissions to the home and supporting residents to find suitable accommodation. It would also mean undertaking a process of redeployment or redundancy with the current staff group. The council would however attempt to, as far as possible, resettle people with their friendship groups and redeployed staff.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this approach?

Please tick (✓) relevant answer

Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither agree or disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't Know	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please tell us why?

12) Do you have an alternative option we should consider for the future of Boniface House Care Home?

Please tick (✓) relevant answer

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you said "Yes", please tell us what this is:

13) Is there anything else you think we should consider as part of the above-mentioned proposed options?

14) Do you have any other comments you would like to make?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Please return it in the pre-paid envelope (no stamp required) by 17th July 2023 to:

Consultation on future of Boniface House 2023
Assistant Director – Safeguarding & Wellbeing Services
Boniface House
Spratton Road
Brixworth
Northampton
Northamptonshire
NN6 9DS



Equality Screening Assessment

The Equality Screening Assessment form must be completed to evidence what impact the proposal may have on equality groups within our community or workforce. Any proposal that results in a negative impact must have a full Equality Impact Assessment completed before approval is sought.

1: Proposal

Requirement	Detail
Title of proposal	The closure of Boniface House
Type of proposal: New policy / change to policy / new service / change to service / removal of service / project / event	Removal of Service
What is the objective of this proposal?	<p>The overall objective of this proposal is to undertake a safe closure programme of the councils residential care provision at Boniface House, Brixworth.</p> <p>The service provides long term residential care for older people and currently houses 13 people with a range of care and support needs.</p>
Has there been any consultation on this proposal? (list all the groups/ communities, including dates)	Residents, their families and carers were consulted as part of a public consultation of stakeholders which took place between 3 rd July 2023 and 30 th July 2023.

Requirement	Detail
	<p>The consultation focused on developing an understanding of the views stakeholders had, and the impact of three options which were being considered in relation to the future of Boniface House. These options were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make no changes to the service • To invest in remodelling the home • To undertake a safe closure programme
<p>Did the consultation on this proposal highlight any positive or negative impact on protected groups? (if yes, give details)</p>	<p>The detailed outcome of consultation can be found at appendix A.</p> <p>Whilst the consultation identified that this proposal would be unsettling for residents affected by it no adverse impacts were identified on the basis of any of the identified protected characteristics.</p>
<p>What processes are in place to monitor and review the impact of this proposal?</p>	<p>There are several processes in place to monitor and review the impact of the proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly project transformation meetings with project team members from a cross section of specialisms • Weekly briefing updates at Senior Leadership Team • Regular meetings with Trade Union representatives <p>In addition to this residents care needs will be reassessed by our Social Work teams and alternative care and support will be sourced to meet the individual needs of each resident.</p>
<p>Who will approve this proposal?</p>	<p>The proposal will follow the councils established governance process for making a key decision with Cabinet required to provide final sign off for the proposal</p>

2: Equality Consideration

Consider in turn each protected group to ensure we meet our legal obligations of the Equality Act (2010).

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include factual evidence of how some people in this group may be affected. • Consider the outcomes and processes. • Does this seek to eliminate discrimination? • Does this promote fostering good relations? 	Changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes can be made to mitigate any negative impact. • Are there opportunities to remove possible barriers or disadvantages that a group may face. 	Impact Delete as appropriate. There can be more than one answer per protected group.
Age Different age groups that may be affected by the proposal in different ways.	According to social care data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 % of the residents are aged between 18 to 30 years • 0 % of the residents are aged between 31 to 54 years • 0 % of the residents are aged between 55 and 59 years • 0% of the residents are aged between 60 and 64 years • 100 % of the residents are aged 65+ Studies show that there is a risk of post move mortality when residents are moved from one care home into another.	All residents will be assigned an allocated worker from Adult Social Care who will complete an update assessment of their needs and support them to find suitable alternative accommodation and care and support which meets their individual requirements. Where residents lack capacity are unable to articulate their needs we will work with their families and carers to understand their needs and support them through the relocation process. Should residents have no family or carer support available we will appoint an advocate to act in their best interests. Where possible we will seek to relocate friendship groups and staff together in an attempt to minimise the disruption of the relocation process and any adverse impact it may have.	Neutral
Sex	According to social care data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 92.30% of residents are female • 7.70 % of residents are male 	All residents will be assigned an allocated worker from Adult Social Care who will complete an update assessment of their needs and support them to find suitable alternative	Neutral

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include factual evidence of how some people in this group may be affected. • Consider the outcomes and processes. • Does this seek to eliminate discrimination? • Does this promote fostering good relations? 	Changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes can be made to mitigate any negative impact. • Are there opportunities to remove possible barriers or disadvantages that a group may face. 	Impact <p>Delete as appropriate.</p> <p>There can be more than one answer per protected group.</p>
<p>Is one sex affected more than another or are they affected the same?</p>	<p>The decision being made will not impact any resident differently on the basis of their sex.</p>	<p>accommodation and care and support which meets their individual requirements.</p> <p>Where residents lack capacity are unable to articulate their needs we will work with their families and carers to understand their needs and support them through the relocation process.</p> <p>Should residents have no family or carer support available we will appoint an advocate to act in their best interests.</p> <p>Where possible we will seek to relocate friendship groups and staff together in an attempt to minimise the disruption of the relocation process and any adverse impact it may have.</p>	
<p>Disability</p> <p>It is likely to have an effect on a particular type of disability? why?</p>	<p>According to Adult Social Care data set:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 61.54 % of the residents have a yes status to having a disability • 0 % of residents have a no status to having a disability • 38.46 % of residents have a not recorded status to having a disability <p>The decision being made will not impact any resident differently on the basis of their disability.</p>	<p>All residents will be assigned an allocated worker from Adult Social Care who will complete an update assessment of their needs and support them to find suitable alternative accommodation and care and support which meets their individual requirements.</p> <p>Where residents lack capacity are unable to articulate their needs we will work with their families and carers to understand their needs and support them through the relocation process.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include factual evidence of how some people in this group may be affected. • Consider the outcomes and processes. • Does this seek to eliminate discrimination? • Does this promote fostering good relations? 	Changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes can be made to mitigate any negative impact. • Are there opportunities to remove possible barriers or disadvantages that a group may face. 	Impact <p>Delete as appropriate.</p> <p>There can be more than one answer per protected group.</p>
		<p>Should residents have no family or carer support available we will appoint an advocate to act in their best interests.</p> <p>Where possible we will seek to relocate friendship groups and staff together in an attempt to minimise the disruption of the relocation process and any adverse impact it may have.</p>	
Gender Reassignment Will there be an impact on trans males and/or trans females?	The Council do not hold this information.	<p>All residents will be assigned an allocated worker from Adult Social Care who will complete an update assessment of their needs and support them to find suitable alternative accommodation and care and support which meets their individual requirements.</p> <p>Where residents lack capacity are unable to articulate their needs we will work with their families and carers to understand their needs and support them through the relocation process.</p> <p>Should residents have no family or carer support available we will appoint an advocate to act in their best interests.</p> <p>Where possible we will seek to relocate friendship groups and staff together in an attempt to minimise the disruption of the relocation process and any adverse impact it may have.</p>	Neutral

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include factual evidence of how some people in this group may be affected. • Consider the outcomes and processes. • Does this seek to eliminate discrimination? • Does this promote fostering good relations? 	Changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes can be made to mitigate any negative impact. • Are there opportunities to remove possible barriers or disadvantages that a group may face. 	Impact <p>Delete as appropriate.</p> <p>There can be more than one answer per protected group.</p>
Race Are people from one ethnic group affected more than people from another ethnic group?	According to Adult Social Care data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 92.30 % of the residents have registered White • 0 % of residents have registered Other White • 7.70 % of residents have registered Black / African / Caribbean / Black British – African • 0 % of residents have registered Other Ethnic Group • 0 % of residents have no ethnicity registration recorded <p>The decision being made will not impact any resident differently on the basis of their disability.</p>	<p>All residents will be assigned an allocated worker from Adult Social Care who will complete an update assessment of their needs and support them to find suitable alternative accommodation and care and support which meets their individual requirements.</p> <p>Where residents lack capacity are unable to articulate their needs we will work with their families and carers to understand their needs and support them through the relocation process.</p> <p>Should residents have no family or carer support available we will appoint an advocate to act in their best interests.</p> <p>Where possible we will seek to relocate friendship groups and staff together in an attempt to minimise the disruption of the relocation process and any adverse impact it may have.</p>	Neutral
Sexual Orientation Are people of one sexual orientation affected differently to people of another sexual orientation?	This data is not held	<p>All residents will be assigned an allocated worker from Adult Social Care who will complete an update assessment of their needs and support them to find suitable alternative accommodation and care and support which meets their individual requirements.</p> <p>Where residents lack capacity are unable to articulate their needs we will work with their families and carers to</p>	Neutral


Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include factual evidence of how some people in this group may be affected. • Consider the outcomes and processes. • Does this seek to eliminate discrimination? • Does this promote fostering good relations? 	Changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes can be made to mitigate any negative impact. • Are there opportunities to remove possible barriers or disadvantages that a group may face. 	Impact Delete as appropriate. There can be more than one answer per protected group.
		<p>understand their needs and support them through the relocation process.</p> <p>Should residents have no family or carer support available we will appoint an advocate to act in their best interests.</p> <p>Where possible we will seek to relocate friendship groups and staff together in an attempt to minimise the disruption of the relocation process and any adverse impact it may have.</p>	
Marriage & Civil Partnership Are people in a Marriage or Civil Partnership treated less favourably?	No impact with this change.		Neutral
Pregnancy & Maternity Are people who are pregnant, or have a baby of 6 months or less, affected by this proposal?	None of the residents are pregnant and none have had a baby in the last 6 months		Neutral
Religion or Belief Does the proposal affect people differently depending on whether	According to Adult Social Care data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 46.16 % of the residents have registered Christian 	All residents will be assigned an allocated worker from Adult Social Care who will complete an update assessment of their needs and support them to find suitable alternative	Neutral

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations:	Changes	Impact
they have or do not have a religion or a belief?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include factual evidence of how some people in this group may be affected. • Consider the outcomes and processes. • Does this seek to eliminate discrimination? • Does this promote fostering good relations? <p>• 15.38% of the residents have registered a no religion</p> <p>• 0 % of the residents have registered a prefer not to say status</p> <p>• 38.46 % of the residents have no Religion or Belief registration recorded</p> <p>The decision being made will not impact any resident differently on the basis of their religious belief.</p>	<p>accommodation and care and support which meets their individual requirements.</p> <p>Where residents lack capacity are unable to articulate their needs we will work with their families and carers to understand their needs and support them through the relocation process.</p> <p>Should residents have no family or carer support available we will appoint an advocate to act in their best interests.</p> <p>Where possible we will seek to relocate friendship groups and staff together in an attempt to minimise the disruption of the relocation process and any adverse impact it may have.</p>	Delete as appropriate. There can be more than one answer per protected group.
<p>Health & Wellbeing</p> <p>1. Health behaviours: diet, exercise, alcohol, smoking.</p> <p>2. Support: community cohesion, rural isolation.</p> <p>3. Socio economic: income, education.</p> <p>4. Environment: green spaces, fuel poverty, housing standards)</p>	No impact to this change.		

3: Equality Impact

Question	Response
What overall impact does the proposal have on the protected groups? If a negative impact is identified in section 2, the response will be a Negative Impact.	Neutral Impact
Does an Equality Impact Assessment need to be completed? (Yes, if any negative impact is found)	No If yes, this Assessment must be adjoined to the Equality Impact Assessment.
Copy attached to Committee Report.	Yes
Copy attached to Options Appraisal. (Business Case)	N/A
Copy sent to Union representatives	Yes

4: Ownership

Question	Response
Department	Adults, Communities and Wellbeing (DASS)
Section	Safeguarding and Wellbeing Services
Lead Officers Name	Neil Cox
Lead Officers Title	Assistant Director – Safeguarding & Wellbeing Services
Lead Officers Contact Details	neil.cox@westnorthants.gov.uk 07734983111
Lead Officers Signature	
Date completed	2 nd August 2023

Completed forms must be sent to the Equality Office via email to equalities@westnorthants.gov.uk

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Equality Screening Assessment

The Equality Screening Assessment form must be completed to evidence what impact the proposal may have on equality groups within our community or workforce. Any proposal that results in a negative impact must have a full Equality Impact Assessment completed before approval is sought.

1: Proposal

Requirement	Detail
Title of proposal	The closure of Boniface House
Type of proposal: New policy / change to policy / new service / change to service / removal of service / project / event	Removal of Service
What is the objective of this proposal?	<p>The overall objective of this proposal is to undertake a safe closure programme of the councils residential care provision at Boniface House, Brixworth.</p> <p>The service provides long term residential care for older people and currently employs 22 people in a range of different roles.</p>
Has there been any consultation on this proposal? (list all the groups/ communities, including dates)	Staff were consulted as part of a public consultation of stakeholders which took place between 3 rd July 2023 and 30 th July 2023.

Requirement	Detail
	<p>The consultation focused on developing an understanding of the views stakeholders had, and the impact of three options which were being considered in relation to the future of Boniface House. These options were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make no changes to the service • To invest in remodelling the home • To undertake a safe closure programme
<p>Did the consultation on this proposal highlight any positive or negative impact on protected groups? (if yes, give details)</p>	<p>The detailed outcome of consultation can be found at appendix A.</p> <p>Whilst the consultation identified that this proposal would be unsettling for staff affected by it no adverse impacts were identified on the basis of any of the identified protected characteristics.</p>
<p>What processes are in place to monitor and review the impact of this proposal?</p>	<p>There are several processes in place to monitor and review the impact of the proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly project transformation meetings with project team members from a cross section of specialisms • Weekly briefing updates at Senior Leadership Team • Regular meetings with Trade Union representatives <p>In addition to this a period of formal consultation will take place with the affected staff group once the decision has been formally approved by Cabinet. During this process all staff members will be invited to a 1:1 meeting, during which they can be supported by their Trade Union representative, where appropriate, to discuss the impact of the proposal on them in more detail and work with both management and HR to address this.</p>
<p>Who will approve this proposal? Committee, CLT</p>	<p>The proposal will follow the councils established governance process for making a key decision with Cabinet required to provide final sign off for the proposal</p>

2: Equality Consideration

Consider in turn each protected group to ensure we meet our legal obligations of the Equality Act (2010).

