



Council

A meeting of the Council will be held at the Great Hall, The Guildhall, St Giles Street, Northampton, NN1 1DE on Thursday 2 December 2021 at 6.00 pm

Councillors are hereby summoned to attend

Agenda

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 of Council (Pages 13 - 28) To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 23 rd September 2021.
4.	Chair's Announcements To receive communications from the Chair of the Council.
5.	Public Participation (1) Receipt of Petitions (if any) from Local Government Electors for the District (2) Questions (if any) from the Public
6.	Written Questions To receive any written questions and answers which have been submitted with advance notice in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.2. Questions of which prior notice have been given may be asked of the Chair, Leader, Portfolio Holder or the Chair of a Committee.

7.	Cabinet Reports and Record of Decisions Taken by the Cabinet (Pages 29 - 100)
Items of Business	
8.	Northampton City Status Bid (Pages 101 - 154)
9.	Personal Safety for Councillors (Pages 155 - 170)
10.	Review of WNC Constitution (Pages 171 - 474)
11.	Annual Report of the Pensions Committee (Pages 475 - 484)
12.	Annual Report of the local Pensions Board (Pages 485 - 492)
13.	Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Board (Pages 493 - 570)
14.	Horton Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Pages 571 - 582)
15.	Approval of the Local Council Tax reduction Scheme 2022-23 (Pages 583 - 632)
16.	Updated West Northamptonshire Council Pay Policy Statement (Pages 633 - 642)
17.	Middleton Cheney Parish Council: Order under section 91(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 (Pages 643 - 648)
18.	Director of Children's Services Recruitment and Interim Arrangements (Pages 649 - 654)
19.	<p>Motions</p> <p>To debate any motions which have been submitted with advance notice, in accordance with the Council's Procedure Rules.</p> <p><u>Motion 1</u></p> <p>Proposed by: Cllr Julie Davenport</p>

Seconded by: Cllr Dennis Meredith

This council understands the huge negative impact that the coronavirus pandemic has had on local businesses and in particular the Town Centre retail and hospitality sectors.

West Northamptonshire Council aims to continue to support its local businesses. Our residents and council ask the executive to investigate continuing the free car parking periods that are due to start on 20th November 2021 past the proposed 1st January 2022 end date. This will be for car parking in all council owned car parks. This Council will continue looking at other initiatives to improve and stimulate our town centres.

Motion 2

Proposed by: Cllr Michael Brown

Seconded by: Cllr Sam Rumens

This Council agrees, in principle, with the creation of a new Dual Carriageway / Grade Separated Northern Orbital Road around the north of Northampton to reduce pollution and traffic through the town, especially residential areas, whilst supporting and safeguarding jobs, and providing infrastructure for future growth.

Motion 3

Proposed by: Cllr Rosie Humphreys

Seconded by: Cllr Jonathan Harris

West Northamptonshire Council notes:

- West Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire Councils have around £59 million invested in fossil fuels via the Local Government Pension Scheme.[1]
- The United Nations Paris 2015 Agreement commits our governments to keep the global temperature increase to under 2°C and aim for 1.5°C. Carbon budgets produced by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), United Nations and the International Energy Agency show that preventing two degrees of warming relies on not burning 60-80% of all proven fossil fuels.
- With COP26 taking place in Glasgow in November 2021, there is increased emphasis by the UK government on showing global climate leadership, especially in relation to finance. Divesting our pension fund is a clear and meaningful action that can be taken at a local government level.
- Fossil fuel investments are financially risky as a result of both the Covid19 pandemic and the global transition to a more sustainable economic and environmental model. They are now being consistently outperformed by renewables.[2]
- Former Bank of England Governor Mark Carney warned in December 2019 that fossil fuel investments risk becoming “stranded assets” (i.e., worthless) as investors exit the sector. He asked, “A question for every company, every financial institution, every asset manager, pension fund or insurer – what’s your plan?”
- As continued investments in fossil fuels pose material financial risks to portfolios, funds have fiduciary duties to consider the benefits of decarbonising

as part of their investment strategies. Fiduciary duty is defined by the Law Commission as “ensuring that pensions can be paid, ensuring that this is undertaken at the best possible value”.

- Pension funds have a legal duty to treat members “fairly as between them”. That means taking seriously the longer-term interests of younger members who may well be affected more by the climate transition.

This Council therefore commits to:

1. Reviewing its Investment Strategy and developing and implementing a Responsible Investment Policy which rules out new investments in fossil fuel companies.
2. Calling on the combined Pension Fund for West and North Northamptonshire to divest from fossil fuels by requesting its representative(s) on the Pension Fund Committee to call for the development and adoption of responsible investment policies which:
 - a) Immediately freeze any new investment in the top 200 publicly traded fossil fuel companies.[3]
 - b) Divest from direct ownership and any commingled funds that include fossil fuel public equities and corporate bonds within as short a period of time as possible given market forecasts.
 - c) Set out an approach to quantify and address climate change risks affecting all other investments.
 - d) Actively seek to invest in companies that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and minimise climate risk.
3. Recognising that fossil fuel investments should be considered as part of the council’s ‘carbon footprint’ and divesting our pension fund is one of the most impactful steps we can take to reduce our impact on our community and the world.

Footnotes

[1] 2021 figures taken from the report ‘Divesting to protect our pensions and the planet – An analysis of local government investments in coal, oil and gas’. Available at: <https://www.divest.org.uk/councils>

[2] Energy Investing: Exploring Risk and Return in the Capital Markets, Joint Report by the International Energy Agency and the Centre for Climate Finance & Investment, Paris. Available at: <https://www.iea.org/reports/energyinvesting-exploring-risk-and-return-in-the-capital-markets>

[3] As determined by the most recent Carbon Underground 200 list.

Motion 4

Proposed by: Cllr Sally Beardsworth

Seconded by: Cllr Jonathan Harris

This council notes that:

It is evident that climate change is here and already impacting on our environment. With Cop26 fresh in our minds and the effects of climate change very much demonstrated by fires and flooding across the world and with gales and torrential rain across the county, we call upon the council to work proactively with the environment agencies to prevent the flooding that took place in the town in 1998 and across the county. We must make sure that everything possible is done to protect homes and

businesses from flooding.

With this in mind, this council resolves to:

- Liaise with the relevant agencies to ensure that rivers have received the appropriate maintenance as needed, such as dredging, to minimise any risk of future flooding
- Reviews preventive measures that currently exist and recommends any further action that needs to be taken and reports back to this council.
- Provides parish and town councils with a well publicised schedule of routine maintenance for all gulley and drainage works (cleaning and clearing), ensuring sufficient notice to ensure that vehicles are not parked over drains to prevent access for maintenance works.
- Urgently review any proposed housing developments in the vicinity of flood plains which, if allowed to progress, will simply compound the problem.

Motion 5

Proposed by: Cllr Danielle Stone

Seconded by: Cllr Wendy Randall

The West Northamptonshire Council has embraced the challenge of providing a welcome and refuge for incoming Afghan families and households seeking sanctuary from the crisis in Afghanistan.

In providing a welcome and working to meet the needs of the incoming refugees we have learned a great deal and have been pleased to be part of a national network delivering the Government's Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme, including safe passage, relocation and resettlement.

The Council is committed to supporting refugee and migrant communities who have fled violence and persecution and been offered safety and sanctuary in our area. As part of this work it supports the initiative to make West Northamptonshire a recognised 'Council of Sanctuary'.

City of Sanctuary UK is a charitable organisation that provides a focus for coordination and development of a network of groups that are focused on bringing about both local and national social change. It started in Sheffield in 2007 and now involves over 50 Cities and towns, including Northampton, which became a Town of Sanctuary in 2015.

In December 2020, the City of Sanctuary Local Authority Network was launched. Its aims are to support the development of a network of local authorities that are working towards the City of Sanctuary vision; and to promote the embedding of a culture and practice of welcome in local authorities to support the City of Sanctuary theory of change.

The Council understands the important role it can play in welcoming people who are fleeing violence and persecution by offering them safety and sanctuary and therefore resolves to:

- apply to become a member of the City of Sanctuary Local Authority Network, with the aim of becoming a recognized Council of Sanctuary.

Motion 6

Proposed by: Cllr Jonathan Harris
Seconded by: Cllr Rosie Humphreys

This Council notes that:

- Every river in England is now polluted beyond legal limits.
- The Environment Agency rated only 14% of rivers as 'Good' in 2019.
- This chemical pollution is mostly caused by sewage discharges from water companies and the run-offs of nutrients from farms.
- 36% of English rivers have been damaged by water companies.
- In England, water companies released untreated human waste directly into our waterways over 400,000 times for a total of 3 million hours in 2020 alone.
- Government funding to the Environment Agency to monitor river quality and regulate farms and water companies has dropped 75% since 2010/11.
- In 2020 just 3.6% of pollution complaints made to the Agency resulted in penalties.
- Farms are now almost never inspected, water quality is rarely tested, and water companies can pump raw sewage into rivers with virtual impunity.
- In addition, tyre particles, metals from brake pads, and hydrocarbons from vehicle emissions wash off road surfaces and into rivers introducing potentially carcinogenic material into the water supply.
- The River Nene is particularly threatened by further sewage discharges.

Council believes that, as host nation of the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow on 31 October – 12 November 2021, the UK Government should commit to:

- Restoring Environment Agency budgets to deliver the necessary oversight.
- Increasing inspection regularity of water companies and farms, and rigorously prosecuting offenders through the Environmental Audit Committee and Ofwat.
- Funding local and highways authorities to introduce systems to prevent road pollutants from entering our water courses.

Council resolves to request the Chief Executive write to:

- The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs calling for the Government to make these commitments as host nation of COP-26.
- The Chairperson of the Parliamentary Environmental Audit Committee to advocate for greater enforcement of existing regulatory powers.
- The Chief Executive of Anglian Water calling for urgent action to address the impact of waste-water discharges on our local rivers.
- The Regional Director of the National Farmers' Union requesting clarification on the action being taken locally by farmers to prevent nutrient run-off.
- The charities River Action and The Rivers Trust expressing this Council's support for their campaign to restore the health of Britain's rivers.
- Our local MP's expressing the council's concerns about the ongoing impact that this practice has on the environment and public health.

Motion 7

Proposed: Cllr Bob Purser

Seconded: Cllr Emma Roberts

'This Council resolves

That the Cabinet will carry out a feasibility review into the advantages and disadvantages of introducing a 20mph speed limit across the urban areas of Northampton reporting on its probable impact on fatal and serious accidents, pedestrian safety, traffic congestion, air pollution and journey times.'

The review should consider the opportunities provided by Active Travel funds and Living Streets initiatives.

Motion 8

Proposed: Cllr Ian McCord

Seconded: Cllr Sue Sharps

This council notes that the consultation on the Strategic Options is due to close on 6 December. This council regrets that this draft has been worked up without member involvement (as confirmed at Cabinet Sept 2021 and member briefing October 2021)

This council resolves to:

- Extend the deadline for responses until 31 January 2022
- Pause the process once the responses are received
- Prepare a vision for the place of West Northants, to establish its role, its ambitions, strategic setting in the UK, economic settings, transport links, future growth and population size and the necessary policy and infrastructure challenges associated with achieving such.
- Establish a member led committee to review the strategic options available and review all site promoted in the SHLAA and any new sites promoted in this consultation
- To prepare a new set of real strategic options with real choice incorporating the emergent Oxford Cambridge Arc Spatial Strategy policy proposals and consult in a real and meaningful way in 2022 for a minimum of 12 weeks.

Motion 9

Proposed: Cllr Terrie Eales

Seconded: Cllr Cathrine Russell

This council reaffirms our commitment to tackling climate change and ensuring a carbon neutral West Northamptonshire by 2030.

To that end, council acknowledges the work of UK 100 (<https://www.uk100.org/>) a network of highly ambitious local government leaders, which seeks to devise and implement plans for the transition to clean energy that are ambitious, cost effective and take the public and business with them. It supports decision-makers in UK towns, cities and counties in their transition to Net Zero. It is the only network for UK local leaders focused solely on climate, clean energy and clean air policy.

This council therefore agrees for this authority to become a member of UK 100 and take the membership pledge, which is:

- We will continue to lead the UK's response to climate change, acting sooner than the government's goal by making substantial progress within the next decade to deliver Net Zero. We will use our experience and achievements to advocate to the UK government in order to accelerate the delivery of ambitious local climate action. With greater powers and funding, we would go further.
- We commit to do everything within our power and influence to rapidly reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and work with our residents and businesses to bring our wider communities' emissions in line with Net Zero as soon as possible.
- We pledge to understand our impact on climate change, prioritise where action needs to be taken and monitor progress towards our goals. We will reduce our emissions at source and limit the use of carbon offsets as part of the global effort to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.
- We are closer to the people who live and work in our communities, so we have a better understanding of their needs. This means we can collaborate with them to build consensus for the solutions we need to transition to a Net Zero society that delivers multiple benefits and is fair, just and works for everyone."

Motion 10

Proposed: Cllr Emma Roberts

Seconded: Cllr Koulla Jolley

As an employer who cares about the impact of domestic abuse, we will seek to lead by example and be a model employer on the issue to protect our employees. To that end we will sign the GMB Charter to Stop Domestic Abuse and pledge to:

1. Support employees who are experiencing Domestic Abuse to access support services and information confidentially.
2. Ensure that those experiencing Domestic Abuse will not be disadvantaged within the terms and conditions of their employment and will take all reasonable measures to facilitate any needs in the workplace.
3. Commit to working/participating with other organisations to facilitate best support for those experiencing Domestic Abuse.
4. Provide all employees with access to toolkits, information and our policies on domestic abuse, in a format that is easily and discretely accessible within the workplace.
5. Ensure that we have employees trained across our organisation to provide adequate access to support within the workplace for all employees. Staff trained should be representative of our workplace and will include line managers and Trade Union representatives.

In addition:

- a) This council through Scrutiny will report on the work it has done.
- b) Full council will request to receive an annual report through the newly formed Domestic Violence Board

Both of these additional steps will enable us to monitor our performance at employer level and for our residents in order to seek necessary improvements or interventions required from us as a council."

20.	<p>Urgent Business (previously agreed with the Chairman)</p> <p>The Chairman to advise whether they have agreed to any items of urgent business being admitted to the agenda.</p>
21.	<p>Exclusion of Press and Public</p> <p>Should Members decide not to make a decision in public, they are recommended to resolve as follows:</p> <p>“That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that, if the public and press were present, it would be likely that exempt information falling under the provisions of Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraph(s) XXXXX would be disclosed to them, and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.”</p>

Catherine Whitehead
Proper Officer
24 November 2021

Council Members:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Councillor Ann Addison (Chair) | Councillor Andre Gonzalez De Savage (Vice-Chair) |
| Councillor Rufia Ashraf | Councillor Jamal Alwahabi |
| Councillor Azizur Rahman | Councillor Anthony S. Bagot-Webb |
| Councillor Fiona Baker | Councillor Dermot Bambridge |
| Councillor Harry Barrett | Councillor William Barter |
| Councillor Sally Beardsworth | Councillor Phil Bignell |
| Councillor Lizzy Bowen | Councillor Rebecca Breese |
| Councillor Adam Brown | Councillor Michael Brown |
| Councillor Muna Cali | Councillor Alan Chantler |
| Councillor Pinder Chauhan | Councillor Nazim Choudary |
| Councillor Imran Ahmed Chowdhury BEM | Councillor Paul Clark |
| Councillor Stephen Clarke | Councillor Maggie Clubley |
| Councillor Fiona Cole | Councillor Raymond Connolly |
| Councillor Karen Cooper | Councillor Daniel Cribbin |

Councillor Julie Davenport
Councillor Paul Dyball
Councillor Terrie Eales
Councillor Penelope Flavell
Councillor Rupert Frost
Councillor Terry Gilford
Councillor Andrew Grant
Councillor Enam Haque
Councillor Jonathan Harris
Councillor Rosie Herring
Councillor James Hill
Councillor Keith Holland-Delamere
Councillor Rosie Humphreys
Councillor David James
Councillor Paul Joyce
Councillor Anna King
Councillor Phil Larratt
Councillor Malcolm Longley
Councillor Charles Manners
Councillor Ian McCord
Councillor Colin Morgan
Councillor Jonathan Nunn
Councillor Suresh Patel
Councillor Bob Purser
Councillor Emma Roberts
Councillor Sam Rumens
Councillor Lisa Samiotis
Councillor Sue Sharps
Councillor David Smith
Councillor Richard Solesbury-Timms
Councillor Danielle Stone
Councillor Nick Sturges-Alex
Councillor Mike Warren
Councillor Janice Duffy
Councillor Gareth Eales
Councillor Alison Eastwood
Councillor Louisa Fowler
Councillor Jo Gilford
Councillor Matt Golby
Councillor Mike Hallam
Councillor Lauryn Harrington-Carter
Councillor Cheryl Hawes
Councillor Stephen Hibbert
Councillor Nigel Hinch
Councillor Mark Hughes
Councillor Cecile Irving-Swift
Councillor Koulla Jolley
Councillor Andrew Kilbride
Councillor Jamie Lane
Councillor Daniel Lister
Councillor Greg Lunn
Councillor Peter Matten
Councillor Dennis Meredith
Councillor Charles Morton
Councillor Kevin Parker
Councillor Ken Pritchard
Councillor Wendy Randall
Councillor Jake Roberts
Councillor Cathrine Russell
Councillor Brian Sargeant
Councillor John Shephard
Councillor Zoe Smith
Councillor Laura Stevenson
Councillor Winston Strachan
Councillor Walter Tarasiewicz

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.

Evacuation Procedure

If a continuous fire alarm sounds you must evacuate the building via the nearest available fire exit. Members and visitors should proceed to the assembly area as directed by Democratic Services staff and await further instructions.

Access to Meetings

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named below, giving as much notice as possible before the meeting.

Mobile Phones

Please ensure that any device is switched to silent operation or switched off.

Queries Regarding this Agenda

If you have any queries about this agenda please contact Ed Bostock / Sofia Neal-Gonzalez, Democratic Services via the following:

Email: democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk

Or by writing to:

West Northamptonshire Council
One Angel Square
Angel Street
Northampton
NN1 1ED

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Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held at One Angel Square, Angel Street, Northampton, NN1 1ED on Thursday 23 September 2021 at 6.00 pm.

Present

- Councillor Ann Addison (Chair)
- Councillor Andre Gonzalez De Savage (Vice-Chair)
- Councillor Rufia Ashraf
- Councillor Jamal Alwahabi
- Councillor Azizur Rahman
- Councillor Anthony S. Bagot-Webb
- Councillor Fiona Baker
- Councillor William Barter
- Councillor Sally Beardsworth
- Councillor Phil Bignell
- Councillor Lizzy Bowen
- Councillor Rebecca Breese
- Councillor Adam Brown
- Councillor Michael Brown
- Councillor Muna Cali
- Councillor Alan Chantler
- Councillor Pinder Chauhan
- Councillor Nazim Choudary
- Councillor Imran Ahmed Chowdhury BEM
- Councillor Stephen Clarke
- Councillor Maggie Clubley
- Councillor Fiona Cole
- Councillor Raymond Connolly
- Councillor Karen Cooper
- Councillor Daniel Cribbin
- Councillor Julie Davenport
- Councillor Janice Duffy
- Councillor Paul Dyball
- Councillor Gareth Eales
- Councillor Terrie Eales
- Councillor Alison Eastwood
- Councillor Louisa Fowler
- Councillor Rupert Frost
- Councillor Jo Gilford
- Councillor Terry Gilford
- Councillor Matt Golby
- Councillor Andrew Grant
- Councillor Mike Hallam
- Councillor Enam Haque
- Councillor Lauryn Harrington-Carter
- Councillor Jonathan Harris
- Councillor Cheryl Hawes

Councillor Stephen Hibbert
Councillor James Hill
Councillor Nigel Hinch
Councillor Keith Holland-Delamere
Councillor Mark Hughes
Councillor Rosie Humphreys
Councillor David James
Councillor Koulla Jolley
Councillor Andrew Kilbride
Councillor Jamie Lane
Councillor Phil Larratt
Councillor Daniel Lister
Councillor Malcolm Longley
Councillor Greg Lunn
Councillor Charles Manners
Councillor Peter Matten
Councillor Ian McCord
Councillor Dennis Meredith
Councillor Colin Morgan
Councillor Charles Morton
Councillor Jonathan Nunn
Councillor Kevin Parker
Councillor Suresh Patel
Councillor Bob Purser
Councillor Wendy Randall
Councillor Emma Roberts
Councillor Jake Roberts
Councillor Sam Rumens
Councillor Cathrine Russell
Councillor Brian Sargeant
Councillor Sue Sharps
Councillor John Shephard
Councillor David Smith
Councillor Richard Solesbury-Timms
Councillor Laura Stevenson
Councillor Danielle Stone
Councillor Winston Strachan
Councillor Nick Sturges-Alex
Councillor Walter Tarasiewicz
Councillor Mike Warren

30. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bambridge, Barrett, Clark, Flavell, Herring, Irving-Swift, Joyce, King, Pritchard, Samiotis and Z Smith.

31. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Hinch, Kilbride and Frost declared interests as board members for Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH).

Councillor Aziz declared an interest in respect of Item 13 (Motion 6) as the owner of a company managing HMO properties.

Councillors Gonzalez De-Savage, Haque, Harris and Hill declared interests in respect of item 10 as members of the Strategic Planning Committee and indicated that they would not take part in the debate or vote.

32. Minutes of Council

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th July 2021 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

Councillor McCord noted that he had been appointed to the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee but had not been invited to its most recent meeting. He asked that proper procedures be adhered to following his appointment.

The Chairman advised that this would be looked into.

33. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman advised of several upcoming events, including her Tea Party taking place at The Forum, Towcester. Members were asked to contact the Chairman's assistant if they would like to help out at the event.

Other events included:

- The Chairman's Civic Service on 24th October, 4pm
- Carol Service on 12th December at All Saints Church, further information to follow.

34. Public Participation

(1) The Chairman advised of 1 request to submit a petition.

Councillor Meredith submitted a petition relating to proposed development at Thorplands Brook Park.

(2) The Chairman advised of 5 requests to address the Council.

Danielle Bird, on behalf of Climate Action West Northamptonshire, addressed Council in relation to Item 13 (Motion 8). She welcomed the Action Travel Strategy in the report of the Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste and suggested that it be developed in conjunction with key institutions such as the university. She stated that aside from a small cycle network, connectivity around the

county was non-existent. She questioned whether funding from the Department for Transport would help to develop an Air Quality Action Plan.

Sally Pagano, a local resident, addressed Council in relation to Item 13 (motion 6) and stated that local residents felt ignored by Planning officers regarding concerns around Houses in Multiple Occupation.

Jane Frost, Chair of Semilong and Trinity Neighbourhood Plan, addressed Council in relation to Item 13 (Motion 6) and voiced concerns around the changing face of communities in the area, due in part to the prevalence of HMOs. She warned that communities were in danger of collapsing and urged the Council to act now.

Jane Wood, Chair of Climate Action West Northamptonshire, addressed Council in relation to Item 13 (Motion 8) and congratulated the Council for its target to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. She questioned whether cutting down trees at Thorplands Brook Park was the right thing to do and urged the Council to carefully consider any decision to permanently remove open green spaces and noted that cutting down any trees would only add to the size of the task of reaching carbon neutrality. Ms Wood urged the Council to reconsider the proposals.

Rachel McGrath, a charity sector professional addressed Council in relation to Item 13 (Motion 9) and asked that when Members attended the Anti-Poverty Workshop on 20th September, as part of the Anti-Poverty Strategy, consideration be given to contacting the government and requesting that the cut to the Universal Credit uplift be reversed.

There was 1 written question from a member of the public. A written response was circulated at the meeting.

35. **Written Questions**

22 questions had been received from Councillors and the answers had been tabled in accordance with the Constitution.

Questions and answers were given as tabled unless where stated, supplementary questions were asked as detailed below.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 2, it was confirmed that private e-scooters were illegal; an enforcement campaign would be taking place in due course; a similar campaign was recently undertaken by Essex Police which proved to be very successful, having confiscated a large number of illegally ridden, privately-owned e-scooters.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 3, Council heard that robust recruitment for social workers was underway. Negative publicity from certain local news outlets were putting potential social workers off from working for the Children's Trust.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 5, it was confirmed that an update relating to social care recruitment would be brought to Council in 6 months.

In response to a supplementary question in relation to question 6, it was advised that a timescale relating to dropped kerbs would come in due course, but it was noted that the issue was much more widespread than Thorplands.

In response to a supplementary question in relation to question 7, it was advised that regular meetings with contractors took place and that contractors were being worked with closely to recruit additional HGV drivers.

In response to a supplementary question in relation to question 9, it was advised that the number of walk-ins were up, but that any suggestions on improvements were always gratefully received.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 10, it was confirmed that St. Edmunds hospital site was now on the ratings list and work was underway to identify how much was owed in back rates.

In response to a supplementary question in relation to question 12, it was advised that monthly meetings took place with the Children's Trust to discuss any financial issues.

36. Announcements by the Leader of the Council

There were no announcements by the Leader on this occasion.

37. Cabinet Member Reports and Record of Decisions Taken by the Cabinet

Councillor Nunn presented his report as Leader of the Council and highlighted the salient points. In response to questions, the Leader confirmed that the Democracy and Standards Committee was the key driver behind the boundary review; he and the Chief Executive had a preliminary meeting and were pleased with the level of input councillors and local residents had.

Councillor Bowen confirmed that she intended to meet with opposition group leaders to discuss regeneration in its entirety.

Councillor Brown presented his report as Deputy Leader and highlighted the salient points. In response to questions, he advised that he had not yet had sight of the amended Tree Policy and would chase it up with officers. He would be happy to arrange a meeting with interested Members. Museum visitor numbers were tracked but it was unclear whether they were coming from inside or outside Northampton. The environment would be a priority when developing the Housing Strategy; it was noted that NPH were currently undergoing a grant funded scheme of retrofitting properties with insulation at significant cost; it was important that future homes be built to be as environmentally friendly as possible. It was not the intention of the housing policy that ex-offender housing all be placed in close proximity and

Councillor Brown confirmed that he would look into where those residents were being placed and what could be done to mitigate any issues that arose.

Councillor Baker presented her report as Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education and highlighted the salient points. In response to questions, Council heard that the Corporate Parenting Board included opposition Members as well as the Assistant Director for Looked After Children and the Strategic Manager for Corporate Parenting, and that it had met twice already and were due to meet next week. Holiday activities were a success, and more were planned for the October and Christmas holidays; information was being sent out to foster carers etc. so that they were aware what was available for their children to attend.

Councillor Larratt presented his report as Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste and highlighted the salient points. He apologised to any affected by Cliftonville roadworks on Monday 20th September; daily monitoring was now taking place and improvements made where possible. He acknowledged concerns raised about the bus lane enforcement camera in St James and advised that this was being looked into. In response to questions, it was advised that a Bus Improvement update would be brought to the next Cabinet meeting which would include the provision for delegated authority to make future amendments if necessary. A scheme relating to Rushmere Road would be funded through Active Travel; plans were in the process of being drawn up. Councillor Larratt praised the Northants Litter Wombles and other community groups and noted that contracts were in place to deal with the issue of litter and fly tipping as well as enforcement procedures to ensure that work was being completed to specification. It was advised that the 3rd phase of the Cliftonville corridor may be forthcoming, however due to a lack of support, not in the way it was originally planned. The North West Relief Road was needed to deliver proposed housing on Dallington Grange and the Northern Orbital Road remained an aspiration to ease congestion issues on the A45.

38. **Youth Justice Plan**

Councillor Baker presented a report which sought Council's approval of the Youth Justice Plan 2021/22 and performance summary for 2021/22. Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 there is a statutory requirement to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan which must provide specified information about the local provision of youth justice services. The Youth Justice Board provides guidance about what must be included in the plan and recommends a structure for the plan.

Councillor Lister seconded the report.

Members commented that the report seemed to be intrinsically linked to the Anti-Poverty Strategy; it was suggested that a person or persons from the deprived areas mentioned in the report be in attendance at next week's Anti-Poverty workshop. Concern was also raised over the number of Operations Manager vacancies.

Members discussed the report.

RESOLVED:

Council approved the Youth Justice Plan 2021/22 and performance summary for the period 2020/21.

39. **Planning policy, conservation areas, local lists and Article 4 Directions - suggested approach for decision making**

Councillor Breese presented a report which sought Council's approval for an approach to making decisions on the various stages of preparing and adopting planning policy and related documents, designating conservation areas, adding buildings to the local list, and making article 4 directions.

Councillor Hill seconded the report.

It was advised that the Terms of Reference and committee representation would be finalised over the following days and climate change policy would feature further along in the policy's development. It was Councillor Breese's intention that the Planning Policy Committee membership be cross-party.

Members discussed the report.

RESOLVED:

Council:

1. Agreed the approaches to the preparation of planning policy and related documents, designation of conservation areas, adding buildings to the local list and making article 4 directions as set out in the report
2. Delegated to the Head of Planning & Climate Change Policy in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Built Environment & Rural Affairs:
 - (a) Responses to consultations on local plans from neighbouring authorities and production of Statements of Common Ground
 - (b) Responses to consultations on other planning policy documents from neighbouring authorities
3. Cabinet will delegate to Planning Policy Committee relevant responsibilities relating to Planning Policy when that committee has been established.

40. **Changes to Committee Places**

Councillor Hallam presented a report to Council which sought approval for changes to the membership of committees as requested by political groups.

Councillor Patel seconded the report.

Councillors requested that climate impacts be considered across all council reports.

Members discussed the report.

RESOLVED:

Council appointed members to the committees listed in Section 4 of the report to give effect to the wishes expressed by the political groups to which the seats were allocated.

41. **Afghan Refugee Update**

Councillor D Smith presented a report which sought to update Council on Afghan resettlement and relocation in West Northamptonshire.

Councillor Nunn seconded the report.

Councillors congratulated staff who had worked hard to make sure the needs of those most in need were met; West Northamptonshire Council was proud to be a welcoming authority.

Members discussed the report.

RESOLVED:

Council:

- a) Noted the use of existing powers and delegation to;
- b) Support central Government's Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and welcome Afghan Locally Employed Staff (ALES) who have worked for UK and risked their lives alongside British forces in Afghanistan and are now relocating to the UK with their families following NATO's decision to withdraw military forces from Afghanistan.
- c) Support Central Government's Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) which will provide vulnerable refugees from Afghanistan and those put at risk by recent events in Afghanistan with a route to safety.
- d) Support officers to work collaboratively with Police, Fire, Northamptonshire Children's Trust, North Northamptonshire Council, Public Health Northamptonshire, other health partners and the local community and voluntary sector to provide a co-ordinated response to the Government's appeal to provide support to affected adults and children under ARAP and ACRS currently being provided with short-term "holding accommodation" in West Northamptonshire.
- e) Support the assessment of the likely long term support needs of this group of people alongside the availability of local services to inform the scale of the Councils offer to permanently resettle households in West Northamptonshire under the ARAP scheme.

42. **Motions**

Motion 1

Councillor Ashraf proposed and Councillor Purser seconded:

“This Council notes:

- That analysis of the 2019 Local Election results by the Fawcett Society found that only 35% of councillors in England are women, up 1% since 2018. Of the seats that were up for election in 2018, 38% went to women, up just 3 percentage points on 2014 when these seats were last contested;
- As of October 2020, 27 councils have passed the LGA Labour Group’s Parental Leave policy, and an additional 9 councils have their own parental leave policy in place;
- That the role of a councillor should be open to all, regardless of their background, and that introducing a parental leave policy is a step towards encouraging a wider range of people to become councillors, and is also a step to encourage existing councillors who may want to start a family to remain as councillors;
- That parental leave must apply to parents regardless of their gender, and that it should also cover adoption leave to support those parents who choose to adopt.

This Council resolves:

- To adopt the parental leave policy drafted by the LGA Labour Group’s Women’s Taskforce to give all councillors an entitlement to parental leave after giving birth or adopting;
- To ensure that councillors with children and other caring commitments are supported as appropriate;
- To notify the LGA that this council has passed a motion at full council to adopt the parental leave policy.

Councillor Hallam proposed and Councillor Chauhan seconded an amendment.

Amended motion to read:

“This Council notes:

- That analysis of the 2019 Local Election results by the Fawcett Society found that only 35% of councillors in England are women, up 1% since 2018. Of the seats that were up for election in 2018, 38% went to women, up just 3 percentage points on 2014 when these seats were last contested;
- As of October 2020, 27 councils have passed the LGA Labour Group’s Parental Leave policy, and an additional 9 councils have their own parental leave policy in place;
- That the role of a councillor should be open to all, regardless of their background, and that introducing a parental leave policy is a step towards encouraging a wider range of people to become councillors, and is also a step to encourage existing councillors who may want to start a family to remain as councillors;

- That parental leave must apply to parents regardless of their gender, and that it should also cover adoption leave to support those parents who choose to adopt.

This Council resolves:

- To adopt a parental leave policy to give all councillors an entitlement to parental leave after giving birth or adopting;
- To ensure that councillors with children and other caring commitments are supported as appropriate;
- To notify the LGA that this council has passed a motion at full council to develop a parental leave policy.

Council debated the amendment.

Upon a vote, the amendment was agreed and became the substantive motion.

Council debated the substantive motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was Carried.

Motion 2

This motion was withdrawn from the agenda prior to the meeting.

Motion 3

Councillor Stone proposed and Councillor Alwahabi seconded:

“The Authority recognises the many challenges faced by care leavers. We have shown our commitment to them by taking away the burden of council tax for all care leavers until they reach the age of 25 years. We now commit to the provision of one year’s free broadband for all young people leaving care, for the first 12 months.”

Council debated the motion.

Councillor Baker proposed that the motion be referred to the People Overview & Scrutiny Committee for review.

Councillor Brown seconded the proposition.

Upon a vote, the proposition to refer the motion to the People Overview & Scrutiny Committee was Carried.

Motion 4

Councillor Alwahabi proposed and Councillor Haque seconded:

“WNC is a new authority and committed to change and transformation where it will benefit our most vulnerable residents. The Pandemic has highlighted the need for

more IT resources for children living in disadvantaged circumstances. WNC commits to recycling all unwanted IT devices and handing them over to a local charity for refurbishment and redistribution for West Northants children, young people, and care leavers.”

Councillor Hallam proposed and councillor Sturges-Alex seconded an amendment.

Amended motion to read:

“WNC is a new authority and committed to change and transformation where it will benefit our most vulnerable residents. The COVID-19 Pandemic has highlighted the need for more IT resources for children living in disadvantaged circumstances. WNC commits to recycling all unwanted IT devices where due consideration has been given to the Council’s Lifecycle Management plan and where these can properly have personal data and software licenses wiped, making use of appropriate local charities for refurbishment and redistribution for West Northants children, young people, and care leavers.”

Council debated the amendment.

Upon a vote, the amendment was agreed and became the substantive motion.

Council debated the substantive motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was Carried.

Motion 9

Councillor E Roberts proposed and Councillor Randall seconded:

This Council is committed to an anti-poverty strategy by understanding impacts and taking real action to lift people out of poverty. It also believes that the Government should stop the planned cut in Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit. Over 19,000 people receive Universal Credit in Northampton alone - in nearly 24% of all families in the area. This is the eighth highest number in the whole of the East Midlands.

This Council notes figures from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, which show that 6.2 million families across the UK will feel a £1,040 hit to their yearly incomes almost overnight and 500,000 people – among whom 200,000 are children – are at real risk of falling into poverty and deprivation.

This Council therefore RESOLVES to join charities, local support groups and residents in writing to the Government expressing its deep concern and calling for Government to make the £20 uplift to Universal Credit permanent and extend it to legacy benefits, in light of the overwhelming evidence of the negative impact this will otherwise have on many within the authority’s area

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was Carried.

Motion 6

Councillor Purser proposed and Councillor Russell seconded:

“In the light of continuing concern by local residents on the growth of HiMOs, and their impact on local communities, West Northants Council will set up a review of the criteria for approval and report back by April 2022.”

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was Carried.

Motion 7

Councillor Harris proposed and Councillor Beardsworth seconded:

“The White Ribbon campaign is at the forefront of campaigning to both end domestic violence and change attitudes to ensure that not only the act but any and all attitudes that condone domestic violence are eradicated.