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include factual evidence of how some people in this group may be affected. • Consider the outcomes and processes. • Does this seek to eliminate discrimination? • Does this promote fostering good relations? 	Changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes can be made to mitigate any negative impact. • Are there opportunities to remove possible barriers or disadvantages that a group may face. 	Impact <p>Delete as appropriate. There can be more than one answer per protected group.</p>
<p>Age</p> <p>Different age groups that may be affected by the proposal in different ways.</p>	<p>According to staff data set:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10% of the staff are aged between 18 to 30 years • 56% of staff are aged between 31 to 54 years • 12% are aged between 55 and 59 years • 12% are aged between 60 and 64 years • 10% are aged 65+ <p>It is recognised that it is statistically more difficult to obtain alternative employment over the age of 55 due to recruiters considering that a) older workers want flexible working hours likely due to caring responsibilities b) are more likely to have their own health issues and c) have little or no IT skills.</p>	<p>We will provide and brief staff on the Council's Redeployment Policy and Procedure and actively seek to redeploy staff into vacant posts within the council.</p> <p>We will provide 1:1 support session to staff as requested.</p> <p>We will share current vacancies within West Northants Council.</p> <p>We will arrange additional support from Unison to provide wellbeing sessions to staff (if requested) in addition to specific union support.</p> <p>We will arrange a briefing session with the Department for Work and Pensions for staff who are at-risk of redundancy.</p> <p>We will offer support in applying for jobs and attending interviews through our iLearn programme.</p> <p>We will allocate protected time to all staff (approved by their supervisor) to complete application forms.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include factual evidence of how some people in this group may be affected. • Consider the outcomes and processes. • Does this seek to eliminate discrimination? • Does this promote fostering good relations? 	Changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes can be made to mitigate any negative impact. • Are there opportunities to remove possible barriers or disadvantages that a group may face. 	Impact <p>Delete as appropriate.</p> <p>There can be more than one answer per protected group.</p>
Sex Is one sex affected more than another or are they affected the same?	<p>We know that despite the Equality Act some people feel they will be discriminated against due to their gender identity when applying for jobs or attending interviews.</p> <p>According to staff data set:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 95% of staff are female • 5% of staff are male <p>We acknowledge that being put at risk can be a stressful experience for workers who may have caring responsibilities, which according to YouGov data typically impact females more than males.</p>	<p>We will provide and brief staff on the Council’s Redeployment Policy and Procedure.</p> <p>We will provide 1:1 support session to staff as requested.</p> <p>We will share current vacancies within West Northants Council.</p> <p>We will arrange additional support from Unison to provide wellbeing sessions to staff (if requested) in addition to specific union support.</p> <p>We will arrange a briefing session with the Department for Work and Pensions for staff who are at-risk of redundancy.</p> <p>We will offer support in applying for jobs and attending interviews through our iLearn programme.</p> <p>We will allocate protected time to all staff (approved by their supervisor) to complete application forms.</p>	Neutral
Disability It is likely to have an effect on a particular type of disability? why?	<p>Despite the Equality Act we know that some disabled people feel they will be discriminated against due to their impairments when applying for jobs or attending interviews.</p> <p>According to staff data set:</p>	<p>We will provide and brief staff on the Council’s Redeployment Policy and Procedure.</p> <p>We will provide 1:1 support session to staff as requested.</p>	Neutral

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include factual evidence of how some people in this group may be affected. • Consider the outcomes and processes. • Does this seek to eliminate discrimination? • Does this promote fostering good relations? 	Changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes can be made to mitigate any negative impact. • Are there opportunities to remove possible barriers or disadvantages that a group may face. 	Impact <p>Delete as appropriate.</p> <p>There can be more than one answer per protected group.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2% of the staff have a yes status to having a disability • 52% of staff have a no status to having a disability • 46% of staff have a not recorded status to having a disability <p>We acknowledge that introducing a new place of work can be difficult for employees with impairments.</p>	<p>We will share current vacancies within West Northants Council.</p> <p>We will arrange additional support from Unison to provide wellbeing sessions to staff (if requested) in addition to specific union support.</p> <p>We will arrange a briefing session with the Department for Work and Pensions for staff who are at-risk of redundancy.</p> <p>We will offer support in applying for jobs and attending interviews through our iLearn programme.</p> <p>We will allocate protected time to all staff (approved by their supervisor) to complete application forms.</p>	
Gender Reassignment Will there be an impact on trans males and/or trans females?	<p>We know that despite the Equality Act some people feel they will be discriminated against due to their gender identity when applying for jobs or attending interviews.</p> <p>The Council do not hold this information.</p>	<p>We will provide and brief staff on the Council's Redeployment Policy and Procedure.</p> <p>We will provide 1:1 support session to staff as requested.</p> <p>We will share current vacancies within West Northants Council.</p>	Neutral

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include factual evidence of how some people in this group may be affected. • Consider the outcomes and processes. • Does this seek to eliminate discrimination? • Does this promote fostering good relations? 	Changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes can be made to mitigate any negative impact. • Are there opportunities to remove possible barriers or disadvantages that a group may face. 	Impact <p>Delete as appropriate.</p> <p>There can be more than one answer per protected group.</p>
		<p>We will arrange additional support from Unison to provide wellbeing sessions to staff (if requested) in addition to specific union support.</p> <p>We will arrange a briefing session with the Department for Work and Pensions for staff who are at-risk of redundancy.</p> <p>We will offer support in applying for jobs and attending interviews through our iLearn programme.</p> <p>We will allocate protected time to all staff (approved by their supervisor) to complete application forms.</p>	
Race Are people from one ethnic group affected more than people from another ethnic group?	<p>We know that despite the Equality Act that some Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic people feel they will be discriminated against due to their race when applying for jobs or attending interviews.</p> <p>According to staff data set:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 59% of the staff have registered White • 6% of staff have registered Other ethnic group • 3% of staff have registered Black / African / Caribbean / Black British – African 	<p>We will provide and brief staff on the Council’s Redeployment Policy and Procedure.</p> <p>We will provide 1:1 support session to staff as requested.</p> <p>We will share current vacancies within West Northants Council.</p> <p>We will arrange additional support from Unison to provide wellbeing sessions to staff (if requested) in addition to specific union support.</p> <p>We will arrange a briefing session with the Department for Work and Pensions for staff who are at-risk of redundancy.</p>	Neutral

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include factual evidence of how some people in this group may be affected. • Consider the outcomes and processes. • Does this seek to eliminate discrimination? • Does this promote fostering good relations? 	Changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes can be made to mitigate any negative impact. • Are there opportunities to remove possible barriers or disadvantages that a group may face. 	Impact <p>Delete as appropriate.</p> <p>There can be more than one answer per protected group.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 32% of staff have no ethnicity registration recorded 	<p>We will offer support in applying for jobs and attending interviews through our iLearn programme.</p> <p>We will allocate protected time to all staff (approved by their supervisor) to complete application forms.</p>	
Sexual Orientation Are people of one sexual orientation affected differently to people of another sexual orientation?	<p>We know that despite the Equality Act that some people feel they will be discriminated against due to their sexual orientation when applying for jobs or attending interviews.</p> <p>According to staff data set:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 58% of the staff have registered Heterosexual • 2% of the staff have registered Homosexual • 2% of staff preferred not to say • 38% of staff have no sexual orientation recorded <p>No impact with this change.</p>	<p>We will provide and brief staff on the Council's Redeployment Policy and Procedure.</p> <p>We will provide 1:1 support session to staff as requested.</p> <p>We will share current vacancies within West Northants Council.</p> <p>We will arrange additional support from Unison to provide wellbeing sessions to staff (if requested) in addition to specific union support.</p> <p>We will arrange a briefing session with the Department for Work and Pensions for staff who are at-risk of redundancy.</p> <p>We will offer support in applying for jobs and attending interviews through our iLearn programme.</p>	Neutral


Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include factual evidence of how some people in this group may be affected. • Consider the outcomes and processes. • Does this seek to eliminate discrimination? • Does this promote fostering good relations? 	Changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes can be made to mitigate any negative impact. • Are there opportunities to remove possible barriers or disadvantages that a group may face. 	Impact <p>Delete as appropriate.</p> <p>There can be more than one answer per protected group.</p>
		<p>We will allocate protected time to all staff (approved by their supervisor) to complete application forms.</p>	
Marriage & Civil Partnership Are people in a Marriage or Civil Partnership treated less favourably?	<p>No impact with this change.</p>		
Pregnancy & Maternity Are people who are pregnant, or have a baby of 6 months or less, affected by this proposal?	<p>We know that despite the Equality Act that some people feel they will be discriminated against due to being pregnant or just recently had a baby when applying for jobs or attending interviews.</p> <p>According to staff data we have no employees currently on maternity leave and no employees who have recently returned from maternity leave and is working to an agreed flexible working pattern.</p>	<p>All staff are being provided with the same support in terms of being advised of job vacancies both internally and outside the organisation. In terms of redeployment opportunities within WNC we will consider and take into account existing flexible working arrangements on a case-by-case basis.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>
Religion or Belief Does the proposal affect people differently depending on whether	<p>We know that despite the Equality Act that some people feel they will be discriminated against due to their religion or belief or none when applying for jobs or attending interviews.</p>	<p>We will provide and brief staff on the Council's Redeployment Policy and Procedure.</p> <p>We will provide 1:1 support session to staff as requested.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include factual evidence of how some people in this group may be affected. • Consider the outcomes and processes. • Does this seek to eliminate discrimination? • Does this promote fostering good relations? 	Changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes can be made to mitigate any negative impact. • Are there opportunities to remove possible barriers or disadvantages that a group may face. 	Impact <p>Delete as appropriate.</p> <p>There can be more than one answer per protected group.</p>
they have or do not have a religion or a belief?	According to staff data set: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31% of the staff have registered Christian • 5% of the staff have registered Buddhist • 2% of the staff have registered Muslim • 2% of the staff have registered Other • 19% of staff have no Religion or Belief registration recorded • 41% of staff have no registered religion 	<p>We will share current vacancies within West Northants Council.</p> <p>We will arrange additional support from Unison to provide wellbeing sessions to staff (if requested) in addition to specific union support.</p> <p>We will arrange a briefing session with the Department for Works and Pensions for staff who are at-risk of redundancy.</p> <p>We will offer support in applying for jobs and attending interviews through our iLearn programme.</p> <p>We will allocate protected time to all staff (approved by their supervisor) to complete application forms.</p>	
Health & Wellbeing <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Health behaviours: diet, exercise, alcohol, smoking. 2. Support: community cohesion, rural isolation. 3. Socio economic: income, education. 4. Environment: green spaces, fuel poverty, housing standards) 	No impact to this change.		

3: Equality Impact

Question	Response
What overall impact does the proposal have on the protected groups? If a negative impact is identified in section 2, the response will be a Negative Impact.	Neutral Impact
Does an Equality Impact Assessment need to be completed? (Yes, if any negative impact is found)	No If yes, this Assessment must be adjoined to the Equality Impact Assessment.
Copy attached to Committee Report.	Yes
Copy attached to Options Appraisal. (Business Case)	N/A
Copy sent to Union representatives	Yes

4: Ownership

Question	Response
Department	Adults, Communities and Wellbeing (DASS)
Section	Safeguarding and Wellbeing Services
Lead Officers Name	Neil Cox
Lead Officers Title	Assistant Director – Safeguarding & Wellbeing Services
Lead Officers Contact Details	neil.cox@westnorthants.gov.uk 07734983111
Lead Officers Signature	
Date completed	2 nd August 2023

Completed forms must be sent to the Equality Office via email to equalities@westnorthants.gov.uk

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

19 SEPTEMBER 2023

CABINET MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY AND ENGAGEMENT AND REGULATORY SERVICES: COUNCILLOR DAVID SMITH

Report Title	Health Protection Service, Food & Feed Standards Service, Spray Paint Enforcement and the Tobacco Enforcement Plans 2023-24
Report Author	Ed Cooke, Head of Health Protection and Business Support edward.cooke@westnorthants.gov.uk Carol Gamble, Head of Trading Standards and Licensing carol.gamble@westnorthants.gov.uk

List of Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	23/08/2023
Chief Finance Officer (S.151)	Martin Henry	23/08/2023
Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	23/08/2023

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Health Protection Service Plan 2023-24

Appendix B – Food & Feed Standards Service Plan 2023-24

Appendix C - Spray Paint Enforcement Plan 2023-24

Appendix D – Tobacco Enforcement Plan 2023-24

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To bring the Statutory plans before Cabinet as required by legislation enforced by Regulatory Services and in accordance with the requirements of the relevant national bodies (Food Standards Agency and Health and Safety Executive). The plans are the Health Protection and

Food & Feed Standards Service Plans, the Spray Paint Enforcement Plan, and the Tobacco Enforcement Plan.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Health & Safety Executive (HSE) issue statutory instructions to local authorities, including the requirement for Council's to produce service plans for Food Safety, Food & Feed Standards, and Occupational Health and Safety. Those plans are shown at Appendix A and B respectively.
- 2.2 In addition to stating the service aims and objectives, the plans detail the demands on the service and how it will be delivered throughout 2023/24.
- 2.3 Under s32 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, the local weights and measures authority is required to consider the extent to which it is appropriate to carry out a programme of enforcement of section 54 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, which prohibits the sale of aerosol paint containers to people under 16.
- 2.4 The Children and Young Persons (Protection from Tobacco) Act 1991 requires the council to annually consider and carry out an appropriate programme of enforcement action relating to age-restricted tobacco controls.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:
- a) approve the Health Protection Service Plan for the year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.
 - b) approve the Food & Feed Standards Service Plan for the year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.
 - c) Approve the Spray Paint Enforcement Plan for 2023-24
 - d) Approve the Tobacco Enforcement Plan for 2023-24

4. **Reason for Recommendations** 4.1 The recommendations are necessary to accord with the requirements of the Food Standards Agency and the Health & Safety Executive.
-

5. Report Background

- 5.1 This report presents the West Northamptonshire Council's Health Protection, Food & Feed Standards Service Plan, Spray Paint Enforcement Plan and Tobacco Enforcement Plans for 2023 - 24.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 It was not possible to produce the final versions of these plans until after 31 March 2023 because they require reports on the achievement of the previous year's plans and data for next year, which were not available until after the year-end.

6.2 The FSA and HSE key requirements common to the plans at Appendix A and B are:

- A plan must be produced that is agreed by elected members.
- Documented policies and procedures must be provided, controlled and reviewed including enforcement policies.
- Officers must be properly qualified and authorised.
- Facilities and equipment must be made available.
- There must be procedures and capacity to fully investigate complaints and/or accidents and/or outbreaks of food poisoning.
- There must be liaison with primary authorities.
- There must be provision for advice and training for businesses.
- Databases of information must be maintained, and records kept.
- Inter-authority auditing and benchmarking must be carried out.
- There must be liaison with other authorities.
- There must be a procedure to deal with complaints about officers.
- Inspections or interventions must take place at nationally or locally determined frequencies.

6.3 The plans shown at Appendices A and B, detail the proposed implementation of these elements for West Northamptonshire Council.

6.4 Local Authorities need to follow a firmly defined process in developing their Food Safety and Food & Feed Standards service plans. The FSA are very specific in what they expect to be included in an Annual Service Plan and that does not allow for legitimate departure from their Food Law Code of Practice (COP).

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

7.1.1 The services identified within the Service Plans will be met from existing approved budgets/resources.

7.2 Legal

7.2.1 The Council must meet the legal requirements of various Acts of Parliament as detailed in each of the Service Plans appended to this report as Appendices A to D. Failure to do so would increase the risk of being judicially reviewed in the High Court or the subject of a complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

7.3 Risk

7.3.1 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report, other than the potential legal risk arising from non-compliance with legal requirements, as set out above.

7.4 Consultation and Communications

7.4.1 No consultation with the public and/or agencies/interested parties was necessary. Communications activities that both underpin and promote the objectives and outcomes of all the service plans will be carried out throughout the year to ensure the public are kept informed and engaged about the work of Regulatory Services.

7.5 **Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

7.5.1 None.

7.6 **Climate Impact**

7.6.1 None.

7.7 **Community Impact**

7.7.1 None.

8. Background Papers

8.1 None.



West
Northamptonshire
Council

Health Protection Service Plan 2023-24



Document Version Control

Author (Post holder title): **Ed Cooke, Head of Health Protection and Business Support**

Type of document: **Service Plan**

Version Number: **1.1**

Document File Name: **Health Protection Service Plan 2023-24 v0.1.docx**

Issue date: **TBA**

Approval date and by who (CMT / committee): **19 September 2023 – West Northants Council Cabinet**

Document held by (name/section): **Ed Cooke, Regulatory Services**

For internal publication only or external also?: **To be published on the West Northamptonshire Council Website**

Document stored on Council website or Intranet?: **Council website**

Next review date: **Annual Plan**

Change History

Issue	Date	Comments
0.1 - Draft	15 May 2023	Issued for internal consultation
1.0 - Draft	15 June 2023	Feedback received and incorporated from internal consultees
1.1 - Final	4 August 2023	Feedback received and incorporated from external consultee

NB: Draft versions 0.1 - final published versions 1.0

Consultees

Internal	External
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Links to other documents

Document	Link
None	

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1.0 Foreword

The following plan outlines how West Northamptonshire Council's (the Council) Regulatory Services Health Protection team intends to deliver and improve services from 1 April 2023 through to 31 March 2024.

Regulatory Services sits within the Place, Economy & Environment Directorate and delivers services in the following areas:

- Trading Standards.
- Building Control.
- Health Protection.
- Licensing.
- Primary Authority and Business Support; and
- Environmental Protection and Environmental Crime.

It also provides oversight of the Traveller Unit service hosted by North Northamptonshire Council.

Regulatory Health Protection provides services to a variety of customers in three key areas, namely:

- Food Hygiene/Safety.
- Occupational Health and Safety; and
- Infectious Disease Control.

The Health Protection service plan has been designed to enable effective performance monitoring of the service and to facilitate continuous improvement.

It covers Food Safety, Infectious Disease Control and Occupational Health & Safety as required by the Food Standards Agency, UK Health Security Agency and Health and Safety Executive respectively. In many cases, however, the services are intrinsically linked, and service provision will often be cross-pollinated to maximise effectiveness and efficiency.

The Council's Regulatory Services Health Protection service has been through a particularly challenging couple of years as they move away from engaging in the Covid response to 'business as usual' and move towards the harmonisation of its services throughout the Council transition process. Regulatory Services will be restructured throughout 2023/24 and the three legacy Management Information Systems will be aggregated; both of which will help to create a more dynamic Health Protection team for 2024/25.

Ruth Austen
Assistant Director Regulatory Services

2.0 Service aims and objectives

2.1 Aims and objectives

The Health Protection service aims to:

- assist the achievement of corporate objectives.
- conduct its business in a consistent, fair, and transparent manner.
- target the service in terms of risk to health and even-handedness, so serving to provide a 'level playing field' for local businesses; and
- satisfy consumer expectations of good standards in the district.

It intends to achieve these aims by the following means:

- The use of robust performance and quality management to improve the quality of services.
- The use of technology to improve efficiency and customer access to services by using, where practicable, customer self-service and the contact centre.
- Access to services can be made via the contact centre, website, telephone or e-mail in addition to traditional means; and
- Working with external and internal service areas partnerships.

2.2 Links to corporate objectives and priorities

The Council has a comprehensive service improvement and performance management process. The Health Protection Service Plan feeds into the following priority areas of the Council's Corporate Plan -

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/your-council/corporate-plan>

- **Improved Life Chances: Health, Social Care & Families** e.g., robust implementation of the Food Standards Agency's E Coli O157 Guidance; implementation of the Health and Safety Executive's National priorities, and implementation of Natasha's Law/general allergen awareness raising.
- **Thriving Villages & Towns: Place shaping & Homes** e.g., provision of food safety and health & safety training courses for local businesses/individuals; Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal Health, and Safety Forum.
- **Economic Development: Growth & Prosperity** e.g., provision and development of Primary Authority, Business Support to local businesses and exploration of providing additional commercial services.

Through a wealth of interventions including education/training, promotion, enforcement, audits/inspections, sampling, and consultation, Regulatory Services Health Protection aims to continually improve its services to assist the Council to achieve its corporate objectives.

2.3 Links to Live Your Best Life ambitions

Since Integrated Care Northamptonshire launched its *Live Your Best Life Strategy*, Regulatory Services Health Protection have endeavoured to ensure that they play a key role in the collaborative approach to deliver better outcomes for the people of Northamptonshire through the set of 10 'Live Your Best Life' ambitions. In addition to engagement with the Northampton and Daventry/South Northants Health & Wellbeing Forums, and various Local Area Partnerships, one associated workflow for the Health Protection team is to collaboratively support the numerous Community Ladders across West Northamptonshire.

3.0 Background

3.1 Profile of the Local Authority: West Northants in Numbers

- £917m budget in 2021-22 including schools (£326.6m Net)
- 405,000 population
- 73,000 over 65s (21% increase in over 65s over next decade)
- 91,000 under 18s (2% increase in children aged 0-19 in next decade)
- 174,260 households
- 165 Town and Parish Councils
- 184 schools
- 1,707 Council buildings and assets
- 2,454km roads and carriageways
- £730.00 Median rent for a 2 bed
- £566.30 average wage

3.2 Executive Leadership

Position	Name
Chief Executive	Anna Earnshaw
Assistant Chief Executive	Rebecca Peck
Chief Executive Children's Trust	Colin Foster
Executive Director People, Deputy Chief Executive (DCS and DASS)	Stuart Lackenby
Executive Director, Place, Economy and Environment	Stuart Timmiss
Executive Director, Corporate	Sarah Reed
Executive Director, Finance (151)	Martin Henry
Director of Communities and Opportunities	Jane Carr
Director of Public Health	Sally Burns
Director of Legal and Democratic (Statutory Monitoring Officer)	Catherine Whitehead

3.3 Place, Economy & Environment Directors

Position	Name
Executive Director, Place, Economy and Environment	Stuart Timmiss
Assistant Director, Assets and Environment	Simon Bowers
Assistant Director, Planning and Development	Stephanie Gibrat
Assistant Director, Highways and Waste	Fiona Unett
Assistant Director, Regulatory Services	Ruth Austen
Assistant Director, Highways	Nick Henstock

3.4 Regulatory Services Management

Position	Name
Assistant Director, Regulatory Services	Ruth Austen
Head of Health Protection and Business Support	Ed Cooke
Head of Environmental Protection and Environmental Crime	Karen Pell
Head of Trading Standards and Licensing	Carol Gamble
Building Control Manager	Lee Hunter

4.0 Demands on the Health Protection Service

The following sections outline the principle demands on the Health Protection service.

4.1 Food Safety

As of 1 April 2023, West Northamptonshire Council has **3539** categorised local food businesses. The total number of food businesses has decreased by 327 from the previous year. The risk category profile is as follows

Risk Category	A (Highest risk)	B	C	D	E (Lowest risk)	Total
Number of premises (as of 1 April 2023)	8	126	604	1446	1355	3539
Number of premises (as of 1 April 2022)	8	124	737	1526	1471	3866
Difference	0	+2	-133	-80	-116	-327

Intervention frequency is the minimum that the Council is required to carry out in accordance with the Food Standards Agency Food Law Code of Practice (England).

Food Hygiene Intervention Frequencies

A at least every 6 months

B at least every 12 months

C at least every 18 months

D at least every 24 months

E Alternative enforcement strategy or interventions every three years

During the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, **588** new food businesses were registered with the Council. The high number of new business registrations received when compared to the decrease in the overall number of food businesses would indicate a lot of churn on the ownership of existing businesses.

There are **22** approved premises that are approved to handle, prepare, or produce products of animal origin for which requirements are laid down in Regulation (EC) No 853/2004.

4.2 Occupational Health and Safety

As of 1 April 2023, there are **8601** businesses within the West Northamptonshire district, for which the Local Authority is the Health & Safety Enforcing Authority. These are broken down into the following main groups:

Health & Safety Category	Number of Premises
Retail	1936
Wholesale and warehouses	655
Offices	1695
Catering service	2256
Hotels and camp sites	89
Residential care homes	160
Leisure, cultural and religious premises	607
Consumer services	1023
Other premises (not classified above)	180
TOTAL	8601

Many other local businesses/organisations are enforced by the Health and Safety Executive as laid out in [Is HSE the correct enforcing authority for you?](#)

4.3 Cross-cutting Services

4.3.1 Primary Authority

West Northamptonshire Council hold **32** primary authority partnerships with a range of local and national businesses. The primary authority scheme allows a business to have one regulatory source of advice and guidance and the Council can assure the businesses documented procedures. Other local authorities must take account of advice that the Council has issued, and the Council can block enforcement action proposed by other local authorities if the primary authority partner has followed the published advice. It can issue advice on all aspects of Regulatory Services functions.

5.0 Health Protection Service Delivery 2023/24

The following sections outline the scope of service delivery by Regulatory Services Health Protection.

5.1 Food Safety/Infectious Disease Control

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) principally directs the Food Safety service delivery through its [Framework Agreement](#). The Service Head is Ruth Austen, Assistant Director Regulatory Services. The lead food safety officer is Ed Cooke, Head of Health Protection and Business Support, Edward.Cooke@westnorthants.gov.uk

All members within Regulatory Services Health Protection who have food safety responsibilities shall have ready access to Food Standards Agency information together with relevant legal encyclopaedias and the Council's Legal Services.

5.1.1 Food Premises: Hygiene Inspections

West Northamptonshire Council follows the priority rating system identified in the FSA Food Law Code of Practice (England).

Interventions consist of questioning the food business operator and employees to discover their knowledge of food hazards and ability to control them. In addition to assessing relevant documentation, officers will also physically inspect the food premises, including food items, and observe food handling practices and procedures.

The following table shows the number of food hygiene inspections/interventions carried out during 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Risk Category	A (Highest risk)	B	C	D	E (Lowest risk)	Total
Number of inspections/interventions achieved	12	114	281	272	128	807

The following table shows the inspection profile for the year beginning 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 (Including the backlog of inspections pre-1 April 2023)

Risk Category	A (Highest risk)	B	C	D	E (Lowest risk)	Total
Inspections/interventions due	8	124	389	395	162	1078

Category A premises are those that pose the highest risk; this may be because of the nature of the activities and/or poor operating conditions. The minimum intervention frequency for the different categories of premises is given above. Food businesses receive interventions more than this where required. The Council uses proprietary software (NEC M3/Assure Public Protection) for logging and tracking all interventions. The Management Information Systems (MIS) have yet to be aggregated from legacy Council's, however the Council has an ongoing project to aggregate the MISs throughout 2023/24.