This Council Meeting notes that

- ONS figures show that almost one in three women aged 16-59 will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime; that two women a week in England and Wales are killed by a current or former partner; that over half a million women are raped or sexually assaulted each year and that a YouGov poll shows that a third of girls have experienced sexual harassment in schools.
- the global pandemic has led to more women and girls being vulnerable to domestic abuse and, according to a BBC news report last July, the initial three months of the first national lockdown saw an 80% increase in calls to the National Domestic Abuse Hotline.
- that, according to crime-survey and other government data, victims disproportionately come from those groups which already experience inequality and additional challenges in our society, including those who are mixed-race, have disabilities, or are transgender.
- and, as we reflect on the end of the delayed UEFA Euro 2020 tournament, previous research by Lancaster University showed that reported domestic abuse incidents increase whenever any of the home nations play in a major tournament, and the effect is particularly large on the days when those teams lose. This Council Meeting further notes that
- White Ribbon UK is the leading charity with a mission to end male violence against women and part of the global White Ribbon movement which arose from a campaign started by men in Canada in 2004
- White Ribbon Day is marked annually on 25th November, the International Day for the Eradication of Violence Against Women, by encouraging men and boys to pledge never to take part in, condone or stay silent about violence against women and to make this public by wearing a white ribbon on the day and a week or two afterwards
- White Ribbon UK operate a system of female Champions, male Ambassadors and Youth Advocates, as well as having specific materials to support primary

and secondary schools, all with the aim of encouraging men to take the pledge and help to eradicate male violence against women.

This Council Meeting believes male violence against women can never be condoned and West Northamptonshire Council should do everything in its power to ensure women are safe. As part of this, the council should facilitate and encourage participation by councillors, staff and schools in the White Ribbon Campaign.

This West Northamptonshire Council therefore resolves to

- encourage all male Councillors to take the White Ribbon pledge, never to take part in, condone or stay silent about violence against women.
- undertake as soon as practicable the steps necessary to achieve White Ribbon accreditation, joining the large number of public sector bodies which have already done so and as part of this, appoint a male Councillor as an Ambassador;
- mark White Ribbon Day on 25th November each year with a fundraising event; and encourage participation among council staff and local primary and secondary schools.
- liaise with the Police and Crime Commissioners office to understand better the issues that exist in West Northamptonshire and if necessary, establish a cross-party working group to develop a strategy to build awareness of the International Day for the Eradication of Violence Against Women.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion Fell.

Motion 8

Councillor Beardsworth proposed and Councillor Humphreys seconded:

“Fraser Park is an area that is cherished by local residents who say it is one of the few safe outdoor spaces they have. This area has also recently been identified as one of the five ‘left behind’ areas in Northamptonshire. According to these findings, these communities are likely to experience a range of adverse outcomes, according to evidence presented to the APPG. This includes lower levels of educational attainment, reduced employment opportunities and a higher rate of ill health.

‘Left behind’ neighbourhoods are also noted as having lower levels of community spaces, cultural, educational, leisure and green assets than other deprived areas. It would seem entirely illogical to even consider allowing development on such an openspace given these factors.

The proposal to build 125 affordable homes on the site put forward by Northamptonshire Partnership Homes (NPH) comes at a time when the importance of such open spaces for residents, especially those in urban areas, has grown in its relevance and significance as a result of our experience during the COVID pandemic.

Whilst this proposal was included as part of the Northampton Borough Council local plan, which was supported Pre-COVID, circumstances have changed and the significance of maintaining these types of spaces for both leisure and environmental reasons has grown significantly.

The Conservative manifesto for the West Northants election clearly states “Parks and other green spaces are much valued by residents as a vitally important amenity. We will continue to maintain them to a high standard.....” and the West Northants Corporate plan states that the council will “Maintain our parks and green spaces to a high standard and make them an amenity for all”. Building on this green space breaks these promises.

This council notes that, whilst there is no doubt a need for additional social housing, it is equally important to protect and preserve green spaces for residents especially in urban settings.

West Northamptonshire council therefore resolves to:

- Review the decision to build on Fraser Park.
- Actively explore alternative brown field locations for the 125 proposed homes.
- Form a task and finish group to include all elected West Northamptonshire council members representing the area, local community groups, members of Northampton Town Council, actively supported by council officers to develop a local business plan with the community to identify and implement an action plan.
- Develop a four-year investment plan for the area.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion Fell.

Motion 5

Councillor G Eales proposed and Councillor Duffy seconded:

“West Northants Council believes planning works best when developers and the local community work together to shape local areas and deliver necessary new homes; and therefore calls on the Government to protect the right of communities to object to individual planning application.”

Councillor Harris proposed and Councillor Humphreys seconded an amendment.

Amended motion to read:

“West Northants Council believes planning works best when developers and the local community work together to shape local areas and deliver necessary new homes; this council therefore will communicate with Government by writing to relevant Government ministers to ensure that the rights of communities and individuals are protected regarding objections to planning applications.”

Council debated the amendment.

Upon a vote, the amendment was agreed and became the substantive motion.

Council debated the substantive motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was Carried.

43. **Urgent Business (previously agreed with the Chairman)**

There was no urgent business on this occasion.

The meeting closed at 10.10 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____

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Report of Councillor Jonathan Nunn Leader of the Council

Thursday 2nd December 2021

Since our last meeting I have worked with the Cabinet, Members, the Chief Executive and Officers across all areas of the Council. Many of these activities and issues are referred to in more detail in Cabinet colleagues' reports.

Sustainability

Members may have noticed that the most recent list of Cabinet Member responsibilities circulated included 'Sustainability' listed under my direct responsibilities, and I have now had discussions with a number of you around this subject.

Whilst climate change and environmental issues is a vital part of WNC's work and focus towards sustainability, economic and social sustainability are also important. The three are also interconnected and indeed cannot be looked at in isolation as they jointly drive the preservation, progress and prosperity of West Northamptonshire. All three elements are also given prominence within the seventeen UN Sustainability Goals agreed in 2015 at COP21 and evaluated more recently during COP26 last month. Work within the environmental pillar is the most progressed, however economic and social sustainability are of course areas in which the council is also already undertaking significant work, through initiatives including our economic regeneration plans and Anti-Poverty Strategy.

Whilst we are taking a little extra time to finalise and enhance our approach to climate change and environmental sustainability, we are also now encompassing this work into a wider Sustainability Strategy. My view is that the key aspects of this strategy must go further than what I observe many councils to be doing on climate change and sustainability, and it needs to be bold. It also needs to provide a framework and platform that will drive and facilitate community and wider stakeholder engagement and commitment, and not just a strategy and action plan for the council's own commitments and work towards achieving 2030 targets. The sustainability of our West Northants area is the collective responsibility of every resident, business, group, sector and so on, all pulling towards the same direction, and needs to become something that everybody feels a commitment to and also, that remains alive beyond council electoral cycles. I also believe this should include reviewing and reporting regularly on progress to the council and to the residents and businesses of West Northants, and we will be looking to create a cross-party committee to take oversight of, and some responsibility for, this initiative and programme as we facilitate this collective journey towards our region's social, economic and environmental sustainability by 2030.

Given the wider brief of this Sustainability Strategy, I have asked Cllr Fiona Cole to support as Assistant Cabinet Member to myself on Sustainability, based on her work so far on this and her strong professional expertise and experience in this area. We will be working closely alongside Cllr Colin Morgan who has been overseeing the climate emergency work and Cllr Phil Larratt as Cabinet Member with responsibility for climate change. As this wider sustainability strategy progresses however, we will clearly be working alongside all Cabinet members and Directorates within the council, as well in collaboration with external stakeholders, as the

environmental, economic and social sustainable progress of West Northamptonshire sits within the scope and remit of everyone.

We anticipate having final draft ready for publishing and sharing with you over the coming weeks, and will confirm exact timescales shortly.

Communications

- City Status: communication and engagement has been taking place across West Northants in support of the Northampton City Status bid included in tonight's agenda and we have seen an overwhelmingly positive response from our communities.
- A councillor working group on residents' communications has been established to support development of our communications strategy and approach.
- Media Relations: We are working to build our relationships with local and national media and ensure that we are proactive in our approach. Media coverage is featured every week in the councillors' briefing.
- Branding: work continues to establish the new West Northants brand and support colleagues to apply branding correctly helping to build recognition and trust with our residents and wider communities.
- Social media: Our social media channels have been established and continue to increase their reach and impact including tik tok and Instagram, which have featured prominently in our city status campaign.
- Internal communications: our internal communications channels including intranet, all staff briefings, weekly councillor briefings, CEO's Blog and Teams channels continue to grow and are increasing engagement.

Business Intelligence, Policy and Performance

- Work has taken place to develop and refine our performance reporting through our corporate dashboard and our Quarter 2 position will be reported to Cabinet on 7th December.
- Work continues on our website project to improve the quality of information and online services available to our residents. Thank you to those councillors who have provided help with testing new areas and providing feedback.
- Staff networks continue to develop and have played a key role in celebrating events including Pride and Black History Month. Our Networks include Black and Minority Ethnic colleagues, Carers, Disability, LGBTQ+, Armed Forces Community, Mental Health and Wellbeing and Armed Forces Community. The networks are staff led and have sponsors from our senior leadership team, and are helping to promote equalities across our organisation and to develop a new culture of inclusivity and innovation.

Transformation

A vital aspect of the budget setting work that has been taking place has focused on pursuing ways of transforming our services to both increase or maintain service quality and seek to deliver them as cost-effectively as possible.

Therefore the main driver for the Transformation team in quarter 3 has been supporting the Star Chamber meetings with directorates in which initiatives and ideas with suggested financial benefits were agreed and will now feed into the pipeline of projects. Also, working closely with

Executive Leadership Team (ELT), the team are engaging in a prioritisation exercise to hone the aims, objectives and capabilities needed to be delivered over the medium term.

The Transformation team is also supporting early stage proposals and business cases to ensure that transformation projects fit with the corporate direction but also allowing better use of resources and ultimately increase productivity.

Outside of project and programme delivery, the change and engagement managers have been supporting a number of workshop days across the directorates to support in bringing staff together and focusing on their purpose and their customers. The team also delivered, in conjunction with customer service colleagues, member sessions in the Guildhall seeking members' expertise and experiences around customer service.

Finally, recognising that there is still a significant amount of effort to disaggregate some services, whilst also bringing together functions from the four sovereign authorities, the team has been strengthened with the capacity to drive this at pace.

In terms of the main aspects of the Transformation Portfolio key developments can be summarised as:

Stabilisation

The team continue to work to complete projects that began pre-vesting day to ensure the stability of services, along with other areas required to support service delivery;

Currently happening:

- Inter Authority Agreements (IAAs) between WNC and NNC are being finalised.
- Revenue and Benefits Project is now concluding and is on track to deliver the required £200k savings. Similar projects across Internal Audit, Executive Support and Communications also continue.
- The prioritisation activity as well as Star Chambers have also led to a number of projects coming on stream with the aim of stabilising delivery in services and to improve quality, project such as Staff Alert Register and the integration of systems in housing.

Improvement Opportunities

Three key Transformation Priorities are;

- How We at WNC Work – Focusing on delivering a modern, effective and resilient workforce by equipping staff with the right tools, space and policies to deliver high quality services.
- Enabling People to Live Their Best Lives – expanding the three conversation model to help the residents we support lead independent lives.
- Green and Prosperous Place – Focusing on our carbon reduction commitment through safe and sustainable growth.

Alongside this, 3 cross cutting themes have also been identified to support our priorities and the wider organisation;

- Commissioning, Contracts, Commercial and Income Generation – ensuring our commercial decisions are sound and offer value for money as well as ensuring our approach to commissioning and market development meets organisational need.

- Digital, Technology, Automation and Innovation Hub – Focusing on leveraging the most appropriate digital tools at the right time and also driving more strategic decisions for the authority around technology options.
- Customer Experience and Innovation Hub - Focusing on putting the customer experience at the heart of service design and delivery.

These priorities will shape how the team delivers projects in the future as well as start to define new initiatives that deliver on the Corporate Plan, balancing this against the financial requirements of the budget and initiatives identified through the Star Chamber process.

Disaggregation / Aggregation

Work to disaggregate the services is ongoing. Change requests have been approved for services where timescales against the original task and finish group timeline and blueprint needed to be amended, and work continues to finalise the disaggregation plan for all hosted services.

Currently happening:

- Delivering the plan and tasks for those services disaggregating this year.
- Lead services are being reviewed for potential separation requirements.
- Remaining change requests to amend services timeline are underway.

Recently completed:

- Exit plan template has been finalised in readiness for capturing surviving terms for the receiver councils to accept the disaggregated services.
- Impact assessments have been completed to support detailed project planning.

Councillor Jonathan Nunn
Leader of the Council

2nd December 2021

Museums – Reporting Period 16 August – 15 October 2021

The visitor figures for Northampton Museum & Art Gallery are remaining strong, with visitors running at 65% and Abington Park Museum at 55% of pre-Covid projections. This compares well to the wider sector which are still operating at between 13 – 40% of 2019 visitor numbers.

The museum service has started to introduce more in person events and activities as part of its public programme, with the Art History lecture series and Over 60's talk series both drawing good numbers. Transport Day returned to Abington Park Museum after a two year gap and drew major crowds, with 5,000 visitors attending the event and just under 3,000 passing through the museum.

The inaugural art gallery exhibition 'Chris Fiddes – Challenging Perspectives', a retrospective looking at the life and work of notable Northampton artist Chris Fiddes, ended its run, with just under 30,000 visitors passing through the exhibition. The exhibition was very well received and garnered a number of reviews in local and national news and arts publications. The next exhibition is the annual Northampton Town and County Arts Society exhibition, showcasing some of the finest artists working in the county.

The stunning atrium extension at Northampton Museum and Art Gallery that links the original museum to new galleries was the East Midlands regional winner in the Local Authority Building Control (LABC) Building Excellence Award for the 'best non-residential extension' category. The accolade was awarded to the project team, including Kettering-based firm GSS Architecture, Wildgoose Construction and West Northamptonshire Council. The project is now up for the National Building Excellence Awards, which will be announced in January 2022.

Supporting the Local Visitor Economy

With the tourism and hospitality industry hardest hit in the pandemic, the Economy team have been working collaboratively with NNC and Northamptonshire Surprise to support the local visitor economy sector to bounce back, by raising the profile of the fantastic local attractions and businesses the area offers to residents and visitors and encourage staycations and tourism spend back into the area.

The Go Northamptonshire campaign was developed to deliver a focussed programme of marketing activity, including dedicated website pages and social media posts to target more overnight stays and increase visitor numbers to the area.
www.northamptonshiresurprise.com/go-northamptonshire

Archives and Heritage Service

The Archives and Heritage Service has been open to the public (by appointment only) since June. Average visitor numbers are steady, lower than before Covid-19 of necessity, but the overall customer feedback as to levels of service and staff helpfulness is all positive.

The core role of the service is to preserve archives for present and future generations for research, learning and enjoyment. This responsibility includes documents that may be 800

years old, as well as modern collections that are placed in the service's care every day. Since the service re-opened, many parish councils have deposited records with the service, for example. These will become important archives for the future – telling the story of local communities for future researchers. The service is also playing a key role by accepting in records from the various local authorities that no longer exist as the result of Local Government Reorganisation. Core records need to be selected and retained to enable the decisions and work of the predecessor councils to be accessible to residents now and into the future.

The key priority for the service currently is to address the precarious position in which it was left by the County Council, whereby budget reductions had left it unable to meet the basic standards of staffing expected by the national regulatory body. To serve both North and West Northamptonshire Councils effectively, the service's core staffing needs to be strengthened so that obligations on the authorities can be delivered, as well as offering good quality services for individuals and communities.

Home Adaptations / Disabled Facilities Grants

The Team have started to see the increase in the number of enquiries and applications from residents across West Northamptonshire as the self-isolation and shielding response to Covid-19 are relaxed.

Year (April – Sept)	No of Enquiries	No of Grant Approvals
2019	182	48
2020	132	15
2021	168	43

The Team have responded by working collaboratively with Community Occupational Therapy to ensure that resources are available to respond to the increased demand. As referenced at the September 2021, Health and Wellbeing Board, additional Occupational Therapy resources have been brought into the team, and arrangements have been made with local providers to outsource the design and tendering of work if necessary.

The actual and committed spend for the provision of home adaptations for 2021/21 has already exceeded to total years spend for 2020/21. This remains within available budget spending and the allocation of funding from the Better Care Fund. Since 1st April 2021, the teams have collectively supported the delivery of home adaptations to our communities of nearly £1m ensuring that residents that continue to live in their homes safely and with continued wellbeing.

The Team Managers have also been working closely with colleagues within the Health sector, and particularly the two acute hospitals, to ensure awareness of the Council's Housing Adaptations Policy, and the discretionary grant assistance to support clients being discharged from hospital with adaptation needs.

Private Sector Housing

The Council continue to response to notifications of properties that are potentially Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO). Since April 2021, the team have completed investigations on 99 properties within the Northampton locality, with 62 of these premises being progressed to application for a HMO licence under the Housing Act 2004. However, over the same period the team have received notifications of 155 new property addresses considered to by HMOs for which investigations continue.

The Team continue to use all its available information to support the 'intelligence led' approach to Private Sector Housing, including HMO regulation, seeking to ensure that those properties that require licences are identified and brought into the regulatory regime.

BIPC service in libraries

During November, the Library Service in the West launched 2 new Business and IP Centre Local spaces in Brixworth Library (2nd November) and Towcester Library (16th November). These are extensions of the main Business and IP Centre in the Central Library, Northampton.

We have been able to extend and enhance the offer through DCMS funding that the British Library BIPC network has attracted (around £700k over 3 years for the county). This has included employing two new fixed term business support advisors as well as creating and furnishing the two new local spaces at Brixworth and Towcester. The BIPC offers 1:1 support to entrepreneurs and those setting up as self-employed to get their SMEs up and running.

A range of workshops, webinars and events are offered throughout the year as well as opportunities for grant funding. The launch of the two new spaces will enable us to deliver these offers much more locally to customers across the West. The BIPC deliver a number of our KPIs and so far this year (Q1 & Q2) 19 new businesses have launched with some support from the service.

Northampton Racecourse Parkrun – Toilet Facilities

Since April this year organisers of Northampton Racecourse Parkrun have experienced issues with access to the park's toilet facilities. This had resulted in the event organiser having to subsidise the cost for opening toilets from their own pocket. WNC's Sport & Leisure Team has stepped in to cover the costs to open these facilities December through to March. A longer-term solution will be set up in time for the new financial year. We are pleased to be able to support the Northampton Parkrun which attracts over 400 participants each week and is part of a national programme of weekly accessible 5k running events for all abilities and fitness levels.

Northampton Partnership Homes

Housing Heroes Awards

Following on from NPH's success in being awarded the UK Housing Heroes Awards in the category of "Team of the Year" (Local Authority/ALMO) NPH have been shortlisted (one of 7 finalists in the country) for UK Housing Homebuilder of the Year award. The winner will be announced on Thursday 25th November. Being shortlisted for this accolade is a major achievement in its own right which recognises the aim to create a home and a sustainable community as opposed to simply building a house.

Working towards Carbon Neutral – Energy Efficient Homes

NPH successfully bid for "Retrofit funding" under the government's demonstrator fund decarbonisation programme. The project to retrofit 150 homes in Northampton has been picked up by BBC Look East and was part of a BBC Special "Eco" programme which showcased WNC at the forefront of innovation in upgrading existing homes to make them energy efficient and working towards zero carbon. These homes are in the Kingsthorpe and Kingsley area are homes built in the early 20th century, which are expensive to heat and energy inefficient due to their construction type. WNC are one of only 16 Councils nationally who secured funding for this work and are consequently considered a trailblazer.

BEIS (the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy) have announced the launch of the Wave 1 SHDF (Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund) competition, which is the formal programme following the demonstrator pilot. The aim of this "Wave 1" of the SHDF differs from the innovation focus of the Demonstrator fund and seeks to retrofit a significantly greater number of properties than the Demonstrator by adopting a worst first, fabric first, lowest regrets approach. Wave 1 will offer scaled cost caps (depending on the starting conditions of the home) and will emphasise fabric improvements to ensure heat loss prevention measures are installed before other energy performance measures. On the back of the pilot project, using the lessons learnt staff from NPH and WNC have worked together to bid for grant funding as part of this programme, which if successful will see a further 429 homes upgraded. These homes are in Kingsthorpe, Kingsthorpe Hollow, Kingsley, Abington and St. James.

Improving Fire Safety

NPH in partnership with Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) have developed and launched a Fire Safety App. This is believed to be sector leading and the first of its kind. This enables live recording of fire risk assessments and daily fire risk management. It has been supported and promoted by Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service and has been recognised as a "huge step forward" in fire protection.

In a drive to ensure sheltered housing is fitted with the latest and best safety devices, NPH are in the process of completing a project to install the latest smoke alarm technology devices in over 440 of the high-risk homes across Northampton. These smart devices enable NPH to monitor all aspects of the alarm's functionality remotely. Any issues are reported immediately and actioned round the clock. This means that vulnerable customers who are supported by lifelines are now even safer.

Reducing Repairs Backlog

As a result of the Covid-19 lockdowns when only emergency works were completed NPH built up a large back log on non-essential repair works. This generated a request for over 2700 jobs, since the lifting of restrictions NPH have been working through this backlog which currently stands at 1619 jobs. To manage expectations all these works have been prioritised. Works are scheduled up to 2 months in advance with tenants with works being allocated to both NPH trades and external contractors with the aim to complete the backlog this financial year.

Councillor Adam Brown

Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture & Leisure

2nd December 2021

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SERVICES

HS2

Pre-app meetings involving local Members are now being held with HS2 Ltd and their contractors on planning, landscape, ecology, noise and highways matters related to the construction period and the permanent arrangements, in advance of formal consents being submitted to the Council. The Council continues to facilitate meetings of the HS2 Liaison Group, a forum for local residents and other key stakeholders to receive updates from HS2 Ltd and raise issues directly. This positive engagement with HS2 Ltd will, we hope, help to minimise as far as possible the impacts of the project on local residents as construction starts to accelerate. The majority of the HS2 Road Safety Fund schemes have now been completed with only the installation of Vehicle Activated Signs and a scheme in Aston le Walls outstanding. Both schemes are on schedule to be completed by Christmas. The possibility of an HS2 Marshal, similar to posts recently recruited to in Buckinghamshire, is being investigated as an option for West Northamptonshire as part of budget setting proposals.

North West Relief Road

The Authority's bid for Levelling Up Funding to cover the budget gap was not amongst the successful bids announced on 27th October. We are therefore considering our options in line with the cabinet paper in June and will report very soon on a way forward.

Cliftonville Corridor

Work on Phase 2 of the Cliftonville Corridor scheme commenced on the 20th September 2021 as planned and after an initial busy first week, traffic in the area has stabilised and is far lower than prior to the works starting. A key contributing factor is the close working relationship the team has established with local businesses, Northampton General Hospital and St Andrew's Healthcare to refine the traffic management arrangements in the area.

Whilst there have been complex challenges on site to resolve the arrangements with a variety of utilities present, the team have shown great flexibility to overcome these challenges and are currently on track to complete the scheme prior to Christmas 2021 as planned.

Resurfacing works, that will require the complete overnight closure of Cliftonville Road and Bedford Road, are due to begin during week commencing 29/11/21. This work is highly weather dependent. While the completion of the scheme is on schedule, unfortunately the weather forecast indicates that we may be in for a cold snap that could impact on the final completion date.

New Highways Contract

The second phase of dialogue with bidders which will result in the procurement of a new contract for highways continues. Bidders have recently been invited to consider if there are any economies of scale or efficiencies if the two separate contracts for West Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire are awarded to the same bidder and the councils allow a limited

degree of co-operation. This would not impact on our ability to deliver to the priorities of West Northamptonshire in any way. The new contract is scheduled to begin in Summer 2022, slightly later than originally planned and so discussions have commenced with KierWSP about extending their current contract to ensure there is no gap between the two contracts.

Active Travel

We have secured money from the Department for Transport for funding to help develop a new Active Travel strategy for West Northamptonshire. This strategy can be used to identify improvements to our active travel schemes, which in turn ensure that we can prioritise key routes across our area, creating a network that will encourage more walking and cycling thereby reducing congestion and contribute to the Council's carbon reduction targets.

Bus Lane Review

The consultation on the St James / Westbridge Bus Lane has recently closed. The result is clear with 56% of the respondents wanting the lane to revert to its original hours of operation – 7.30 am to 9.30 am. Only 6% of respondents wish the lane to continue to be operational 24 hours a day, and 9% favored it being operational from 7.00 am to 7.00 pm. This will be reflected in a report to December Cabinet when a final decision will be taken.

Transport – Buses & Rail

Following agreement at our June Cabinet meeting to develop a Bus Service Improvement Plan, the plan was submitted to Government at the end of October. I thank Members for their input in finalising the plan. This is one of the key steps in delivering the Government's National Bus Strategy - Bus Back Better - within West Northamptonshire and allowing us to access the associated funding. Work is now under way on establishing the Enhanced Partnership with local bus operators by March 2022.

A meeting has been held with East West Rail to discuss better ways of integrating West Northamptonshire rail stations into their plans for a new / re-opened rail line between Oxford and Cambridge.

Highways Maintenance

A schedule of highways maintenance in West Northamptonshire is published regularly and is available for all elected members. The maintenance team are using new technology to help improve the speed and quality of repairs, including the Thermal Road Repair Unit and the Roadmaster unit which have been bought using capital investment from the Council.

A highways 'members evening' was held on 21st October 2021 and was attended by approximately 40 members from West Northamptonshire Council. Future events will be scheduled and they are a good opportunity to find out more about the work that the team does on a daily basis. The next 'members evening' will be about Capital funding and works prioritisation.

Winter Service

We have now entered the Winter Service period and have been out on our first gritting runs, these will continue until April 2022 on the basis of the forecast for road temperatures and weather. We operate route-based forecasting, which means that on occasions we will grit some routes but not all.

WASTE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Waste Collections

Following some disruption to waste collection services in recent months due to the national HGV driver shortage, the services have recently stabilised with only a small number of service disruption issues.

Preparations are being made to harmonise the charges for garden waste across West Northamptonshire from 1st April 2022, following agreement by Cabinet in November. The service will be managed and administered by West Northamptonshire Officers in order to ensure the best possible customer service for our residents. All residents across West Northamptonshire will have the option to choose whether or not to receive garden waste collections for 2022/23 by subscribing to the service for an annual charge.

We have successfully bid for £20,000 of funding to introduce the kerbside collection of WEEE (Waste Electric and Electronic Equipment) from residents in the Daventry area. Residents in the Northampton and South areas already have this service. This money will be spent on fitting cages to the Refuse Collection Vehicles in which to collect the material, advertising banners for the vehicles and other publicity activities. The new scheme will be launched in the new year.

New Contracts are being procured for the maintenance of the waste fleet in the South area and also for the Farthinghoe Recycling Centre. More information regarding these will be available towards the end of this calendar year.

Litter and Street Cleansing

Dialogue with and support for the Northamptonshire Litter Wombles is on-going and very positive.

We hope to secure some external funding to enhance town centre cleansing and to buy additional equipment for community groups who undertaken litter picking.

With the changing of the seasons, street cleansing crews are gearing themselves up to deal with leaf fall, additional resources have been planned and a schedule created taking into account the most heavily affected areas though whilst also providing a responsive service.

ENVIRONMENT

Climate Change

The Council brought together 6 working groups to look at how we could ensure that West Northants played its part in reducing carbon and meeting our targets as set out in our climate emergency commitment.

The six themes included the Environment and Agriculture, transport business and housing the main contributors to climate change as well as a group representing the many environmental groups and partners that operate in West Northamptonshire as well as a group of young people.

The outcomes of all of the groups have been fantastic, developing a wide range of opportunities that we will very soon share and consult with everyone. It is clear from the discussion at COP 26 that climate is not seen in isolation and that the wider sustainability aspects are also considered. We are therefore looking at how we can ensure that as a Council and as a place, bringing everyone together, we can develop a more rounded approach to ensuring we are truly making a difference.

We will therefore be looking at announcing our next steps, working with members, on how we will deliver this important work.

Environmental approach, including climate

With the WNC Environmental Framework and Environmental Principles for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc in place, and a climate emergency recognised, the Council is now rolling up its sleeves for the hard work of making real change.

The Council has two roles in relation to climate. It has responsibilities as a major organisation and service provider, reflected in the target for internal carbon neutrality target of 2030. This will require a series of linked strategies covering:

- Assets (land and buildings).
- Energy, including renewable energy production.
- Fleet.
- Procurement of goods, works and services.

A project working on an estate climate strategy has now commenced. This will work on the basis of 'true' carbon impacts of gas and electricity and include the authority's entire estate, including the 'shadow estate' operated on WNC's behalf by contractors but excluding (as being outside of WNC's area of control) industrial operations of commercial tenants. It also excludes defined areas, such as the new highways contract, which will have their own carbon neutrality plans.

Parks and Open Spaces

The parks continue to be very well used, as we move into the autumn and winter months. After the mini tornado that hit some areas of Northampton on Sunday 31st October, there were many trees in our parks that had lost some major limbs. The Park Rangers worked very hard to ensure the parks remained safe by taping off hazardous areas and helped the Idverde tree teams identify and prioritise the removal of the highest risk trees.

As part of our continued commitment to the enhancement of our Parks & Open Spaces, the footpath at Granary Road has been completely refurbished and a new footpath has been installed at Bradlaugh Fields.

Weekly, all the play equipment within our parks is inspected and repairs are carried out as and when necessary. On top of this, plans are in place for the refurbishment and for additional play equipment at Exeter Place, Rillwood Court, Milverton Park, Nursery Lane Open Space and Brixworth Country Park. Other parks are also being investigated and considered year on year.

The new Watermeadows Park in Towcester is nearing completion. It has a new footpath that loops around the park and it will shortly have installed new benches, picnic tables, litter bins and a play area.

Discussions about integrating the Council's country parks are developing. It seems likely that – subject to joint committee approval – the former NCC country parks will be disaggregated for April 2022. Whilst this will involve some change for the staff involved, it offers real opportunities to build a WNC parks service, getting the best out of all our parks.

Tree policy

The Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered a presentation on the development of a WNC Tree Policy on Tuesday 31st August. This identified the importance of trees for beauty and biodiversity, the pressures both to add and remove them and the need to have 'the right

tree in the right place'. The new policy will draw on expert advice to provide clear guidance, taking into account West Northamptonshire's climate, soils and styles of development, about how to get the best out of trees for everyone's benefit.

Development and delivery of the tree policy and strategy will have a significant resource requirement, which the Council will need to consider as part of budget-setting.

The Woodland Trust invited the Council to submit a bid to the Emergency Tree Fund to develop a high quality and comprehensive tree policy and strategy. The Trust's local staff are working with the Council to prepare the bid, which will have been submitted by the deadline of 29th November 2021. Bids can range from £50K - £300K; it is proposed to request £160k, to balance the maximum chance of success with maximum investment.

In line with the Trust's expectations, the bid includes support for a professional tree officer to work on the tree strategy and delivery plan. The bid also includes resources for tree surveys, including assessment of tree canopy cover (the Trust's preferred measure), working with parishes and community groups, and actual tree planting. Strategy development in the first year would be followed by delivery in the later years.

The Council would be required to provide some match funding; this is proposed to be £45k over two years, reflecting 50% of the costs of the staff post."

FLOOD MANAGEMENT

Flood & Water Team

In 2020, the Government announced a £200 million fund for innovative projects to help communities be more resilient to flooding and coastal change. The former NCC Flood & Water Team put in a bid and were successful in being awarded £6.2 million, which will be spent over the next five and a half years.

This meant that an Innovative Flood Resilience Project Team would need to be appointed, which is currently on going. However, the team has so far successfully appointed the Innovative Flood Resilience Programme Manager, Alan Ryan, who is now in place. The interviews are continuing for the posts of Project Manager and Support Officer.

The Council has an important role as lead local flood authority and land drainage authority. The service responds to large number of formal consultations, and investigates flooding incidents. Strategically it works to identify and secure measures to reduce the risk of flooding to homes and businesses.

There are a number of places, notably in Northampton and Yelverfoft, where flooding is a major concern to residents and businesses

Car parks

Although still below pre-Covid levels, car park usage has been recovering. Currently we are projecting a loss of income of around £1.7m, against the budget of nearly £5m. Just under £0.3m has been met from the Government's Covid fees and charges scheme; the remainder will be met from the Covid grant the Council is holding.

In the run up to Christmas free parking will be provided in Northampton on Saturdays and after 3.00pm in all council car parks from Saturday 20th November to Monday 3rd January 2022. The additional loss of income will be met from Covid grant funds.

It is also proposed to use Covid grant monies to install a new parking payment system in the council's multi-storey car parks and the larger surface car parks. The new system will allow

payment by direct debit and app or mobile-friendly website, greatly reducing the need to pay at machines in the car parks and removing the fear of overstaying in surface car park. This should increase ease of use, improve personal safety and reduce the chances of Covid infection from proximity and use of the same payment machine. However, at least one payment machine would still be provided for each car park to cater for those who prefer not to use the other means.

This initiative should encourage people to use Northampton town centre, which is directly beneficial but also would improve car park income.

Councillor Phil Larratt

Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste Services

2nd December 2021

Trading Standards

The team have carried out further illegal tobacco visits during November in partnership with HMRC.

Thousands more packets of illegal cigarettes have been seized from shops in Northampton after being sniffed out by tobacco detection dogs.

The operation took place as part of Operation CeCe, a National Trading Standards initiative in partnership with HMRC to tackle illegal tobacco.

Officers from West Northamptonshire Council's Trading Standards team seized 1109 packets from one shop, and 1079 from another. They also uncovered 7kg of illegal hand rolling tobacco.

It follows a similar crackdown in the town in September which led to the seizure of more than 3,500 illegal cigarettes.

Further investigations are now underway to decide what action should be taken against the shop owners.

More than 180 victims of a fraudulent flight delay compensation company are to be reimbursed following a successful prosecution by Northamptonshire Trading Standards.

Flight Delay Claims Team promoted themselves through a website which said they could help people claim up to £540 in compensation for delayed, cancelled or overbooked flights.

A lengthy investigation by Northamptonshire Trading Standards led to the company directors, Martin Ryan and his son Joseph Ryan, being charged with fraudulent trading.

And at Northampton Crown Court on Monday (27 September) Martin Ryan was sentenced to 22 months imprisonment, suspended for two years. He was also disqualified from being a director for five years and was made the subject of a five-year criminal behaviour order.

Joseph Ryan was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment, suspended for two years, was disqualified as a director for three years, and received a three-year criminal behaviour order. Their company E.Asthampton Ltd, registered in Rushden, Northamptonshire, was also fined £5,000.

The pair had entered guilty pleas at an earlier hearing, when His Honour Judge Rupert Mayo ruled they pay £250,000 to compensate victims, as well as to help cover the costs of the prosecution.

A total of 182 victims identified as part of the court case as having suffered financial loss will now receive their share of the amount set aside for compensation.

The Trading Standards Team have commenced a programme of sampling to monitor compliance with the requirements of the Food Information (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2019. (Natasha's Law). This legislation extends allergen labelling requirements to food items which are prepacked for direct sale. This follows on from a programme of awareness raising about the requirements of the legislation which came into force at the beginning of October.

The team have also been raising awareness of firework safety in the lead up to Bonfire night and will be carrying out further communications in the coming months to raise awareness of product safety issues as Christmas approaches

Environmental Health

The environmental health team have been carrying out inspections of new high risk food businesses which have registered with the Council during the last 18 months. In addition continuing with the programme of inspection of existing food businesses on a priority basis. The team continue to work in support of the partnership efforts to deal with COVID 19 and continue to support investigations of outbreaks and promotion of vaccinations.

Further prosecutions from fly tipping offences have taken place in the last few weeks and the LA Support (Kingdom) team have recommenced litter enforcement patrols in the centre of Northampton.

Four pairs of rapid charging points for electric vehicles have been installed in town centre car parks in Northampton. The charging points which are primarily for use by taxi drivers but may be used by other members of the public are located in Newland, Wellington Street, Commercial St and The Mounts surface car parks. , Each 50kw unit can charge up to two vehicles at a time in dedicated parking bays.

The West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) project was initiated by the former Northampton Borough Council, which received a £45,000 grant from the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV).

That funding was matched using Section 106 developer contributions, with EB Charging Ltd financing the remainder.

The scheme follows the publication in 2018 of the Northampton Low Emission Strategy, which aims to encourage and support taxi and private hire operators to switch to ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs). The target is for all taxis and private hire vehicles to be ULEVs by 2028.

Building Control

The team continue to deal with a large number of inspections reflecting the high levels of activity in the construction industry. They are providing building control services for a wide range of customers.

Community Engagement

WNC's Community Engagement Team has supported various community events recently, including:

- Diwali celebrations in Northampton town centre on Saturday 30 October. The annual Festival of Lights celebrations are organised by the Indian Hindu Welfare Organisation with support from West Northants Council. There was food and community stalls and performances from 10am, followed by a lantern procession in the evening.
- International Men's Day was celebrated on 19 November, 5-7pm. People were able to attend in person and there was also an opportunity to watch it livestreamed via

YouTube. Partnership health and mental health agencies were invited to engage, awards were given to the two winners, chosen from the 80 applications received, for this year's Inspirational Male Award.

- Remembering World Aids Day on 1 December was a civic event including the lighting of candles across our locality areas.
- Virtual International Day for Persons With a Disability event – this will be live-streamed over YouTube on Friday 3 December. The event is led by West Northamptonshire Council's Disability Forum, Teamwork Trust's Disability Forum, the Staff Disability Network for both West and North Northants Councils and Northants Sport.

Community Safety Initiatives

The 16 Days of Activism campaign will run from the 25 November to 10 December focused on raising awareness and encouraging reporting of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence. During the 16 days we:

- ran a social media campaign
- distributed posters and leaflets detailing how to access support
- held engagement sessions at a range of locations including the University of Northampton and Metro Bank Weston Favell
- online coffee and chat sessions

Working in partnership together, WNC and the Northamptonshire Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner have bid for and secured funding through the Safer Streets 3 and Safer Streets 4 Programmes.

The funding awarded through these programmes is over £800,000. The money will fund a wide range of projects to improve the safety of women and girls on our streets and prevent violence in the night-time economy, including:

- measures to target the perpetrators of harassment or violence
- physical environmental improvements, including lighting, CCTV, fencing and cutting back shrubbery
- training, education, awareness raising/communications campaigns and engagement activity, involving the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, University of Northampton and our domestic abuse and sexual violence providers.

We have also launched a third Party Hate Crime Reporting Service, 'Stop Hate UK'.

Beat the Streets

West Northamptonshire Council worked in partnership with Public Health Northamptonshire and NSport to deliver Beat the Streets Northampton from 22 September to 3 November 2021. Beat the Street is a fun, free initiative that saw Northampton transformed into a giant game! Participants each got a Beat the Street card which contained radio-frequency identification (RFID) technology which participants tapped against sensors called 'Beat Boxes' located on lamp posts across the area. Players received points for each box they tapped. The game encourages residents to get involved and provides an opportunity to form teams linked to schools, community groups and businesses promoting people to get more involved in their local community alongside becoming more physically active. 9.6% (20,699 people) participated covering 113,510 miles. A range of residents participated in the game:

- 73% were children
- 32% were previously inactive
- 45% were from areas of multiple deprivation
- 12% had a long term medical condition, and

- 3.4% had a disability.

The next phase of the project focuses on sustaining the momentum we have seen through the project, for people to continue to lead active lives..

Resettlement of people from Afghanistan

A range of teams across the council and other statutory agencies, North Northamptonshire Council and voluntary/community sector partners continue to deliver a comprehensive package of wrap around support to people who have fled Afghanistan who are currently being accommodated in hotel-type accommodation booked by the Home Office within West Northamptonshire.

As at 19th November, 48 families are accommodated in the Hotels comprising of 113 adults and 136 children – a total of 249 people

The number of families that have moved onto permanent accommodation 14, comprising of 32 adults and 36 children – a total of 68 people

We will continue to periodically receive new family groups via the Home Office

Councillor David Smith

Cabinet Member for Community Safety & Engagement and Regulatory Services

2nd December, 2021

Northamptonshire's Children Trust

The Trust has had 2 Ofsted visits. They have had a Ofsted visit to the Fostering service which is now registered as a Independent Fostering Agency. The out come of which has not yet been publish. It is fair to say that the transition between a fostering service within a councils and the Ofsted requirements of an IFA is great, so there is more work to be done in this area. The Trust also had a MV from Ofsted about children in care 16+ and Care leavers. The final Ofsted letter has not yet been published for this visit. The Trust are also now waiting for a YOS inspection and also an inspection of the Adoption service which is now a Voluntary Adoption Agency. The two Councils and the Trust are currently in contract negotiations for 2022/23.

You will all have heard that our joint DCS Cathy Hadley will be leaving us at the end of January. I would like to thank her for all the work she has done whilst in our County. Cathy has. Been with us for just over 2 years, during that time we have become two Councils and set up a Children's Trust and worked very hard to make sure that Children's Services's is now well on the improvement journey. We wish her well with her new position near to her home

Education

The Councils will be due a SEND inspection on the Autumn of 2022 and work is underway with partners to consider current performance and to develop a self assessment and action plan. The work is being supported by an experienced SEND consultant and all partners are engaged and attend a SEND Accountability Board. Work is also underway with the Parent Care Forum to ensure they are fully involved in the work. It is also planned that the Regional Improvement and Innovation Alliance will undertake a peer inspection of the SEND provision in the spring.

Children have been working with the Afghanistan families and ensuring the provision of education for children. School placements have been found for all children however there are challenges around the continuous movement of the children from the hotels to permanent homes as well as the initial funding from the DfE which has been initially for 3 months.

Last week I attended the Youth Summit at the Guildhall Northampton, please see attached report

The #NorthamptonYouthSummit was set up three years ago with a meeting of 8 youth providers.

We became a steering group and the first thing we did was to reach out to other youth providers.

We had our first collaborative in June 2019.

From that evolved the ideas on how to support youth work development-

1. A Youth Centre (Motion passed at NCC and NBA).
2. Accredited courses at the uni- there is now a youth and community MA
3. An annual youth led youth conference. We have just delivered the third annual conference.

4. Continued networking of all youth providers. NBA took over the networking and have now passed it to VIN.
5. A youth weekly radio show called Free2Talk radio-broadcasts on Thursdays.
6. We continue as a steering group- L2L, The Lowdown, Free to Talk, NAYC, Springs Family Centre, CYPN, Right Resolution, Peak Empower, Sport for Fitness.

This years #NorthamptonYouthSummit

NAYC play a lead role, working with other youth groups, to identify young leaders and work through with them the design and content of the day. Covid permitting, this includes a weekend residential, many hours of workshops in the Guildhall and lots of pizza.

This year we had 15 young leaders, from different parts of the town, working together, to deliver the day.

Outcome for 2021.

The stalls set up the day before the conference to allow young people at school/college/ and statutory services to come and see what is on offer in the town. Covid meant we had to limit the number of stalls, so from a potential 45 stalls we had 28-first come first served. They represented an amazing mix of services and resources and the young people really enjoyed spending time at each stall.

Schools and statutory services and the stall holders themselves, all fed back how exciting and how encouraging it is to see such a range of provision.

Covid also meant we had to limit the number of schools bringing 10 young people each.

We were delighted with the schools that did attend. All their youth were fully engaged in every aspect of the day and gave us some fabulous feed-back.

Guildhall staff were fabulous and really helped us design a safe environment for everyone.

The Free to Talk radio show broadcast all day under the amazing stewardship of Mark Dean, with young people interviewing each other, and being asked their opinions on a wide range of topics.

The day began in the Council Chamber and the conference was opened by the Mayor. She talked to the young people about her role, about the role of Councillor. She invited debate about any recent concern. The issue raised was the discriminatory and the perceived discriminatory experience of young Black people in relation to the police. Solutions were asked for. Answers given were, training for the police, body cameras for the police, more CCTV. The Mayor invited the youth to consider becoming Councillors and to consider speaking at council meetings. Two youth have agreed to speak at the next Full Council.

The young leaders delivered 2 workshops twice, am and pm. These were on Healthy Relationships and Cyber bullying. Feed back from the young people attending was amazing.

The day ended in the Chamber and Cllr. Fiona Baker talked to the young people about her role and the importance of hearing from young people first hand. She gave out the certificates.

Ideas for developing the conference for next year were:-

- To have more workshops.
- To include a workshop on physical health as well as mental health.
- To have a workshop at the conference for the teachers.
- To run youth led workshops for parents (Not necessarily at the conference).

Many, many, thanks to the young leaders, to Zoe for her amazing facilitation of the process and to Becky, Leanne, Lucy, Jenny, James and Mark for supporting the young people throughout and on the day. Thanks too to the Mayor, Cllr. Rufia Ashraf, and to the Guildhall staff.

Councillor Fiona Baker

Cabinet Member for Children, Families, Education and Skills.

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2nd December 2021

ECONOMY TEAM SUMMARY

Supporting West Northamptonshire Businesses

The Economy Team have been dealing and responding to a number of business enquiries recently and engaging with local businesses at events, such as the Northamptonshire Chamber of Commerce Back 2 Business Expo, the West Northants Business Forum and most recently the Motorsport Industry Association's Conference Technology Showcase to promote the business support provided by the team.

The WNC website has also been updated with information about the business support provided by the Economy team and a dedicated contact form for enquiries is now available. www.westnorthants.gov.uk/free-business-support

WNC Employment Support Activities

The Economy team have been actively promoting and providing employment support to a number of West Northamptonshire businesses and residents looking to fill vacancies/find local work.

This month the team were involved in hosting a DWP Kickstart event in Towcester, which focused on supporting businesses based in Towcester and Silverstone with filling their Kickstart vacancies.

The employment support provided by the WNC Job Club includes access to professional experts who provide free confidential advice and support to help find local employment, latest information on local vacancies, CV, application form and covering letter advice, support with on volunteering and training opportunities as well as money, debt and welfare advice. www.westnorthants.gov.uk/free-employment-support

Developing a West Northamptonshire Prospectus

The development of a West Northamptonshire Prospectus is progressing and the Economy team are engaging with key external stakeholders to support its preparation. Partners include the University of Northampton, University of Cranfield, Prologis, Visit England, Silverstone Park, and others, all of whom are endorsing the developing document and are keen to build partnership working with WNC. A final draft of the Prospectus is currently under development to then be approved internally and taken to Government soon. The Prospectus will steer a future strategy development and be used to input how WNC addresses business support, inward investment, skills development, climate change and more.

Celebrating West Northamptonshire businesses – Small Business Saturday

This year Small Business Saturday will take place on the 4 December 2021. The national campaign celebrates small business success and encourages consumers to 'shop local' and to support businesses in their communities and reinforces the message of utilising local assets, which in turn benefits the local economy.

Now in its 9th year in the UK, the campaign has grown significantly year on year with 15.4 million people spending a record £1.1 billion with small businesses on Small Business Saturday in 2020.

The Economy team have been working pro-actively with the Town Councils, Northampton Bid, FSB and Northamptonshire Chamber and local partners to ensure that all of West Northamptonshire is aware of Small Business Saturday and ready to celebrate our fantastic local businesses.

Small Business Saturday activities the Team are delivering include a robust marketing campaign in partnership with the Communications Team, focused towards both residents and employers. An informative Business Pack, delivered to businesses surrounding each local High Street, including information on a Shop Window Competition for employers to decorate the High Street, attract customers in and to be in with a chance of winning some free marketing publicity and a custom box of chocolates to use in their own marketing.

To engage residents, the Economy Team are running a Selfie Competition, whereby residents are invited to show their love by taking selfies on Small Business Saturday outside their favourite High Street businesses. Not only does this nurture community spirit and enforce the key message of supporting local, but it generates marketing content to celebrate all of our local businesses to residents and visitors. A winner will be chosen for the best selfie in Brackley, Daventry, Northampton and Towcester and each will receive a custom box of chocolates to enjoy this Christmas.

To further celebrate Small Business Saturday, the Economy Team have procured West Northamptonshire bags to be given out for free to residents with around 100 available for each High Street.

The efforts of the Economy Team to celebrate Small Business Saturday won't be just focused towards this one initiative, as the benefits of supporting local employers and investing in the local economy apply all year round, so the Economy Team will continue to run initiatives and campaigns to bring residents and visitors back into the High Streets and to showcase the quality local employers on a local, regional and national level.

For more information about the Council's Small Business Saturday campaign visit www.westnorthants.gov.uk/smallbizsat

MAJOR PROJECTS AND REGENERATION

- **Vulcan Works**
Building works to transform the former Vulcan Works site in Northampton into creative businesses with studios, workshops and managed workspaces have now been completed. The £14 million development is located in the heart of the town's Cultural Quarter and involved a combination of renovation and new build that will provide a total of 68 lettable units specifically aimed at start-ups and growing businesses within the creative industry.

An operator for the facility has been selected following the competitive tendering process. Work is now taking place to make the final elements of preparation for the centre ahead of this opening in the new year. Fit out works for the centre are continuing and the new operator will feed into the remaining parts of this process.

- **Northampton Market Square**
Work on developing the design for the market square has been taking place with Planning, Historic England and Market Traders in the consultation to this point. A report on the future of operation of the market has been produced following this consultation with traders and will influence the make up of the new market provision on the square. A wide public engagement event for the works is planned to start in December.
- **78 Derngate**
£400k of Towns Fund monies, as was set out in the Northampton Town Investment Plan, has successfully been approved by the Northampton Forward Board and WNC Cabinet. Following this a grant agreement with the Trust has been entered into.
- **Watermeadows**
Work on the Watermeadows in Towcester continues with Phase 1 works complete and the second phase of works, which will see new footpaths, seating and play equipment created across the site well underway, although delays due to issues sourcing wood have led to the play equipment being delivered later than planned.
- **Old Black Lion**
A business case for the use of £315k of Towns Fund monies, as was set out in the Northampton Town Investment Plan, has successfully been approved by the Northampton Forward Board and WNC Cabinet. The monies will be made available to the Churches Conservation Trust who are managing the project, with enabling works already commenced on the building..
- **24 Guildhall Road**
The first phase of Works to 24 Guildhall Road, that will see the building changed to accommodate a new contemporary art gallery on the Lower Ground Floor and improvements to the Upper Ground and first floors has now commenced. The contractor, Overbury, expect the works to be completed in spring 2022.

Work on the business case for the second phase of works to this building continues and will come to WNC cabinet in due course.

- **Northampton Bike Park**
The procurement for a contractor to deliver the new bike Park in Northampton has been undertaken, with the submission now being scored to determine which contractor will be selected to deliver the project. The former nine-hole course at Delapré Golf Centre will be transformed into the new facility for mountain biking where the natural slopes, undulations, trees and vegetation will be used to create a series of winding trails for users of all ages and abilities.

Councillor Elizabeth Bowen

Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Town Centre Regeneration and Growth

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2 December 2021

Human Resources

The HR Strategy, Policy and Projects team have continued writing and consulting on the new HR policies for WNC alongside building the HR pages of the intranet, to ensure information relating to HR is accessible to all staff. The new WNC employee (lifestyle) benefits scheme was launched in late July to all employees (and Councillors), currently c700 staff have registered. We will be focusing over the next few months on further communication to publicize the scheme as well as looking at what other benefits can be added to enhance the overall employee package.

The design activity around the creation of the new WNC People Strategy has moved forward at pace this quarter with the team carrying out c16 staff focus groups as well as various meetings with senior managers. We are also out for procurement for an employee survey which will provide a valuable baseline to move forward from. As we move into quarter 3 the focus of the team will be to start to shape the work streams arising from the emerging people strategy themes, such as induction, leadership and management development and talent management/succession planning.

In July the Learning and Development Team (hosted by NNC) launched our new WNC 'managing and leading performance excellence' course, which is a 12 week programme designed for experienced managers who want to refresh or develop their leadership and management knowledge and skills. Take up on the first course has been excellent. We have also been planning and piloting a new Microsoft 365 training across the workforce in collaboration with IT and Transformation, Councillor development programmes and working in partnership with Health, Safety and Wellbeing to review and refresh the key training offer.

Work has continued during this quarter on pay and grading for WNC. In addition to conducting the local pay bargaining for 2021/22 we have been undertaking 100 plus job evaluations jointly with our trade unions using the NJC job evaluation scheme. The outcomes of these will then be used to shape our new pay structure for new staff to WNC during the Autumn.

Finally, we remain busy in the HR Business Partnering and Advisory team, supporting some restructuring and early transformation activity in addition to the business as usual in terms of employee relations casework. We have also produced the first quarterly management information dashboards for services

Legal and Democratic Services

The in-house legal team is now delivering the legal service across the whole authority area, having brought back in house the contracts for Daventry and South Northants. Pathfinder legal services continue to provide upper tier legal advice to the Council. A review of legal services is underway, supported by Transformation resource, to provide quality legal advice which also provides the best value for money for the Council moving forward. The review will also look at external spend on legal advice.

The Constitution review has been completed by the Task & Finish Group and Democracy and Standards Committee and is recommended to this meeting of Council. The review involved consultation with Members and with the public and has resulted in some very positive improvements. The new Head of Law and Governance has been appointed, Sameera Khan and she will join the Council on 1st February 2022.

Work has been started with the Land Registry to update all of the Council's land holdings to reflect the new ownership by West Northamptonshire Council. This also provides the opportunity to ensure that there is no outstanding unregistered land.

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England have now met with officers, Group Leaders and the wider members of the Council to kick off the review of Council Size and Ward Boundaries. The Review will be conducted by the LGBCE and further updates on the review will be included in future reports as the review progresses. The outcome of the review will be implemented at the election in 2025. The elections team have continued to deliver elections. On 28th October 2021 there were by-elections in Long Buckby and Duston parishes and there are three Neighbourhood referendums taking place today, 2nd December 2021. The Annual Canvas has continued with the publication of the new electoral register on 1st December 2021.

The three Overview and Scrutiny Committees have each held work programming events to further develop their short term work programmes into longer work programmes. Prior to the work programming events taking place, there was comprehensive consultation. The Chairs of the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees contacted various community groups, Parish Councils, voluntary groups and other organisations asking them to suggest items for future Scrutiny review via a short online survey. The Committee received around sixty suggestions for future scrutiny reviews. The Leader and Cabinet Members attended the three Overview and Scrutiny work programming events and informed of their priorities for the year. All of which provided information to assist non Executives in proposing their work programmes for the year. Meetings of the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees took place in November 2021 to prepare the longer-term work programmes which were presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group at its meeting on 30 November 2021 for approval.

Recruitment of the Political Assistant posts has been completed and the new members of staff will be starting with the Council shortly.

In partnership with Property Services and IT, work is underway on the procurement of a modern audio visual system that will be able to meet the needs of future Council meetings, as well as enhancing the facilities available at OAS and The Guildhall.

Registration and Ceremony Service:

A stock and security review was undertaken from 8-11th November in both North and West Registration Districts by the General Registration Office (GRO). The Registration Service holds stock which is very valuable particularly in relation to potential fraud and therefore the GRO maintain a national vigilance in relation to the management and handling of the stock held by Registration authorities. Normally this inspection is undertaken every 2 to 3 years but we have not had a review since 2017. We are pleased to report that the review went well with some minor advisories to be picked up.

The service is still working through the backlog of customer enquiries and appointments. We commenced the recruitment of 3 temporary staff to join the team to help clear this backlog.

Conditions in the general labour market have made it difficult to recruit to these roles. We are therefore exploring alternatives including using staff from other areas in the Council on a temporary basis to clear the current backlog. There is a longer term goal to facilitate bookings online to reduce the workload.

The service has appointed a new manager, who is in charge of the Copy Records Office, and we are also recruiting for new Registrars. We have taken steps to change the calendar booking system to appointments for death registrations only, to ensure the Registration service can meet forecast increased demand during winter. Whilst this will reduce availability for marriage appointments until the New Year this is generally a quieter period for marriages. There is however an outstanding pressure on appointments and moving forward the recruitment of Registrars is essential to tackle this in the longer term.

Coroners Service:

We reported to the last Council meeting the significant increase of Coroner's hearings to deal with the backlog arising during the period when none were taking place during Covid and we are continuing to complete Coroner's hearings at an increased rate. There were some issues with the accommodation for hearings but very positive work has been undertaken which has identified alternative accommodation within the Guildhall which will be suitable to provide a suitable court and office accommodation for the service.

As part of unitary The Leys body storage facility based in North Northamptonshire has been aligned with the Coroners Service, as both are county wide functions. The Coroners Service has recently recruited 3 casual contracted Coroners Officers to support the facility. If the request for The Leys to be activated comes from the hospital trusts, then the casual Coroners Officer's will maintain the day to day part of the service, to allow swift decision making for death registrations. Three permanent staff will be diverted to run The Leys body store. Northants Fire will undertake the hospital to site transfer system.

Since October 2019 both Kettering General Hospital and Northampton General Hospital have had a Medical Examiner Service, to scrutinize all hospital deaths. The next step is to roll out the Medical Examiner service throughout the community. This will be a statutory obligation by 1st April 2022. Both Medical Examiner areas have modelled their boundaries on the WNC and NNC boundaries. Both are about to commence pilots with GP surgery's, then progress a gradual rollout. The Service Manager is working with the lead Medical Examiners to ensure all three service areas work together to provide a joined up service.

Technology and Digital

A full strategic review of our technology provision has commenced ahead of budget setting and the publication of our first technology strategy as a WNC service. An in-depth analysis of the existing capabilities of the service has been completed, which has highlighted areas to develop and invest in – most notably cyber security, architecture, data, project management, business analysis, user training and relationship management of external entities who use our services. Our executive leadership team have approved an initial set of new hires to bolster these areas, and we are developing additional plans to take through service and budget planning for 2022. In addition, we have commenced a formal management training programme for all senior and middle managers to raise the standard and consistency of existing team management, as we seek to drive greater productivity with our current staff. A full reorganisation of the service, which will see former sovereign council teams merged and staff grouped by skill/function is expected c. Oct-Nov, with efficiencies in these teams identified during Q1 2022.

A complete governance structure for handling the complex web of stakeholders and approvals (given we support numerous internal and external customers) is in draft and expected to be approved and published to the organisation in the next month. This will include new early invention from Technology staff in projects, ensuring stakeholders are supported to devise systems that are the best technical as well as business fit.

We continue to work with partners at the Children's Trust, Northampton Partnership Homes, Northampton Leisure Trust and Northampton Museums to set and meet appropriate service standards. In addition, we are supporting work from North Northamptonshire to investigate the service with view to presenting options for potential disaggregation to members.

We are presently running two assessments in partnership with Microsoft, to help determine a) the economics of a full Cloud migration, ahead of a formal Cloud First strategy, and b) the full state of our security, ahead of the arrival of our new cyber security function.

Notable team work over the last several weeks has included:

- Rolling out Office 365 to all user desktops
- Recovery of services following fire outside County Hall
- Numerous adjustments to our main website as services "settle" into it
- Development of an automated mailbot to handle and reply to customer queries and reduce contact centre work

We have also been developing the following projects:

- Migration of children's services to a new Cloud-based application
- Hardware refresh of personal equipment to support new ways of working
- Desk booking system for all sites to support flexible working
- Migration of deprecated Sharepoint 2007 and 2013 instances to new WNC Sharepoint
- Deployment of new a service desk solution (to replace end-of-life)
- New income management tool (to replace end-of-life)
- Enhanced DR options

We will shortly be publishing the first service plan and technology strategy, and taking a number of immediate project priorities through the executive leadership team (replacement phone system, CRM, IT procurement policy, hardware refresh).

Customer Services

The Customer Services department has continued to work on developing the approach to the Customer Experience Strategy by gathering customer stories, customer feedback and mapping customer pathways to understand where interactions can be streamlined.

Work has been carried out on developing a more effective and transparent process for logging and managing Councillor and MP enquiries, with a view to removing any unnecessary steps in the process. Following feedback from Councillors and the Leader, Responders have been identified in each Directorate to coordinate responses, provide updates, and be available for additional clarifications should these be required by Members.

The project to gather requirements and define the best solution for an organisation-wide Customer Experience Management system has now been initiated, and the department are

working closely with ICT and Transformation to ensure that any solution developed is future-proof and offers the one view of the customer.

Over the past two months we have witnessed a continued increase in footfall in our One Stop Shop and receptions and are continuing to multi-skill advisors so they can assist customer with a multitude of queries when they make contact.

Councillor Mike Hallam
Cabinet Member for HR & Corporate Services

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The world of Adult Social Care and Public Health feels like it gets busier every day. At the same time as dealing with the fall out of the pandemic we are seeing significant reform across the sector and challenges around increasing demand and complexity of need. Our teams are doing everything we can to make sure we maintain and provide the best possible support to local people and below are some headlines around our focus over the last few months.

Integrated Care Partnership - ICP

We continue to develop our thinking around future integrated care partnership arrangements in readiness to be compliant with the Health and Care Bill from the 1st April. Alongside considerable engagement through focus groups, two specific Health and Wellbeing Board sessions have been undertaken to inform our thinking of how we define the geographies that we will then wrap services and support around through multidisciplinary teams and increased integrated working opportunities.

The work will see the role of the Health and Wellbeing Board change to be compliant with new legislation with a continued focus of how we;

- Support Children to get the best start in life
- Enable adults to live health and independent lives
- Reduce reoffending
- Provide the best housing options to people in relation to both short and long term need
- Support the best employment and education for local people possible
- Taking forward our Anti-Poverty strategy.

Basically this is about how we support children, young people and adults to live their best life in West Northants.

Anti-Poverty strategy

Development of our anti- poverty strategy is well underway with support from the community and voluntary sector key partners and cross party political support. The Poverty Truth Commission locally has worked with local people to support the development of statements and definitions that define the impact of poverty locally. These statements will support us to connect our strategy to the lived experience of local people. Our policy oversight group met on the 24th November and will continue to meet on a monthly basis as we drive the policy and its implementation forward. The Policy will be presented to Council early in the new year.

A visit to Salford City Council as also being planned to learn from their Anti-Poverty experience over the past 3 years.

Integrated Care Across Northamptonshire - iCAN

iCAN – Newton Europe are now well into the design phase of the iCAN programme. There is a particular focus on the areas that will support the challenges that are predicted across the country in health and social care this winter. We can already see

the difference the programme is making with early signs of things like hospital duration of stay reducing through effective multi agency working.

Safeguarding

The recent safeguarding campaign across Northamptonshire #report it has led to an increase in safeguarding notifications and has increased general awareness with the public on what to do if they have any concerns relating to the safeguarding of adults. The safeguarding board have recently launched the new ARM (adult risk management) toolkit which helps all organisations to support vulnerable adults that have capacity to make decisions but maybe making unwise choices that put themselves at risk of harm. The 15th November -19th November was National Safeguarding Adults Week. Over 1000 people participated in sessions during the week covering a wide range of topics including the role of the adults safeguarding board, duty to refer under the Homelessness Reduction Act and professional curiosity.

Mandatory Vaccinations

From the 11th November any member of care staff working in a residential care home had to be fully vaccinated with the COVID vaccine to be able to continue in their employment. This has been a particularly challenging piece of work both as an employer and a commissioner supporting the wider care market. Internally this has resulted in 7 members of staff having to leave their employment with WNC. It has been confirmed that from 1st April all frontline NHS and social care staff need to be fully vaccinated. We are waiting for the full guidance to be able to understand the impact for both internal and external staff within West Northamptonshire. Whilst this will support the ongoing reduction in transmission of COVID 19, this will have a significant impact

Recruitment

Locally and nationally we continue to see significant challenges in relation the recruitment and retention of front line care workers both internally and externally. Local care providers have lost on average 9 full time equivalent staff members in the last 6 months with sourcing care becoming more difficult by the day. Whilst we continue to meet our statutory duties to support people we are having to stretch our reliance on informal care, be innovative in care provision and sometimes over provide just to keep people safe. This issue is likely to be our biggest challenge over the coming year and whilst we are working with partners to mitigate risk, in the long term we and the Adult Social Care sector as a whole need a sustainable funding settlement from government to prevent us being unable to source support for some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

Councillor Matt Golby

Cabinet member for Adult Social Care and Public Health

2nd December 2021

Planning Policy

The consultation exercise on the Strategic Plan concludes on 6th December. During the consultation exercise a briefing was held for WNC members and two briefings held for parish councils followed by three briefings for the public. All of the briefings consisted of a presentation on the main elements of the consultation followed by a question and answer session. A series of exhibitions have been held at seven locations across the west Northants area. As a result of the interest and that many people are also involved in the examination of the Northampton Plan we have decided that for this stage it is possible to extend the consultation until the 23rd December.

The hearings part of the examination on the Northampton Part 2 local plan took place over the last three weeks in the Guildhall. Inspectors are now considering all that they have read and heard on the plan and will prepare their report. This will be presented to members in due course.

Three Neighbourhood Plans are at a referendum today (Overstone, Clipston and Hackleton).

Responses have been made to consultations on the Vision for the Oxford/Cambridge Arc and an options consultation for a new plan for Cherwell.

At the meeting of Cabinet on 9th November, Cabinet agreed to the adoption of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area Supplementary Planning Document by the Council and also to endorse for public consultation a draft Mitigation Strategy addendum to the Supplementary Planning Document. The mitigation strategy will help to protect birds such as the golden plover and lapwing, which are protected by national and international legislation, and which over winter in the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA.

Development Management and Enforcement

The Local Enforcement Plan for WNC was endorsed by Cabinet in October. This sets out the WNC approach to dealing with Planning Enforcement. Its purpose is to provide a consistent approach to Planning Enforcement across West Northants and is written in a style that easy is for the public to read and understand. Previously residents received different guidance based on which local area website they accessed. The plan identifies clear targets and timeframes for dealing with Planning Enforcement cases.

The Plan sets out what a breach of planning control is; how we investigate breaches; how we assess harm; what powers the council can use; the priority cases are given and the timescales we aim to achieve in investigating cases.

The Plan is now live on WNC website. All the previous enforcement pages on the legacy council websites have been removed and all enforcement information is now in one place. In addition to the Plan are helpful guides to those wanting to report a breach and those who may be the subject of a complaint. Breaches can now also be reported online, asking the right questions to bring forward and streamline the registration and investigation of cases. As such we request anyone wishing to report a breach of planning control, residents, councillors, and parish councillors etc to report a breach online.

The website can be found here: <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/planning-applications-and-enforcement/planning-enforcement>

Planning application and Enforcement caseloads continue to be very high, and we are taking steps to recruit to vacant posts and also bringing in agency staff to reduce the backlog of work.

I am also working with management to ensure that the planning service continues to move forward therefore, we are looking at and will share very shortly, steps that include development of a single IT system, an improved structure of working and increased resources in key areas. This plan will also be clear on the demonstrable improvements to our customers, whether applicants or consultees, we will be delivering.

Councillor Rebecca Breese

Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Built Environment & Rural Affairs

FINANCE ISSUES

Revenue Monitoring report

Officers are in the process of drafting the latest budget monitoring report for 2021-22. As we go through the year a number of issues have emerged which are now included in the latest forecast position for 2021-22.

However, I am pleased to report that we contain to be able to contain those emerging pressures through the overall budget that was set back in February.

The detail budget monitoring report will be going to the additional Cabinet meeting set up in December to deal with the draft budget setting process for 2022-23.

Budget Setting

We are currently right in the middle of the detailed budget setting process. Cabinet and the Executive Leadership Team met on the 22 November to run through the latest position and to determine the potential service growth that should be included in the draft budget plans.

Officers are now working through the detail with a report on the draft budget due to be considered by Cabinet on 21 December. This will then commence full budget consultation on those proposals.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS)

Councillors may well remember previous reports on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. We have to approve a local scheme each year to determine the level of Council Tax support to provide to residents in the area.

We proposed a scheme for 2022-23 which maintained the same level of support as the current scheme but also provide greater support to care leavers and war widows. We carried out a full consultation on the plan and received significant support for the proposals.

The consultation results were taken into account and Cabinet have recommended to Council the adoption of the scheme for 2022-23 as proposed which is elsewhere on the agenda.

Revenues and Benefits

Members may recall a Cabinet decision to move away from three different operating models inherited from the predecessor authorities and into one in-house structure with responsibility for dealing with all Revenues and Benefits issues across West Northamptonshire.

This involved winding up a standalone company in the South Northants area, moving away from the lead authority (ex-LGSS) arrangement that provided the service for the Northampton area and bringing across the in-house team that was in operation at Daventry.

Belinda Green, who is the Assistant Director responsible for Revenues and Benefits has set about this with some gusto and from the 8 November we now have one Revenues and Benefits service, delivered by an in-house team.

The performance inherited from the previous arrangements is not great and may worsen before it improves as the team and new culture settles in. However, it has been a great achievement to transform this service so quickly, deliver a financial saving and provide the foundations to deliver an improved revenues and benefits service going forward.

Predecessor Authority Accounts

A week or so before vesting day there were 10 sets of accounts outstanding from the predecessor authorities.

By the time we get to the full council meeting we expect there to be only four sets that remain outstanding.

The Audit and Governance Committee under the leadership of Cllr Irving-Swift has gone about its task to get the accounts closed in an enthusiastic but fastidious way. In fact, the meeting in September included four sets of predecessor accounts for the Committees approval and the agenda ran to 1,196 pages. An all time record for this Committee I am informed!

We are hoping that by the end of this financial year all of the predecessor accounts will have been approved and signed off by the external auditors. The progress towards that has certainly been pretty impressive so far.