The latest version of the Food Law Code of Practice enables Local Authorities to deal with lower-risk premises (Category D and E) by means other than 'official controls' such as a full on-site inspections. Many establishments rated category D can alternate between either an intervention that is an official control and an intervention that is not an official control of which there are a range of options. Local intelligence will

be used to focus interventions on category D premises. Establishments rated category E can be subject to the an Alternative Enforcement Strategy such as the use of self-assessment questionnaires. Health Protection intends to utilise the flexibility contained within the Food Law Code of Practice to ensure that as many of the premises as possible in this cohort are contacted to ascertain whether there have been any significant changes/to assess compliance (which would then act as intelligence to determine whether a physical inspection is needed).

Revisits are made to food premises where there are food safety matters not broadly complying with Food Law identified during a primary visit.

Hygiene improvement notices will be issued if work detailed on a previous intervention report has not been completed or if there are serious concerns about food safety during a primary visit. The legal notices assist to ensure that improvements are made within a reasonable timescale.

Hygiene emergency prohibition notices are used where there is an imminent risk to health. This would normally lead to immediate closure of the premises or prohibition of a process. Reasons for taking this action could include the discovery of an active pest infestation, the absence of water, or very poor control of food hazards and/or cleaning. The business may decide to voluntarily close in these circumstances; officers would support that approach. A prosecution would be considered against the business involved if deemed appropriate in accordance with the [Council's Enforcement Policy](#).

The outcome of routine food hygiene inspections will be displayed on the Food Standards Agency (FSA) Food Hygiene Rating website (<http://ratings.food.gov.uk/>) and window stickers issued to food business operators in accordance with the National FSA [Food Hygiene Rating scheme](#).

The COVID-19 Pandemic response had a significant adverse impact on the Council's ability to carry out the food safety service throughout recent years. An impact that remains to a greater or lesser extent. To provide support and direction to local Food Authorities, the Food Standards Agency developed a 'Recovery Roadmap'.

The Recovery Roadmap took account of the following points:

- Numbers of 'new' food businesses significantly increased and, although some never started trading and others ceased trading, the risks associated with them remain largely unknown.
- Some existing businesses changed hands while others started up to capitalise on potential additional trade from staycations etc.
- Existing businesses gradually re-opened, many after prolonged closure, as restrictions on businesses in the hospitality sector on eating onsite were lifted, while others continued to diversify activities to adapt to ongoing changes in the market.
- The highest risk establishments – which represent a relatively small proportion of the total number of establishments – may have missed one, two or, in a very small number of cases, three planned interventions.
- Local Authority resources were diverted during the pandemic to activities related to reducing the spread of COVID-19.
- Local Authorities were anecdotally reporting that significant resource is currently being used for non-statutory, but important, wider government priorities such as export certification.
- Local Authorities were also anecdotally reporting that in some cases hygiene standards had reduced since the onset of the pandemic.

The following table illustrates the FSA expectations and timescales included within the Recovery Roadmap.

Key Milestone Date	Target
By 30 June 2022	All establishments rated Category B for hygiene to have received an onsite intervention
By 30 September 2022	All establishments rated Category C for food hygiene and less than broadly compliant to have received an onsite intervention
By 31 December 2022	All establishments rated Category D for hygiene and less than broadly compliant to have received an onsite intervention
By 31 March 2023	All establishments rated Category C for hygiene and broadly compliant or better to have received an onsite intervention

The Health Protection successfully achieved all the milestones and to some extent exceeded the expectations by carrying out interventions that were not strictly required by the Recovery Roadmap. However, in numerous cases, that unearthed a drop in standards which has led to robust enforcement actions being taken which can often be very time-consuming. As a result, there remains backlog of interventions including unrated premises that needs tackling. The Council can no longer benefit from the Recovery Roadmap and must now align its food hygiene intervention regime back to the full requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice.

In tackling the backlog, the team will apply a risk-based and intelligence led approach to the prioritisation of interventions that will assist to re-align with the Food Law Code of Practice. The following hierarchical approach shall be taken throughout 2023/24:

1. All establishments rated Category A, B, C and D (less than broadly compliant) shall receive an onsite intervention
2. All establishments subject to new business registrations, that have been triaged to be 'high risk' shall receive an onsite intervention
3. Within capacity, through the use of local intelligence, a number of broadly compliant establishments rated Category D and E shall receive an onsite intervention
4. Within capacity, and through using local intelligence, flexible approaches contained within the Food Law Code of Practice e.g. alternative enforcement strategy (AES) interventions, shall be used
5. Within capacity, establishments subject to new business registrations, that have been triaged to be 'low risk' shall receive an onsite intervention

Although there are many confounding factors to consider such as the need to ensure robust enforcement against poor performing food businesses, there are 271 more programmed food hygiene inspections/interventions due to be completed for 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 (including the backlog n=1078) than was achieved during 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 (n=807). That must be addressed to ensure compliance with the Food Law Code of Practice. The following table indicates how the circa. 800 programmed food hygiene inspections/interventions within existing capacity shall be distributed.

Risk Category	A (Highest risk)	B	C	D	E (Lowest risk)	Total
Inspections/ interventions due 2023/24	8	124	389	395	162	1078
Target (based on 2022/23 achievement)	8	124	389	286	0	807
Difference	0	0	0	109	162	271

The Council's Regulatory Services shall be restructuring throughout 2023/24. Although that process does create challenges, it also creates an opportunity to align the Health Protection team to a better place to be able to fulfil the requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice. It is anticipated that will include:

- Recruitment to vacant posts
- Maximisation of workforce development, including
 - Utilisation of the available apprenticeship schemes
 - Enabling team members to progress to the base line qualifications i.e. The Higher Certificate in Food Premises Inspection
 - Developing competence at the various levels throughout the team
 - Developing technical officer and business support competency to support suitably qualified officers and to carry out AES interventions
- Cross-team pollination e.g., developing the competence of officers in other teams to carry out interventions
- A fundamental review of the need for additional resources required to tackle the backlog of interventions including unrated premises address the backlog, including the possibility of needing to contract in extra capacity throughout the year.

The Lead Food Officer shall ensure that all FSA expectations are met and exceeded if resources allow.

5.1.2 Support to Businesses

The Council shall provide appropriate and competent advice/support, through a variety of different means, to local businesses and residents, within its resource constraints. Much of the advice is made available through the Council website - www.westnorthants.gov.uk. Some charged discretionary enhanced support services are offered and it is the Regulatory Services Health Protection intention to expand those services.

Food safety/hygiene advice shall be routinely given as part of an intervention and is complimented using mail shots, national/local campaigns and promotional activities when required. Advice is also given out upon request when food business registration may well not be required e.g., pop-up food outlets.

5.1.3 Complaints about food, food hygiene/safety

It is the Authority's intention to consider all complaints concerning food, food hygiene/safety. These complaints are commonly about the following matters:

- Foreign objects in food, such as wood, metal, insects, mould etc.
- Unhygienic food premises and their staff.
- Unsafe food safety practices such as provision of undercooked food, lack of protective clothing and lack of hand washing.

5.1.4 Food and Water Sampling

Food sampling is an integral part of the food hygiene intervention process. We also lead on the sampling and enforcement of Private Water Supplies.

Microbiological food sampling is carried out to meet 4 main objectives:

- To determine the current state of food safety in the West Northamptonshire Area as part of a structured sampling programme.
- To improve the effectiveness of food hygiene interventions.
- To investigate suspect cases of food poisoning where a link with a local business or food is suspected; and
- To investigate complaints about food.

The Council's food sampling plan shall link with the European Commission and the United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Regional sampling plan as well as taking account of local/County trends and needs.

Number of microbiological samples taken

Year	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Number	75	51	198

5.1.5 Infectious Disease Control

General Practitioners across the Area report suspected cases of food poisoning to the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA). The local medical microbiological laboratories also advise the UKHSA of positive results for food poisoning and food/water related illness. In turn, Regulatory Services Health Protection are advised so that they can carry out investigations to discover the source of infection and prevent further potential disease spread.

Documented procedures are available for the management of the investigations of outbreaks of food borne infectious disease. The procedures were developed and are regularly reviewed with the UKHSA and other Regional Local Authorities.

Number of infectious disease cases (informal and formally notified)

Year	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Number	237	154	231

5.1.6 Food Safety Incidents

The Food Standards Agency declares National food safety incidents from time to time and notifies food authorities of these by means of a 'Food Alert' procedure. Some notifications require directed action, whereas others are for information only. The Council ensures that all directed action is carried out.

5.1.7 Liaison with other Organisations

The Council is a member of the Northamptonshire Food Liaison Group. The group aims to:

- Act as a forum to provide consistency of enforcement.
- Act as a facilitator for benchmarking activities; and
- Provide exercises to facilitate consistency.

Other links include:

- United Kingdom Health Security Agency (East Midlands)
- Building and Development Control Service (regarding any development within the district).
- Care Quality Commission (regarding residential care home).
- Office for Standards in Education (regarding school and nursery provision).
- Police and Fire Authority (regarding licensing matters); and
- Local and national area forums, such as the Primary Authority Regulatory Group and the Local Authority Food Hygiene Rating Scheme user group.

5.1.8 Food Safety Promotion and Education

Regulatory Services Health Protection will contribute to the National 'Food Safety Week'. Activities are based around raising public awareness of food safety and hygiene issues.

As a registered training centre, the Council offers a range of both taught and e-learning food safety courses.

Regulatory Services will aim to maximise the use of social media platforms and enhanced use of the Council's website to promote and educate on food safety matters.

5.2 Occupational Health and Safety

The Health and Safety Executive continues to encourage Local Authorities to focus the attention of their interventions on the National Priority Areas as set out in its document [LAC 67/2 \(Revision 12\) 2023/24 \(hse.gov.uk\)](#).

5.2.1 Occupational Health and Safety Interventions

Regulatory Services Health Protection has committed to engage in the following priority areas during 2023/24.

Warehousing and workplace transport: To ensure that health, safety, and welfare is effectively managed at local workplaces where warehousing and/or workplace transport is identified as poorly managed. That shall be done through targeted interventions, including focussed inspection/audit, and raising awareness through education/advice. Regulatory Services Health Protection will facilitate workplace transport focussed Health, Safety and Wellbeing forums.

Gas safety in commercial catering premises: To ensure proper installation, maintenance, and inspection by a competent Gas Safe registered engineer to ensure that staff and customers at commercial catering premises are protected from exposure to carbon monoxide gas. That shall be done through a range of interventions to raise awareness, with local duty holders, of the risks of exposure to carbon monoxide in commercial kitchens from badly installed or faulty appliances; poor ventilation resulting in lack of make-up air to support combustion; and/or inadequate extraction systems.

Electrical safety in hospitality settings: To ensure that any electrical equipment which has the potential to cause injury is maintained in a safe condition. That shall be done through raising awareness to improve standards of compliance. Duty holders shall be reminded to ensure both the fixed installation and electrical appliances are inspected by a competent person at appropriate intervals.

Large scale public gatherings, including inflatable amusement devices: To ensure that health, safety, and welfare is effectively managed during large local public events. That shall be done through active engagement with the [West and North Northamptonshire Event Safety Partnership](#) and facilitating Safety Advisory Groups as necessary.

Safety at Sports Grounds: to ensure the safety of the public attending designated sports grounds and those grounds with regulated grandstands. Regulatory Services Health Protection will advise, monitor, review and enforce as necessary the terms and conditions specified in safety certificates, engage with partner agencies (including participation in Safety Advisory Groups) and follow direction from the Sports Ground Safety Authority to ensure the sports ground operators are meeting their responsibilities.

5.2.2 Support to Businesses

The Council shall provide appropriate and competent advice/support, through a variety of different means, to local businesses and residents, within its resource constraints. Much of the advice is made available through the Council website - www.westnorthants.gov.uk. Some charged discretionary enhanced support services are offered.

Occupational health, safety and welfare advice shall be routinely given as part of an intervention and is complimented using mail shots, national/local campaigns and promotional activities when required.

5.2.3 Complaints about health, safety, and welfare at work

It is the Authority's intention to consider all complaints concerning health, safety, and welfare at work. These complaints are commonly about the following matters:

- Equipment at work is not safe (guarding missing or electrical problems).

- Workplace is not safe because of defective floors or blocked fire exits.
- Unsafe systems of work – employees are being required to carry out particular jobs or processes which they feel are unsafe e.g., use of chemicals, manual handling.
- Inadequate protective clothing provided.
- Welfare facilities not kept clean or in good repair.

Additionally, members of the public contact the service to complain about conditions they have experienced while visiting shops, restaurants, and leisure premises in the district.

Regulatory Services Health Protection shall assess and respond, where necessary, to consultations under the Licensing Act 2003 and planning consultations.

5.2.4 Investigation of Reportable Accidents/Incidents

Employers have a duty to report certain categories of accidents. Accidents can be reported directly to the Council or to the [Health and Safety Executive's online reporting system](#).

It is the aim of Regulatory Services Health Protection to investigate all reported major accidents in line with guidance issued by the Health and Safety Executive. The purposes of the investigation are to both ensure legal compliance and to make sure that steps have been taken to prevent similar accidents or incidents occurring wherever possible.

Number of reported accidents/incidents

Year	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Number	237	292	233

5.2.5 Liaison with other Organisations

Regulatory Services Health Protection is an active member of the Northamptonshire Health & Safety Liaison Group. The group aims to:

- act as a forum to provide consistency of enforcement.
- act as a facilitator for benchmarking activities.
- provide 'standardisation' exercises to facilitate consistency; and
- provide competent training at reasonable costs for members.

It also liaises with the Police, Fire Service, St Johns Ambulance, East Midlands Ambulance Service, and a range of other partners, to ensure that the major events happening in the district have safety planning very much at their heart. This is a particularly important role as many thousands of people could be placed at risk when event activities are not effectively controlled.