Councillor Malcolm Longley
Cabinet Member for Finance

**Summary of the decisions taken at the meeting of the
Cabinet held on Tuesday 14 September 2021**

1. Date of publication of this summary: 15th September 2021
2. Deadline for requests for call-in (detailing reasons for doing so): 22nd September 2021, 5pm
3. Earliest date for implementation of decisions: 23rd September 2021
4. Urgent decisions taken and not subject to the call-in procedure: None

Agenda Item and Recommendations	Decision
<p>Agenda Item 6 Quarter 1 Revenue Monitoring Report for the Financial Year 2021-22</p>	<p>RESOLVED: Cabinet;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Noted the final outturn 2020-21 for all legacy Councils within West Northamptonshire in Appendix A of the report b) Noted the estimated reserves and balances brought forward from each legacy Council within West Northamptonshire in section 5 of the report c) Noted the early review of 2021-22 financial progress and associated financial risks by Directorate d) Noted the deliverability assessment of West Northamptonshire Council savings requirement for 2021-22 and 2022-23 in Appendix D of the report e) Agreed to the virement that transfers £2.0m from the central contingency budget to the Place directorate budgets that require this funding <p>REASONS: To ensure that the Authority complies with its financial regulations</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS: None</p> <p>CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DELCARED</p>

<p>Agenda Item 7 Q1 Capital Monitoring Report 2021-22</p>	<p>AND DISPENSATIONS GRANTED: None</p> <p>RESOLVED: Cabinet;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Noted the provisional capital outturn position from all legacy WNC authorities for the financial year 2020-21 b) Noted the proposed capital carry forwards for the GF and HRA capital programmes as detailed in appendices A and B of the repor c) Noted the latest capital budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan for the GF and HRA d) Noted the new schemes that had been approved since 1st April 2021 or were in the process of being approved. <p>REASONS: This in accordance with the policy of the Council and constitution</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS: None</p> <p>CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARED AND DISPENSATIONS GRANTED: None</p>
<p>Agenda Item 8 Corporate Plan Performance Report - 2021-22 Q1</p>	<p>RESOLVED: Cabinet;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Noted the content of the appendix covering the 1st quarter of 2021-22 <p>REASONS: This report is for information and discussion only, there are no direct decisions to be made following the report.</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS: None</p> <p>CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARED AND DISPENSATIONS GRANTED: None</p>
<p>Agenda Item 9 Quarter 1 Transformation Update</p>	<p>RESOLVED: Cabinet;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted the contents of the report. <p>REASONS: Update paper for information only, no decisions required</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS: None</p> <p>CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARED AND DISPENSATIONS GRANTED: None</p>

<p>Agenda Item 10 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Report Analysis 2020-21</p>	<p>RESOLVED: Cabinet;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted the contents and recommendations of the Ombudsman’s reports <p>REASONS: It is good practice to note the findings and recommendations of the Ombudsman and support their implementation across Council services, in order to improve customer experience, value for money and outcomes for residents.</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS: None</p> <p>CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARED AND DISPENSATIONS GRANTED: None</p>
<p>Agenda Item 11 West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan: Spatial Options Consultation and Statement of Community Involvement and West Northamptonshire Local Development Scheme</p>	<p>RESOLVED: Cabinet;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Approved the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan: Spatial Options Consultation Paper (Appendix A) for the purposes of public consultation as set out in the report. b) Approved the West Northamptonshire Local Development Scheme (Appendix B) which would have effect upon expiry of the call-in period for Cabinet decisions. c) Noted the responses to the consultation on the draft Statement of Community Involvement and adopted the Statement of Community Involvement with the amendments set out in Appendix C. d) Delegated to the Assistant Director: Growth, Climate and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Built Environment and Rural Affairs, authority to make minor editorial and presentational changes to the above documents in their final published form. <p>REASONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The development plan (or local plan) is central to the planning system with a requirement in law that planning decisions must be

	<p>taken in line with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Each local planning authority must identify their strategic priorities and have policies to address these in their local plans. It is essential that plans are in place and up to date. The preparation of the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan is required to ensure that the new council has an up-to-date development plan, and the spatial options consultation is the key next step in the preparation of the plan.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. An LDS is required which sets out the Local Plans, which when prepared, will comprise part of the development plan for the area. The LDS must be made available publicly and kept up to date. For West Northamptonshire a new LDS is needed to set out the revised timetable for the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan and also for the remaining stages of the Northampton Local Plan (Part 2). 3. Local authorities are also required to have in place an up-to-date SCI. Consultation has been undertaken on the SCI. This report sets out the responses received during the consultation and proposes changes in response to the representations. If adopted it would set out how the Strategic Plan will be consulted upon, at the various stages of preparation. <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS: None</p> <p>CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARED AND DISPENSATIONS GRANTED: None.</p>
<p>Agenda Item 12 A422 Farthinghoe Bypass</p>	<p>RESOLVED: Cabinet;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Received the results of the recent consultation on the A422 Farthinghoe Bypass and agreed the timescales for further work <p>REASONS:</p>

- To progress the delivery of the A422 Farthinghoe Bypass, which is a priority scheme for the Council.
- The recommendation reflects the results of the consultation and scheme assessment work and the need to examine the points raised in the detailed consultation comments in more detail.
- The timescales for further work are based on the processes to be followed to gain statutory and funding approval for a major highway scheme.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

1. Following the identification of funding to progress the scheme by the former County Council and South Northamptonshire Council, further work to develop four northern route options was undertaken in 2020.
2. A plan showing the four northern route options, with the 2016 southern route included for comparison, can be found at Appendix A of the report.
3. A Scheme Assessment Report provided a technical overview of the routes. The desktop environmental impact assessment showed that the impacts of the four northern routes were very close:
 - Northern Routes V0 and V1 scored best on Landscape impacts
 - Northern Route V1 scored worse than the other routes on Materials Waste impacts
 - Northern Route V3 scored best on Road Drainage – Groundwater Impact
 - Northern Route V0 scored worst on Road Drainage Flood Risk/Surface Water impacts

Overall Northern Routes V0 and V3 scored slightly better than routes V1 and V2.
4. The Scheme Assessment Report

	<p>can be found on the website at https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/northamptonshire-highways/majorhighway-projects/Pages/a422-farthinghoe-bypass-consultation.aspx</p> <p>CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARED AND DISPENSATIONS GRANTED: None</p>
<p>Agenda Item 13 Regulatory Services Statutory Plans 2021-22</p>	<p>RESOLVED: Cabinet;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Approved the Food Safety Service Plan for the year 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 b) Approved the Food and Feed Standards Service Plan for the year 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 c) Approved the Spray Paint Enforcement Plan for 2021-22 d) Approved the Tobacco Enforcement Plan for 2021-22. <p>REASONS: The recommendations are necessary to meet with the requirements of the Food Standards Agency and relevant legislative requirements.</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS: None</p> <p>CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARED AND DISPENSATIONS GRANTED: Councillor Brown advised that one of the businesses listed on the report was a supplier to a business listed on his Register of Interests (non-pecuniary).</p>
<p>Agenda Item 14 Hellidon Conservation area, Spratton Conservation area, Article 4(1) Directions for conservation areas at Weedon Bec, Flore, Everdon, Little Everdon, Staverton, Kilsby, Welford and Pitsford (2021)</p>	<p>RESOLVED: Cabinet;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Endorsed that the conservation area boundaries as set out in appendix E of the report be designated as conservation areas. b) Endorsed that the proposed changes to the Hellidon conservation area appraisal and management plan and Spratton conservation area appraisal and management plan in response to representations, as set out in appendices A to D of the report be approved.

- c) Endorsed that further minor editorial changes be made to the Hellidon conservation area appraisal and management plan and Spratton conservation area appraisal and management plan including to reflect the fact that the documents will be in their final adopted form.
- d) Endorsed that the conservation area appraisal and management plans for Hellidon and Spratton be adopted as supplementary planning documents.
- e) Endorsed the local list entries for Hellidon and Spratton set out in appendix F of the report.
- f) Endorsed that article 4(1) directions for Hellidon and Spratton, in accordance with the proposals in the conservation area appraisal and management plans, be made subject to consultation (appendices G and H of the report).
- g) Agreed to “make” the article 4(1) directions contained at appendix J of the report.
- h) Agreed to consult upon the article 4(1) directions contained at appendix J of the report.

REASONS:

1. Hellidon and Spratton Conservation Areas

This course of action will put measures in place to help safeguard the heritage of Hellidon and Spratton.

2. Article 4(1) Directions for conservation areas at Weedon Bec, Flore, Everdon, Little Everdon, Staverton, Kilsby, Welford and Pitsford (2021)

The introduction of article 4(1) directions within conservation areas allows the council to manage change within historic areas on a case-by-case basis through the planning system. If the article 4(1) directions are made and confirmed it will therefore help to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas. Consultation is required as part of the legal process for

making and confirming article 4(1) directions.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:
Hellidon and Spratton Conservation
Areas**

1. The alternative options would be not to endorse the designation of the conservation area boundaries and the adoption of the Hellidon conservation area appraisal and management plan and Spratton conservation area appraisal and management plan as a supplementary planning documents, not to endorse the candidates for the local list, and not to 'make' the article 4(1) directions.
2. Not endorsing the boundary designations, the adoption of the appraisal and management plans, not endorsing the candidates for the local list, and not 'making' the proposed article 4(1) directions would leave the council without valuable tools with which to protect and enhance the special architectural and historic interest of these villages.

Article 4(1) Directions for conservation areas at Weedon Bec, Flore, Everdon, Little Everdon, Staverton, Kilsby, Welford and Pitsford (2021)

Not "making" and "confirming" the article 4(1) directions would leave the council without valuable tools with which to preserve and enhance the special architectural and historic interest of these villages.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARED AND DISPENSATIONS GRANTED: None

**Agenda Item 15
Innovative Flood Resilience Project**

- RESOLVED:** Cabinet;
- a) Noted the work to date on securing £6.2m of Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme grant allocation for West Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire, and the next steps required to progress the

	<p>project.</p> <p>b) Approved the use of the ring-fenced Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme grant funding of £6.2m to deliver innovative flood resilience measures across the two catchments, one in each of West Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire, as set out in the report.</p> <p>REASONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The recommendations proposed align closely with the objectives established in the WNC Corporate Plan 2021-2025. 2. The recommendations proposed align with the Northamptonshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and will see the significant improvement in flood resilience of communities in two priority catchments, with learning to be applied to future flood risk management work across both councils. 3. The recommended course of action is in line with the objectives, outputs and benefits expected from the Flood and Coastal Risk Innovation Programme (FCRIP), to develop and test new approaches to improving flood resilience. 4. The recommendations above are required to progress the flood resilience measures as submitted to the FCRIP. <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS: None</p> <p>CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARED AND DISPENSATIONS GRANTED: None</p>
<p>Agenda Item 17 Re-procurement of facilities management contracts</p>	<p>RESOLVED: Cabinet;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approved the re-procurement of the facilities management service and maintenance contracts as set out in the report. <p>REASONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that the Council complies with statutory and regulatory duties.

- To ensure that Council properties are safe and fit for use.
- Maximising cost-effectiveness.
- To minimise depreciation of Council assets
- Provide customers and staff of the Council with buildings which are fit for purpose and welcoming.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

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 'noncore' 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 insourcing would be likely also create significant new costs associated with pension liabilities.
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 exceptionally competitive rates. A disaggregation would increase the

time and processes requirement for administration of the contracts and is Page 302 likely to increase the contract costs too, particularly for small remote sites. It is considered it strikes the right balance between the different levels of packaging services.

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 subcontracts for specialisms. As outlined above, it is considered that the proposed set of contracts enables 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 also increases the potential for bids from small and medium businesses ('SMEs') and local suppliers.
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 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 on pension liabilities and 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. It is intended that it would be considered during the life of the contracts proposed to be procured.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARED AND DISPENSATIONS GRANTED: None

<p>Extension of 78 Derngate Charles Rennie Mackintosh Museum – Northampton Towns Fund</p>	
<p>Agenda Item 19 Variation to Agreement to Lease of Stable Block at Delapre Abbey</p>	<p>RESOLVED: Cabinet;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. delegated authority to the Assistant Director Assets and Environment to vary the terms of the agreement for lease between the Council and the Delapre Abbey Preservation Trust relating to the 19th Century Stable Block, as set out in the report. <p>REASONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agreeing to extend the longstop date in the Agreement for Lease and making the other changes would: 2. Maximise the opportunity to see the plan for the Delapre Abbey site implemented, and also help sustain the Delapre Abbey Preservation Trust, thus securing important public benefits and community resources. 3. Make it more likely that public expectations will be fulfilled. 4. Minimise the risk of costs falling on the Council to restore and manage the 19th Century Stable Yard. <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. WNC could refuse consent to the extension of the longstop date in the agreement to lease. This is not recommended as it as it would cause uncertainty and discourage DAPT from proceeding with their plans to bring the premises back into use. The vision for the 19th Century Stable Block is part of DAPT wider vision for Delapre Abbey which would be adversely impacted if the stables were not developed. 2. WNC could also consider whether to develop the site itself. However, no viable alternative uses other than those proposed by DAPT have been identified. The buildings are in a poor state of repair and would require substantial capital

	<p>investment which has not currently been provided for. In addition to this, any future use of the site would need to be sympathetic to the wider services offered at Delapre Abbey so as not to have a detrimental impact on overall viability.</p> <p>3. WNC could let the stables as storage, but it is likely the income set against the cost of maintenance would not make this a financially viable option.</p> <p>CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS GRANTED: None</p>
<p>Agenda Item 20 Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022-23</p>	<p>RESOLVED: Cabinet;</p> <p>a) Noted the contents of the report b) Approved, for consultation purposes only, the LCTRS outlined in this report for West Northamptonshire for the year 2022-2023.</p> <p>REASONS: To enable a consultation process to take place on a proposed Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for West Northants Council for the financial year 2022-23 and for the final scheme to be approved and in place by 31 January 2022.</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS: None</p> <p>CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS GRANTED: None</p>
<p>Agenda Item 21 Proposal for Capital Funding to replace the Library Management System and associated hardware</p>	<p>RESOLVED: Cabinet;</p> <p>a) Considered and approved the proposal to capital fund the replacement of the Library Management System and associated hardware.</p> <p>REASONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Library Management System is a key requirement for delivering the statutory library service • The current contract must end on 31st March 2022 and cannot be extended. A replacement must be procured in order to ensure

continuity of service.

- The associated equipment for running the Library Management System is now 9 years old and at end of life. Replacing the equipment now will ensure that it is compatible with the new system, compatible with West Northants and North Northants IT Roadmaps and future proofed.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS: None

**CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND
DISPENSATIONS GRANTED:** None

**Summary of the decisions taken at the meeting of the
Cabinet held on Tuesday 12 October 2021**

1. Date of publication of this summary: 13th October 2021
2. Deadline for requests for call-in (detailing reasons for doing so): 20th October 2021
3. Earliest date for implementation of decisions: 21st October 2021
4. Urgent decisions taken and not subject to the call-in procedure: None

Agenda Item and Recommendations	Decision
<p>Agenda Item 5 Old Black Lion Pub and St Peter's Church – Northampton Towns Fund</p>	<p>Resolutions: It agreed that Cabinet:</p> <p>a) Approved the business case for the Old Black Lion and St Peter's Church project to draw down on £315,000 of Towns Funding</p> <p>b) Delegated authority to the Head of Major Projects and Regeneration to finalise the Grant Funding Agreement with The Churches Conservation Trust (CCT)</p> <p>c) Delegated authority to the Assistant Director of Assets and the Environment to agree terms of the lease on the Old Black Lion Pub.</p> <p>Reason for Resolutions</p> <p>The recommendation was made so the regeneration of Northampton Town Centre can take place as set within the Town Investment Plan.</p> <p>Alternative Options</p> <p>None</p>
<p>Agenda Item 6 Local Enforcement Plan for West Northamptonshire</p>	<p>Resolutions: It was agreed that the Executive Leadership Team Adopt the Draft WNC Local Enforcement Plan</p>

	<p>Reason for Resolutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. It outlined a consistent approach to Planning Enforcement across West Northants. B. It was written in a style that easy is for the public to read and understand. C. It identified clear targets and timeframes for dealing with Planning Enforcement cases. <p>Alternative Options.</p> <p>We can either carry on as we are with three separate enforcement plans in place, or we can adopt a new, unified approach across West Northamptonshire.</p>
<p>Agenda Item 7 Neighbourhood Development Plans: Hackleton, Overstone and Clipston - Hackleton</p>	<p>Resolutions: It was agreed that Cabinet: Hackleton</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Noted and welcomes the significant progress in making the neighbourhood development plan (NDP) by the Hackleton community. b) Accepted the examiner’s recommended modifications in respect of the Hackleton NDP. c) Accepted the examiner’s recommendation that the Hackleton NDP, as modified in accordance with recommendation (b) above, should proceed to a referendum of voters within Hackleton Parish. d) Approved the proposed decision statement set out in Appendix 1, subject to recommendations (b) and (c) above and any necessary factual alterations. e) Agreed that delegated authority be given to the Interim Head of Planning and Climate Change Policy to make further minor editorial changes to the NDP to address any factual and typographical errors and to reflect the fact that the document will be in its intended final form. f) Agreed that the costs of the referendum be met from the existing budget for neighbourhood planning. <p>Reason for Resolutions</p>

In order for a Neighbourhood Development Plan (“NDP”) to be ‘made’ (adopted) the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012 No. 637) require the Council to make a decision regarding the examiner’s recommendations before agreeing to subject the NDP to a referendum.

Alternative Options

None

Resolutions: It was agreed that Cabinet:
Overstone

- a) Noted and welcomed the significant progress in making the neighbourhood development plan (NDP) by the Overstone community
- b) Agreed the Examiner’s recommended modifications in respect of the Overstone NDP with the exception of the recommendation relating to important view V6
- c) Considered the responses to the consultation on proposed deletion of important view V6 and confirms deletion of the view
- d) Agreed the Examiner’s recommendation that the NDP, as modified in accordance with recommendation b) and c), should proceed to a referendum of voters within Overstone Parish
- e) Approved the proposed decision statement set out in appendix 1, subject to recommendations b) and d)
- f) Agreed that delegated authority be given to the Interim Head of Planning and Climate Change Policy to make further minor editorial changes to the NDP to address any factual and typographical errors and to reflect the fact that the document will be in its intended final form
- g) Agreed that the costs of the referendum be met from the earmarked reserve for neighbourhood planning.

Reason for Resolutions

In order for a NDP to be “made” (adopted) the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 ((SI 2012 No. 637) require the council to make a decision on the Examiner’s recommendations before agreeing to send it to referendum. In this case, the council was required to decide whether it is appropriate to make a different decision to the examiner in respect of one issue

Alternative Options

None

Resolutions: It was agreed that Cabinet: Clipston

- a) Noted and welcomed the significant progress in making the NDP by the Clipston community.
- b) Agreed the Examiner’s recommended modifications in respect of the Clipston NDP are accepted and further minor modifications as set out in appendix 1 are also made
- c) Agreed that the NDP, as modified in accordance with recommendation (b), shall proceed to a referendum of voters within the Clipston neighbourhood area
- d) Approved subject to items (b) and (c) above, the proposed decision statement set out in appendix 1, subject to any necessary factual alterations
- e) Agreed that delegated authority be given to the Interim Head of Planning and Climate Change Policy to make further minor editorial changes to the NDP to address any factual and typographical errors and to reflect the fact that the document will be in its intended final form
- f) Agreed that the costs of the referendum be met from the earmarked reserve for neighbourhood planning.

Reason for Resolutions

In order for a NDP to be “made” (adopted) the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 ((SI 2012 No. 637) require the council to make a decision on

	<p>the Examiner's recommendations before agreeing to send it to referendum. In this case, the council is required to decide whether it is appropriate to make a different decision to the Examiner in respect of one issue.</p> <p>Alternative Options;</p> <p>None</p>
<p>Agenda Item 8 Bus Service Improvement Plan</p>	<p>Resolutions; It was agreed that Cabinet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Noted the work undertaken on developing a draft Bus Service Improvement Plan and the outline BSIP in Appendix A; b. Agreed delegated authority to the Executive Directors for Place, Economy and Transport and for Finance, in consultation with the Cabinet Members with responsibility for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste and for Finance, to agree the final Bus Service Improvement Plan (in consultation with a cross party working group of up to 6 members) prior to submission to the Department for Transport and publication on the Council's website by 31 October 2021. c. Asked Scrutiny to facilitate the establishment of a task and finish group to input to and review progress on the establishment of the Enhanced Partnership. <p>Reason for Resolutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To improve bus services in West Northamptonshire and minimise the risk of any communities losing their bus service; b. To facilitate climate and environmental benefits through increasing bus use and the operation of more low emission buses; c. To contribute to the implementation of the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan (the Local Transport Plan); d. To enable the Council to access the

	<p>funding being made available by Government to support the National Bus Strategy</p> <p>e. To meet the deadlines set by the Department for Transport</p> <p>Alternative Options</p> <p>None</p>
<p>Agenda Item 9 24 Guildhall Road refurbishment and relocation of Northampton Arts Collective Limited</p>	<p>Resolutions; Cabinet;</p> <p>a. Noted the work done to date by WNC officers and Northampton Arts Collective Limited on securing the £1.15m of GBF funding for the refurbishment of 24 Guildhall Road, the design development and procurement that has been undertaken to date and the next steps that are required to take forward this project.</p> <p>b. Delegated authority to the Assistant Director of Planning, Economic Growth and Regeneration to enter into a partnership agreement between the Council and Northampton Arts Collective Limited. This will include, for example (but is not limited to), the establishment of the governance and project arrangements on the refurbishment project and the working relationship beyond completion as referenced in the cabinet report dated 9th September 2020.</p> <p>c. Delegated authority to the Assistant Director of Assets and Environment to agree heads of terms for a lease and enter a 25-year lease on the lower ground, upper ground and first floors at a peppercorn rent. This is subject to a service charge to Northampton Arts Collective and all documentation related to the project will be completed on simultaneous basis.</p> <p>d. Delegated authority to the Head of Major Projects and Regeneration to approve the final design for phase one of the refurbishment project.</p>

	<p>Page 363</p> <p>e. Accepted further reports on any matters generally or risks pursuant to paragraphs 6.23 to 6.30 that arise that are different to what is proposed in this report.</p> <p>Reason for Resolutions</p> <p>a. The refurbishment project will make use of a WNC building, the former NCC offices, that has no other use.</p> <p>b. The recommendations above are required to progress this important cultural regeneration</p> <p>Alternative Options</p> <p>None</p>
<p>Agenda Item 10 Hardingstone Bike Park - Update and Operator Arrangements</p>	<p>Resolutions: That Cabinet</p> <p>a) Noted the work to date undertaken in the development and delivery of the bike park project</p> <p>b) Approved the revised budget in line with appendix 1 of this report</p> <p>c) Delegated Authority to the Assistant Director Economic Growth and Regeneration to enter the SE (Places to Ride) grant agreement, subject to being satisfied with financial and legal due diligence</p> <p>d) Delegated authority to the Assistant Director Housing and Communities to agree the terms of the operation and maintenance agreement (OMA) with the bike park operator (which shall include back-to-back requirements of the SE Grant condition), subject to being satisfied with financial and legal due diligence</p> <p>e) Delegated Authority to the Assistant Director Assets & Environment to grant a lease to the proposed operator of the bike park for 25 years on terms acceptable to the Council, subject to being satisfied with financial and legal due diligence</p> <p>f) Received a further report in the</p>

	<p>event any issues arise with the financial and legal due diligence exercise where the risks listed in paragraphs 5.15.1 to 5.15.6 materially impact on the delivery of the project and/or the grant funding conditions</p> <p>Reason for Recommendations</p> <p>The recommendations establish financial and requisite delegated authorities to proceed with the project. Whilst there are a number of outstanding risks and interdependencies on this project, these approvals are necessary to enable the project to continue.</p> <p>Alternative Options</p> <p>None</p>
<p>Agenda Item 11 Approach to Community Funding for 2021/22 and 2022/23</p>	<p>Resolutions: That Cabinet;</p> <p>a) Approved the proposed interim Community Funding Grant Policy for West Northants Council 2021 to end of March 2023.</p> <p>b) Approved delegated authority to Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing (DASS) for awarding community funding as set out in the new policy. Where appropriate to adjust the policy in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder.</p> <p>c) Approved the Councillor Covid Support Fund of £232,500 for 2021/22 to aid Covid recovery of our local communities, note the use of Covid Recovery Fund to finance this scheme in 2021/22 and agree that officers complete a review of the scheme and its funding source prior to 2022/23.</p> <p>Reason for Resolutions;</p> <p>Community Funding Grant Policy:</p> <p>a) WNC acknowledged there has been a six-month gap (since Vesting</p>

Day) in the council awarding small grants to our local community and voluntary organisations (CVS). This presents a risk to the continuation of essential local support and services. Therefore, Cabinet approval is sought to enable WNC to launch the interim Community Funding Grant Policy.

- b) The recommendation to produce one interim policy with one community funding scheme for West Northants provides a consistent approach to community funding grant awards across West Northants.
- c) The policy enables the council to take a more strategic approach to investment into CVS organisations, aligned to meet identified needs and the councils adopted corporate priorities.
- d) Approval of the policy enables the application and award for grants process, in turn benefiting our local communities through funding that helps sustain and invent new activity to address the local needs.
- e) WNC has an increased Scheme of Delegation limits for officers, and with grant awards capped at maximum £15,000 no grant award will be classified as a Key Decision of the Council. The Cabinet will set the strategic direction of community funding through its decision to approve the proposed community grant funding policy and the policies alignment to the council's corporate priorities. However, there will be cross-party oversight of the implementation of the Community Funding Grant Policy to ensure adherence to the new policy, that grant awards are allocated to meet identified local needs, and that community funding is distributed in a fair and equitable manner.
- f) The recommendation for delegated authority to officers will ensure applicants receive funding awards in the most expedient timescale.

Councillor Covid Support Fund 2021-22:

- a) To support our local communities to recover from the impact of Covid during the remainder of the 2021-22 financial year.
- b) To provide WNC Councillors with a consistent and expedient mechanism for making local grant awards to community and voluntary groups.
- c) To draw upon the local knowledge of Councillors best placed to identify local groups, organisations and/or communities at most risk due to Covid impact and in most need for grant awards.

Alternative Options

- a) Continuing the model of sovereign council community funding. This model would see decision making and awarding of community funding implemented on a locality basis (Northampton; Daventry; South Northants). This option is not recommended for reasons including: requirement for three different funding policies and principles; the risk of challenge due to inconsistencies of decision making; risk of duplicating funding to organisations and/or projects; inconsistency of having three different thresholds for min/max grant awards.
- b) The decision to have a Councillor Covid Support Fund for the remainder of 2021-22. To further enhance and expediate the recovery of local community and voluntary groups in West Northants the recommendation is for WNC to have a Councillor Covid Support Fund. This fund enables Councillors to make local decisions on grant funding awards for the benefit of the communities they represent.
- c) Assign an allocation (£232,500) of the councils Covid Recovery budget to the Councillor Covid Support

Fund. This option protects the current Community Funding Grants budget of £433,401 helping to stretch community funding grant awards further.

- d) Not to approve the proposed community funding approach as interim to cover 2021/22 and 2022/23. This would lead to the council having no mechanism to deliver community funding grant awards therefore having a detrimental effect on community and voluntary organisations and residents of West Northants.

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**Summary of the decisions taken at the meeting of the
Cabinet held on Tuesday 9 November 2021**

1. Date of publication of this summary: 9th November 2021
2. Deadline for requests for call-in (detailing reasons for doing so): 16th November 2021
3. Earliest date for implementation of decisions: 17th November 2021
4. Urgent decisions taken and not subject to the call-in procedure: 17th November 2021

Agenda Item and Recommendations	Decision
<p>Agenda Item 6 Constitution Review</p>	<p>RESOLVED: That Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Acknowledged the work of the Democracy & Standards Committee; b) Endorsed the proposed amendments to the Constitution and makes such further proposals as it thinks fit; c) Recommended the revised Constitution to Full Council for approval. <p>REASONS RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A review of the Constitution by the Democracy & Standards Committee were agreed by Full Council on 20 May 2021 and Cabinet on 8 June 2021. b) Conducting a review of the Constitution would help ensure that it is legally compliant, complete, reflects the character and culture of the authority and supports decision making. <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:</p> <p>The alternative choices were to not conclude a Constitution review at all, or to conclude the review at a later date or in accordance with a different timetable. These options were not recommended as a need for a review had been identified and it is important to ensure the Constitution was fit for the new Council's purposes and compliant with all current legal requirements as soon as possible.</p>

<p>Agenda Item 7 Cottesbrooke Conservation Area</p>	<p>RESOLVED: That Cabinet:</p> <p>a) Endorsed that public consultation be undertaken on the draft Cottesbrooke Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan SPD (appendix A)</p> <p>b) Endorsed that public consultation be undertaken on Article 4(1) Directions controlling development with regards to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alteration of windows • Alteration of doors • Alterations to roofing • Alterations to porches • Alterations to walls, gates and fences • Painting of exterior walls • Alterations to chimneys. <p>REASONS RESOLVED: To accord with the council's Consultation and Engagement Framework, the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which requires local authorities to hold a public meeting to publicise draft proposals within an appraisal, for the relevant stakeholders of the affected area.</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS: The alternative option would have been not to agree to the public consultation on the draft Cottesbrooke Conservation Area Appraisal and Management as an SPD.</p>
<p>Agenda Item 8 Harmonisation of the Garden Waste Collection Service Across West Northamptonshire</p>	<p>RESOLVED: That Cabinet</p> <p>a) Agreed that a charge was made for kerbside garden waste collection for all residents of West Northamptonshire who opt into this service of £42 per bin per year, from 1 April 2022;</p> <p>b) Approved the decision to run the customer service and administration of the garden waste collection service in-house for all residents of West Northamptonshire, thus removing its administration from West Northamptonshire Norse, in the Daventry area.</p> <p>c) Approved the establishment of a subsidised home composting scheme, to be launched at the same time as the</p>

charge 2022/23, to offer residents an alternative.

REASONS RESOLVED:

a) The introduction of a charge for the collection of garden waste would bring the south of West Northamptonshire into harmony with the rest of the council area. The scheme would be run council-wide with the level of charge, terms and conditions and service standards the same across west Northamptonshire.

b) Charging for the collection of garden waste would ensure that only those who wish to use the service pay for it and in that way, supports the Polluter Pays Principle. Therefore, those who home compost, or who don't have gardens or who take their garden waste to the Household Waste Recycling Centre would not pay for the collection service.

c) The Council would be permitted to levy a 'reasonable' charge for the garden waste service (under the Controlled Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2012). The proposed charge would generate income essential to part fund the waste collection services provided to the residents of West

Northamptonshire. This includes approximately £800,000 in additional net income to the council in 2022/23 for the south area, where the charge would be newly introduced. It would also maintain the approximate £2.2 million of annual income from the areas of the council where there was an existing charge.

d) The £42 charge recommended for 2022/23 would be the same as was charged in the Daventry and Northampton areas in 2021/22 and so would represent no increase for those residents and is identified as average across the region.

e) The proposal to bring the customer service and administration of the garden waste collection service would enable the Council to have a direct interface with residents who wish to opt-in to this service, ensuring they receive the best possible customer service.

f) The subsidised home composting scheme would provide an alternative

option for residents who do not want to pay the collection fee. It also promotes home composting, which in waste management terms is a preferred option.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

a) In reviewing the council's garden waste service, several alternative options were considered for harmonising it across the whole of West Northamptonshire.

Appendix A of the report showed a table of the

considered options, along with the positive and negative considerations of each option and the financial impact of each.

b) Officers had considered whether it would be appropriate and possible to offer discounts, for example in the following circumstances:

- A resident pays by direct debit; or
- A household has more than one bin (multi-bin discount); or
- If a household would like to pay for more than one year in advance; or
- For residents in receipt of certain benefits.

The council would seek to establish a single auto payment system across West Northants which might enable future opportunities for any discounts to be administered as well as providing evidence of where any discounts were needed or justified based on usage.

Therefore, it was agreed to introduce the scheme using existing payment systems in April 2022.

**Agenda Item 9
Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special
Protection Area**

RESOLVED: That Cabinet

a) Adopted the UNVGP SPA SPD for the West Northamptonshire Council area

b) Endorsed the UNVGP SPA SPD – Addendum to the SPA SPD: Mitigation Strategy for consultation.

REASONS RESOLVED:

The above recommendations were proposed so that, as the competent authority, West Northamptonshire Council, could protect Unit 1 of the SPA from adverse impact from recreational pressure resulting from proposed and windfall

	<p>housing growth within 3km of Unit 1 the SPA.</p> <p>Protection of the SPA and its qualifying features would not only meet the requirements of the Habitats Regulations but also help protect the SPA now and in the future so that protected bird species would remain present, and it could be enjoyed by residents and visitors. Adoption of the SPD</p> <p>and endorsement of the consultation for the mitigation strategy would align with the council's Green and Clean, Environment and Wellbeing priority within its Corporate Plan.</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS: None</p>
<p>Agenda Item 10 Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022-2023</p>	<p>RESOLVED: That Cabinet:</p> <p>a) Noted the contents of the report.</p> <p>b) Recommended to Council a Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2022-2023:</p> <p> i) to include the proposed changes</p> <p> ii) to amend the LCTRS Regulations for pensioners in line with the uprating announced by DLUHC and</p> <p> iii) to uprate the working age Regulations in line with those announced by Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)</p> <p>c) Recommended to Council that delegated authority would be given to the Executive Director Finance to make any changes to the LCTRS up to and including 31 January 2022 in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance.</p> <p>REASONS RESOLVED: To enable a Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for West Northamptonshire Council to be approved for the financial year 2022-2023 and for the final scheme to be in place by 31 January 2022.</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS: Proposal One: For the financial year 2021-2022, members agreed a Council Tax discount for care leavers and a local policy was agreed. Under this policy, care leavers are required</p>

	<p>to apply for LCTRS and can then apply for an exceptional hardship award to help with any Council Tax payment required. This additional support is funded from the exceptional hardship pot. The proposal is to include this additional support for care leavers up to the age of 25 as part of the LCTRS for 2022-2023.</p> <p>Proposal Two The current scheme allowed for a 100% disregard of War Widows and War Disablement pensions when calculating entitlement to LCTRS. The proposal was to offer enhanced support to those of working age in receipt of War Widows and War Disablement pensions and who currently must pay a minimum Council Tax contribution of 20%. This proposal would remove the minimum contribution and allowed LCTRS to be calculated on 100% of Council Tax liability therefore enabling these claimants to receive up to 100% support.</p>
<p>Agenda Item 11 Grant of Long Lease to the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire of Barnes Meadows Nature Reserve, Northampton</p>	<p>RESOLVED: That Cabinet</p> <p>a) Authorised a 99-year lease with a peppercorn rent to The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire of Barnes Meadows, Northampton.</p> <p>b) That this authorisation was subject to the conduct of public notification for disposal of open space as required by Section 123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972 and no material and substantive objections being received (and not withdrawn).</p> <p>REASONS RESOLVED:</p> <p>a) The WT managing the Barnes Meadow nature reserve would help to ensure it was managed in a fashion which would maximise the benefits for people and the environment.</p> <p>b) This course of action would also be the most cost-effective and would remove a management and maintenance liability from the Council.</p> <p>c) There would also be consistency with previous decisions if this land was to be managed by the WT.</p>

	<p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:</p> <p>a)The Council could have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Granted the proposed lease. • Managed the land in house. • Have sought to dispose of the land entirely. • Have sought to put the land to some other use, such as development. <p>b) The Council could offer the land to third parties (potentially including the WT) for freehold disposal. Whilst potentially removing all future liabilities in relation to the land, it would also remove any ability for the Council to use the land differently in the future.</p>
<p>Agenda Item 12 Decisions taken by the Leader of the Council under urgency procedures: Northampton Partnership Homes - Westbridge lease and development, Planning Policy Committee and Appointment to West Midlands Rail Ltd</p>	<p>RESOLVED: That Cabinet noted the decisions taken by the Leader of the Council set out at Appendices A, B and C.</p> <p>REASONS RESOLVED:</p> <p>a) Where decisions that would otherwise be taken by Cabinet have been taken by the Leader of the Council, it was considered best practice to report those decisions to the next available meeting of the Cabinet.</p> <p>b) In the case of NPH, the decision taken provided NPH with accommodation that enables them to operate effectively and deliver against the management agreement with Council.</p> <p>c) In the case of the Planning Policy Committee, the agreement of the terms of reference for this committee enabled items that would otherwise be taken by Cabinet to be taken by that committee. This improved the efficiency of Cabinet decision making, while improving the accountability of planning policy decision by including members who are not part of the executive as non-voting members of the committee.</p> <p>d) In the case of West Midlands Rail Ltd. The Council was required to appoint a director in its capacity as one of the partner local authorities.</p> <p>e) Full reasons for the recommendations were set out in the decision records appended to this report.</p>

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

The options considered were whether to wait for the next Cabinet meeting or to proceed under the Leader's statutory powers. Cabinet members were consulted and agreed the proposed solution was beneficial to the Council and it was important to meet the timeframe of NPH's board to ensure that a decision in principle could be communicated.

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

2 December 2021

Cllr Jonathan Nunn, Leader of West Northamptonshire Council

Report Title	Northampton City Status Bid
Report Author	<p>Rebecca Peck, Assistant Chief Executive Rebecca.Peck@westnorthants.gov.uk</p> <p>Alexandra Paulley, National Management Trainee Alexandra.paulley@westnorthants.gov.uk</p> <p>Christopher Normington, National Management Trainee Christopher.normington@westnorthants.gov.uk</p>

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Chief Finance Officer/S.151	Martin Henry	24/11/2021
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List of Appendices

Appendix A – Northampton City Status: Benefits for West Northamptonshire

Appendix B - (To follow) Northampton City Status Bid

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To reach a decision on applying for city status for Northampton as part of The Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 As part of the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee celebrations there is an opportunity for towns to apply for city status. The deadline for applications is 8 December 2021 and the winners are expected to be announced in early 2022.
- 2.2 A successful City Status bid for Northampton will benefit the whole of West Northamptonshire including our many thriving villages and towns such as Brackley, Daventry and Towcester. City status would bring:
- Raised National and International Profile
 - Economic benefits
 - Opportunities to celebrate our History & Culture
 - Community Pride
- 2.3 Public engagement and consultation activity is taking place throughout November and the response from our communities has been overwhelmingly positive, including media coverage from the [Northampton Chronicle & Echo](#) and [BBC](#). We have had positive engagement through social media including Facebook, Instagram and TikTok with content reaching over 17,000 people, and number of accounts engaged has increased by over 14,000%. To enable all consultation feedback to be included in our bid, the final submission will be shared with council by 1 December.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that councillors endorse the bid for Northampton City Status.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- If successful in the Civic Honours Competition, West Northamptonshire will gain from the many benefits of attaining city status shown within Appendix 1.
- City status attracts inward investment, new businesses and skilled employees. Post-Diamond Jubilee (2012), Perth had £30 million invested into the cultural sector alone.
- Achieving city status for Northampton would raise the profile of West Northants nationally and internationally with 87.5% of the newly created cities outperforming their regional counterparts with neighbouring towns and villages also benefiting.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 Her Majesty the Queen celebrates 70 years as Monarch and will become the first British Monarch to reach this milestone.
- 5.2 As part of the celebrations, there is a civic honours competition which includes competitions for City status and Lord Mayor or Provost status. Any local authority within the United Kingdom, a Crown Dependency or an Overseas Territory is welcome to submit a town for the competition.
- 5.3 Northampton was last put forward for City Status as part of the Millenium Civic Honours Competition in 2000.