5.2.6 Health & Safety Promotion and Education

In addition to the points stated in 5.2.1 above, as a registered training centre, the Council offers a range of both taught and e-learning health and safety courses.

Regulatory Services will aim to maximise the use of social media platforms and enhanced use of the Council's website to promote and educate on occupational health and safety matters.

6.0 General Service Issues

6.1 Resources

	2023/24 budget
Staffing	£tbc
Transport	£tbc
Supplies & Services	£tbc
Income	£tbc
Net Expenditure	£tbc

6.2 Staffing Allocation

All officers shall be duly authorised in accordance with the delegated authority laid out in the Council's Constitution ([Constitution | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk)). (Senior) Environmental Health Officers have holistic responsibilities for food safety, occupational health & safety, and health improvement. This approach facilitates a broad approach to the protection of the health of the public within the district.

Much of Regulatory Services Health Protection consists of Environmental Health Practitioners and is complimented by Specialist Officers and Regulatory Support Officers. All Environmental Health Officers possess a BSc or MSc in Environmental Health, and many are Chartered Practitioners or working towards this.

As of 1 April 2023, the Council has **15.37** Full Time Equivalent (FTE) to provide the services outlined in this service plan (detailed below). The capacity shall be uniformly split between Food Safety/Infectious Disease Control and Occupational Health and Safety. Unexpected demands on the service, such as vacancies, complex legal cases or the requirement to ensure virulent organisms (e.g. *Escherichia coli* O157) are adequately controlled, have illustrated that lesser-risk interventions may well suffer. Services will be re-prioritised to high-risk based interventions accordingly.

Position	Full Time Equivalent
Environmental Health Manager	1.00
(Senior) Environmental Health Officer	6.65
(Senior) Food & Safety Officer	4.43
Technical/Regulatory Support Officer	3.29
TOTAL	15.37

6.3 Enforcement Policies

An [enforcement policy](#) (the Policy) is in place to cover all environmental health functions. It sets out the general principles and approach that the Council will follow when considering enforcement action.

The policy takes account of the Regulators' Code (the Code) published by the Better Regulation Delivery Office of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. The Code is underpinned by the statutory principles of good regulation, which states that regulatory activities should be carried out in a way, which is transparent, accountable, proportionate, and consistent and should be targeted only at cases in which action is needed.

6.4 Staff Development Plan

Every year development discussions shall be held with all members of staff and in light of the service plan objectives, action plans are drawn up for each individual. Action plans detail the training and development needs of the individual to meet service requirements.

Regulatory Services will encourage and support individual officer professional development (including apprenticeships) to facilitate the 'grow your own' approach and help ensure an experienced and competent workforce.

Staff will cascade training received, as appropriate, to increase the knowledge base of colleagues.

Staff will carry out Continued Professional Development to help maintain their competence.

6.5 Quality Assessments

Documented procedures are being harmonised to ensure that the services provided by the Health Protection team are consistent and subject to continual improvement.

Published service standards are monitored on a regular basis.

6.6 Review against service objectives

This service plan pulls together significant information about the Council's Food Safety service activities.

Health Protection team performance indicators, as shown below, shall be reviewed on a monthly basis through one 2 ones with the Service Managers and through the Regulatory Services Managers team meetings.

Indicator Ref	Indicator Name	Target (2023-24)	Report Frequency
HP-01	Establishments rated Category A-C for food hygiene and broadly compliant or better to have received an onsite intervention (cumulative)	90	Monthly
HP-02	Programmed food and environmental sampling takes place (Cumulative)	60	Monthly
HP-03	One news story per month to be shared across appropriate channels (cumulative)	2	Monthly
HP-04	Annual Health, Safety and Wellbeing forum takes place	N/A	Annually
HP-05	Programmed Private Water Supplies sampling visits take place (cumulative)	N/A	Quarterly

West Northamptonshire Council Trading Standards

FOOD and FEED STANDARDS ENFORCEMENT SERVICE PLAN 2023-24

INTRODUCTION

This Plan outlines how the Trading Standards Service carries out its statutory duties to enforce standards for food and animal feeding stuffs. This includes monitoring the composition, labelling, claims, and descriptions relating to foodstuffs for human consumption, materials and articles in contact with food, and feeding stuffs for livestock and pets.

This has been prepared in accordance with the Food Safety Act 1990 Framework Agreement ^{1(April 2010)} published by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). In this plan 'food' should be read as meaning food for human consumption and 'feed' means animal feeding stuffs.

As a result of available resources within the Trading Standards Service, a risk assessed basis (utilising the National Trading Standards Intelligence Operating Model) has been applied to its responsibilities as the Service is unable to meet all the demands placed upon it across its wide remit. This Service Plan does not meet the requirements set out in the Food and Feed Codes of Practice (England). Where indicated, the plan should be read in conjunction with the Trading Standards Service Plan 2023/24 [SP].

1. SERVICE AIMS AND PRIORITIES

1.1 The Service's aims and priorities are reviewed annually and may be found in the Trading Standards Service Plan. The main aim of the Service is to, as far as possible within allocated resources to ensure a safe and fair trading environment in West Northamptonshire. The key priority is to protect our communities, particularly those that are most vulnerable, from rogue trading.

1.2 Corporate objectives and plans
<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/your-council/corporate-plan>

Food Standards work contributes to the Council's priorities by protecting people, by helping reputable businesses to meet their responsibilities, by tackling those who flout the law or act irresponsibly, by helping the market place to operate fairly and competitively, enabling consumers to make informed choices about the food they eat, and by health promotion activity.

From 1 April 2023 the Service will follow the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) instructions following the withdrawal of the Recovery Plan to:

- Carry out due interventions for establishments that are back in the routine programme of interventions in accordance with the frequencies set out in the Food Law Code of Practice

(the Code).

- Work towards realigning with the provisions set out in the Code from 1 April 2023 using the full range of flexibilities already offered by the Code. In practice, this may mean continuing to prioritise interventions according to the milestones outlined in the period of the Recovery Plan or the prioritisation of other interventions based on local risk assessment and available intelligence while having due regard for the Code.
- Continue to exercise a risk-based approach to the requirements set out in the Code based on available resource. There is an expectation by the FSA that services should be resourced to ensure they can meet the requirements of the Code.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Profile of West Northamptonshire

West Northamptonshire Council is a Unitary Council which supports residents and businesses across Northampton, South Northants and Daventry. The Trading Standards Service sits within Regulatory Services in this Council.

2.2 Organisational Structure

The food and feed enforcement responsibilities are managed within the Trading Standards Service of the Council's Regulatory Services; see structure chart at Annex 4.

The Service currently has 15 posts, 13 officers, 11.89 FTEs, comprising 6 experienced officers, 2 officers undergoing the professional qualification process and 2 FTE vacant posts. One enforcement officer is currently competent and actively involved in food and feed enforcement.

2.3 Scope

Food and Feed Standards work is only part of the statutory responsibilities enforced by the Trading Standards Service (see list of legislation enforced Annex 3 and the SP). Work is combined with other activities for efficiency and effectiveness.

Statutory Public Analyst services are provided by Public Analyst Scientific Services Ltd.

2.4 Demands on the Food and Feed Service

The premises risk rating scheme utilised is the revised National Trading Standards Board agreed risk scheme.

The Service maintains a database of all businesses identified as affected by Trading Standards legislation.

Food Standards Inspection Premises	As at April 2023 premises¹
High Risk ²	9
Upper Medium Risk	129
Lower Medium Risk	2599
Low Risk	263
Total premises subject to Food Standards Risk	3000

	As at April 2023 premises¹
Animal Feed Premises <i>Livestock and arable farms and other businesses in the feed chain</i>	1599
Registered Establishments ³	602
Approvals	0
Livestock farms	1327

Notes

¹ Numbers will vary throughout the year as the system is updated.

² Risk assessment has been based on the version published by National Trading Standards Board 2013.

³ The numbers include livestock and arable farms, manufacturers, food businesses supplying surplus food for animal feed, and transporters.

Farms register with this Service if they request, such as when audited by a Food Assurance Scheme, and Farms are registered directly by the Service where they are identified as unregistered on inspection/complaint/enquiry.

2.5 Regulation Policy

Food Safety Enforcement will be taken in accordance with the [Council's documented Enforcement Policy](#).

3. Service Delivery

Interventions at Food and Feed establishments

<p>3.1 The authority's policy on interventions</p>	<p>Interventions are in the main visits to businesses for the purpose of inspection and/or sampling of the business to check compliance (frequently encompassing other trading standards legislation that applies including fair trading, age restricted sales, metrology). Recognising the continuity of the food chain it is necessary to consider aspects of animal health and welfare, primary production of food, animal feed, surplus food and animal by-products and food standards that apply to a food or feed business. We work with businesses, offering business advice and primary authority partnerships to assist businesses to improve or maintain their compliance. Intelligence, including complaints, is prioritised for an appropriate response including retaining as intelligence. Businesses are risk assessed according to the method incorporated into the dedicated database, Civica's Authority (APP). This is currently modelled on a risk assessment process designed by the National Trading Standards Board. Premises may have their risk rating raised or lowered according to the assessment of confidence in the business management, which is assessed following inspection or contravention. In Autumn 2023 the FSA intend to roll out a new nationwide Food Standards Delivery model that will change the risk assessment used for food businesses. This will have a significant impact on the work of the Service, whilst we get used to the new model. This year's plan is outlined in Annex 1.</p>
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	<p>Food and animal feed standards enforcement is an integral part of the Service and therefore it is not possible to accurately detail financial expenditure for it.</p>
<p>3.2 Food and Feed Complaints and enquiries</p>	<p>The Citizens Advice Consumer Service is the initial point of contact for most consumer complaints and enquiries on Trading Standards matters. Appropriate complaints are referred to the Service where they are prioritised and may be investigated. We are therefore critically reliant on the availability of that Service, and their competence, to identify the nature of the complaint so that it may be correctly prioritised according to our complaint grading policy. The complaint grading policy has been revised to reflect the reduced resources available and will focus on those matters causing most risk and harm.</p> <p>Therefore, food and feed issues affecting the safety of consumers are prioritised over other food and feed complaints.</p> <p>Complaints about food will be dealt with in accordance with the Compliments, comments and complaints policy and the West Northamptonshire Enforcement Policy</p> <p>The Food Safety Act 1990 Code of Practice directs which complaints are more appropriately dealt with by Food Safety officers in the Environmental Health Service of West Northamptonshire Council Regulatory Services. There is a local memorandum of understanding with the Environmental Health Services of North and West Northamptonshire Regulatory Services to ensure consumer complaints are dealt with appropriately and efficiently.</p>
<p>3.3 Home Authority Principle and Primary Authority Scheme</p>	<p><u>Primary Authority Scheme</u></p> <p>It is Service policy to comply with the requirements of the Primary Authority scheme where we are the enforcing authority.</p> <p>We have delegated authority to enter into Primary Authority partnerships under the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008. The Service offers Primary Authority agreements to eligible businesses, and charges for business advice that extends beyond basic signposting and identification of legal duties. Basic advice is provided to start up and small businesses without charge. The demand is likely to be around 50 enquiries for business advice across the service. The applicable fees are published on our website. https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/trading-standards</p> <p>The Service does not act as Home Authority for those businesses who do not wish to enter into a Primary Authority Partnership, however the Service will provide advice and guidance on a cost-recovery basis. Any referring authorities with issues concerning non-Primary Authority businesses are asked to contact the business directly, conclude their own investigations and notify the outcome to this Service for intelligence purposes. The intelligence may be used on inspection or other regulatory intervention with the business.</p>

<p>3.4 Advice to Business</p>	<p>The Service provides advice to business through inspections, visits, telephone enquiries, occasional mailshots, press releases, the website, and occasional talks.</p> <p>Contact is maintained with the business community by liaising with business organisations.</p> <p>Where appropriate businesses, especially start-up businesses are directed for self-help advice via the Business Companion website, pages on www.gov.uk and the FSA website. More complex issues are dealt with by officers under the business advice policy.</p> <p>The Service, where relevant, signposts business to the SEMLEP Growth Hub.</p>
<p>3.5 Food and Feed Sampling</p>	<p>A Survey programme is being prepared for 2023-24 for food and feed. The Service has a budget of £10,758 for all sampling and analysis (including non food and feed). This budget will be prioritised on a risk assessed basis across all the Service's responsibilities. Samples are submitted to the appointed Public and Agricultural Analyst laboratories and occasionally to other test houses where necessary.</p>
<p>3.6 Food and Feed investigations</p>	<p>Contraventions of food standards legislation are assessed using the National Trading Standards Intelligence Operating Model tasking process that considers appropriateness of enforcement action in accordance with relevant policies. Resource commitments for food standards investigations vary according to the nature and complexity of infringements detected.</p>
<p>3.7 Food and Feed Safety Incidents</p>	<p>Food Alerts are received through the FSA Smarter Communications interface, which is accessible to all registered food officers, and email contacts from the Food Standards Agency. These are monitored by relevant staff. Relevant alerts requiring action are responded to. The authority liaises with other local authorities, trading standards and environmental health to co-ordinate responses to alerts that relate to food standards, including publicity and communication with traders, as required and as practicable.</p>
<p>3.8 Liaison with Other Organisations</p>	<p>The Service is a member of Trading Standards East Midlands (TSEM) which coordinates work on Food Standards, Feed and Agriculture Enforcement across the region where it is appropriate to do so. The Service also has access to a national 'Knowledge Hub' website for specialist officers related to food labelling and feed matters. Regular contacts are maintained with the North and West Northamptonshire Food Liaison Group, where North Northants and West Northants co-ordinate enforcement of food hygiene and food standards. The Trading Standards Manager attends the WNC Regulatory Services Managers Group.</p> <p>Where appropriate, liaison takes place with DEFRA, the FSA, DoH, and the Animal and Plant Health Agency regarding enforcement of animal health and welfare controls and other relevant bodies as appropriate.</p>

<p>3.9 Food and Feed Safety and Standards promotional work, and other non-official controls interventions</p>	<p>The Service maintains website links to sources of advice and has previously produced additional guidance, when appropriate, for businesses and consumers as can be found on our website: https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/trading-standards</p> <p>The primary source of business guidance is supplied by CTSI through the Business Companion website https://www.businesscompanion.info/</p> <p>Businesses are directed to Business Companion as well as government websites such as the Food Standards Agency and www.gov.uk to provide consistent guidance.</p> <p>Media releases will be used to promote food standards issues where appropriate. It is Service policy to inform the local media of all legal proceedings taken by the Service to assist in education of businesses and consumers and to act as a deterrent to those who may act irresponsibly or flout the law.</p> <p>Where appropriate we will seek to liaise with colleagues within West Northamptonshire Council in relation to public health issues relating to food and feed.</p>
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4. Resources

<p>4.1 Financial Allocation</p>	<p>Overall resources allocated to the Trading Standards Service are detailed in the Service Plan. Food and animal feed standards enforcement is an integral part of the Service and therefore it is not possible to accurately detail financial expenditure for it. It is estimated that approximately 80% of the sampling budget is allocated to food enforcement.</p>
<p>4.2 Staffing Allocation</p>	<p>One permanent enforcement staff member is currently actively involved in food and feed enforcement although they are not purely dedicated to food and feed standards enforcement. This officer holds appropriate qualifications and experience, meeting the requirements of Food Safety Act 1990 Code of Practice for food standards and feed enforcement. From time to time, other qualified officers from within the Service and North Northamptonshire (mutual aid) also contribute to enforcement activities. All Enforcement Officers within the Service are required to undertake a range of trading standards obligations some proportion of which could include food and/or agriculture if suitably trained and competent.</p> <p>The Service has two RCO apprentices who will go on to complete the TS qualification, potentially completing either the food or feed element. There are also two vacant Authorised Officer posts which we will look to recruit to or take on a contractor.</p>

	Any business, regardless of business sector, that shows an intentional, reckless, or repeated disregard for the principles of fair or safe trading will be tackled as a matter of priority, where resources allow.
4.3 Staff Development Plan	All officers have an annual appraisal with their Line Manager that identifies their training and development needs. "Refresher" training will be provided for any staff returning to food standards enforcement work. Training will also be given to take account of any new legislation. The Food and Feed Codes of Practice specify revised continuing professional development and training: at least 10 hours relevant to food standards and safety and 10 hours' professional practice; and 10 hours relevant to feed standards and safety during 2023/24.

5. Quality Assessment

5.1 Quality assessment and internal monitoring	Procedures relating to all operational activities, including food and feed enforcement will be reviewed as appropriate during 2023/24 as part of the ongoing transformation of local government services in West Northamptonshire and the restructure of Regulatory Services.
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6. Review

6.1 Review against the Service Plan	A review of Food Standards Enforcement for 2022-23 is attached as Annex 2.
6.2 Identification of any Variation from the Service Plan	Compliance with requirements of the Recovery Plan which was officially withdrawn on 31/03/2023
6.3 Areas of Improvement	The Council continues to embark on a challenge to transform services in the medium/long term. There are strict financial limitations in which it can work. The Service will strive to recruit to the vacant Authorised Officer posts.

FOOD AND FEED STANDARDS INTERVENTION PROGRAMME 2023-2024

All High Risk businesses will receive an intervention visit or where appropriate some other kind of contact.

We will carry out a limited programme of food standards inspections and conduct limited sampling surveys taking into account resource availability, and Service priorities. Complaints and referrals from the public and other authorities and intelligence received from the Food Standards Agency and other sources assist in identifying areas of work as well as the previous history of compliance.

Limited surveys of particular food business sectors will be conducted to assess compliance with the results being considered as to appropriate further action.

There will be additional consequences for the Service as we move to a new Civica Cx management information database. In addition to the intended introduction by the FSA of a new Food Standards Delivery Model in Autumn 2023.

Business sectors Food	Activity	Target Numbers of Premises 2023-2024
FS Planned - High Risk	Annual intervention due	100%
FS - Upper Medium Risk Targeted activities across business sectors. Retail – including National chains (having regard to Primary Authority) and other UM risked businesses	Biennial intervention due Intervention by survey inspection or sampling (visits; mailshot to others) across business types	Work will be tasked based on risk assessment and available resources at the relevant time.
FS – Lower Medium and Low Risk	Intervention by survey, sampling particularly regarding allergen information intelligence from complaints. Use of mailshot if appropriate.	Work will be tasked based on risk assessment and available resources at the relevant time.
FS Revisits	As appropriate	
FS responsive – inspections and other interventions to assess Food Standards compliance	Conducted following complaint, intelligence, visits prompted by other regulatory activities etc.	Work will be tasked based on risk assessment and available resources at the relevant time.

Feed visits

	Target – FSA funded
Manufacturers (A01-8 and R1-4)	0
Co-product (R12)	1
Importer	0
Stores (R9)	0
Distributor (R1-3, R5)	1
Transporter (R8)	2
On farm mixer (R10 and 11)	2
Pet Food Manufacturer (R6)	2
Supplier of surplus food (R7)	2
Food Hygiene at Primary Production	
Livestock Farm (R13)	2
Arable Farm (R14)	0

Farm visits for feed hygiene and/or food primary production may be combined with visits for animal health and welfare complaints or enquiries.

Sampling Activity	Target
Food samples (products submitted for analysis/report)	As appropriate, according to intelligence, complaints and identified trends
Feeding stuffs samples	As appropriate

- Inspections prompted by application for registration under a code that requires Annex II HACCP to be in place. The need for a visit will be assessed individually.
- The value given is an estimated target; actual numbers of such businesses that should be registered under the feed categories are undetermined.
- Samples may be taken in response to complaints and investigations.

Work is continuing to improve database accuracy for food and feed premises.

REVIEW OF FOOD AND FEED SAFETY AND STANDARDS WORK 2022-23

Business sectors Food	Activity	Target Numbers of Premises 2022-23	Actual
FS Planned - High Risk	Annual intervention due	100% (7)	100% (7)
FS - Upper Medium Risk (From a total of 129 premises currently) Targeted activities across business sectors. Retail – including National chains (having regard to Primary Authority) and other UM risked businesses	Biennial intervention due Intervention by survey inspection or sampling (visits; mailshot to others) across business types	100% Work based on risk assessment and available resources.	100% (39)
FS – Lower Medium and Low Risk	Intervention by survey, sampling particularly regarding allergen information intelligence from complaints. Use of mailshot if appropriate.	Work based on risk assessment and available resources.	708*
FS responsive – inspections and other interventions to assess Food Standards compliance	Conducted following complaint, intelligence, visits prompted by other regulatory activities etc.	Work based on risk assessment and available resources.	48
Primary Authority and business advice	Labelling reviews, interpretation advice, advice on developing legislation, advertising practice, complaints and incidents.		BA food 9 BA feed 5 PA food 8 PA feed 0
Food and Feed-related complaints	Food Consumer Referred from partners Feed		63 37 26 6

*Includes updating of food premises database.

Feed visits

	Target	Actual
Manufacturers (A01-8 and R1-4)	0	0
Co-product (R12)	2	1
Importer	0	0
Stores (R9)	0	0
Distributor (R1-3, R5)	0	0
Transporter (R8)	0	0
On farm mixer (R10 and 11)	2	2
Pet Food Manufacturer (R6)	1	1
Supplier of surplus food (R7)	2	0
Food Hygiene at Primary Production		
Livestock Farm (R13)	4	4
Arable Farm (R14)	1	3

Farm visits for feed hygiene and/or food primary production may be combined with visits for animal health and welfare complaints or enquiries.

Sampling Activity	Target	Actual
Food samples (products submitted for analysis/report)	24	38
Feeding stuffs samples	As required	0

Surveys conducted:

Survey	TOTAL SAMPLES	RESULT TYPES	
		Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Allergens Project 2022-23	12	8	4
Milk Allergens in takeaway drinks	12	6	6
Pass Acrylamide Survey	3	3	-

1. Food Standards Summary 2022-23

Background: Staffing

During 2022-23 there was one qualified permanent food officer.

Background: Brexit

The impact of the EU exit has not yet been felt by the Service. There are still issues which may impact going forward but they are not as yet quantifiable. There is the future outcome of the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill which had its first hearing in Parliament in September 2022. In addition, the Windsor framework was introduced in February 2023 and implications are as yet unknown.

Background: Covid-19 outbreak and Intervention visits

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the need for routine food standards inspections was evaluated in light of prevailing FSA Guidance as it developed throughout the outbreak. The guidance was in the form of the Recovery Plan which was officially withdrawn on 31st March 2023.

The prioritisation advised by FSA was found to be very much in line with our own vigilant management of scarce resources.

Background: Management Information Database

The Service received funding from the FSA to cleanse our food database premises in preparation for the introduction of the new Food Standards Delivery Model. It is also something we have been working on in 22-23 in anticipation of our forthcoming change of management information database.

Food Alerts for Action

No alerts received.

Supporting businesses

The Service operates the Primary Authority Partnership Scheme. There are 11 food PA Partnerships and 2 Feed Partnerships.

1. Feed Summary

Feed hygiene, together with hygiene requirements in the primary production of food, continue to be the focus of animal feed interventions. It is closely related to farm animal health and welfare complaints and they are often considered together.

LEGISLATION ENFORCED

The Service has a statutory duty to enforce either all or particular sections of legislation within the majority of consumer protection and fair trading legislation. Additional legislation is enforced where it contributes to achieving the aims and objectives of the Service and Unitary Council. The Service enforces over 70 Acts of Parliament, over 1000 associated Regulations and Orders, and a substantial range of retained EU legislation (EU legislation which applied directly or indirectly to the UK before 11pm on 31 December 2020 has been retained in UK law as a form of domestic legislation).

Accommodation Agencies Act 1953
Administration of Justice Act 1970
Agriculture Act 1970
Agriculture (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1968
Agricultural Produce (Gradings and Marking) Acts 1928 and 1931
Animal Health Act 1981
Animal Health Act 2002
Animal Welfare Act 2006
Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
Business Names Act 1985
Cancer Act 1939
Children and Families Act 2014 (in respect of Sections 91 to 94 only)
Children and Young Persons Act 1933
Children and Young Persons (Protection from Tobacco) Act 1991
Clean Air Act 1993
Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005
Climate Change Act 2008 (in respect of Single Use Carrier Bag charges only)
Companies Act 2006
Consumer Credit Acts 1974 and 2006
Consumer Protection Act 1987
Consumer Rights Act 2015
Control of Pollution Act 1974
Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988
Criminal Justice Act 1988 (in respect of sales of knives to young people)
Development of Tourism Act 1969
Dogs Act 1906
Education Reform Act 1988
Energy Act 1976
Energy Conservation Act 1981
Enterprise Act 2002
Estate Agents Act 1979
Explosives Acts 1875.
Explosives (Age of Purchase etc.) Act 1976
Fair Trading Act 1973
Farm and Garden Chemicals Act 1967
Fireworks Act 2003
Food Act 1984
Food and Environment Protection Act 1985
Food Safety Act 1990
Forgery and Counterfeiting Act 1981
Fraud Act 2006
Hallmarking Act 1973
Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (relating to explosives, petroleum and the classification, packaging and labelling of dangerous substances)
Housing Act 2004
Insurance Brokers (Registration) Act 1977

Intoxicating Substances (Supply) Act 1985
Knives Act 1997
Licensing Act 1964
Licensing Act 2003
London Olympic Games and Paralympic Games Act 2006
Medicines Act 1968
Malicious Communications Act 1988
Motor Cycle Noise Act 1987
Motor Vehicles (Safety Equipment for Children) Act 1991
National Lottery etc. Act 1993
Offensive Weapons Act 1996
Olympic Symbol etc. (Protection) Act 1995
Performing Animals (Regulation) Act 1925
Petroleum (Consolidation) Act 1928
Petroleum (Transfer of Licences) Act 1936
Prices Act 1974.
Proceeds of Crime Act 2002
Protection from Harassment Act 1997
Protection of Animals Act 1911
Public Health Acts 1936 and 1961
Road Traffic Act 1988
Road Traffic (Foreign Vehicles) Act 1972
Solicitors Act 1974
Telecommunications Act 1984
Theft Acts 1968 and 1978
Timeshare Act 1992
Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Act 2002
Trade Descriptions Acts 1968
Trade Marks Act 1994
Unsolicited Goods and Services Acts 1971 and 1975
Video Recordings Acts 1984 and 1993
Weights and Measures Act 1985

Any orders or Regulations or other instruments (whether dated before or after the date of execution of this delegation) i) made thereunder or ii) having effect by virtue of the European Communities Act 1972 (where such orders or Regulations specify the Unitary Council as having an enforcement duty (including references to a feed authority, food authority and local weights and measures authority))

Any offence under legislation, or at common law, which is of a similar nature including offences of aiding, abetting, counselling and procuring, incitement, conspiracy, perverting the course of justice, criminal attempts, assisting or encouraging another person to commit an offence or participation in a crime.

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West Northamptonshire Council

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL TRADING STANDARDS SERVICE

2023-24 Plan regarding Enforcement of Section 54 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 - Sale of aerosol spray paints to under 16's

Introduction

Section 32 of the Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005 places a duty on the local Weights & Measures authority (Trading Standards Service) to consider, at least once in every period of twelve months, the extent to which it is appropriate for the authority to carry out in their area a programme of enforcement action in relation to section 54 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 (which prohibits the sale of aerosol paint containers to a person under the age of sixteen) and to the extent that they consider it appropriate to do so, carry out such a programme.