- 5.4 This competition last took place to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee in 2012 and three places were awarded City Status: Chelmsford, St Asaph and Perth.
- 5.5 For the Diamond Jubilee 26 towns applied for City Status: Bolton, Bournemouth, Chelmsford, Colchester, Coleraine, Corby, Craigavon, Croydon, Doncaster, Dorchester, Dudley, Dumfries, Gateshead, Goole, Luton, Medway, Middlesbrough, Milton Keynes, Perth, Reading, Southend, St Asaph, St Austell, Stockport, Tower Hamlets and Wrexham.

6. Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Resources and Financial

- 6.1.1 The city status bid has been developed in house and within existing budgets and there are no financial implications directly arising from submitting the bid.
- 6.1.2 Achieving city status would bring financial and economic benefits to Northampton and the wider West Northants Area as set out in appendix one.

6.2 Legal

- 6.2.1 There are no legal implications arising from the proposals. Achieving city status would not change the local governance arrangements for West Northants Council or town and parish councils in the area.

6.3 Risk

- 6.3.1 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report. One potential risk outlined is the failure to attain city status, should the bid go ahead leading to negative perceptions and disappointment amongst residents. This risk will be mitigated through an effective communications campaign to promote the many positive aspects of Northampton that have been highlighted through our consultation and engagement activity.
- 6.3.2 The national attention drawn to Northampton, and the community support demonstrated in the report, outweighs any potential negatives arising from a failed bid.

6.4 Consultation

- 6.4.1 The council has carried out engagement and consultation across Northampton and wider West Northamptonshire. This has involved workshops with community groups and community leaders. Discussions have taken place with community leaders, charities, businesses, the sports teams, MPs, the response has been widely supportive.
- 6.4.2 Residents have shared their photos of Northampton which have been included in the bid, have taken part in videos featuring in our social media campaign and shared statements of support.
- 6.4.3 Individual interviews have taken place with residents, demonstrating their passion for Northampton and support for the bid.

6.5 Climate Impact

6.5.1 Whilst there are no direct climate impact implications arising from the proposals, city status would increase our profile nationally and internationally and increase opportunities for investment in the green economy.

6.6 Community Impact

6.6.1 City Status has the potential to provide wider opportunities to the community and attract high-skilled workers. Cities in the UK comprise 9% of the land but provide 60% of national employment. Post-2012, Chelmsford (a Diamond Jubilee winner) witnessed a 29.4 % increase in NVQ Level 4+ qualified workers from 2012-2020.

6.6.2 Celebrating the many positive attributes of Northampton and engaging with our communities to understand their ambitions and aspirations for the future encourages community pride and helps to improve perceptions.

6.7 Communications

6.7.1 Communications activity will continue following submission of our bid and following the outcome to ensure we promote the many positive aspects of Northampton that have been highlighted through our consultation and engagement activity.

7. Background Papers

Appendix A – Northampton City Status: Appraisal of Benefits for West Northamptonshire

Appendix B - (To follow) Northampton City Status Bid



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Northampton City Status: Appraisal of Benefits for West Northamptonshire

Briefing 22 October 2021



Timeline

October

Member's briefing
MP's Briefing
Northampton Forward

November to December

Draft bid application
Continued engagement
Webpage launch
Jubilee Committee

December 8th

Submission
Deadline

October to November

Community Engagement
Stakeholders/businesses
Social media outreach

December 2nd

Council Meeting

Purpose

West Northants in Numbers



£917m

Budget in 2020-21
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 &
Parish Councils



184

Schools



1707

Council
buildings & Assets



2,454km

Roads &
carriageways



£730.00

Median Rent
for a 2 bed



£566.30

Average Wage

A successful City Status bid for Northampton will benefit the whole of West Northamptonshire including our many thriving villages and towns such as Brackley, Daventry and Towcester.

Through various forms of engagement, we will be seeking to prioritise the voices and opinions of our West Northants communities. This briefing is to gather opinions and feedback from members, to help inform possible decision making at a later date, and to seek your involvement in the potential bid.

City status could bring:

- Raised National and International Profile
- Economic benefits
- Celebrating our History & Culture
- Community Pride.

Economic Benefits



- City status attracts inward investment, new businesses, and skilled employees.
- 'Towns (and villages) close to highly productive cities perform better in terms of attracting high-skilled business investment, jobs and firms.'
- 'Towns next to...cities get higher inflows of investment'
- Those wanting the 'London experience', without the prices and with improved quality of life will want to relocate to neighbouring cities – Northampton could be one of them.
- Achieving city status for Northampton would raise the profile of West Northants at a much more successful rate.
- West Northants has the potential to become a larger contributor to the country's economy and city status would support this.



- 87.5% of the newly created cities outperformed their regional counterparts
- 'UK city economies are the heart of the national economy: they are 21% more productive...and host 72% of all highly skilled jobs.' (Centre of Cities)
- Cities 9% of land, 55% of businesses and 60% of jobs
- 2012: All 15 of the top metropolitan areas by GDP are cities
- 2015: 29/32 GVA areas are cities meaning they outperform towns 10 to 1
- 2021: Investment Monitor listed 50 cities and towns by economic potential; 34 of which are cities, outperforming towns at a rate of 2 to 1 (Northampton was 41)

Perth (2012)

- £30 million invested into cultural sector alone in 2016 as a result of city status.
- Number of Universal Credit claimants from 2012-pre-covid was steadily declining year on year.

Since 2012:

- Wolverhampton (2000) has benefited from £2bn inward investment in the first twelve years of city status.
- Brighton and Hove's (2000) tourism spending went from £400m in 2000 to £837.2m in 2017.



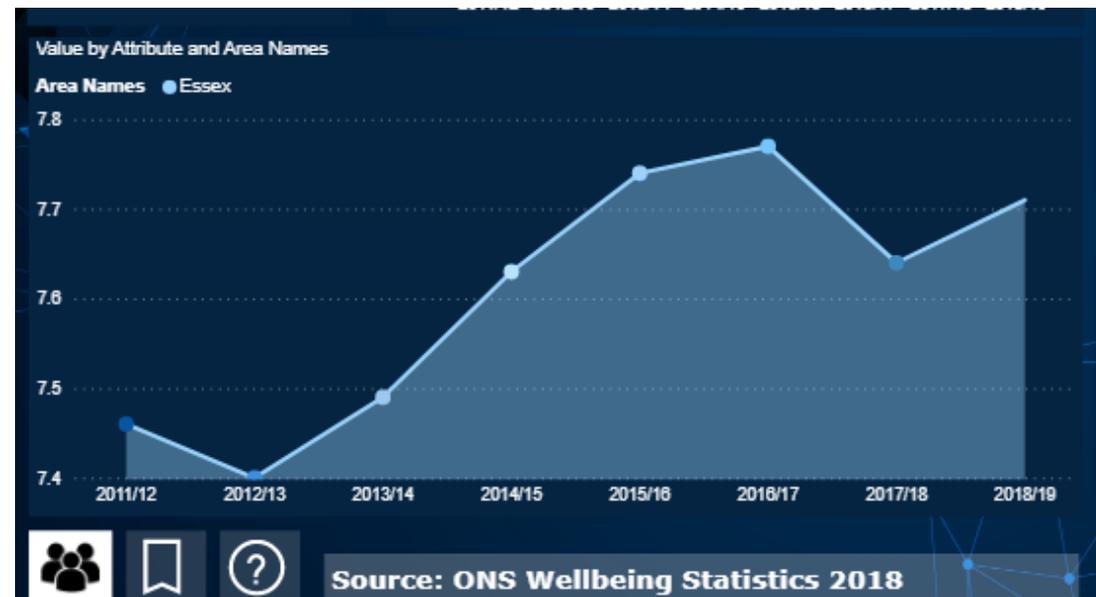
New Cities: Chelmsford (2012)

- 25% increase in Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities sectors from 2015-2019
- 29.4% increase in NVQ Level 4+ qualified workers from 2012-2020
- 11.5% increase in total number of businesses from 2015-2020

Average Weekly Gross Pay

District	2012	2020
Chelmsford	275	300
Thurrock	190	266
Basildon	210	261

Wellbeing Statistics chart measuring resident satisfaction in Chelmsford from 2011/2012 - 2018/2019.



How does West Northants compare?

Total GVA per area (2017):

- Perth: £28,909
- **West Northants: £27,528**
- Brighton and Hove: £27,081
- Heart of Essex: £25,854
- Sunderland: £22,368
- Wolverhampton: £19,021



Population

- Brighton and Hove: 290,395
- **Northampton: 229,815**
- Reading: 229,274
- Wolverhampton: 218,255
- Bolton: 202,369
- Milton Keynes: 184,105
- Sunderland: 175,031
- Perth : 47,430

Average salary (2020):

- Brighton and Hove: £37,700
- **West Northants: £37,000**
- Chelmsford: £36,500
- Sunderland: £32,600
- Wolverhampton: £31,300
- Perth and Kinross: £26,000

Raised profile



- Cities are continuing to have larger platforms and voices in the setting and implementation of national policies/legislation.
- "...way of announcing to an international audience that here is an important place with which they should be doing business." (John Beckett, author of *City Status in the British Isles, 1830-2002*)
- Increased responsibility as a city with COVID recovery strategies.
- Opportunity to promote the many highlights and hidden treasures of West Northants.

Our Community Pride



- West Northants developing a reputation as a region in which their residents take pride creates a more positive outsider perspective.
- It is not a “Northampton-centric bid” - this is a true team effort and will be developed with our communities and partners.





Northampton
A city at heart



Northampton's Application for Grant
of City Status

December 2021

Northampton City Credential 1:

Bronze Age Settlement, Medieval Battleground and A Home to Changemakers.

Northampton has a deep and long-standing history. There is a record of human existence as far back as the Bronze Age, with archaeological evidence of a Neolithic encampment dated to approximately 3500 BC. Following the Norman Conquest, it continued to prosper, and in 1215 King John appointed a mayor, a structure which still exists today.

Northampton continued to be at the heart of England. In 1460 it was a key battleground in the War of the Roses and later at the forefront of the English Civil War. Northampton has been home to trailblazers and changemakers, out of the box thinkers. In the 20th Century Margaret Bondfield was the third female MP and the first female cabinet member. While in the 19th Century Charles Bradlaugh was the founder of the National Secular Society.

Northampton City Credential 2:

A Place for Businesses to thrive

Northampton currently houses 11,345 businesses which provide 153,000 jobs to the community. In 2014 Northampton was voted by Experian as the best place to start business. The town houses many Transport & Storage and Construction businesses including Travis Perkins and Wrefords Transport, which reflects Northampton's mainstay role at the heart of the country's connectivity.

Business within Northampton is at the center of environmental innovation. Cosworth, established in 1958, is currently operating at the forefront of transport technology with its work in hybrid solutions. While smaller enterprises such as the Good Loaf are leaders in community innovation providing employment to vulnerable local women to enable them to break the cycle of poverty.

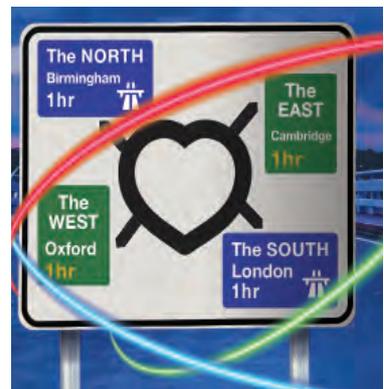
Northampton City Credential 3:

Northampton City Attribute 2: At the Centre of Regional and National travel: 30% of the population can visit within 1 hour.

Northampton has the first-class transport provisions and connections expected of a city. There is direct and frequent travel regionally and nationally with the ability to reach international airports within an hour. Today Northampton is at the centre of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc to bring new infrastructure developments.

“As someone born and bred in Northampton with long family history here, I couldn't be prouder to support our bid for city status.”

Cllr Gareth Eales
Leader of the Labour Group
West Northamptonshire Council



Northampton City Credential 4:

Northampton City Attribute 3: University Town with a £330 million state of the art campus.

Northampton is home to the University of Northampton, an institution with historic origins which in 2005 was revived for the students of today. It is now home to over 12,000 students.

In 2018 the University placed itself at the heart Northampton's future investing £330 million into a state-of-the-art campus located in Northampton's Waterside Enterprise Zone which is just 15 minutes from the town centre. The facilities include a Sports Pavilion, a 20,000 sqm Learning Hub and a new low carbon Energy Centre.



Northampton City Credential 5:

Home of the shoe industry past present and future

Since the 15th Century Northampton has been the home of shoemaking. In the 1790s, Northampton was producing 10-12,000 pairs of boots per week for the British Army. By 1841, there were nearly 2000 shoemakers. Today industry combines tradition with innovation. It is home to historic companies like Crockett & Jones and Churches who produce the shoes for James Bond, and brands which push the design envelope, Jeffrey West. Companies have struck worldwide trade deals, spreading the good word of the town and the highest-quality shoes across the globe.



Northampton City Credential 6:

Home of the Saints, the Steelbacks and the Cobblers

Northampton has a historic connection to sport, being home to three major teams which each have regional, national, and international significance. Northampton Town FC, The Cobblers, have for decades been a continual presence in league football. Northampton Saints are one of the most successful Rugby Union Clubs in the country, with 21 players in the hall of fame, and 3 currently playing for England. Northamptonshire County Cricket Club, the Steelbacks, have over 140 years of history, winning the T20 in 2013. Notable players including Monty Panesar and Kapil Dev.



Northampton City Credential 7:

Biggest Town in Europe: Home to 225,000 people

Northampton is Europe's biggest town and like any thriving city it is constantly growing. In 1900 it was home to just 87,000 people. Today it has tripled and there are 225,000 people. 20% of Northampton's population are from an Ethnic Minority while annually the community gathers together for celebrations of all cultures.



At the of national history

Northampton has a long history, growing rapidly from the original Danish settlement in the 9th century. Following the Norman Conquest, Northampton was recognised on a national level as the seat of royalty, government and conflict. It has been a defiant parliamentarian stronghold and the home to several 19th, 20th and 21st century changemakers. Northampton has evolved into a thriving national and regional hub rooted in history but forward-looking.

Rich in Heritage

There is evidence of settlement dating back to the Bronze Age, with archaeological evidence of a Neolithic encampment in Briar Hill dated to approximately 3500 BC. Today Hunsbury Hill is a surviving example of the many hillforts that populated the country in the Iron Age. Northampton, then Hamm Tunn, is first referenced in 914 as a Danish settlement later relinquished to Edward the Elder. Under his rule, Northampton became the centre of one of the new shires and grew rapidly as a nationally significant trading centre. The town's prosperity can be highlighted by the imposition of special taxes demanded by Henry II from 1158 to 1214.

Northampton continued to thrive with the construction of Northampton Castle in 1084. Today, remains can be found outside Northampton Train Station. During the Middle Ages, Northampton was at the heart of Medieval England. Its central location made it a strategic destination for governance, royalty and eventually conflict. King Henry I was the first monarch to reside in Northampton Castle, an act which was followed by the 8 subsequent sovereigns. In 1205 King John moved the Treasury to Northampton hosting 5 Parliaments and over 20 royal councils within the Castle walls. The town became a prominent destination within Medieval England. It played host to the trial of Thomas Becket, the Assize of Northampton and the imposition of poll tax. In 1460 Northampton sat at the heart of the War of the Roses with the Battle of Northampton. Fought in the grounds of Delapre Abbey it was the first battle where artillery was used in England.

During the English Civil War, 1642-1651, the people of Northampton were decidedly pro-parliament. In 1642 the town became the main Parliamentarian garrison for the South-West Midlands. On the way to the Battle of Naseby, Oliver Cromwell marched through the town reaffirming its instrumental position in the dissolution of the monarchy. After the Great Fire of Northampton, 1675, Charles II demonstrated his support of Northampton by donating several tonnes of timber and halved the taxes for seven years to help the reconstruction of the town. Today Northampton is one of just three towns to honour the Restoration of the monarchy with Oak Apple Day. Like in 1675, Northampton donated 100 tonnes of timber from Delapre Abbey to Windsor Castle in 1992 to help rebuild after the fire. It was utilised to reconstruct the State Dining Room floor and has been admired by many international dignitaries.



“ I wholeheartedly support Northampton's bid to gain City status. Northampton has been at the centre of English history for 2000 years, from being a key administrative centre with strong Royal connections in Medieval England to a thriving and prosperous economy, famous amongst other things for its shoemakers.

A successful bid would be the perfect catalyst to attract inward investment, drive regeneration and build a great future for Northampton. **”**

James Saunders Watson
Esq Lord-Lieutenant of
Northamptonshire



At the of national history

Royal Connections

Since Queen Victoria the royal family has visited Northampton nine times, with James Saunders-Watson currently serving as Northamptonshire's Lord Lieutenant. In 1863 a cast-iron fountain to commemorate the marriage of King Edward VII and Alexandra of Denmark was gifted to Northampton, which now resides in the newly reopened Northampton Museum. In 1982, Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Phillip opened the Express Lift Tower which today plays a significant role in international space innovation. Subsequently Prince Charles and Princess Diana were frequent visitors to the town, in 1989 year she was awarded the Freedom of the Borough . Today she is commemorated with a memorial plaque located at the Guildhall within the town centre.

Market Town

At the heart of Northampton's proposed city centre is the second largest outdoor market in the country. One of the oldest market towns, King Richard I granted a market charter in 1189 located on the site of the historic All-Saint's Church. In 1235 it was relocated after Henry III imposed a trading ban to the market square where it still resides today. The market square survived The Great Fire in 1675, with many residents fleeing through Welsh House at the top of the square, which still stands today. The square has been hugely successful and popular for centuries and has hosted several events throughout its history. During World War Two, the square was home to Weapons Weeks, which were instrumental in fundraising for spitfires, warships and tanks. In more modern times, the square has hosted several events, such as Christmas fairs, Diwali celebrations, Armed Forces Day and Pride.

Changemakers

At the heart of Northampton is an independent spirit. The community has been home to several influential pioneers whose work has held international significance. In 1880 Charles Bradlaugh was elected as MP of Northampton and became a staunch campaigner for atheist rights. In 1888 his campaign resulted in a revolutionary revision of the Oaths Act which removed the required religious oath.

The Northampton spirit was upheld by the Margaret Bondfield, the third female MP, first woman to become a member of cabinet and the first woman to chair the General Council of the Trade Union Congress. Bondfield was a trailblazer whose work paved the way for the female politicians of today. She is memorialised in the Guildhall Courtyard along with Francis Crick the co-founder of DNA. Along with James Watson, his efforts won him the Noble Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1962. His work is at the heart of medical innovation today. These changemakers have worked and lived in Northampton while their legacy mirrors the ambitions of the town.



“ I am delighted to support Northampton's bid for city status, a move which has the potential to really put Northampton. Our local area has witnessed a great deal of change in the past year with the move to two unitary councils – I am excited that we have the opportunity to bring our communities together in a local effort to showcase everything that is great about Northampton, and Northamptonshire. A successful city status bid would be a huge honour for our area, and would be a real testament to our wonderful residents, businesses, towns and communities. ”

At the of Innovation



Northampton is at the heart of national and international innovation of the past, present and future. Throughout the 20th century, Northampton had the biggest and brightest names within the automotive industry call the town and surrounding county home.

'Northampton Lighthouse'

The Queen opened the Northampton Lift Tower in 1982, its original purpose to test elevators. Immortalised by Terry Wogan after one of his listeners dubbed it the 'Northampton Lighthouse', it was granted Grade II listed building status in 1997 and has always been at the heart of innovation. Standing at a height of 127.5 metres, its distinctive features make it an irreplaceable resource for various projects. In 2018 Airbus utilised the building to test the Space Harpoon, which is currently used to remove thousands of tons of debris from Earth's orbit. The tower is the tallest drainage installation testing centre, which has aided in the evolution of the construction of skyscrapers. It has also been used to test climbing equipment and has been the site of many a charity abseil.

Automotive home

Northampton's centre is just 15 miles from Silverstone, the home of the British Grand Prix since 1948. Silverstone hosted the 1950 F1 World Championships, the oldest F1 race of its kind, and is the third longest track within the F1 calendar. This historic track has placed Northampton at the heart of innovation and Northamptonshire at the centre of British Motor Racing. Silverstone itself generated a peak revenue of £53.9 million for the 2018 financial year. Both Mercedes and Aston Martin are based at the circuit, with Mercedes building its own engines in nearby Brixworth.

Based out of Silverstone, the Lunaz Group is known for its petrol-to-electric conversion of classic luxury cars. This innovative approach preserves classic car heritage by reducing their significant environmental impact. In 2020 David Beckham invested in the company, explaining that the Lunaz Group is at the heart of sustainable motoring.

Engineering legend Cosworth, whose engines have been used in F1 across the globe, have been based in Northampton since 1964. In the 20th century, Cosworth was at the heart of international automotive innovation as it developed the DVF engine which led to 155 Formula 1 victories from 1967 to 1983. In 2015 it invested £20 million into a Northampton-based factory, the Advanced Manufacturing Centre. Within three years the Northampton-based centre helped the company reach record revenue levels. Today Cosworth is a leader of hybrid engine innovation, placing the nation at the heart of F1's sustainable evolution.

Northampton has been home to Cosworth since 1964. During that time, we have developed key relationships within the town, especially with the council, to drive our business growth. Through this, we have received funding for innovative projects, like our Advanced Manufacturing Centre, and helped to position Northampton as a place from which engineering and technology can be nurtured, as part of our joint efforts to support STEM and STEAM initiatives. We are proud to be based in Northampton and fully support the town's bid for city status.

Hal Reisiger, CEO Cosworth



At the of Culture

Northampton has over 500 listed buildings, 21 conservation areas and 7 scheduled monuments. It is rooted in history, providing residents and visitors with one-of-a-kind experiences while being at the forefront of arts protection and innovation. Northampton has always been at the heart of culture and continues to provide residents and visitors with premium experiences.

The Cultural Quarter

In 2013 the Northampton Cultural Quarter was formed which brings together some of the town's most popular attractions, with a variety of nearby restaurants and bars. This innovative district demonstrates a continued support of the cultural arts and the town's focus on the future. The area includes the newly refurbished Northampton Museum and Art Gallery and the one-of-a-kind 78 Derngate Charles Rennie Mackintosh Museum.

The Northampton Museum and Art Gallery recently underwent a £6.7 million expansion which combined the existing heritage structures with innovative architectural design. The project saw the museum double in size, with a beautiful new extension connecting the museum to the Old Gaol Block, creating a new Temporary Exhibitions Gallery, schools' activity space and stunning Shoe Gallery. The Museum famously possesses an extensive shoe collection which in 2013 was designated by the Arts Council England as having local, national and international significance.

78 Derngate is a unique cultural destination which brings together heritage and architecture with an innovative modernist interior design. Originally built in 1815, local businessman Wenman Joseph Bassett-Lowke commissioned Charles Rennie Mackintosh to remodel the interior. It is the only Mackintosh-designed home in England and is one of the first examples of the Art Deco Style seen in Britain. In 2020, 78 Derngate was declared Visit England's 'Hidden Gem of 2019 of the East Midlands', which recognises its unique and outstanding visitor experience. In 2021 the attraction began building a £400,000 expansion to extend the current gallery space, create a new 'learning garden' and to add a new tearoom.

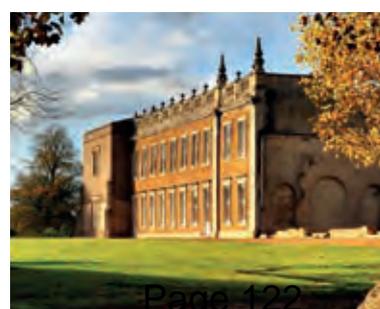
Delapre Abbey

Delapre Abbey lies within a registered battleground and is a grade II listed manor house and park. It is at the heart of Northampton's history and is a popular tourist attraction, located just outside the proposed city centre. Founded in 1145 as a nunnery, the abbey became a stopping point on Eleanor of Castile's funeral procession from Harby to Westminster in 1290.



“Delapre Abbey is fully supportive of the City status bid. Northampton and its people are ready to embrace the opportunities that City status can deliver. Siting within the Heritage and Cultural offer we are particularly interested in how becoming a City can create a new progressive narrative and interpretation of Northampton's rich heritage, that will bring new stories and spaces within the City. The attention and investment that City status would deliver would allow Northampton's Culture and Heritage to take centre stage.”

**Richard Clinton Chief Executive
Delapre Abbey Preservation Trust**



At the of Culture

King Edward I commemorated the journey by commissioning the construction of a dozen Eleanor Crosses. Today, Northampton's cross is one of just three that remain. From 1550 to 1943 the Abbey remained a private residence, during which a variety of additions were made, creating a unique amalgamation of architectural styles. The restored Abbey first opened to the public in 2018, welcoming approximately 350,000 visitors since opening. It is a destination with significant potential and there are plans to save the derelict 19th century stables, turning them into a wellbeing hub.

The Show Must Go On

Northampton is home to several historic theatres. The Royal & Derngate theatre complex is located within the Cultural Quarter and is made up of the Royal, the Derngate and the Northampton Filmhouse. The Royal Theatre first opened in 1884 as a reparatory theatre, and in 1999 this combined with the newer Derngate Theatre, a popular stop for touring productions. The theatre has been the launching pad for several critically acclaimed productions. The Worst Witch was first shown in 2018 which went on to win an Olivier for Best Family Show in 2020. Our Lady of Kibeho opened in 2019 and in 2020 was nominated for an Olivier in Outstanding Achievement in Affiliate Theatre.

The Deco is an Art Deco theatre and cinema located within the centre of Northampton. Dating back to the 1930s, it helped launch the careers of several trailblazing international musical artists including the Beatles in 1963, and the Rolling Stones in 1965. The Deco has evolved into a multi-purpose venue which is at the heart of the community, focusing on providing opportunities for local artists.



It's an important time for Northampton as we emerge from the Covid pandemic and a bid for City status really has the opportunity to galvanise the town, increase collaboration amongst partners, and ensure that we are bold and ambitious in our future plans. Northampton has long punched above its weight, with culture is playing an important role in its national profile and local regeneration. Achieving city status could elevate this even further.

Jo Gordan, Royal and Derngate



At the and sole of Shoemaking



Northampton is a centre of excellence for footwear production. Industry leaders preserve traditional manufacturing techniques for the consumer of today, putting Northampton at the heart of the national and international footwear industry.

Shoes of the Past

Shoes have been produced in Northampton since the 13th century. In 1213 King John purchased a pair of boots from a local shoemaker. In 1401 Northampton's first shoemaking guild was founded to maintain high quality shoe production. Northampton was solidified as a centre for shoemaking excellence when 600 pairs of boots and 4,000 pairs of shoes were commissioned by Oliver Cromwell for the Parliamentarian Army.

During the Industrial Revolution Northampton was a leader in the footwear industry. Factories were producing at least 10,000 pairs a week while design choices put them at the heart of innovation. Northampton shoe factories adopted the Goodyear Welt, a revolutionary stitching method from 1871 which allowed soles to be easily replaced. This established Northampton's industry as the world's largest producer of Goodyear-welted footwear.

During World War One Northampton, alongside the wider county, made 50 million of the 70 million shoes produced for the British Forces. Throughout history Northampton has been a community of shoemakers at the heart of the nation, becoming international leaders in shoemaking excellence.

Shoemaking today

Northampton is internationally recognised for producing high quality shoes. Today, 11 companies reside in the town with a further ten in the wider Northamptonshire. Northampton is home to several heritage shoe brands including Tricker's, Church's, Crockett & Jones, JL & Co, Edward Green & Co, and Crown Shoes.

Crockett and Jones have produced custom shoes for James Bond movies and the Prince of Wales. In 1982 Spring Line Limited was formed, the only manufacturer in Britain producing bespoke hand-crafted wooden lasts, which help form the shape of the shoe. The company provides lasts not only to Northampton's shoe brands, but several internationally renowned fashion labels including Vivienne Westwood and Paul Smith. JuJu, formed in 1986, produced the culturally iconic Jelly shoe, pioneering the production of injection footwear.

Northampton's footwear industry continues to be at the forefront. Owned by Prada, Church's manufactures 5,000 pairs of shoes a week, 70 per cent of which are exported, placing it at the heart of international footwear. In 2005, the film Kinky Boots placed Northampton shoes on the map and in 2012 it was turned into a Broadway Musical still shown today. Northampton shoes are examples of shoemaking excellence, preserving heritage production whilst continuing to innovate.

Tricker's fully support for the bid for Northampton to gain city status. The globally respected footwear industry is an exceptionally important part of our town and this is a great opportunity to build on our fantastic history and assets and attract future inward investment to regenerate the whole area.

Martin Mason – Managing Director and Member of Northampton Forward



At the of our Sport & Leisure

Northampton is the only town in England to host three professional sports teams: Northampton Town Football Club, Northamptonshire County Cricket and Northampton Saints. Together they place Northampton at the heart of regional, national and international sport, capable of welcoming over 450,000 visitors to Northampton combined across their respective sporting seasons.

Heart of Football

Founded in 1897, Northampton Town Football Club has seen the rise of two game-changing players. Herbert Chapman, during the 1904-05 season, became Northampton's first-ever player/manager which launched his historic career. Today Chapman is regarded as one of football's greatest managers. In 1911 Walter Tull, the third person of mixed heritage to play in the top division of football, transferred to Northampton Town. He made 111 appearances for the club before enlisting for WW1, where he became one of the first Black Officers in the Army and the first to lead White soldiers into battle.

In 2015, the club was bought by American entrepreneur Kelvin Thomas. This incredible season saw Northampton secure promotion to League 1, where they currently play today, and finish as the champions of League 2. In 2021 the Cobblers hosted a national football tournament for ethnic minority communities promoting 'multi-cultural togetherness.' Northampton Town is at the heart of the national football community outreach and ensures the legacy of their international changemakers is never forgotten.

Heart of Rugby

Northampton Saints are one of the oldest Rugby Clubs in England established in 1880 they have for over two hundred years called Franklin Gardens home.

The Saints have won six major titles, becoming European Champions in 2000, English Champions in 2014 and more recently winning the inaugural Premiership Rugby Cup in 2019. The team is one half of 'The East Midlands Derby' the fiercest rivalry in English Rugby Union. To date the Saints have had 38 international players called up for the England Rugby World Cup squad. Notable alumni include Ben Cohen and Dylan Hartley, whilst Northampton's own Courtney Lawes currently plays for England.

Like their footballing counterparts, The Saints work closely with the community, giving back to those who have tirelessly supported them. Wheelchair rugby, educational programmes, and fitness classes "Shape Up with Saints" demonstrating how they put themselves at the heart of the community prioritising their heart and wellbeing.



“Northampton is a great place to live, work and visit. We believe that achieving city status would help attract more investment for the area and improve opportunities and life chances for residents and communities. Northampton Saints whole heartedly support the bid.”

Mark Darbon, Chief Executive at Northampton Saints



At the of our Sport & Leisure

First-class cricket

Cricket in Northampton dates to 1741, and Northamptonshire County Cricket Club was founded in 1878. The County Cricket Ground was constructed in the late 1880's, hosting the first game in 1886. It is one of 18 first class Cricket clubs within the country.

Diversity has always been at the heart of the Steelbacks, whilst simultaneously preserving home-grown talent. This mixture and balance of players was instrumental in restoring the club's status as a top side, winning the Gillette Cup Final at Lord's in 1976. The 21st Century has seen the Steelbacks in the thick of cricketing action. The captain and the academy's own Alex Wakely led the club to Twenty20 championship glory in 2013, and later in 2016.

There are Women's teams competing in the Indoor Cricket League and the East Midlands Cricket League. The Steelbacks host 5 Disability Cricket teams for people of all ages and provide an established coaching program. Northamptonshire Cricket sits at the Heart of the County and continues to be at the forefront of national cricket.

Award-winning green spaces

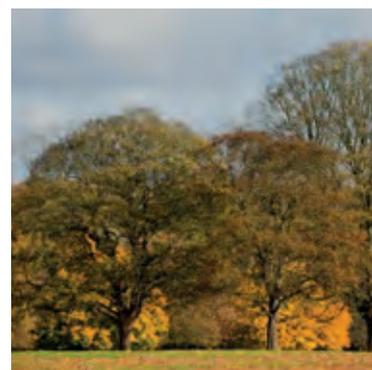
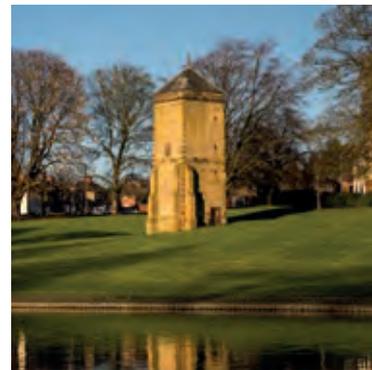
Northampton has 1,880 acres of parkland, equaling 5.52 square metres per 10 residents. In October 2021, four parks in and around the proposed city centre retained their prestigious Green Flag Status recognising them as leaders in the management of sustainable green spaces. They are: Delapre Park, Abington Park, Bradlaugh Fields and Daventry Country Park have all been recognised.

The Racecourse

The Racecourse is, historically at the heart of the amateur sports community. These include football, cricket, rugby, tennis, and bowls. There are over 27 Sunday league football teams and there is a well-attended weekly Parkrun. In 2012 an adventure park was opened which included a climbing frame, zip wire and a five-person buddy swing. The park has thousands of estimated weekly visitors.

The People's Park

Abington Park is the 'People's Park' it is home to Abington Manor, known today as Abington Museum, and the Church of St Peter & St Paul. The Manor became the home of William Shakespeare's granddaughter Elizabeth Bernard. Today Abington Museum is a prominent feature of the park, housing displays on the social history of Northamptonshire and The Museum of Leathercraft. The park is a popular destination for residents with a play area, café, bandstand and fitness trail.



At the of our Sport & Leisure

Becket's Park

Named after Thomas Becket, the park is linked to the adjacent Becket's Well, the purported drinking site of Becket before his escape from trial at Northampton Castle. The park lines the banks of the River Nene and possesses a canal lock connecting the Nene to the Grand Union Canal. Across the river sits the new University of Northampton campus which consolidated the University's sites and brought its main out-of-town campus into the heart of the town. Linked with a modern footbridge the park is a popular student destination, placing this historic park at the heart of future generations.

Prime Retail Destination

Northampton's Retail sector provides 6,500 jobs and makes up 4.7% of jobs in Northampton. The town centre offers a good mix of high street favorites and independent stores with an estimated retail floorspace of 1.3 million sq ft. This includes the popular Grosvenor Centre which houses many high street chains and St Giles Street which won the Great British High Street Award in 2015. Northampton has become an example of social enterprise excellence within retail, with aspirations of an innovative future.

In 2021, Northampton Forward, an informal partnership of stakeholders tasked with the regeneration and growth within Northampton, secured a Towns Fund deal of £24.9 million. It is intended to establish Northampton as a thriving centre for residents, visitors and businesses as it has the potential to become a centre of high-quality employment. Abington Street sits at the heart of Northampton and recent funding has enabled the redevelopment of BHS and Marks & Spencer. They will become mixed-use sites capitalising on Northampton's lack of high-quality office stock.



At the of Community



From its Bronze Age roots to its Parliamentary garrison, people have always been at the heart of Northampton. It has been a home to changemakers, independent thinkers and importantly a community which continually help one another.

We're All in this Together

Northampton has a diverse and welcoming community; ethnic minorities make up 20 per cent of the population. There is a proud history of religious diversity; the first recorded Muslims in England were in Northampton, and it held one of the largest medieval Jewish communities in the country. Today Northampton's faith communities play a vital role in the community and voluntary sector and are crucial in the provision of local services, often in areas of long-term disadvantage.

In 2020 the Siri Guru Singh Sabha Northampton and the Sikh Community Centre and Youth Club (SCCYC) completed the Northampton Sikh Gurdwara. The new development included a gym, museum, and foodbank. The SCCYC continually served the community in 2020, and they were labelled 'Lockdown Legends'. They launched a pop-up food bank providing food, toiletries and parcels for vulnerable families, and every Friday members of the community provide curries. Located in the proposed city centre, Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire provides volunteering support and opportunities for the entire county. In Northampton there are over 150 voluntary organisations. West Northamptonshire Council provides grants for the sector to help these organisations remain at the heart of their community.

Let's Celebrate

West Northamptonshire Council's Community Safety and Engagement Team works with voluntary and community sectors on engagement, events and development. The team supports community groups through a forum network which includes disability, ethnicity and faith, LGBTQ, women, and pensioners and young people. The team helps forums and community groups with event management. Northampton's community consistently comes together to celebrate a variety of events.

Diwali

For over 20 years the Indian Hindu Welfare Organisation (IHWO) has hosted Diwali in the town centre. The event features a parade displaying lights, elaborate 3D puppets, lanterns and bhangra music. The parade is walked by hundreds of people including primary school children, local councillors and retirement communities. It is a popular event watched by thousands. In 2021 the IHWO was awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

6 Northampton is a very multicultural place with a greater understanding amongst faith and people in the community. I am very proud of our Northampton, and it will be great to see Northampton being awarded city status. This certainly will be a dream come true feeling for me and many others.

Mrs Neelam Aggarwal – Singh, MBE, DL, JP



At the of Community



Pride

Pride events have taken place in Northampton since 2004. Organised by Northampton's LGBTQ+ and Allies Forum and the Northampton Pride Committee, the event promotes equality, respect, and community engagement. It features a parade with musical performances attracting people from across the county.

Carnival

Northampton carnival is a multicultural event which can be traced back to 1914, and continues to grow and develop, attracting thousands of participants and audience members along the parade route. The event is split into two parts – the carnival parade of floats and troupes, and then stalls and stage performances. Every year there is a theme for the parade, which provides opportunities for creative interpretations that make the parade a spectacular sight.

Governance and Administration

Northampton sits at the heart of the county. It is home to Northamptonshire Police, Northamptonshire Records Office and West Northamptonshire Council. Located in One Angel Square, West Northamptonshire Council was launched in April 2021 as a unitary authority replacing Daventry District, South Northamptonshire, Northampton Borough and part of Northamptonshire County Council. Northampton Town Council resides within the historic Guildhall, and the mayoralty is the oldest in the country, established for over 900 years. Northampton appointed its first Bangladeshi Mayor, Rufia Ashraf, in April 2021.

International Partners

For over 30 years Northampton has been twinned with both Poitiers, France and Marburg, Germany. The partnership supports continental exchange programmes and an annual TwinFest. This popular festival has performances from each locality, a partnership which provides an international platform for local Northampton artists.

In 2009 Northamptonshire became a sister city for Indianapolis, the only county to be partnered with the US city. This relationship is founded upon motorsport connections but has branched into a mutual celebration of culture and community. There have been international exchanges to promote business connections and this relationship continues to thrive.

“ On behalf of the City of Indianapolis, Indiana, I am pleased to offer my support regarding Northampton's bid to be awarded city status. For the past 12 years, Indianapolis has been a proud Sister City of Northamptonshire who plays a unique and integral part in the fabric of the global racing and automotive industries. These industries are vital to preserve the financial sector and the major automotive trade of Northamptonshire. ”

Joseph H. Hogsett Mayor
City of Indianapolis

“ Marburg and Northampton have been, for many years, linked by an official town twinning. It is upheld by many private friendships that have emerged over the years as well as the formal visits between representatives of both towns. In the now 32 years of our partnership a wonderful friendship has developed, which is reflected in collaborative projects and joint events, such as the MaNo music festival. ”

Dr. Thomas SpiesLord
Mayor of Marburg



At the of The People

Northampton is Europe's biggest town and has the hallmarks of a city. In 1086 Northampton had an estimated population of 1,500, placing it within the top 20 per cent of settlements within England. Today Northampton is very different and has witnessed significant growth, from a population of 87,000 in 1900 to over 225,000 today, making it the UK's biggest town. Northampton is home to 11,130 businesses and is one of the most entrepreneurial places in the UK, with high employment – currently 78 per cent of the population is employed totalling 136,000.

Open for business

Northampton's central location has established it as a hub for business. In 1973 Carlsberg opened its only UK-based factory, now annually producing 525 million bottles of beer. While Northampton's roots are in manufacturing, today it is at the heart of distribution. The transport and storage sector accounts for 22.8 per cent of businesses.

In 2019, 1,800 new businesses were formed as Northampton performs exceptionally with business start-ups. The town has the foundations of a city, with business-focused regeneration to establish Northampton as a national leader. Upcoming projects have a total gross development value of over £400 million. These include Four Waterside which will provide 60,000 sqft of grade A office space, 90 homes and a new hotel to provide high-quality accommodation for potential tourists. These projects will respect the past while creating a thriving future for the community. Northampton's Old Black Lion and St Peter's Church are to form a new community hub within an area of high deprivation. Northampton has all the hallmarks of a city and this drive for regeneration will ensure it becomes a thriving diverse home for its people, present and future.

Aspirational Education

Northampton has some of the best educational institutions in the country. There are 26 schools and colleges in and around the town centre, with 85% having an Ofsted rating of Good or above. Education facilities in Northampton promote aspirational education providing post-16 students access to skills-training establishing social mobility. This is supported by several local businesses with Cosworth operating several active apprenticeship programmes to provide young people with high-level quality skills in high performance engineering.

Northampton is home to Northampton University with over 12,000 students. In 2018, the University invested £330 million to create a modern state of the art campus within Northampton Waterside Enterprise Zone. The facilities include a state-of-the-art Paramedic learning centre where students receive first-class training in stimulated environments. The University of Northampton has been internationally recognised for its commitment to social innovation and entrepreneurship. In 2013, they were the first UK university to be a designated 'Changemaker Campus' by Ashoka U.



“ On behalf of the University of Northampton the application has my full support. ”

Nick Petford, Vice Chancellor of the University of Northampton and Deputy Lieutenant for Northamptonshire



At the of Connectivity



Connectivity is at the heart of Northampton's past, present and future growth. Cities have thrived when they are strategically located to enable businesses to prosper. Northampton provides efficient regional, national, and international links, connecting residents and businesses with major population centres. Having these connections is a key feature of cities.

Well-connected for business and living

The recently refurbished Northampton railway station welcomes 3.3 million passengers per year, making it the busiest station in the county. London and Birmingham are reachable within an hour with three trains in either direction leaving every hour. From Northampton residents can connect with two of the UK's busiest airports within an hour. London Luton and Birmingham International collectively welcome over 30 million passengers per year. This perfectly integrates Northampton nationally and internationally.

Northampton was one of the first locations linked by the M1 motorway, enabling connectivity since its opening in 1959. It now has three junctions enabling easy access from Northampton to London (south), Birmingham (north-west) and Sheffield, Leeds and Manchester (North). Northampton benefits from key arterial routes including the A45, leading eastwards towards Cambridge, with easy access to the A14, M6 and M40.

Over 30 per cent of the UK's population can travel to Northampton within an hour. Being at the heart of the nation provides businesses and residents with a significant advantage, perfectly placing Northampton at the heart of the nation's future growth.

Northampton is home to a Park and Ride, located at Sixfields, which connects visitors to the town centre, and during the Grand Prix connects the town to Silverstone, the heart of Formula 1 racing. There are approximately 158 cycle routes including the Norbital route, which links residential areas with areas of employment and education.

Northampton is working towards completing its goal of carbon neutrality by 2030 and helping the country work towards wider climate targets.

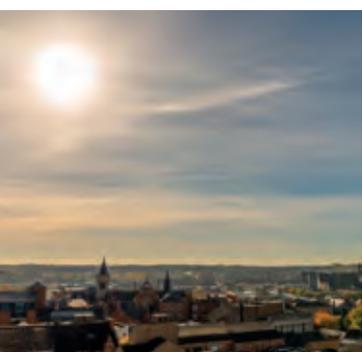
In 2021, the first phase of Network Rail's eco-friendly railway depot was completed which, once phase two is complete, will become the first net-zero carbon 'maintenance delivery unity' on a railway network.

A focus for our future economy

Northampton is at the geographical centre of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. It currently supports over two million jobs, is one of the fastest growing economies within England and annually brings in £110 billion to the UK economy. The arc is an internationally recognised opportunity and a key component of the nation's future plans, which include building upon the current infrastructure. Northampton is perfectly positioned to be at the heart of these proposed infrastructure developments, ensuring it continues to thrive for residents, businesses, and visitors.

I fully support and endorse Northampton's bid for city status. As the county town of Northamptonshire, one of only two historic counties in the United Kingdom without a city, Northampton undoubtedly has all the hallmarks of a city in the very heart of the country. It has a university, excellent schools, it is home to three major sporting teams, and has a historic selection of cultural destinations. It is a rapidly growing town with significance and deserves the elevated status that becoming a city would bring.

Andrea Leadsom, MP

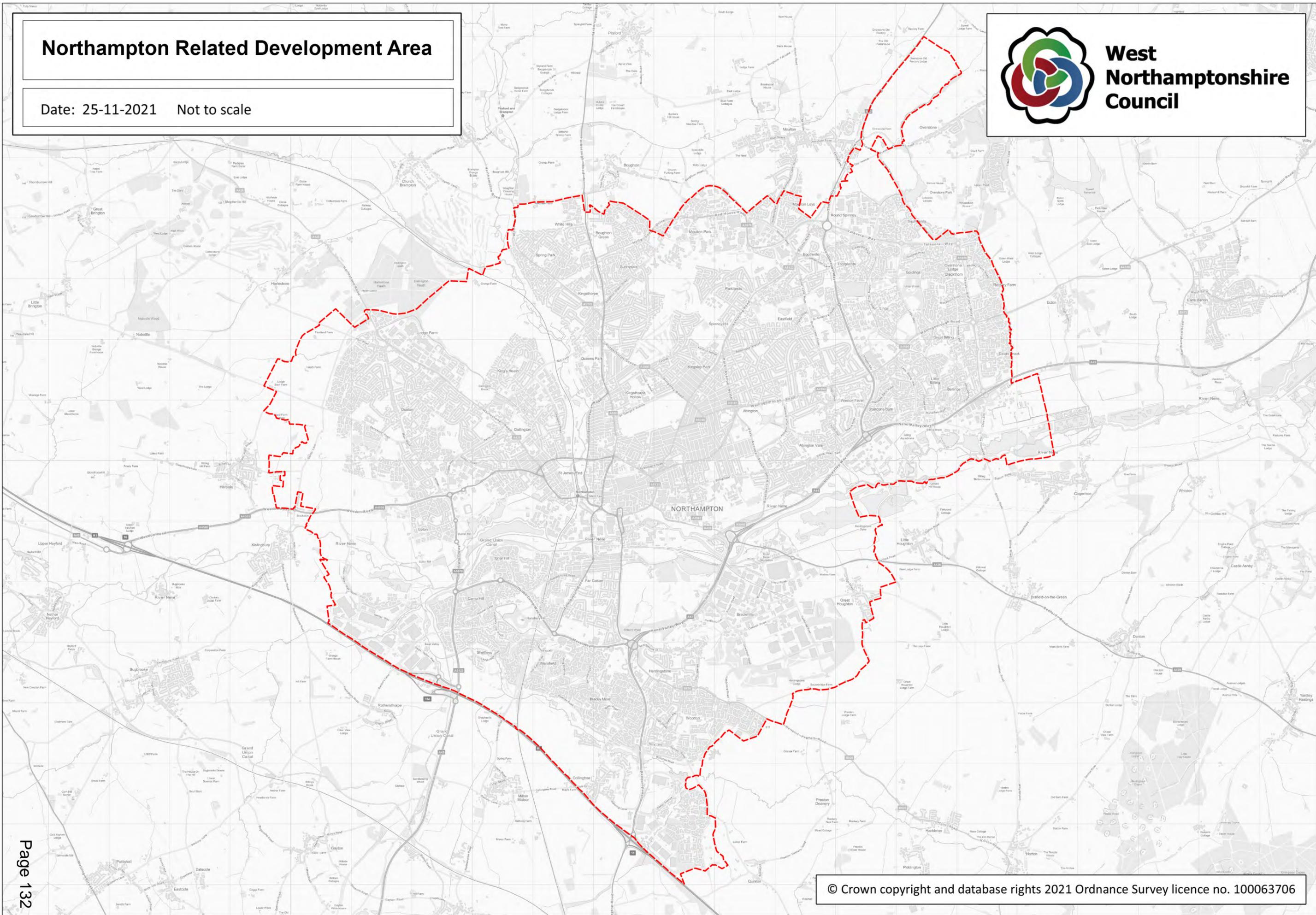


Northampton Related Development Area

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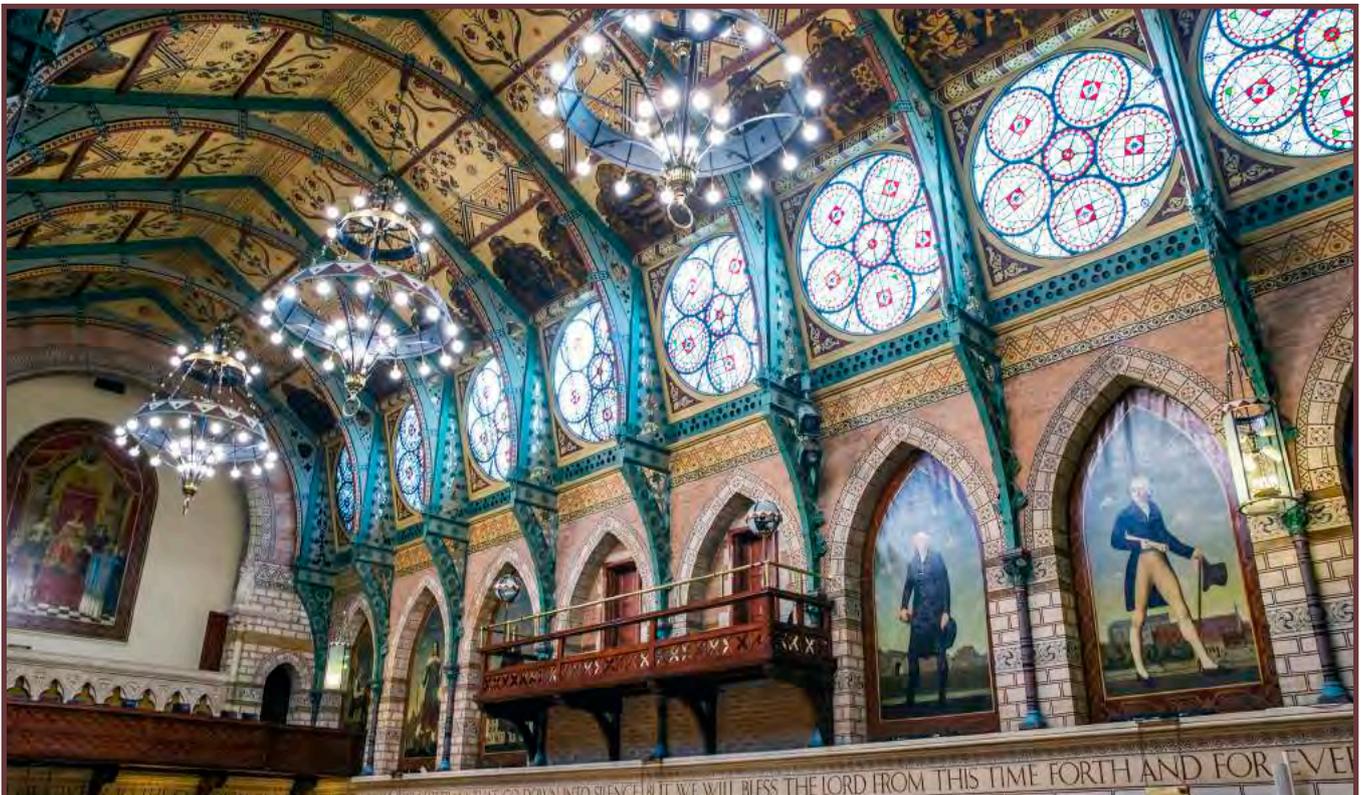
**West
Northamptonshire
Council**



The Guildhall



Northampton's stunning Guildhall, a wonderful example of Victorian gothic architecture and perhaps the town's most recognisable building, remains at the centre of civic life today.



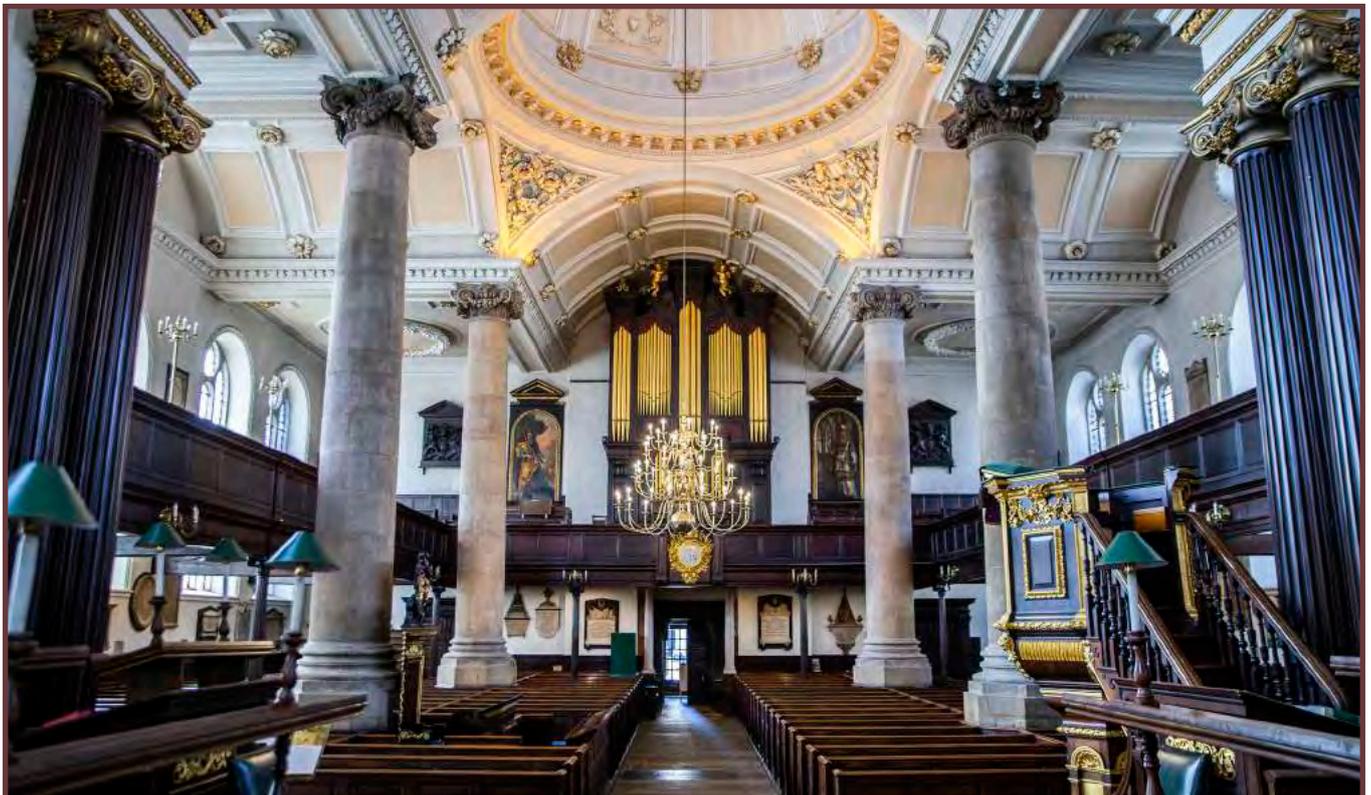


The centre of Northampton boasts an eclectic mix of fine architecture, housing fantastic independent stores alongside high street favourites, and its blossoming Cultural Quarter.





When the original All Saints Church burned down in Northampton's 1675 great fire, King Charles II donated 1,000 tonnes of timber to its beautiful replacement (an act still celebrated annually).



Hazelrigg House



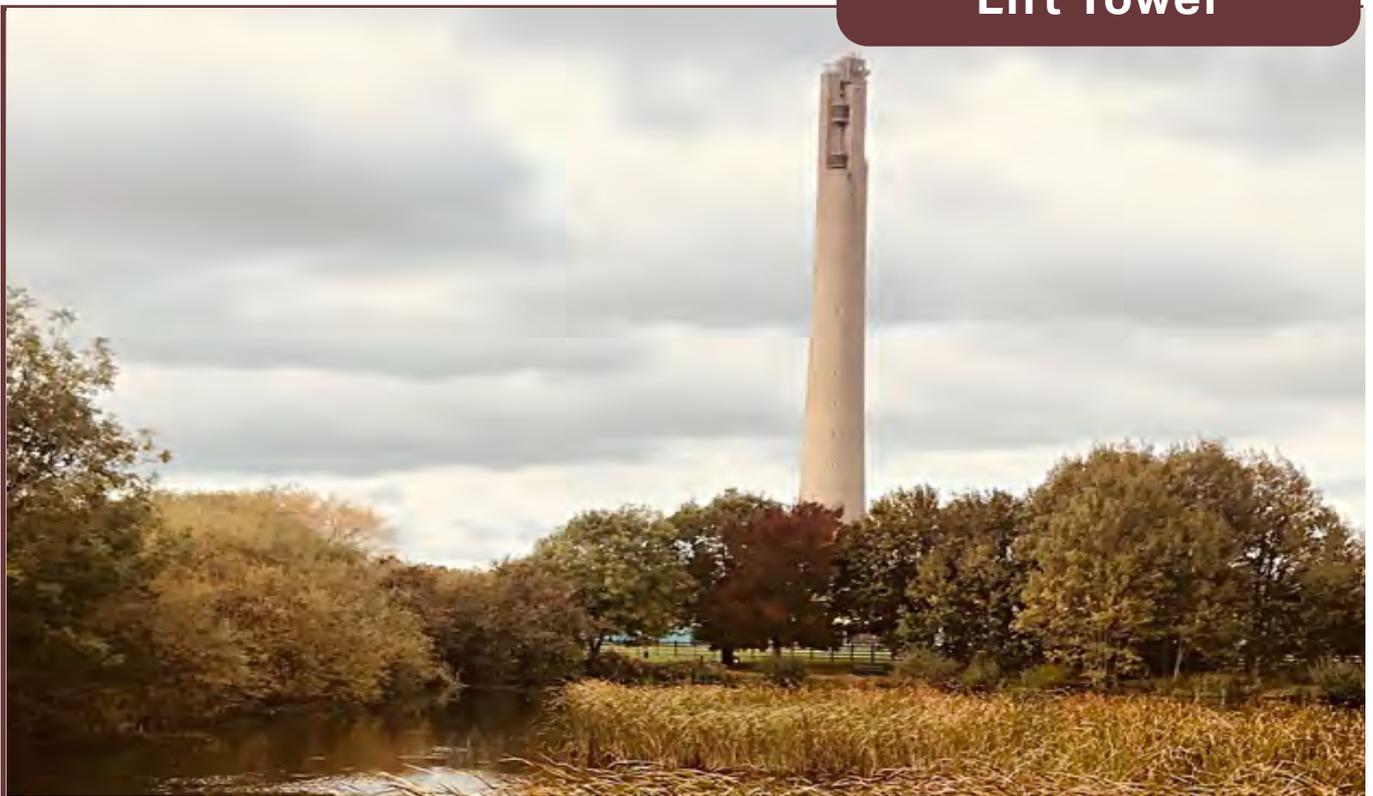
Hazelrigg House is one of the oldest surviving buildings in Northampton and now plays host to Looking Glass Theatre, and organisation providing community access to the arts.



Old Black Lion



Lift Tower

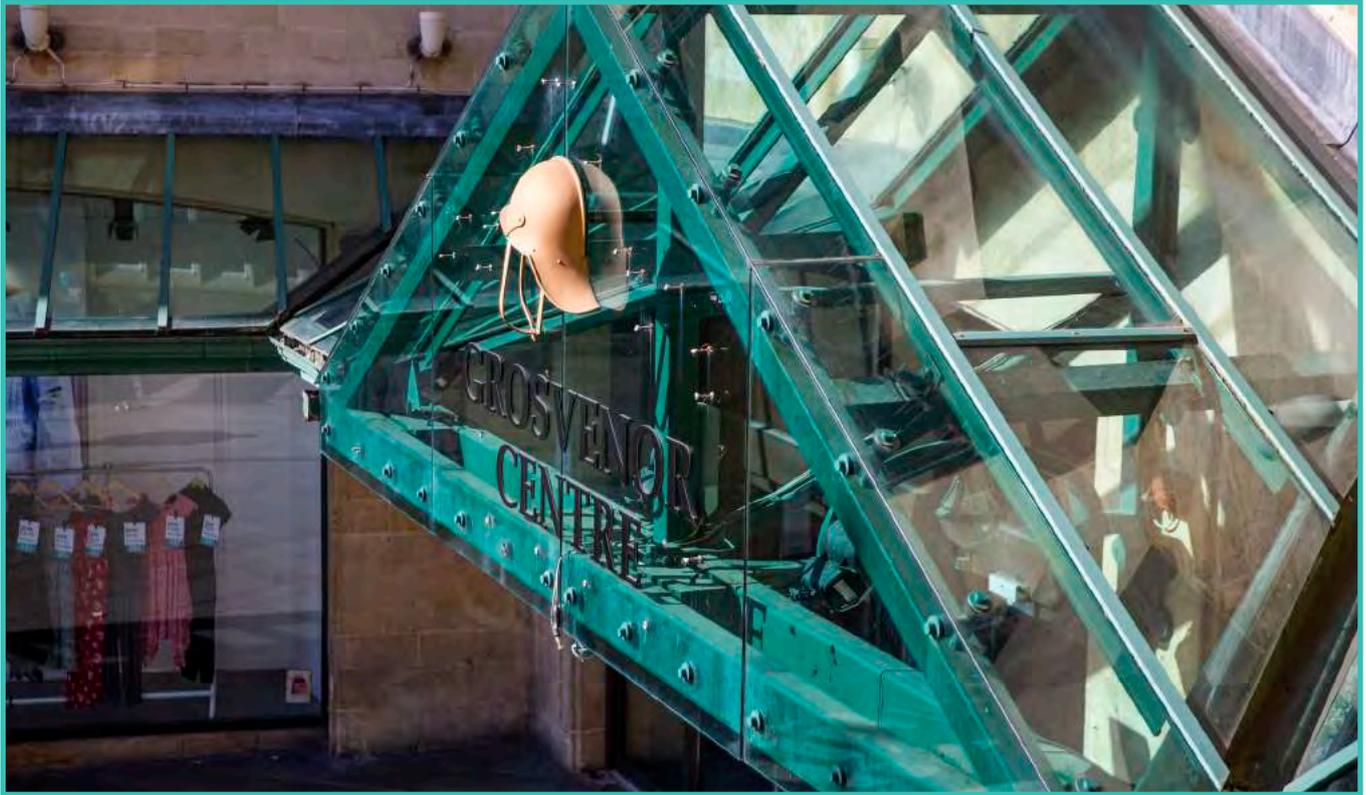


Market Square



Northampton has been able to hold markets since King Richard I granted it's charter in 1189, and Market Square remains the key civic space which is currently being prepared for an £8m revamp.





Northampton has been able to hold markets since King Richard I granted it's charter in 1189, and Market Square remains the key civic space which is currently being prepared for an £8m revamp.



Abington Street



One of Northampton's primary shopping streets, soon to be refurbished as part of ambitious plans.

Fish Street



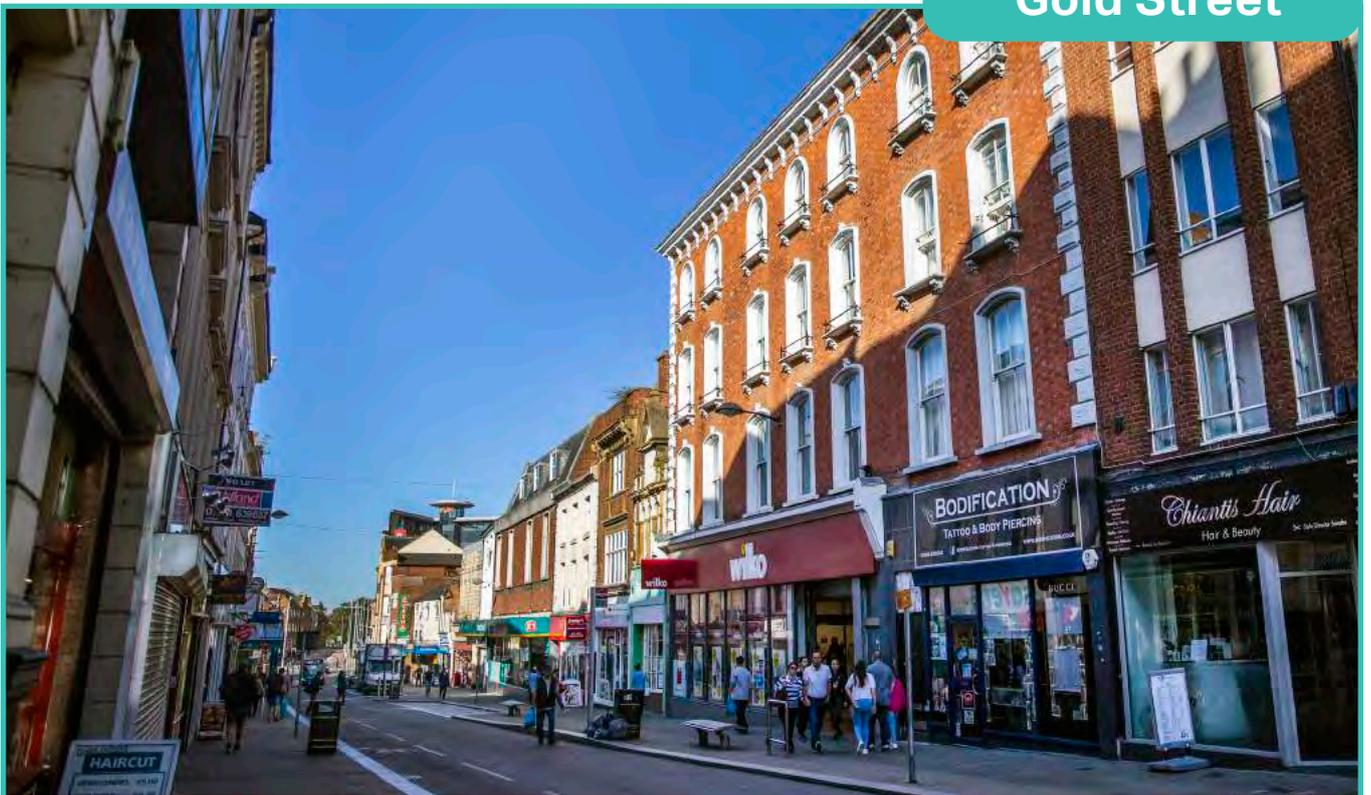
A wonderful little lane offering a taste of the continent at the heart of the UK.

Bridge Street



The primary destination for many seeking a night out on the town.

Gold Street



From home to Northampton's medieval Jewish community to popular shopping thoroughfare.

Sol Central



Strictly star Kristina Rihanoff and Northampton's England Rugby hero Ben Cohen MBE chose this flourishing leisure hub as home to their Soo Yoga venture.

Train Station



This new, modern railway station opened in 2015 on part of the former site of Northampton's castle.

Bus Station



Strictly start Kristina Rihanoff and Northampton's England Rugby hero Ben Cohen MBE chose this flourishing leisure hub as home to their Soo Yoga venture.

The Ridings Arcade

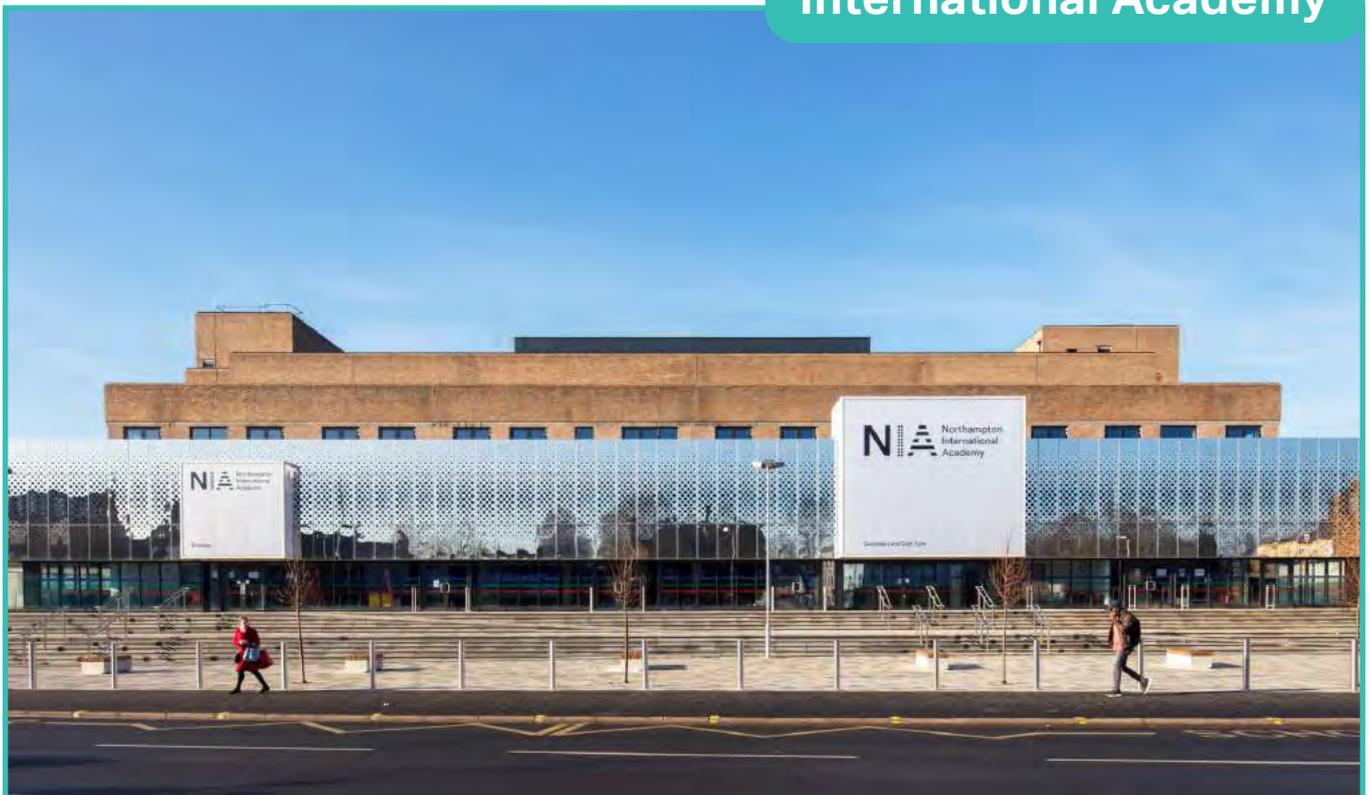




One Angel Square



International Academy



Abington Park



Abington Park is the grounds for the former Abington Manor, once home to Shakespeare's granddaughter Elizabeth Barnard and now a museum.

Becket's Park



Sixfields

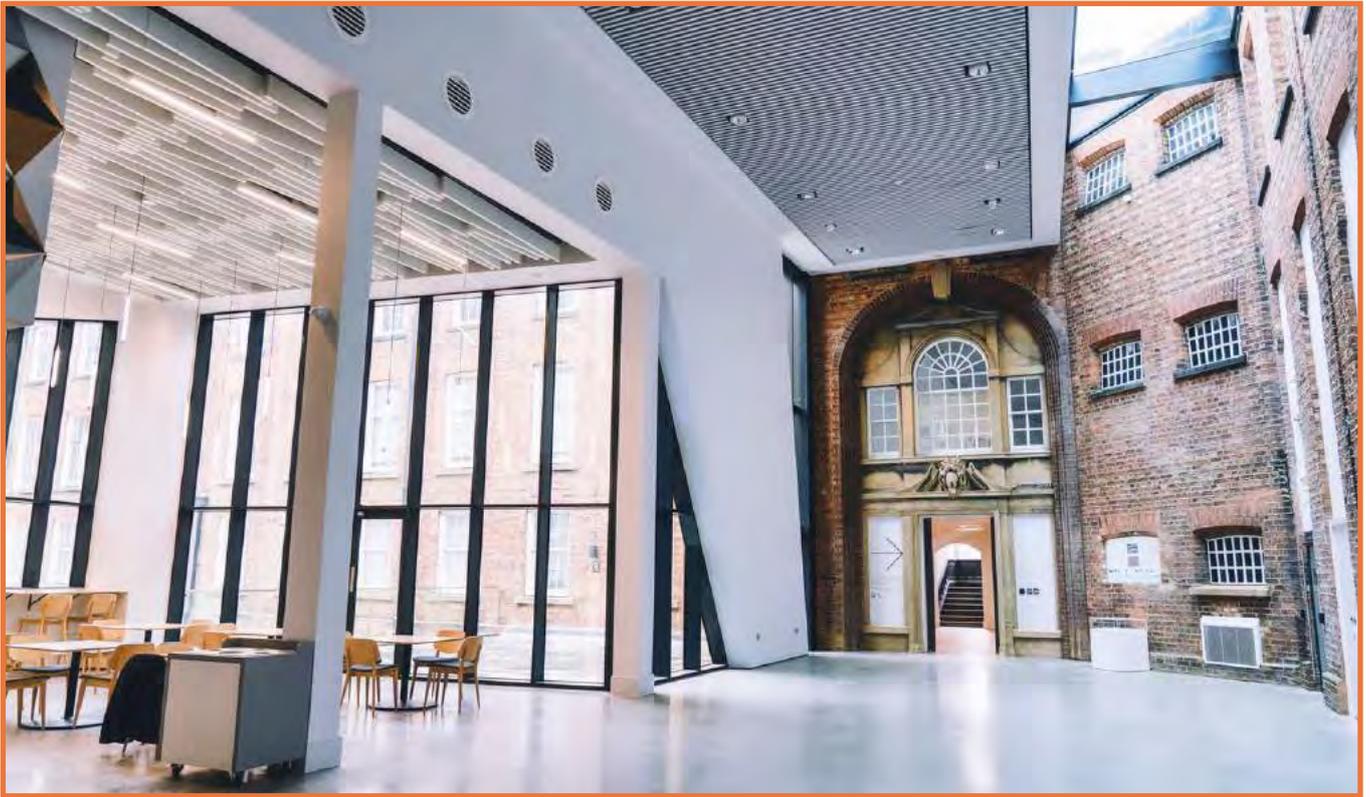


Sixfields is home to Northampton Town Football Club (known affectionately as the Cobblers) surrounded by an impressive dining, leisure and shopping.