West Northamptonshire Council is a Unitary Council which, from 1st April 2021, took over the provision of local public services from the aggregated Councils of Northampton, Daventry and South Northamptonshire, and from the disaggregated Northamptonshire County Council. West Northamptonshire Council Trading Standards Service was created from half the disaggregated Northamptonshire County Council Trading Standards Service

Background

Graffiti is the gateway to a plethora of other problems – anti-social behaviour and criminality – and brings with it a huge social cost.

Nationwide, the bill to the council taxpayer for the removal of graffiti is £1 billion a year. The bill to clear up graffiti on the London Underground alone amounts to £10 million a year.

In Northampton, Veolia employ a dedicated graffiti removal team at around £30k per annum and all operatives emptying bins are expected to remove graffiti as they do so. In Daventry and South Northants very little graffiti is reported and most of the removal is dealt with using graffiti wipes and occasionally paint at a relatively low cost. Highways spend around £20k.

Where there are large amounts of graffiti you invariably find neglect; it occurs in an area which isn't cared for or it occurs in an area where members of the public feel uncared for and so feel it is not worth reporting. There may also be anti-social behaviour issues like littering, street drinking, drug use and other examples of criminal damage, like glass broken in bus shelters or other petty vandalism.

2022-23

Following the trend of previous years, the Service has not received any complaints alleging the sale of spray paints to children under 16. Therefore, no test purchasing exercises were arranged.

2023-24

West Northamptonshire Council Trading Standards Service will:

- ❖ Respond to any complaints alleging the sale of spray paints to under 16's by advising retailers of their legal responsibilities and good practice to not sell spray paints to young people under the age of 16.
- ❖ Liaise with Northamptonshire Police and Environmental Protection to gain intelligence around underage sales of spray paints and where appropriate work with relevant partners to reduce the incidence of graffiti within West Northamptonshire.
- ❖ Carry out test purchasing exercises using volunteer underage test purchasers in response to any complaints or local intelligence.
- ❖ Investigate and take appropriate enforcement action in respect of offences under Section 54 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 in accordance with our prosecution policy.
- ❖ Make available a retailer training pack covering all age restricted products.
- ❖ Where appropriate make use of the media to publicise relevant issues.
- ❖ Continue to promote PASS accredited proof of age cards to retailers and also the use of the 'Challenge 25' scheme, whereby businesses are advised to ask for PASS accredited proof of age if the purchaser looks under 25.

Enforcement background

Graffiti is usually regarded as criminal damage under section 1(1) of the Criminal Damage Act 1971. Councils may issue a fixed penalty notice to deal with an offence under section 1(1) "which involves only the painting or writing on, or the soiling, marking or other defacing of, any property by whatever means" (Section 43 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003). Section 1 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) includes articles made, adapted or intended for use in causing criminal damage. It does this by amending the list of offences in section 1(8) of PACE to include offences under section 1 of the Criminal Damage Act 1971. The effect is to give police officers power to stop and search where they have reasonable suspicion that a person is carrying, for example, a spray paint can which they intend to use in producing graffiti.



**WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL TRADING STANDARDS SERVICE
TOBACCO ENFORCEMENT PROGRAMME 2023-24**

Introduction

The Children & Young Persons (Protection from Tobacco) Act 1991 requires the Council to annually consider and carry out an appropriate programme of enforcement action relating to age-restricted tobacco controls including nicotine inhaling products.

The Council, through its Trading Standards Service (WNCTS), has a number of responsibilities with regard to tobacco enforcement including:

- Underage sales
- Supply of counterfeit and illicit tobacco
- Advertising and promotion

The Tobacco Control Plan for England was published in July 2017: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/towards-a-smoke-free-generation-tobacco-control-plan-for-england>

This includes a commitment to reduce the number of 15 year olds who regularly smoke from 8% to 3% or less by the end of 2022.

This should be read in conjunction with the Tobacco Control Plan delivery plan 2017 – 2022 published in July 2018:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/714365/tobacco-control-delivery-plan-2017-to-2022.pdf

The Government had previously stated that a new Tobacco Control Plan would be published in 2022, however in September 2022 the Government said it was considering the recommendations set out in the Khan Review of England's smokefree target (published in June 2022). During September – October 2022 whilst Dr Coffey was Secretary of State for Health and Social Care it was reported that the Government was about to decide against publishing the Plan. No new Tobacco Control Plan has been published to date.

[The Khan review: making smoking obsolete - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/reviews/khan-review-of-england-s-smokefree-target)

The Northamptonshire Children and Young Persons Wellbeing Survey 2022 was undertaken by the Schools Health Education Unit (SHEU) which surveyed Year 8 & 10 pupils. In answer to questions regarding cigarettes and e-cigarettes the following statistics were highlighted (for West Northants only):

		Year 8 (12-13 year olds)	Year 10 (14-15 year olds)
% that have tried smoking	Boys	6	8
	Girls	4	14
% that smoke regularly	Boys	1	1
	Girls	0	1
% that smoke occasionally and smoked in the 7 days before the survey	Boys	1	1
	Girls	0	2
% that have tried vaping	Boys	20	30
	Girls	18	44
% that vape regularly	Boys	3	4
	Girls	2	9

ASH produced a report in June 2021 which concluded that the large majority of 11-17 year olds had never tried (77.7%) or are unaware of e-cigarettes (10.5%).

However the latest data from the ASH-Youth 2022 survey of 11 to 18 year olds in England shows that:

- current smoking prevalence (including occasional and regular smoking) is 6% in 2022, compared with 4.1% in 2021 and 6.7% in 2020
- current vaping prevalence (including occasional and regular vaping) is 8.6% in 2022, compared with 4% in 2021 and 4.8% in 2020
- most young people who have never smoked are also not currently vaping (98.3%)
- use of disposable vaping products has increased substantially, with 52.8% of current vapers using them in 2022, compared with 7.8% in 2021 and 5.3% in 2020

Report on activities 2022-23

From 1/4/2022 to 31/3/2023, this Service received four complaints alleging premises were selling cigarettes to persons under the age of 18. Generally, the level of complaints received has significantly reduced over the past ten years, however this figure is up on the one complaint received the previous year.

The complaints were followed up by an advisory letter to the businesses concerned and the four premises were subjected to an underage test purchasing exercise where they all refused the sale.

After several years of the Service not receiving any complaints alleging the sale of nicotine inhaling products (NIPs) to persons under the age of 18, the latter part of 2021 saw this trend stop with the emergence of new disposable e-cigarettes.

From November 2021, eleven complaints were received regarding premises selling nicotine inhaling products to persons under the age of 18. This trend has increased significantly in 2022-23 with twenty-eight complaints being received regarding premises selling NIPs to persons under the age of 18.

The complaints were followed up by an advisory letter to the businesses concerned before twenty-five premises were then subjected to an underage test purchasing exercise, where four premises sold to the volunteer. Warning letters have been issued to the premises that sold and further monitoring, including test purchasing, will take place.

This work is further impacted by the deluge of reports that many of the disposable e-cigarettes being supplied also exceed the permitted 2ml maximum quantity. TS have seized around 1600 of these non-complaint vapes with a value of approximately £12,500.

The sale of illegal vapes crisis has been recognised nationally with a very recent announcement by the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) pledging £3million in funding to support Trading Standards to tackle the issues of non-compliance. The Chartered Trading Standards Institute and National Trading Standards are now in discussions with DHSC about developing a detailed plan covering what can be delivered.

DHSC proposals include:

- Increased financial support for Trading Standards to increase enforcement action including test purchasing and testing products for non-compliance
- Setting up a centralised task force to help to join up Trading Standards work being done locally

The Local Government Association have also called for a ban on candy flavoured vapes and child friendly packaging and descriptions and the same marketing and display restrictions as tobacco – plain packaging and hidden from view.

Prosecutions

No prosecutions in relation to age-restricted sales were completed in the period of 2022-23.

Programme for 2023-24

WNCTS will:

- ❖ Ensure appropriate resources are targeted at the enforcement of legislation regulating the sale of tobacco and nicotine inhaling products to under 18's.

- ❖ Respond to all complaints alleging the sale of tobacco and nicotine inhaling products to under 18's by advising retailers of their legal responsibilities and good practice to achieve compliance.
- ❖ Respond to all complaints alleging the sale of illegal nicotine inhaling products due to permitted quantities being exceeded.
- ❖ Monitor the display of statutory notices, the restrictions on the display for sale of tobacco products, the plain packaging requirements and the labelling of tobacco products.
- ❖ Using an intelligence led approach, carry out test purchasing exercises of tobacco and nicotine inhaling products **using volunteer underage test purchasers.**
- ❖ Investigate and take appropriate enforcement action in respect of offences relating to the protection of children from consuming tobacco products and nicotine inhaling products in accordance with our enforcement policy.
- ❖ Make available a retailer training pack covering all age restricted products on WNC website.
- ❖ Continue to promote PASS accredited proof of age cards to retailers and use the 'Challenge 25' scheme, whereby businesses are advised to ask for PASS accredited proof of age if the purchaser looks under 25.
- ❖ Where appropriate make use of the media to publicise relevant issues
- ❖ Monitor the availability of illegal tobacco to underage young people and share relevant intelligence with other enforcement agencies eg HMRC.
- ❖ Work in partnership with Public Health, HMRC and National/Regional Trading Standards to raise the profile of tobacco reduction initiatives and achieve relevant outcomes.
- ❖ Consider any available funding streams to promote tobacco work within West Northamptonshire
- ❖ Support any National or East Midlands regional tobacco control projects.



WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

19th September 2023

Clr Malcolm Longley – Cabinet Member for Finance

Report Title	Procurement of WNC Security Services
Report Author	<p>Jessica Hiams, SFM Contract Manager Jessica.Hiams@westnorthants.gov.uk Jason Chambers, Head of Facilities, Public Realm and Heritage Jason.Chambers@westnorthants.gov.uk</p>

List of Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	30/08/2023
Chief Finance Officer (S.151)	Martin Henry	30/08/2023
Other Director	Stuart Timmiss, Executive Director Place, Economy & Environment	16/08/2023
	Simon Bowers, Assistant Director Assets & Environment	18/08/2023
Communications Lead/Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	30/08/2023

List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. To seek authority to procure security services contracts.

2. Executive Summary

- 1.2. On vesting day, WNC inherited a set of arrangements for security service from each of the predecessor councils. Many of these contracts are expiring and replacement arrangements for service provision are needed.
- 1.3. The new contracts would be for specialist areas of work within the security services industry but aggregated over the Council's estate. This is considered to represent the best mix of scale and scope, and should maximise value for money achieved, whilst also supporting social value.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approves the procurement of contracts for security services.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 1.4. To ensure that the Council complies with statutory and regulatory duties.
- 1.5. To ensure as far as practicable that Council properties provide a safe environment for staff and other users.
- 1.6. To maximise cost-effectiveness.
- 1.7. To minimise opportunities for damage of Council assets.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 The Council currently provides security services management and maintenance activity via predecessor councils' contractors. Some of these contracts have been extended to allow for the aggregated re-procurement of activity to cover all WNC's estate. These arrangements will expire on 31st March 2024 and should not be extended further.
- 5.2 The security services industry provides many specialist services. Those currently provided to the Council are listed below:

Key Holding	Intruder Alarm Monitoring	Intruder Alarm Maintenance/Annual Service	CCTV Monitoring
CCTV System Maintenance/Annual Service	Access Control Maintenance/Annual Service	Out of hours Helpdesk	Unlocking
Locking Up	Static Guard	Static Guard Including Dog Handler	Mobile Patrols Including Dog Handler

- 5.3 The requirement for the re-procurement of security services contracts is as shown in the Table 1. The values shown are for maximised use of three-year contracts with an optional one-year extension.

Table 1: Estimated values of security service contracts

Source	Overview	Estimated total value, £m
Former NCC - planned	Various including care homes, children’s centres, libraries, and HQ accommodation including One Angel Square and County Hall	1.70
Former NCC – reactive	Alarm callouts and ad hoc requests	0.14
Former NBC – planned & Reactive	Guildhall, car parks, bus station	1.28
Off contract spend, various services	Identified from ERPG spend review	0.08
Total		3.20

- 5.4 The predecessor councils generally delivered these services through a single bundled contract for each council. Having reviewed the options it is recommended to source activities via a framework of individual lots e.g., alarm monitoring and maintenance, as this provides local and specialist suppliers with greater opportunity to bid for work whilst ensuring that there is sufficient open market competition and providing opportunity for other councils to use our framework. This should maximise value for money and create an opportunity to generate income from accessing the framework.
- 5.5 Managing several individual contracts would increase contract management commitments but this is offset by ensuring value for money via the open market and avoiding the overheads an intermediate contractor would levy on a bundled contract. Thus, it is likely to result in the most economically advantageous position being achieved.
- 5.6 The current contracts provide a range of services to a varying number of properties dependant on the service or building requirement as shown in the tables above.
- 5.7 The proposed approach to supporting local enterprise and social value is to: (i) set minimum response times which necessitate local resourcing, (ii) exclude travel costs from the contracts which necessitate local resourcing, (iii) use the Social Value Act within the procurement and the tender evaluation to seek local investment such as apprenticeships, and (iv) consider the cost implications of the supplier’s management within the tender evaluation.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 The Council has a range of options in the provision of these services. As the Council’s approach to sourcing develops it may be appropriate to make other proposals. However, at present there is a need to promptly secure re-provision of services and in that context the approach set out above is recommended. Options which could be considered include the following:

- 6.2 Option 1: Insourcing of the service. Insourcing decisions are often made to obtain control of a critical production or competency; conversely outsourcing decisions are often made to reduce 'non-core' in-house operations and to reduce some costs, typically by taking advantage of specialist providers, the ability of supplies to aggregate demand and thus produce economies of scale, competitive market forces, and by reducing employment costs. Insourcing can make sense in some cases, notably where the Council has sufficient demand to sustain a level of staffing and expertise in the services in question, and when quality of outsourced provision hard to control. However, the existing contracts for these services have generally operated well and it may be challenging to provide the same quality or reliability of service in-house.
- 6.3 Option 2: Disaggregation of the contracts into small lots. The current procurement strategy relies on aggregating all specific service contracts requirements into single contracts with single specialist suppliers for each field. This is in order to attract the greatest commercial interest from the market and obtain additional value and/or reduce cost through efficiency of scale and minimise the administrative burden on the Council. This approach has previously attracted significant market interest and has provided competitive rates. A disaggregation across sites or areas would increase the time and processes requirement for administration of the contracts and is likely to increase the contract costs too, particularly for small remote sites.
- 6.4 Option 3: Aggregation of the contracts into one or a small number of multi-service contracts. To deliver such an aggregated service is likely to require the principal provider to let a number of sub-contracts for specialisms. This would involve additional costs in the overall supplier managing the sub-suppliers. It would also limit opportunities for small and medium businesses ('SMEs') to participate.
- 6.5 Option 4: Use of a Council-owned or jointly-owned entity (e.g. West Northamptonshire Norse Limited). These are traditionally known as Teckal companies, after the ECJ case which decided the exemption in public procurement law which allows direct awards to entities controlled by a body such as the Council. This falls somewhere between the insourcing and outsourcing options, having benefits such as potential for profit generations from third parties, but without the competitive pressure of a procurement. It would take time and staff resource the Council does not currently have to pursue this approach at this time. As with in-house provision, it may be challenging to provide the same quality or reliability of service.
- 6.6 Option 5: Aggregation of demand across the Council's sites whilst providing lots for specific types of service. As outlined above, this would enable specialist suppliers to bid, without the overheads which come from having a large entity seeking to co-ordinate the units actually providing services. The division into specialist areas would also increase the potential for bids from small and medium businesses ('SMEs') and local suppliers.
- 6.7 Overall, Option 5 is the recommended way of proceeding. It is considered to be likely to optimise the response from the market and maximise the opportunities for social value from the procurement.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

7.1.1 Other than National Living Wage and inflationary increases there should be no increase in spending commitments. The services are ones the Council requires, and the approach is intended to secure value for money in receiving them.

7.1.2 The alignment of all current security services may provide opportunities for savings through economies of scale by bringing the full West Northamptonshire service requirement into individual service contracts.

7.2 Legal

7.2.1 Having appropriate security services helps, both directly and by helping maintaining buildings in a fit state, the Council in to comply with its duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and related legislation.

7.2.2 Due to the value of the contracts, the procurements will generally be subject to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (or potentially the provisions of the Public Procurement Bill if this is enacted and in force in time).

7.3 Risk

7.3.1 The main risk of proceeding is insufficient interest resulting in gaps in service provision and/or poor value for money. The packaging strategy outlined in the report is intended to minimise this risk.

7.3.2 The risk of not proceeding would be that the Council does not have suitable arrangements in place to provide security for its staff, services, and properties.

7.4 Consultation and Communications

7.4.1 No specific consultation has been undertaken. This is not considered necessary given the nature of the procurement proposed.

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.5.1 None.

7.6 Climate Impact

7.6.1 The Corporate Plan for 2021-2025 sets out 6 Priorities. In Priority 1, Green and Clean, the plan states that "We will become the most environmentally friendly Council that residents have ever had, with a clear ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030." Accordingly, contract specifications and tender submission requirements will address climate issues.

7.7 **Community Impact**

7.7.1 The approach to supporting local enterprise and social value is set out in 5.7 above. This combined approach should maximise community benefit from the procurement.

8. **Background Papers**

8.1 None



WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

19th September 2023

**Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Corporate Services:
Cllr Mike Hallam**

Report Title	Coroner's Service contractual spend
Report Author	Sadie Nightingale, Head of Coroners and Registration, Sadie.nightingale@westnorthants.gov.uk

List of Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	30/08/2023
Chief Finance Officer (S.151)	Martin Henry	30/08/2023
Communications Lead/Head of Communications	Nina Cebotari	30/08/2023

List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to explain and seek approval for the procurement of new contracts to support HM Coroner to meet her statutory duties.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report sets out the legal requirements which sit with HM Coroner as well as set out the contracts that we require to enable the Coroner's Service to support HM Coroner to meet those duties. There are additional costs arising from the renewal of those contracts and the contracts sit within the context of the Council's need to update and improve facilities for excess deaths.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 Cabinet is requested to approve the proposed procurement of contracts to deliver a range of services to support HM Coroner to deal with sudden, unnatural, violent, or unknown deaths

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 To enable HM Coroner to carry out her statutory duties.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 Under Section 1 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 (CJA 2009) it cites that it is “A Senior Coroner who is made aware that a body of a deceased person is within that Coroners area must as soon as practicable conduct an investigation into the persons deaths if subsection (2) applies:

- (a) the deceased has died a violent and unnatural death
- (b) the cause of death is unknown, or
- (c) the deceased died while in custody or otherwise in state detention”

- 5.2 Local Authority Statutory Responsibility Section 24 (1) of CJA 2009 it states that it is the LA responsibility to provide the Coroner with her service:

The relevant authority for a coroner area:

- (a) must secure the provision of whatever officers and other staff are needed by the coroners for that area to carry out their functions;
- (b) must provide, or secure the provision of, accommodation that is appropriate to the needs of those coroners in carrying out their functions;
- (c) must maintain, or secure the maintenance of, accommodation provided under paragraph Northamptonshire Coroner’s Service

- 5.3 Northamptonshire Coroner’s Service is a county wide service as the Coronal area combines the areas of the two new local authorities. The Chief Coroner is responsible for this decision not the Councils and therefore this is not a shared service but a single service under the order of the Chief Coroner.

- 5.4 The management of the Coroner’s Service is carried out by West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) with a 48/52 charge back basis to North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) for the operational costs of the Coroner’s Service.

- 5.5 WNC as the lead authority has the responsibility to provide support to the HM Coroner for her to fulfil her judicial function.

- 5.6 This report relates to costs for body transport, body storage/ post-mortem facilities, pathologists, and toxicology contractual spend.

- 5.7 Referrals into the service are largely made by a Medical Practitioner either from the Medical Examiner’s Office at Kettering General Hospital (KGH) or Northampton General Hospital (NGH), or by a General Practitioner (GP). Following a sudden unexpected death in the community a referral into the service is made by Northants Police.
- 5.8 The Medical Examiner Service (ME) was introduced by the Department Health Social Care on a non-statutory basis but is due to become statutory from April 2024. This has been piloted in Northamptonshire since October 2019. It is responsible for scrutiny of all cases that are not directly reported to HM Coroner. The expected benefit of scrutiny of these deaths by the NHS is to reduce the total number of referrals to HM Coroner.
- 5.9 However, with added scrutiny cases, that had not been referred previously are now being referred. By nature, these cases tend to be more complex, and as a percentage of coroners’ casework, the PM rate and the number of inquest hearings has increased. Ordinarily, not all coroners’ casework required a PM or an inquest.
- 5.10 The increased complexity of these cases increases workload for the HM Coroner and WNC staff. As a result, it is necessary to engage medical expert opinion there can also be longer hearings and additional pre-inquest court hearings. This has combined to increase the workload on the Coroner’s Service and the cost of the service.

Transportation

5.11 The below table shows the referrals into the service and post-mortems:

Year	PM total	Total annual referrals into service
2019	922	2542
2020	1022	2555
2021	1129	2326
2022	1131	2502

- 5.11.1 WNC has in place two contracted funeral directors to move the deceased between place of death and mortuary or mortuary to mortuary on behalf of HM Coroner.
- 5.11.2 For North Northamptonshire the Co-Operative Funeralcare based in Corby provide this service. Deceased are normally taken to KGH.
- 5.11.3 For West Northamptonshire, Cooksleys Funeral Directors provide this function. Deceased are taken to either NGH or KGH dependant on the place of death.
- 5.11.4 Leicester Royal Infirmary (LRI) currently provide specialist support for specific cases for the service.
- 5.11.5 When a specialist pathologist cannot be identified locally, HM Coroner can instruct a pathologist/ hospital outside of our local hospital contractual arrangements, to determine a medical cause of death.

- 5.11.6 The current cost is per transfer. The contracted funeral directors undertake a combined total of approximately 120 removals per month from the place of death, into hospital.
- 5.11.7 We are charged per removal or transfer. The charge is £120 per journey. An annual cost for body transport is £170k and over 3 years is at least £510k
- 5.11.8 The Head of Service supported the procurement team have carried out an Expressions of Interest exercise in relation to the Body Movement Contract. Our two current providers have declared a continued interest in supplying the service as a three-year term.

Mortuaries

- 5.12 WNC do not have a public mortuary. WNC is therefore reliant on the NHS facilities to store the deceased and carry out post-mortem examinations. Coroners PM examinations (PME) must be carried out by a registered and licensed pathologist. WNC currently has contracts with KGH and NGH NHS Trusts mortuaries on behalf of HM Coroner to deliver the provision.
- 5.13 The costs for this service are charged per deceased, for the relevant period of time of the storage. The total contracted costs for last year were £382K. The combined contract is due to expire and this request is to extend the current contract for a total of three years (1+1+1). This will see a contract value for three years of £1,150,000 if all three years are required. The Head of Service supported by procurement colleagues has issued an Expression of Interest. NGH/ KGH and LRI have all expressed an interest in continuing with supporting this service provision.

Post-Mortem (PM) arrangements for Northamptonshire

- 5.14 HM Coroner's PM examinations (PME) must be carried out by a registered and licensed pathologist. A pathologist must already be a medical doctor registered with the General Medical Council having undertaken specialist training and accreditation with the Royal College of Pathologists.
- 5.15 PM is no longer a mandatory part of pathologist training and there is a declining number of pathologists trained for this work.
- 5.16 Many NHS Trusts do not support pathologists to perform coroners' PMEs in NHS contract time and since the nationally set fee for PMs has not increased since 2007, many NHS pathologists will not undertake coroners' PMEs. The statutory fee is £96.80 for a standard post-mortem. For a special post-mortem the fee is £276.90
- 5.17 NGH do not employ PM trained pathologists and KGH have one, but they do not undertake HM Coroner PM's. The Coroner Service is reliant on directly appointing their own pathologists and have five pathologists that support the PME work at KGH and NGH. The service has a business continuity plan for agency pathologists and the cost is approximately 3.5 times the statutory fee.
- 5.18 The cost per PME was agreed locally in 2018/2019 at £150 per standard PM including the supply of the final post-mortem report. The fee was above the statutory fee, to attract pathologists to

undertake Northamptonshire's PME's. Additional charges were made by pathologists for histology (biopsies) and court attendance.

5.19 To remain competitive and retain our pathologists the charge per standard PM is set to increase from September 2023 to £250 per PM.

5.20 Based on last year's PME's (1131) the new rate will introduce a pressure of £113K per annum, of this figure, £59k relates to West Northamptonshire Councils 52% share. The ongoing funding requirement will be reviewed as part of 2024/25 budget setting exercise.

5.21 The Service has a Memorandum of Understanding between Pathologist/ HM Coroner and WNC which sets out HM Coroners expectations and standards for timely final PM report.

Toxicology

5.22 In certain circumstances a pathologist may require toxicology to ascertain a medical cause of death and if the death was due to Natural or Unnatural Causes. If the death was natural, the death can be registered. If the death is unnatural, an Inquest is required before death registration takes place. On average 25-30 cases per month require a toxicology test. This service is provided by Toxicology UK and service intends on going out to tender for a three-year contract. The cost per case for toxicology is per case £425.

5.23 Subject to tender and using the current values the cost for a three-year contract will be £459k

6 Issues and Choices

6.1 The proposal is to carry out a procurement exercise to select suppliers to deliver a service between now and 2025. It is proposed to provide flexibility within the contract to terminate earlier if alternative delivery arrangements are established between now and 2025. The contract is therefore on the basis of 1 year with the potential to extend until 2025.

7 Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

7.1.1 This is a niche service with limited choice in available provisions that meet our requirements of an accredited facility by the Human Tissue Authority who are licensed premises for storage and to undertake post-mortem. For the Body Movement contract, we had no interest from a soft marketing exercise, only the current providers following the Expressions of Interest. The service is demand led and the costs may increase from the previous contractual arrangements. The ongoing financial implications of the latest cost assessment of service demand will be carefully monitored throughout the year, and considered as part of 2024/25 budget setting process.

7.2 Legal

7.2.1 The contracts are being entered into with the benefit of advice from procurement colleagues and in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, where appropriate

requirements because of the lack of suppliers in the market. Expressions of interest have been used to test market interest prior to determining the appropriate procurement route.

7.2.2 This is a statutory service and there is legislation set out in the body of the report which explains the Council's statutory obligations.

7.3 Risk

7.3.1 The service is a critical service for the local authority.

7.3.2 Without approval the service would not be able to deliver this critical function and would cause delay to families in death registration or funerals

7.3.3 The service would not be able to respond to a mass casualty incident

7.4 Consultation and Communications

7.4.1 There has been consultation with some current providers to inform the specification. General engagement takes place on a regular basis with Pathologists, Funeral Directors, and the Mortuaries KGH and NGH as part of ongoing liaison and partnership working.

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.5.1 This report has not been considered by Overview and Scrutiny.

7.6 Climate Impact

7.6.1 The transportation elements of the contract do have impacts on carbon footprint of the service and every effort is made to limit the unnecessary transportation of deceased and to deliver services locally. However due to the shortage of mortuary space, pathologists, and specialist facilities it is necessary to transport deceased in order to comply with statutory obligations within relevant timescales.

7.7 Community Impact

7.7.1 The proposals will not have a direct impact on the bereaved and specific communities however it will help to avoid delay in death management which is key to the experience of those impacted by the service.

8 Background Papers

8.1 None