Franklin's Gardens







St Michael 's Church

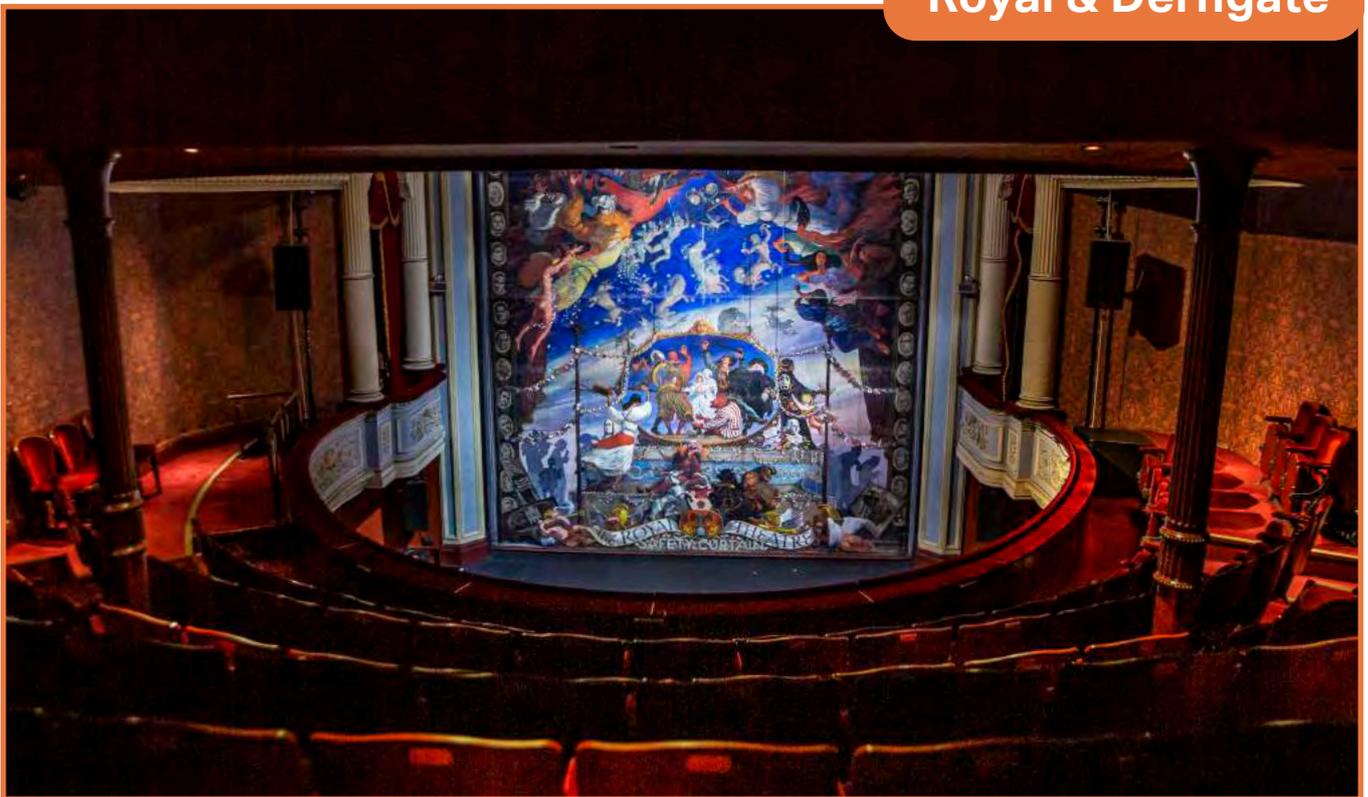
**Northampton War
Memorial**



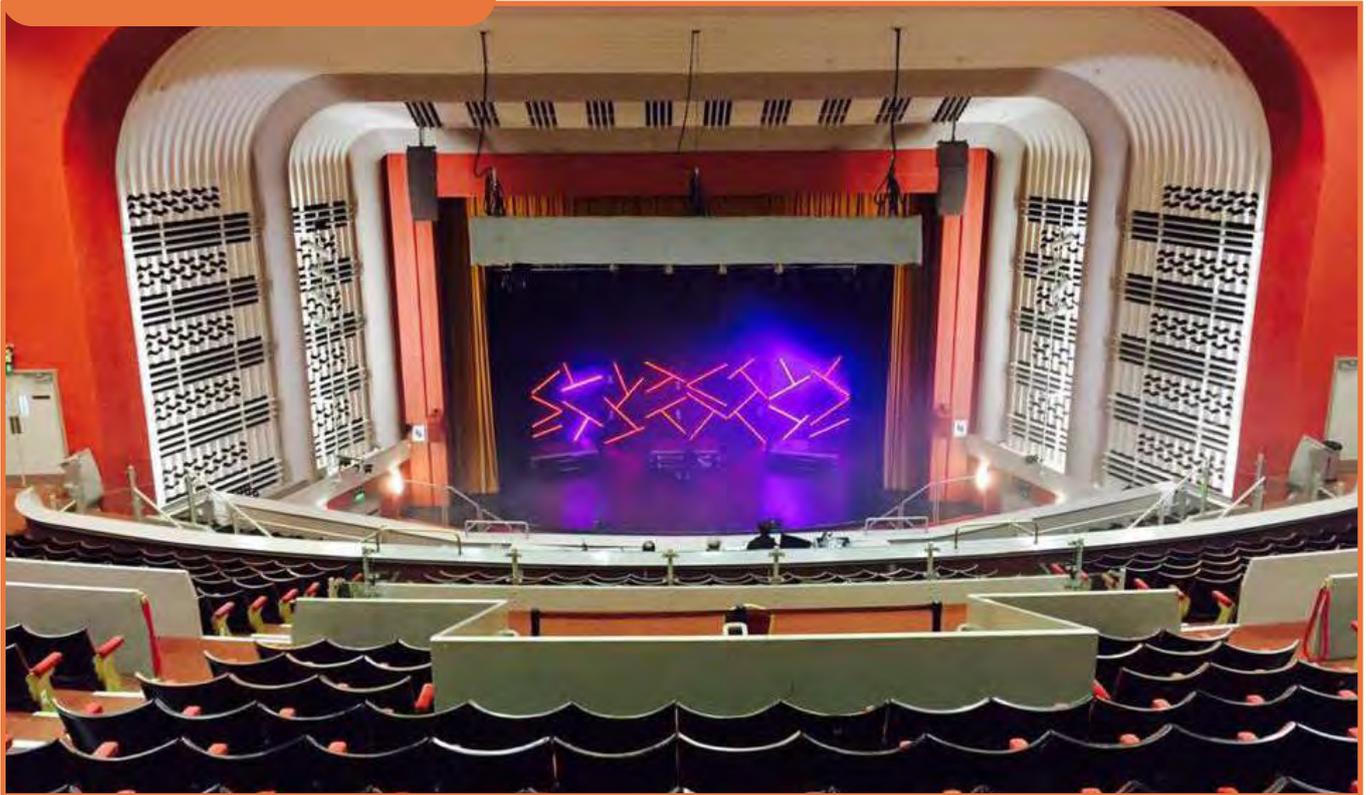
Derngate 78



Royal & Derngate



The Deco Theatre



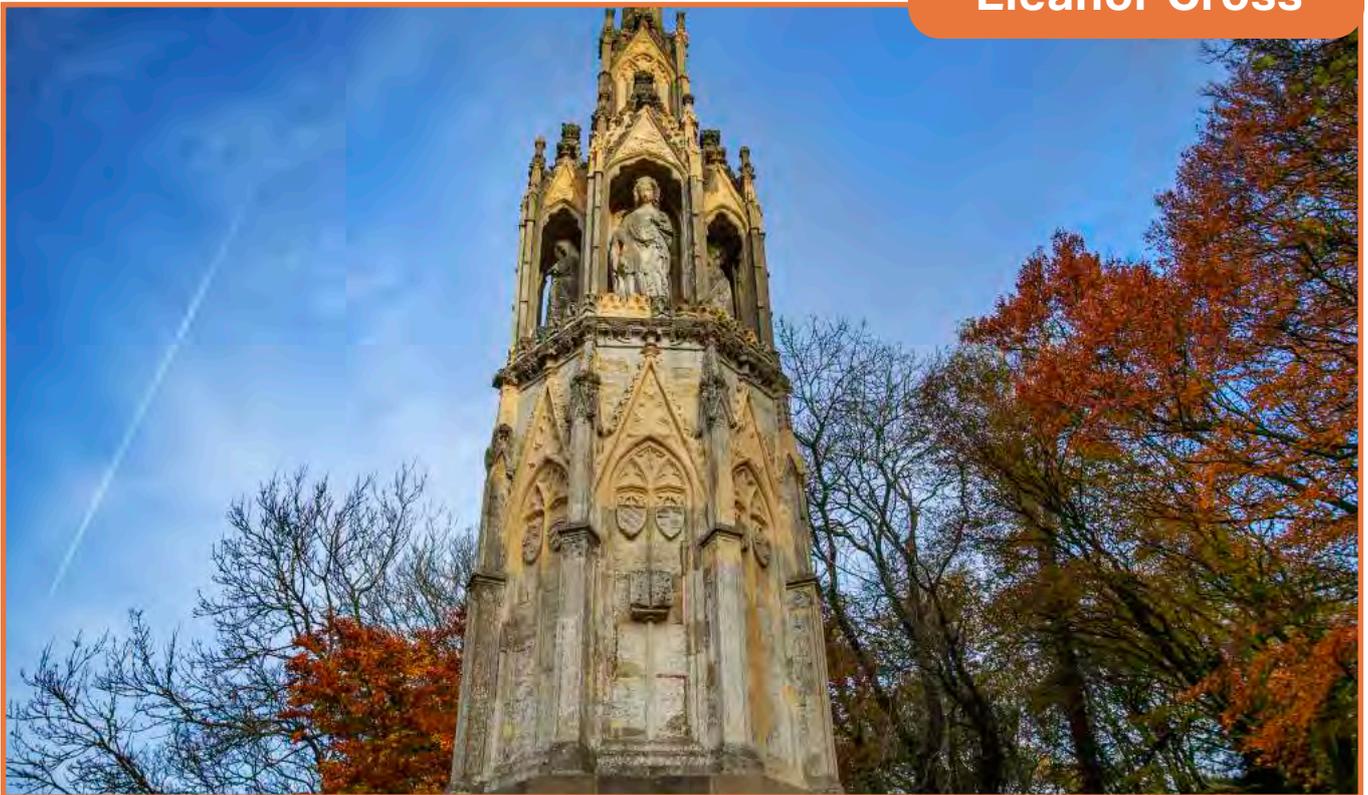
Abington Museum



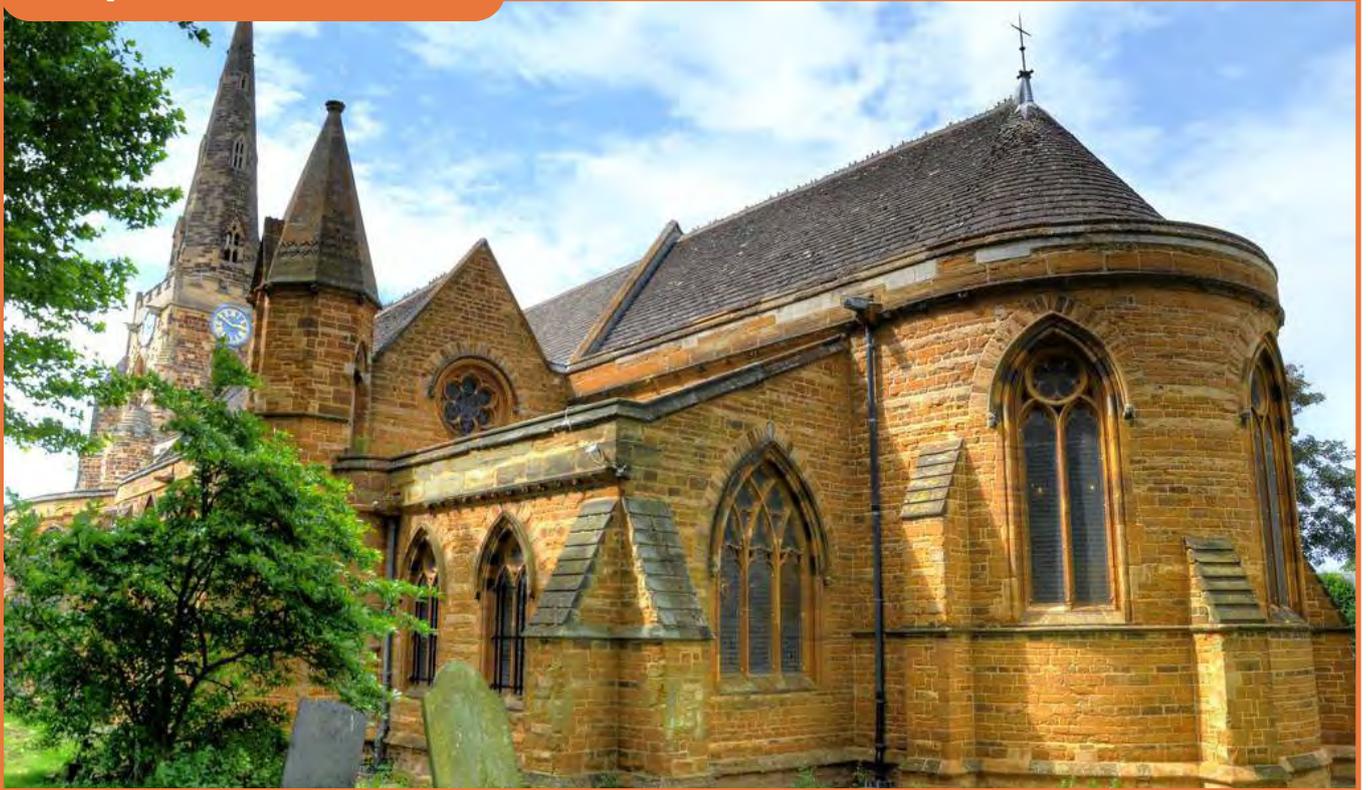
Delapre Abbey



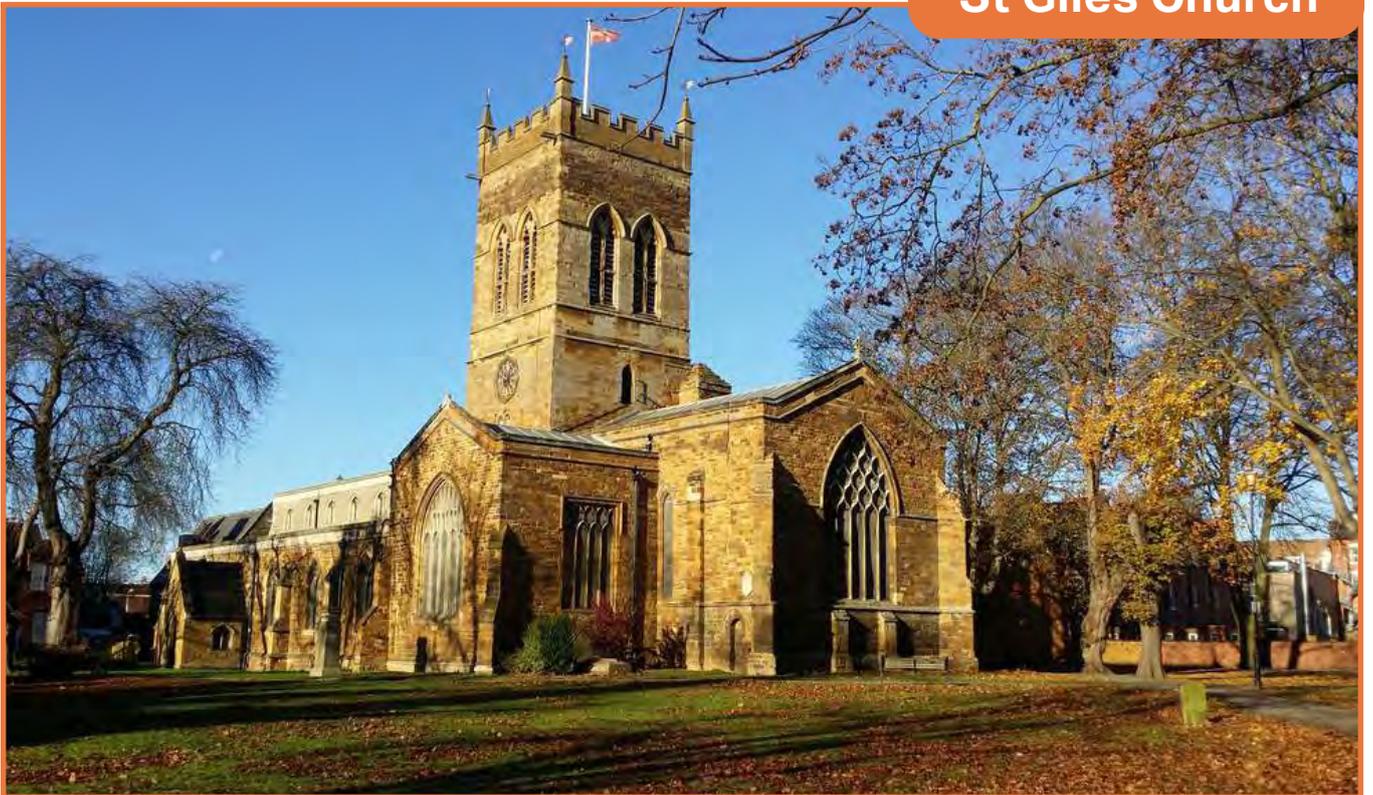
Eleanor Cross



Sepulchre Church



St Giles Church





WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

2 December 2021

Councillor Mike Hallam: Cabinet Member for HR & Corporate Services

Report Title	Personal Safety for Councillors
Report Author	Paul Hanson, Democratic Services Manager

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Geoff Wild, Deputy Monitoring Officer	09/11/2021
Chief Finance Officer	Martin Henry	09/11/2021
Other Director/SME	Sarah Reed	08/11/2021
Communications Lead/Head of Communications		Sent 08/11/2021

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Personal Safety Guide for Councillors

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report summarises the steps the Council has taken to ensure members are aware of their personal safety and are able to access appropriate advice and resources, as well as steps being taken by the Council to ensure the safety of members.

2. Executive Summary

- 1.2. The personal safety guide for West Northamptonshire Councillors, attached at Appendix A, was developed over the summer but has been included on this agenda to raise awareness amongst members following the murder of Sir David Amess MP on 15 October 2021.

- 1.3. The report also details other action being taken by the Council to ensure members can have confidence in arrangements to ensure their safety while not limiting opportunities for the electorate to engage with their elected representatives.

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the Council:

- a) notes the Personal Safety Guide for Councillors, attached at Appendix 1 of the report; and
- b) notes action being taken by the Council in a few areas related to the safety of members, as set out in Section 6 below.

4. Reason for Recommendations

4.1 The Council encourages all its members to familiarise themselves with the personal safety guidance made available by the Council and also to make use of resources available from other organisations. The Local Government Association (LGA) and the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) have also issued guidance documents, both of which are available on their respective websites as set out in Section 8 below.

5. Report Background

5.1 The murder of Sir David Amess MP during a constituency surgery has highlighted the issue of security for all UK politicians. Although such incidents are thankfully rare, the murder of Sir David Amess MP follows the murder of Jo Cox MP in 2016 and the attack on Nigel Jones MP, in which Gloucestershire County Councillor Andy Pennington was killed, in 2000. In light of these events, members may naturally feel concerned about their personal safety.

6. Issues and Choices

6.1 The Council's guidance on Personal Safety for Councillors, set out at Appendix 1, covers a range of topics, including:

- Holding ward surgeries safely;
- Dealing with people who are emotional or upset;
- Safety during home visits;
- Lone working;
- Malicious and nuisance telephone calls;
- Car safety and parking;
- Attendance at meetings; and
- Reporting incidents.

6.2 In addition to the guidance, information about personal safety was also included the Member Briefing circulated on 22nd October.

- 6.3 Members are also encouraged to take advantage of some of the training material available on the Council's i-Learn portal (which includes a module on personal safety) available here: <https://northwestnorthants.learningpool.com/totara/dashboard/index.php> (login required). Online courses are also available via organisations such as the LGIU and the Council encourages members to participate in learning opportunities such as these. Notification of such a course was circulated to all members on 21st October.
- 6.4 The Council has also responded to the LGA's request for views on several areas relevant to the safety of members, including the publication of address details for members. In light of this issue, the revised constitution (submitted for approval elsewhere on this agenda) includes revisions to the Code of Conduct in relation to sensitive interests, making it clear than in granting dispensations under this section (i.e., in relation to publishing home address details) the overriding concern should be the safety of members and their families.
- 6.5 In addition to this, officers carry out and maintain risk assessments for public meetings. A risk assessment pro forma has also been developed for members to complete and maintain for surgeries or other events for which they feel it would be beneficial. This is set out at the end of Appendix 1.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.2 Resources and Financial

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

7.3 Legal

7.3.1 There are no legal implications arising from the proposals.

7.4 Risk

7.4.1 As referred to above, the Council carries out risk assessments where it is appropriate to do so. There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

7.5 Consultation

7.5.1 No statutory or other consultation is required as a result of the recommendations in this report.

7.6 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.6.1 The report is for consideration by Full Council and so no scrutiny is required.

7.7 Climate Impact

7.7.1 There is no climate impact arising from the proposals.

7.8 Community Impact

7.8.1 There is no community impact arising from the proposals.

7.9 Communications

7.9.1 There is no communications impact arising from the proposals.

8 Background Papers

8.2 LGA 'Personal Safety': [Personal safety Local Government Association](#)

8.3 LGIU publication 'Personal Safety for Councillors': [Personal safety for councillors – LGIU](#)



West Northamptonshire Council

Personal Safety Guide for Councillors

Version	2021/2022	Version 2
Date last printed		
Date last saved	30/11/21	
File name	Personal Safety – A Guide for Councillors V2 draft	
Issue date	14 October 2021	
Review date	July 2023	

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A PERSONAL SAFETY – A GUIDE FOR COUNCILLORS

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An important role of Councillors is to keep in touch with their communities. This includes helping individuals with any problems they might have. Often this extends beyond just the delivery of council services. These contacts are usually rewarding and non-adversarial. Councillors are often in a position where they need to calm down angry and frustrated residents who often contact their elected representative when they feel that they have no other avenue to pursue. Often Councillors will deal with constituents on a face to face basis when alone.
- 1.2 Councillors should therefore always make an assessment of the level of risk and what arrangements are in place for their safety. This approach applies to other situations where personal safety is a factor, such as when holding ward surgeries.
- 1.3 The purpose of this guide is to set out what personal safety measures can be taken to prevent and to deal with those rare circumstances when they might find themselves in situations where they become anxious for their safety. Many Councillors will not experience any problems during their term(s) of office, but a little time given to the preparation and planning can reduce any risk further.

2. WARD SURGERIES

- 2.1 The arrangements each Councillor makes will vary according to local circumstances and it will be a fortunate Councillor who can find premises for their surgery which meet every aspect of good practice and are also accessible to their constituents.
- 2.2 The following suggestions will help to make a Ward Surgery safer and more effective.
- 2.3 Do not hold surgeries alone in an otherwise empty building. Try to get someone to act as receptionist. This not only makes you safer, but also makes it much easier to manage a busy surgery. If you are currently holding surgeries alone arrange to discuss how this can be overcome with fellow Councillors or Council Officers.
- 2.4 If you cannot avoid holding surgeries on your own, make sure you remember a few simple guidelines. The layout of the room should suit you, i.e. you should sit nearest to the door with the constituents seated on the other side of the table. Seating is best set out at an angle of 45 degrees (seating directly opposite can be confrontational).
- 2.5 Ideally there should be a separate and comfortable waiting area for constituents. If there is no separate waiting room, try to ensure that the

waiting constituents are as far as possible away from those whom you are talking to.

- 2.6 Make sure there are no heavy items in the room that could be used as weapons.
- 2.7 If you are at the stage of looking for suitable premises in which to hold a surgery, try to get a space with as many as possible of the following features:
 - Council premises (e.g. libraries) during opening hours or other premises where there are many other people about
 - Premises where the names of any visitors for Councillors are recorded
 - Premises where there is a comfortable waiting area
 - Try to ensure the surgery (interviewing) room has:
 - Easy access to a landline
 - A clear and agreed procedure for dealing with a call for assistance
 - An alarm linked to reception
 - Is in view of the reception or public area
 - A vision panel in the door
 - Has a swift means of escape and any visitors are not able to lock the door from the inside.

3. DEALING WITH EMOTIONAL CONSTITUENTS

- 3.1 It is inevitable that some of the people you will meet will be angry or upset. You need to be prepared to handle all types of emotion. For example, it is worth having some tissues on hand. Calmness in the face of whatever comes up will help you and your constituents.
- 3.2 You may find that racist or other offensive remarks are made. If they are directed at you do not respond, this will only make the situation worse. Instead, bring the interview to an end as quickly as possible. If there are more general remarks, you should state that this is not acceptable and that you cannot continue the interview. Often this will elicit an apology. Otherwise ask the person to leave. However, you must use your own judgement if you are alone and in a vulnerable situation. (Please note: any hate motivated crimes or incidents should be reported to the Police.)

4. HOME VISITS

- 4.1 Councillors do sometimes visit residents in their homes, especially those who are elderly, disabled or where they simply want to see for themselves the conditions that are the subject of complaints. Before arranging a lone home visit, Councillors should always consider alternative options:
 - Can contact be made by telephone or email?

- Can a meeting be arranged in a public place such as a Community Centre or a café?
 - Can the resident attend a Ward Surgery (if appropriate)?
 - Can a ward colleague, Police Community Support Officer or another person accompany you?
- 4.2 It is for each Councillor to decide whether a particular visit should be made, especially if the person to be visited is unknown to the Councillor. Most Councillors trust their own instincts as to whether to meet someone alone. However, if you have any doubts about the safety of the premises you are to visit and the purpose of the visit is not about the premises itself then arrange for the meeting to take place at a neutral venue.
- 4.3 If a home visit is undertaken, the following general personal safety issues should be considered and planned before the visit:
- Arrange the visit during normal working hours, if possible
 - If appropriate, contact the Council's 'cautionary contacts' database
 - Let somebody know who you are visiting, providing details of address, date and time of visit and expected duration.
 - Keep a record of your whereabouts. This might include making a call on your mobile during the home visit, telling the resident that there is such a record or that you are expected elsewhere at a specific time. It would be advisable to let colleagues or family members know when you expect to finish
- 4.4 During a home visit, the following specific personal safety issues should be followed:
- Consider calling the person before the meeting to confirm arrangements and establish their mood/state of mind
 - Use a code word on the telephone. This needs to be a word you have agreed with someone which will alert them that you think you might have a problem
 - Park your car so that it can be driven away easily
 - Park in a well-lit area near other vehicles, if possible
 - Stay alert when approaching the property, and look around the garden for obvious dangers, for example dogs or prowlers
 - After knocking, stand back and to the side of the door
 - If there is a need to look through the letter box, do not look in directly; try to observe from the side
 - Do not stand on the edge of the steps
 - Be aware of potential weapons
 - Ask for any dogs or other pets to be secured, where appropriate
 - Assess the situation and mood of the resident. Also note any other people in the property and their mood

- If in any doubt or you feel threatened, do not enter, make an excuse and leave
- Only sit down when the resident does
- Where possible, sit in an upright chair as this is easier to stand up from and use as a defensive barrier. If you have to sit in an armchair or settee, sit on the edge near the arm. This will enable you to stand up more easily
- Be aware of any alternative escape routes
- If the situation changes and you feel threatened, make an excuse and leave. Back out rather than turning your back on the resident

4.5 What to do if a serious situation occurs:

- Vacate the premises immediately and report the incident
- If racist or other offensive remarks are made, indicate firmly to the constituent that this is not acceptable. If it continues the Councillor should inform the constituent that it will not be possible to continue the home visit (please note: any hate motivated crimes or incidents should be reported to the Police.)

4.6 If a Councillor is unable to leave immediately when a serious situation occurs, the following steps should be taken, as appropriate:

- Place defensive barriers between yourself and the resident
- Continue talking to the resident as long as possible, reassuring them that you mean them no harm
- Use reasonable force to protect yourself, if absolutely necessary, but only as a means of last resort. Escape should always be the first option
- Set off your personal attack alarm, if you have one, or scream or shout to attract the attention of others

5. THE COUNCIL'S POTENTIALLY VIOLENT PERSONS REGISTER

5.1 The Council has a corporate database. Councillors can contact designated Officers to provide information about potentially violent persons prior to undertaking a home visit.

6. LONE WORKING

6.1 If you are working alone you might consider the following options:

- Leave details of where you are going and how long you will be with a friend, relative or colleague
- Check that you mobile 'phone is charged and switched on
- Carry a personal attack alarm
- Consider making regular check-in calls to a friend, relative or colleague or ask them to call you at regular intervals

- Team up with a Councillor from a neighbouring ward or from the corresponding ward to make visits
- If there are a number of risks associated with a particular visit you may wish to carry out a risk assessment and discuss or ask another Councillor or an Officer for their view on whether a visit should be undertaken

7. PERSONAL CALLERS TO COUNCILLORS' PRIVATE HOMES

7.1 Most Councillors seek to maintain a balance between their personal and public lives and do not want to encourage any callers at their private homes. Good publicity by the Authority as to how to contact Councillors and details of ward Surgeries reduces the chances of unwanted callers. Contact details for Councillors can be found on the Council's [website](#).

7.2 Making appointments or 'drop-in' arrangements for residents to see Councillors at their private homes does sometimes occur, usually when the person is well known to the Councillor concerned. The relevant steps as detailed in the section above regarding home visits should be followed.

8. MALICIOUS AND NUISANCE TELEPHONE CALLS

8.1 Councillors occasionally get the odd nuisance or abusive call. Although such calls are likely to be rare, you might become the target of a persistent, anonymous caller with a grudge against the Council. These calls need to be dealt with in accordance with Police advice:

- Keep the caller talking
- Note any clues the caller may provide as to sex, age, accent, etc;
- Listen for any clues as to the caller's motive and intention
- Write down the details immediately to assist the Police at a later stage
- Listen for background noise that may provide valuable information (e.g. railway sounds, industrial noises, machinery, music, animals)
- Inform the Police
- Inform the Council

9. MAIL

9.1 As with telephone calls, Councillors on rare occasions can become the target of malicious anonymous letters. Any such letters should be given immediately to the Police.

10. CAR SAFETY & PARKING

10.1 You need to take the same precautions as most car owners do:

- Have your keys in your hand or easily accessible

- Consider whether an area will be dark and isolated when you return to your car
- Park where possible, under street lighting and try not to park in dark, deserted streets or isolated car parks
- If you have to park in a multi storey car park, try to park on the ground floor away from stairs and lifts
- Don't stay around for longer than necessary and stay alert at all times
- Always lock the car doors when you get into the car and leaving it
- Take boxes/bags to the car when other people are around
- Always carry a torch with you
- Look around your vehicle as you approach in case someone is crouching down
- Look inside before entering your vehicle to ensure no one is hiding there (even if the doors were locked)
- Try to park on the left hand side of the road facing the way you want to drive off
- In a cul de sac do not park facing the dead end
- Try to park in a space where you will not be blocked in
- At service stations always lock the car when you go to pay
- Ensure your vehicle has sufficient fuel for the journey
- If you are followed in your vehicle, do not get out. Ensure that it is locked, flash your lights and sound the horn to attract attention

11. ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

- 11.1 Councillors have to attend evening meetings which often finish after dark. It is possible that depending on the nature and outcome of the meeting that members of the public may leave feeling angry or upset. In such instances, Councillors may wish to ask to be accompanied to their car or nearest bus stop by colleagues or officers who also attended the meeting. If waiting for a taxi, you should wait in well-lit areas, preferably inside the building or close to the main entrance. Before entering the taxi ensure it has the relevant licencing plate and they can confirm your booking.

12. REPORTING INCIDENTS

- 12.1 Depending on the severity of the incident, the Councillor involved should contact the Police. Even if an incident is not considered serious enough to involve the Police, it should always be reported, using the Accident/Work Related Ill Health Report Form. The completed form should be passed to the Chief Executive for any further action.
- 12.2 If you have been subject to, or witnessed a hate incident or crime, you have a duty to report it.
- 12.3 By taking appropriate action you may help to prevent a similar incident re-occurring.

13. TRAINING

- 13.1 Personal safety of Councillors is a responsibility of the Local Authority whilst they are on Council business. Therefore, Personal Safety Training for Councillors is a key component of the Councillor Induction Programme.
- 13.2 Personal Safety Training for Councillors will be delivered for all Councillors at the beginning of their four-year term in office. All Councillors will be required to attend this high profile, important training module.

Appendix 1: Personal Safety checklists

Running a Safe Surgery

Councillors may hold surgeries in a range of locations and there is no one-size-fits-all approach to security. Nevertheless, there are some practical points to consider, and these have been set out in the checklist below. Councillors are encouraged to review each surgery after it has finished and decide if any changes need to be made:

Issue to consider	Completed?
Do not hold surgeries alone. Wherever possible have someone else present during so that they can assist or call for help if necessary.	
Ensure a table or desk to is positioned between you and members of the public but the arrangement of furniture is not confrontational.	
Ensure your chair is nearest the door/exit and ensure that your pathway is not blocked if you need to leave in an emergency.	
Ensure that a partner/colleague/friend is aware of the location of proposed meetings and the expected time of return.	
Carry a mobile phone and ensure that someone is notified if there is a change of plan, you are delayed, or that you have returned safely.	
Ensure you have a good mobile phone signal in your chosen venue.	
If applicable, get to know any on-site security staff and liaise with and get to know local neighbourhood police.	
Remove any heavy items or items that could cause harm e.g. water glasses and jug or sharp objects.	
Have a plan for what you and your colleagues would do in an emergency and review it with them regularly.	
If appropriate leave the door ajar; or use a room with a door with a view panel; never lock yourself into a room with a stranger	
Check if there is a panic button or alarm linked to reception.	
If you are arranging to meet a member of the public you have concerns about, consider the option of arranging the meeting in a	

Council managed venue where there are arrangements in place for visitors and an individual can be screened on arrival.	
Consider the risks of advertising your whereabouts in advance e.g. on social media where your movements can be monitored anonymously.	
Ensure GPS tracking is disabled on social media apps that have public access that enable your movements to be tracked.	
Do not carry cash or valuables and do not openly display objects such as mobile phones, laptops etc.	
If there is a confrontation and members of the public are abusive or violent, contact the Police where appropriate, but ensure you report the incident to the Council. It is foreseeable that staff will also be required to deal with this person following your meeting and they may need to be informed that there is a grievance and potential for abuse/violence.	

Security at Home

Issue to consider	Completed?
Check security and robustness of external doors and the quality of fitted locks. Ensure windows are fitted with a good lock appropriate for the window type.	
Check for signs of a break in before entering and call the police if you think someone might have broken in or if you notice anything unusual such as an open door or window.	
Ensure you have adequate lighting around the perimeter of your home at night and consider using an automatic device or leaving lights on if it will be dark when you get home.	
If you use a car, be alert to any visual changes to your vehicle.	
If you notice anything suspicious, contact the police and do not enter the vehicle.	
If you choose to received a called to your home, try to follow the steps outlined under 'security during home visits'.	

Security During Home Visits

<u>Issue to consider</u>	<u>Completed?</u>
Do you need to make a home visit? Can you meet at a neutral venue, or can contact be made via other means, such as a telephone call or Zoom/Teams?	
Make sure a partner/colleague/friend is aware of the location of proposed visit and the expected time of return. Consider having a code word to use on the phone that you have agreed in advance.	
Have you parked your car so it can be driven away easily, without the need to reverse?	
Have you checked for obvious dangers or suspicious activity? Ask for dogs to be secured if you are wary of them.	
Have you assessed the situation and mood of the resident, as well as other individuals who may be in the property? If in doubt, do not enter. Make an excuse and leave.	
Make sure you only sit down when the resident does. Where possible, sit in an upright chair as this is easier to stand up from and use as a defensive barrier. If you have to sit in an armchair or settee, sit on the edge near the arm. This will enable you to stand up more easily.	
Be aware of any alternative escape routes.	



WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL COUNCIL

2 December 2021

Report Title	Constitution Review
Report Author	Geoff Wild, Deputy Monitoring Officer geoff.wild@westnorthants.gov.uk

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	23/11/2021
Section 151 Officer	Martin Henry	23/11/2021
Other Director	The Executive Leadership Team have been consulted on this report.	

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Terms of reference of the Constitution Review Task and Finish Group

Appendix B – Constitution review proposal

Appendix C – Draft revised Constitution

(please note that, due to the size of Appendix C, copies will not be printed unless requested from Democratic Services)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to:
- 1.1.1 Report on the work undertaken by the Democracy & Standards Committee to review the Constitution;
 - 1.1.2 Report the results of the consultation exercise held during the summer;
 - 1.1.3 Seek agreement to formally approve the draft revised Constitution.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report sets out details of the Constitution Review process conducted through a Task and Finish Group of the Democracy & Standards Committee ('the Committee').
- 2.2 At its meeting on 29 July 2021, the Committee:
- a) Established a Task & Finish Group to conduct a review of the Council's Constitution and make proposals to the Committee for onward recommendation to Cabinet and Full Council;
 - b) Approved a consultation programme for the Constitution review;
 - c) Agreed the anticipated timeframe for the review.
- 2.3 A consultation exercise with elected members, Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils (NCALC) and the general public was conducted during August. The responses to the consultation exercise, together with proposed amendments put forward by officers, were considered by the Task & Finish Group in two meetings during September. The outcome of those meetings was a revised Constitution showing (by way of tracked changes and marginal comments) the amendments proposed.
- 2.4 Following consideration and endorsement by the Committee at its meeting on 30 September, further consultation took place with the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) during October, before consideration by Cabinet at its meeting on 9 November.
- 2.5 A number of minor additional proposed amendments were received from officers during October and November, which are shown as tracked changes in the revised draft Constitution at Appendix C. Cabinet made no further proposals to amend the draft revised Constitution.
- 2.6 The final draft revised Constitution was submitted to the Committee at its meeting on 25 November 2021, before being submitted to Full Council for formal approval on 2 December 2021.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Council:
- a) Acknowledges the work of the Democracy & Standards Committee;
 - b) Formally approves the draft revised Constitution with immediate effect.

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The reasons for the recommendations are as follows:
- a) A review of the Constitution by the Democracy & Standards Committee was agreed by the Council on 20 May 2021 and Cabinet on 8 June 2021.
 - b) Conducting a review of the Constitution will help ensure that it is legally compliant, complete, reflects the character and culture of the authority and supports decision making.

- 5.1 West Northamptonshire Council was established on 1 April 2021 as a result of local government reorganisation that took place pursuant to the Northamptonshire Structural Changes Order 2020.
- 5.2 A West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority was established in the period leading up to 1 April 2021 to ensure the new unitary authority was ready to operate once established. One of the tasks undertaken by the Shadow Authority was the development of a Constitution for the new authority.
- 5.3 The Shadow Authority established a Member Task & Finish Group to progress the drafting of the Constitution. The draft Constitution was approved by the Shadow Executive on 21 February 2021 and the Shadow Authority gave final approval to the Constitution on 10 March 2021.
- 5.4 At the first West Northamptonshire Council meeting on 20 May 2021, several amendments to the Constitution were agreed. Council also resolved that: *“A further review of the Constitution be carried out by the Democracy and Standards Committee and referred to a future meeting of Council”*. On 8 June 2021 Cabinet made the same resolution and approved those amendments that related to executive matters.
- 5.5 At its meeting on 29 July 2021, the Democracy & Standards Committee:
- a) Established a Task and Finish Group to conduct a review of the Council’s Constitution and make recommendations to the Committee for onward submission to Cabinet and Full Council;
 - b) Appointed five members of the Committee to the Task and Finish Group:
 - i. Cllr Patel (Con)
 - ii. Cllr Irving-Swift (Con)
 - iii. Cllr Cole (Con)
 - iv. Cllr G Eales (Lab)
 - v. Cllr Harris (LibDem)
 - c) Agreed the terms of reference of the Task and Finish Group (Appendix A);
 - d) Endorsed the proposal set out in Appendix B and the review principles set out in paragraph 6.2, below;
 - e) Approved a consultation exercise be conducted with all elected members, the chief executive of NCALC, together with parish councils and members of the public (via the Council’s [consultation hub](#));
 - f) Agreed the anticipated timeframe for the review as set out at paragraph 5.16.
- 5.6 A draft consultation questionnaire was agreed by members of the Task & Finish Group and emailed to all Members on 2 August. The questionnaire was launched on the Council’s consultation hub on 3 August and remained open until midnight on 31 August. A tick box was included on the opening page for respondents to indicate their status (including one for Members to state that they were a councillor).
- 5.7 In addition, the online survey was sent to:
- a) West Northants Residents Panel (comprising 500+ individuals);

- b) West Northants Consultation Registrar (comprising individuals and organisations who have registered to be informed about West Northants consultations);
- c) WNC councillors and Town and Parish councillors;
- d) The chief executive of the Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils (NCALC), for distribution to its members and for his personal response.

- 5.8 Officers in the Communications Team also issued a news story for the press and social media to promote awareness of the consultation exercise.
- 5.9 The consultation questionnaire and survey responses were considered in detail by the Task & Finish Group at its meetings on 6 and 21 September. There were 98 online responses plus 95 other responses that were not submitted online, giving a total response to the survey of 193.
- 5.10 Respondents included 19 WNC councillors, 65 parish councillors, 3 representatives of the local business community, 2 representatives of a public sector partner, 15 representatives of a voluntary or community organisation, 7 council employees and NCALC.
- 5.11 A quantitative summary of the responses is shown in the table below. The qualitative (free text) responses, together with a comprehensive analysis of the comments received, were considered by the Task & Finish Group and reported to the Committee.

Question		Agree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	No response
1	Do you agree or disagree that the Constitution provides guidance on how the Council provides leadership to the community in partnership with citizens, businesses and other organisations?	46 (24%)	27 (14%)	34 (18%)	86 (44%)
2	Do you agree or disagree that the Constitution supports the active involvement of citizens in the process of council decision making?	36 (19%)	44 (23%)	26 (13%)	87 (45%)
3	Do you agree or disagree that the Constitution is easy to understand and is up to date?	26 (13%)	41 (21%)	39 (20%)	87 (45%)
4	Do you agree or disagree that the Constitution helps councillors to represent their constituents more effectively?	23 (12%)	40 (21%)	41 (21%)	89 (46%)
5	Do you think the Constitution enables decisions to be taken efficiently and effectively?	Always – 3 (2%) Usually – 53 (27%) Rarely – 24 (12%) Never – 7 (4%)			
6	Do you agree or disagree that the Constitution ensures that those responsible for decision-making are clearly identifiable to local citizens and that they explain the reasons for decisions?	32 (17%)	41 (21%)	30 (16%)	90 (46%)
7	Do you agree or disagree that the Constitution creates a powerful and effective means of holding decision makers to public account?	24 (12%)	44 (23%)	33 (17%)	92 (48%)
8	Do you agree or disagree that the Constitution ensures that proposals and decisions are effectively and fairly	20 (10%)	42 (22%)	36 (19%)	95 (49%)

	reviewed?				
9	Do you agree or disagree that the Constitution provides a means of improving the delivery of services to the community?	21 (11%)	38 (20%)	38 (20%)	96 (49%)

- 5.12 In addition, a table of responses and proposed amendments received from the Liberal Democrat Group was considered in detail by the Task & Finish Group.
- 5.13 Over the course of its two meetings, the Task & Finish Group went through the whole of the Constitution, discussed several specific areas in detail, considered the consultation responses, endorsed a number of proposals for change and made several recommendations for amendment to the Constitution. The revised draft Constitution is attached at Appendix C, showing by way of tracked changes the proposed revisions and in marginal comments the explanation of certain issues relating to the amendments.
- 5.14 Whilst many of the proposed amendments are administrative in nature or to comply with legal requirements, members' attention is specifically drawn to the following proposed amendments:
- a) Principles of Decision Making (page 7)
 - b) Opposition speeches, Member questions and motions on notice at Full Council meetings (pp.23, 31, 32)
 - c) Substitute members (p.42)
 - d) Planning Policy Committee draft terms of reference (page 74)
 - e) Public interest test for exempt agenda items (p.90)
 - f) Councillor Call for Action (p.106)
 - g) Sensitive interests (p.126)
 - h) Call-in of planning applications (p.157)
 - i) Protocol for Speaking at Planning Committee (p.161)
 - j) Recording and publishing officer decisions (p.181)
- 5.15 Following consultation with ELT and other officers in October, a number of further minor amendments were received in the following areas:
- a) Reference to museums (p.14)
 - b) Priority opposition motions (p.30)
 - c) Committee structure chart (p.45)
 - d) Licensing sub-committee terms of reference (pp.46, 48)
 - e) Local Pension Board quorum (p.63)
 - f) Safeguarding Adults Board (p.103)
 - g) Channel Panel (p.104)
 - h) Safeguarding Children Partnership (p.105)
 - i) Scheme of delegation to officers (pp.182, 190, 199)
 - j) Staff employment procedure rules (p.226)
 - k) Contract procedure rules (p.237 et seq)
- 5.16 The timetable for the review is set out below, which balances the need to ensure that the Constitution is up to date and fit for purpose as soon as possible against the need to carry out a

thorough and detailed review. The shaded sections have been completed.

July 2021	29 th – Democracy & Standards Committee establishes Task and Finish Group, approves Terms of Reference, endorses constitution review principles, and approves consultation programme.
August 2021	1 st -31 st - Consultation on revisions to the Constitution in accordance with consultation programme agreed by the Democracy and Standards Committee.
September 2021	6 th -21 st - Task and Finish Group reviews consultation responses and makes recommendations for amendments in conjunction with officers supporting the Task and Finish Group. 30 th - Democracy & Standards Committee reviews findings and confirms recommendations.
October 2021	ELT inputs and reviews consultation responses and proposed amendments to the Constitution.
November 2021	9 th – Cabinet reviews and comments on proposed amendments to the Constitution. 25 th – Democracy & Standards Committee considers responses from ELT and Cabinet, and agrees report recommending changes to Constitution for approval at full Council.
December 2021	2 nd – Full Council gives formal approval of changes to the Constitution.

5.17 At its meeting on 30 September 2021, the Committee:

- a) Noted the responses to the consultation programme;
- b) Acknowledged the work of the Task & Finish Group;
- c) Endorsed the proposed amendments to the Constitution;
- d) Recommended the revised Constitution to Cabinet for comment and further consideration.

5.18 At its meeting on 9 November 2021, Cabinet:

- a) Acknowledged the work of the Democracy & Standards Committee;
- b) Endorsed the proposed amendments to the Constitution;
- c) Recommended the revised Constitution to Full Council for approval.

5.19 At its meeting on 25 November, the Committee:

- a) Endorsed the additional proposed amendments to the Constitution;
- b) Made the following further proposals:
 - a. Extend the finish time of full council meetings by 15 minutes (so that the finish time will be 9.45pm, with the option to extend until 10pm);
 - b. Extend the time for portfolio holder questions by 15 minutes (from 45 to 60 minutes);
 - c. Clarify that the Priority Opposition Motion should be put to the vote after a right of reply;
 - d. Clarify that the maximum number of Motions on Notice should be five (excluding the Priority Opposition Motion);
 - e. Clarify that questions at council meetings are restricted to members of the public;
 - f. Clarify that call-in requests should specify which Overview & Scrutiny Committee should deal with the matter;

- g. Clarify that the requirement for members to rise should be only where they are able;
 - h. All references to “impracticable” be replaced with “not possible”, for clarity.
- c) Recommended the revised draft Constitution to Full Council for approval.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 It was necessary for the Constitution to be developed relatively quickly during the shadow period before the authority came into existence, with a view to putting a core instrument in place. A further detailed review of this fundamental governance document at this stage is beneficial for several reasons:
- a) It enables the Constitution to be improved to reflect the wishes of the Council during the first year of its operation;
 - b) It takes account of consultation responses from various stakeholders, e.g. senior officers, elected members, parish councils, third sector organisations, the business community and the general public;
 - c) It also presents an opportunity to ensure that the Constitution is compliant with current legal requirements, that the content is complete and the various components are cross-referenced and accessible.
- 6.2 When the Shadow Council was developing the Constitution, the Member Task & Finish Group agreed the following principles, which enabled Members and officers to work together collaboratively to frame a new Constitution:
- Transparency – makes it clear what our rules are
 - Accountability – explains clearly who makes which decisions
 - Efficiency – keeps the cost of decision making down
 - Accessibility – is accessible to all
 - Inclusivity – encourages public participation
 - Concise – describes what it needs to succinctly.

The Committee approved these same principles for application in this current Constitution review.

- 6.3 The alternative choices are to not conclude a Constitution review at all, or to conclude the review at a later date or in accordance with a different timetable. These options are not recommended as a need for a review has been identified and it is important to ensure the Constitution is fit for the new Council’s purposes and compliant with all current legal requirements as soon as possible.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1 There were staffing implications in terms of the officer time required to support the Constitution review process. However, these requirements were met within existing staff resources.
- 7.1.2 There are no financial implications arising directly as a result of the Constitution review process.

7.2 Legal

7.2.1 Every local authority is under a legal duty to prepare and keep up to date its Constitution (see Appendix B). In particular, section 9P of the Local Government Act 2000 requires the Constitution to contain:

- a) a copy of the authority's standing orders;
- b) a copy of the authority's code of conduct;
- c) such information as the Secretary of State may direct; and
- d) such other information (if any) as the authority considers appropriate.

7.2.2 Regular review of the Constitution helps to ensure these legal requirements are met.

7.3 Risk

7.3.1 There are no significant risks arising from this report. Conducting a Constitution review process helps to reduce any risks that could arise as a result of the Constitution not properly supporting decision making and delivery of Council services.

7.4 Consultation

7.4.1 The consultation implications arising from this report have been considered above.

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.5.1 Not applicable to this report.

7.6 Climate Impact

7.6.1 No climate or environmental impacts have been identified as arising from this report.

7.7 Community Impact

7.7.1 There are no direct community impacts arising from this report. However, any specific community impacts that arise from amendments to the Constitution have been considered by the Task and Finish Group at the time recommendations for amendments were made.

8. Background Papers

8.1 Reports to the Democracy & Standards Committee 29 July, 30 September and 25 November 2021.

8.2 Report to Cabinet 9 November 2021.

Democracy & Standards Committee

Constitution Review Task & Finish Group

TERMS OF REFERENCE

In accordance with the review principles approved by the Democracy & Standards Committee:

1. To identify, in conjunction with officers, areas of the Constitution that require review and consider proposed amendments.
2. To conduct a consultation exercise on changes to the Constitution with those stakeholders identified in the consultation programme agreed by the Democracy & Standards Committee.
3. To review consultation responses and consider any necessary amendments to the Constitution arising from them.
4. To report to the Democracy & Standards Committee recommending amendments to the Constitution for onward recommendation by the Committee to Cabinet and Council.

CONSTITUTION REVIEW PROPOSAL

Introduction

A council's Constitution should primarily be a locally driven document that reflects the character and culture of the organisation. It should facilitate council business, deliver consistent, efficient and effective decision-making and enable good governance. It should not create overly bureaucratic procedures but promote transparency, efficiency and democratic accountability.

Background

West Northamptonshire Council's Constitution was introduced at short notice during the shadow authority period, with a view to putting a core instrument in place. This was to be followed by a more detailed and thorough review once the new authority was up and running, to ensure the Constitution's legal compliance and completeness.

The Council's Constitution can be found using the following link:

<https://cms.westnorthants.gov.uk/media/79/download>

Legislation

Every local authority is under a duty to prepare and keep up to date its Constitution under [s.9P of the Local Government Act 2000](#).

The Constitution must contain:

- the standing orders/procedure rules
- the members' code of conduct
- such information as the Secretary of State may direct
- such other information (if any) as the authority considers appropriate

Constitutions must be available for inspection at all reasonable hours by members of the public and supplied to anyone who asks for a copy on payment of a reasonable fee.

Under [s.135 Local Government Act 1972](#), every local authority must make standing orders with respect to the making of contracts for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works.

Under sections [8](#) and [20](#) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Secretary of State may by regulations require local authorities to incorporate in standing orders relating to their staff, meetings and proceedings. Accordingly, the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) Regulations [1993](#), the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations [2001](#) and the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations [2014](#) and [2015](#), all require certain standing orders relating to staff and council proceedings to be included in the Constitution.

Furthermore, the Secretary of State issued guidance in the form of the [Local Government Act 2000 \(Constitutions\)\(England\) Direction](#) in December 2000, which required over 80 minimum requirements to be included within Constitutions. West Northamptonshire Council's compliance with these is outlined in the table below:

	Direction Requirement	Relevant part of current Constitution
1.	A summary and explanation of the purpose and content of the Constitution	Part 1.1
2.	A description of the composition of the council, the scheme of ordinary elections for members of the council and their terms of office	Part 1.1
3.	A description of the principal roles and functions of the members of the council under executive arrangements, including the rights and duties of those members	Part 1.1 Part 8.1
4.	The scheme of allowances for members of the authority drawn up in accordance with regulations made under s.18 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989	Part 8.6 Scheme of Allowances needs to be inserted.
5.	A description of the rights and responsibilities of inhabitants of the authority's area including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. their rights to vote in elections for the return of members of the authority ii. their rights to access to information about the authority's activities iii. their rights of access to meetings of the council, its committees and sub-committees and any joint committees established with any other authority and iv. their rights of access to meetings of the executive and committees of the executive 	Part 5.4
6.	A description of the roles of the authority itself under executive arrangements, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the functions which may be exercised only by full Council or which may to some extent be exercised only by full Council (including, in the case of a local authority operating executive arrangements, any plans and strategies which are subject to approval or adoption by full Council by virtue of reg.5 and Sch.4 para.1 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000) and ii. any rules governing the conduct and proceedings of meetings of full Council, whether specified in the authority's standing orders or otherwise 	Part 3 Part 5
7.	A description of the roles and functions of the chairman of the council	Part 1.13 Part 3.2 (para.6) Part 8 (Part D) Suggest amalgamate all references into one place.
8.	A description of the functions of the local authority executive which are exercisable by individual members of the executive stating, as respects each function, the name of the member by whom it is exercisable	Part 5 A table of Cabinet members and their portfolios needs to be inserted.

9.	A description of the functions of the local authority executive that are exercisable by the executive collectively or a committee of the executive stating, as respects each function, the membership of the body by who it is exercisable	Part 5 Description needs to be inserted.
10.	A description of those powers of the executive which for the time being are exercisable by an officer, stating the title of the officer by whom each of the powers so specified is exercisable, other than any power exercisable by the officer for a specified period not exceeding six months	Part 9.2 Need to distinguish between Executive and Non-Executive officer delegations. Need to allocate Local Choice Functions. Need to review and update List of Proper Officers.
11.	A description of the arrangements for the operation of overview and scrutiny committees, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the terms of reference and membership of those committees and any rules governing the exercise of their functions and ii. any rules governing the conduct and proceedings of meetings of those committees, whether specified in the authority's standing orders or otherwise 	Part 7 Terms of reference and membership of the three Overview & Scrutiny Committees need to be inserted.
12.	A description of the roles of the executive, committees of the executive and members of the executive including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the roles, functions, rights, responsibilities and duties of members of the executive ii. in the case of a leader and cabinet form of executive, any rules governing the election of the executive leader iii. any rules governing the appointment or dismissal of members of the executive iv. any provisions in the executive arrangements with respect to the quorum, proceedings and location of meetings of the executive v. any provisions in the executive arrangements with respect to the quorum, proceedings and location of meetings of any committees of the executive vi. any provisions in the executive arrangements with respect to the appointment of committees of the executive 	Part 5 Part 8 (Parts B and C)
13.	A description of the roles of any committees or sub-committees appointed by the authority in accordance with s.101 of the Local Government Act 1972, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the membership, terms of reference and functions of such committees or sub-committees and ii. any rules governing the conduct and proceedings of meetings of those committees or sub-committees, whether specified in the authority's standing orders or otherwise 	Part 4

14.	A description of those powers of the council which for the time being are exercisable by an officer, stating the title of the officer by whom each of the powers so specified is exercisable, other than any power exercisable by the officer for a specified period not exceeding six months	Part 9.2 Need to distinguish between Executive and Non-Executive officer delegations. Need to allocate Local Choice Functions. Need to review and update List of Proper Officers.
15.	A description of the roles of the local authority's Standards Committee and any parish council sub-committee of the Standards Committee appointed in accordance with ss.53 or 55 of the Act, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the membership, terms of reference and functions of that committee or sub-committee and ii. any rules governing the conduct and proceedings of meetings of that committee or sub-committee, whether specified in the authority's standing orders or otherwise 	Part 4.4
16.	A description of the roles of any area committees appointed by the authority to exercise functions in accordance with reg.16A of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 or, as the case may be, s.18 of the Act and the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2000, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the membership, terms of reference and functions of such committees and ii. any rules governing the conduct and proceedings of meetings of those committees, whether specified in the authority's standing orders or otherwise 	Part 6 Need to include membership of Shared Services Joint Committee, and Police, Crime and Fire Panel.
17.	A description of any joint arrangements made with any other local authorities under s.101(5) of the Local Government Act 1972, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the terms of those arrangements ii. the membership, terms of reference and functions of any joint committees established under those arrangements and iii. any rules governing the conduct and proceedings of meetings of those joint committees, whether specified in the authority's standing orders or otherwise 	Part 6 Need to include membership of Shared Services Joint Committee, and Police, Crime and Fire Panel.
18.	A description of any arrangements made with another local authority for the discharge of functions by that other local authority or the executive of that other local authority in accordance with s.101(1)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 or, as the case may be, Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2000	Part 6
19.	A description of the roles of officers of the local authority, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the management structure for officers of the authority 	Part 8.4 Part 9.5 and 9.7 Need to incorporate at Part 9.5 (para.3.5d) the

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. any arrangements made under s.101 of the Local Government Act 1972 or, as the case may be, ss.14, 15 or 16 of the Act for the discharge of functions by officers of the authority iii. the roles and functions of the head of paid service, monitoring officer and chief finance officer iv. the code of conduct for local government employees issued by the Secretary of State in accordance with s.82 of the Act v. any rules governing the recruitment, appointment, dismissal and disciplinary action of officers of the authority vi. any protocol established by the authority in respect of relationships between members and officers 	provisions of the Standing Orders Regulations into the Employment Procedure Rules.
20.	A description of the arrangements the authority has in place for access of the public, members of the authority and officers of the authority to meetings of the authority, committees and sub- committees, joint committees established with any other local authority, the executive and committees of the executive	Part 2 Part 5.4
21.	A description of the arrangements the authority has in place for access of the public, members of the authority and officers of the authority to information about the decisions made or to be made by or in respect of local authority's functions and activities	Part 2 Part 5.4
22.	A register stating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the name and address of every member of the local authority executive for the time being and the division (if any) which they represent and ii. the name of every member of each committee of the local authority's executive for the time being 	Need to insert a link to the councillors and committees section on the website.
23.	A description of the rules and procedures for the management of its financial, contractual and legal affairs, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. procedures for auditing the local authority; ii. the local authority's financial rules or regulations, whether specified in the authority's standing orders or otherwise; iii. rules, regulations and procedures in respect of contracts and procurement, including authentication of documents, whether specified in the authority's standing orders or otherwise and iv. rules and procedures in respect of legal proceedings brought by and against the local authority 	Part 9.2, 9.6 and 9.7
24.	A description of the register of interests of members and co-opted members of the authority required under s.81 of the Act, together with the procedures for publicising, maintaining and updating that register	Part 8.2 (Section 3) Need to add a description of the register and reference to the website where it is published.
25.	A description of the rules and procedures for review, revision, suspension and interpretation of the authority's Constitution and executive arrangements	Part 3 (para.50) Part 4 (para.4.4.2.a) Part 9.2 (para.12)

26.	The Code of Conduct for Members	Part 8.2
	Legislative Requirement	Relevant part of current Constitution
s.135 LGA 1972	Standing orders with respect to the making of contracts for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works	Part 9.6
SO Regs 1993	Standing orders dealing with the appointment of chief officers. Standing orders dealing with the recording of votes and signing of minutes.	Need to incorporate the provisions of the Standing Orders Regulations into the Employment Procedure Rules at Part 9.5. Part 3.2 (para.33) Need to add reference to not signing minutes at extraordinary meetings.
SO Regs 2001	Standing orders dealing with the appointment or dismissal of, or the taking of disciplinary action against, the Head of Paid Service, the Monitoring Officer and the Chief Finance Officer; the objection by the council to budgets, plans or strategies submitted by the Cabinet.	Need to incorporate the provisions of the Standing Orders Regulations into the Employment Procedure Rules at Part 9.5. Part 3.4 (para.2.1)
SO Regs 2014	Standing orders dealing with the recording of votes at budget meetings	Part 3.2 (para.31)
SO Regs 2015	Standing orders dealing with the appointment or dismissal of, or the taking of disciplinary action against, the Head of Paid Service, the Monitoring Officer and the Chief Finance Officer.	Need to incorporate the provisions of the Standing Orders Regulations into the Employment Procedure Rules at Part 9.5.

Procedure

The Democracy and Standards Committee has overall responsibility for reviewing the Constitution and recommending any proposed changes to Cabinet and Full Council for approval.

The Monitoring Officer has delegated authority to make consequential amendments to the Constitution to give effect to a lawful decision; as a direct consequence of a change made outside the council, e.g. a change in legislation; and to correct an error or resolve an inconsistency. All such changes are to be reported to Council.

Proposals

The Democracy and Standards Committee be asked to:

- approve an appropriate programme of consultation with members, officers and external stakeholders, e.g. public, media, businesses, parish council, etc, on what changes (if any) they would like to see made to the Constitution and how it might be improved
- consider recommendations from the Monitoring Officer on amendments to the Constitution to ensure it is lawful, fit for purpose and up-to-date

- put forward recommendations to full Council for approval

Ahead of this, it is recommended that the following issues be considered to ensure the new Constitution is legally compliant:

- Compliance with the Secretary of State's 2000 Direction (see above);
- Clarify what documents should comprise the Policy Framework – the plans listed in the Functions and Responsibilities Regulations have reduced over time, but some of these are still included, e.g. the Annual Library Plan. Do members and officers wish to take additional plans and strategies to Council as well as to the Executive, without such plans having to be approved by Council?
- Insert the Members' Allowances Scheme;
- Insert Councillor Call for Action procedures;
- Insert details of the Community Rights;
- Insert protocol for recording and publishing officer decisions;
- Ensure the Officer Scheme of Delegation is up to date, understandable and all encompassing. Does it distinguish sufficiently between executive and non- executive functions? Does it clarify sufficiently what decisions are reserved to members?
- Insert up to date and comprehensive table of Proper Officer functions;
- Clarify Employment Procedure Rules and insert more detailed description of roles and functions of statutory chief officers;
- Clarify who would exercise or allocate executive functions in the event that a Leader is not elected (and so no cabinet is appointed), i.e. should Executive functions be delegated to the Chief Executive in the absence of a Leader and Deputy?
- Clarify where responsibility and accountability lie for the council's involvement in companies, including reviewing whether officers and members act as company directors.

Appendix 3 – available online at:

<https://westnorthants.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=142&Mid=285>

Printed copy on request only.

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**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

CONSTITUTION

**Approved by the Council
2 December 2021**

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1.0 SUMMARY AND EXPLANATION

General

- 1.1 The West Northamptonshire Council has agreed this Constitution. The Constitution sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. Some of these processes are required by the law, while others are a matter for the Council to choose. The Council must operate in accordance with its Constitution and the rules set out in it.
- 1.2 The Constitution is divided into different parts which set out the basic rules governing the Council's business as well as some of the detailed rules. The Council has chosen to make decisions through a Leader and Cabinet and this is explained below.
- 1.3 The Council's current corporate objectives and priorities are set out in its Corporate Plan. This is available on the Council's website together with the Council's Values.
- 1.4 The Constitution ensures that the Council's decision-making and governance arrangements support the corporate aims, objectives and priorities effectively and efficiently. It also ensures that the Council meets its legal duties.

The Constitution and its content

- 1.5 The Constitution is divided into nine parts:

Part 1 - Summary and Explanation: Provides an explanation of what the Council is and how it works.

Part 2 – Public Participation: Explains how the public can get involved in Council decision making.

Part 3 – Council: Explains what the Council is and how the full body of all elected Members meet together to make decisions.

Part 4 – Committees: Sets out the role of each of the different committees of the Council and how they make decisions.

Part 5 – Executive: Explains the role of the Executive which in West Northamptonshire is called the Leader and Cabinet. The members of Cabinet have portfolios which mean they have special areas of responsibility, but meet together to make decisions.

Part 6 – Joint Arrangements: Sets out the joint arrangements that the Council has made to work in partnership with other councils and where decision making is shared by two or more councils. Sometimes this is because there is a shared service delivered on behalf of two or more councils.

Part 7 – Overview and Scrutiny: Explains the arrangements the Council has put in place to ensure that decisions are scrutinised by other members of the Council not directly involved in the decision making.

Part 8 – Councillors: Provides more details about how councillors operate as individuals and the measures in place to ensure that councillors maintain high standards of conduct. It also shows what payments are made to councillors.

Part 9 – Officers: Explains the role of the Council's staff, what the management structure of the Council is and which officers make decisions for the Council. It also explains the measures in place to ensure that officers making decisions maintain high standards of conduct and make decisions in line with expectations set by councillors.

How the Council operates

- 1.6 The Council is made up of 93 councillors (excluding vacancies) who are elected every four years. Councillors are democratically accountable to residents of their electoral ward. The overriding duty of councillors is to the whole community of West Northamptonshire, but they have a special duty to their constituents, including those who did not vote for them.
- 1.7 All councillors meet together and this is called full Council. Meetings of the Council are normally open to the public. At these meetings, the councillors decide the Council's overall policies and set the way that the budget will be spent and invested each year. The Council appoints the Executive Leader who in turn appoints councillors to the Cabinet.
- 1.8 The Council also decides on the delegation of certain functions to the Cabinet and some committees and joint committees. The Council holds the Cabinet to account through the Overview and Scrutiny function, which also provides an opportunity for pre-decision involvement in decisions and policy development for the wider membership.
- 1.9 In performing their various roles, councillors are supported by the officers who give advice and implement decisions. Some decisions are delegated to officers to ensure that the Council can act quickly and efficiently. Officers also ensure the Council acts within the law and uses resources efficiently and effectively.

Roles of councillors

- 1.10 Councillors will:
 - (a) collectively be the ultimate policy-makers and carry out several strategic and corporate management functions;
 - (b) contribute to the good governance of the Council and actively encourage community participation and citizen involvement in decision making;
 - (c) effectively represent the interests of the communities and individual constituents in their own ward;
 - (d) respond to constituents' enquiries and representations, fairly and impartially;
 - (e) participate in the governance and management of the Council;

- (f) maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics and observe the Code of Conduct for Elected and Co-opted Members and the other Codes and Protocols adopted by the Council and set out in Part 8 of this Constitution;
- (g) share responsibility with officers of the Council to act as effective and caring corporate parents for looked after children;
- (h) be available to represent the Council on other bodies; and attend meetings of bodies to which they are appointed.

1.11 Councillors are entitled to receive allowances in accordance with the Members' Allowances Scheme set out in Part 8.6 of this Constitution.

The Chair of the Council

1.12 The Chair is elected by the full Council at its Annual Meeting each year, which is usually held in May. The Council also elects a Vice Chair, who acts as Chair when the Chair is not available. The Chair (and the Vice Chair) undertake civil and ceremonial roles on behalf of the Council and represent the Council at events.

1.13 Although the Chair is an elected politician and is entitled to vote, they are expected to be impartial in the way they carry out the role.

1.14 The Chair presides over meetings of the full Council to ensure that business is carried out effectively and has responsibilities for upholding and interpreting this Constitution. Their ruling about this or as to any proceedings of the Council cannot be challenged at any meeting of the Council, although their interpretation must have regard to the purposes of this Constitution and must be reasonable. Neither the Chair nor the Vice Chair can be the Leader or a member of the Cabinet.

1.15 The Chair is responsible for, and must conduct themselves in accordance with the following:

- (a) upholding and promoting the purposes of this Constitution and interpreting it with appropriate advice when necessary;
- (b) presiding over meetings of the Full Council to ensure that business is carried out efficiently, effectively and fairly between the different political groups whilst preserving the rights of councillors and the interests of members of the public;
- (c) ensuring that at Council meetings, matters of concern to local communities can be debated through the appropriate councillors;
- (d) ensuring that councillors who are not on the Cabinet or who do not hold the Chairpersonship of a main Committee are able to hold those office holders to account;
- (e) promoting public involvement in the Council's affairs and acting as a contact between members of the public, organisations and the Council; and
- (f) undertaking such other roles as may be placed upon the office from time to time by the Council.

Council Business

1.16 At its Annual Meeting (usually in May) the Council will approve its planned calendar of business and schedule of meetings but nothing prevents changes being made to the calendar of business and schedule of meetings during the following 12 months.

1.17 There are four types of Full Council meeting:

- (a) Annual meetings – take place every year (generally in May) to appoint committees etc;
- (b) Ordinary meetings – there are a minimum of five Ordinary meetings per year;
- (c) Extraordinary meetings – meetings called for specific decisions;
- (d) Special purpose meetings - e.g. for the appointment of honorary aldermen and alderwomen.

Meetings are conducted in accordance with the Meeting Procedure Rules in Part 3.2 of this Constitution.

1.18 There are some decisions that can only be taken by the full Council. The Council sets the Budget and the Policy Framework for the Council. All decisions must be taken within the Budget and in accordance with the policy set out and only Council can change them. Details of these are in Part 3.

1.19 The Council is responsible for electing (and can remove) the Leader who in turn will appoint a Deputy Leader and a Cabinet. The Council (mainly through the Overview and Scrutiny process and call-in of decisions) is ultimately responsible for holding the Cabinet to account.

How decisions are made

1.20 The Cabinet is the part of the Council responsible for most day-to-day decisions. The Cabinet is made up of a Leader appointed by the full Council and between two and nine other councillors appointed by the Leader.

1.21 When Key Decisions (these are specific significant decisions defined in Part 5) are to be discussed or made, these are published in the Council's Forward Plan and a public notice is placed on the Council's website. If these decisions are to be discussed at a meeting of the Cabinet, this will generally be open for the public to attend except where Confidential or Exempt Information (defined in Part 5) is being discussed. The Cabinet generally has to make decisions that are in line with the Council's overall policies and budget. If it wishes to make a decision that is not consistent with existing policies and budget, this must usually be referred to full Council to decide.

Principles of Decision Making

1.22 All council decisions will be made in the best interests of the communities of West Northamptonshire and in accordance with the following principles:

- (a) take into account all relevant considerations and ignore those which are irrelevant
- (b) compliance with finance, contract and all other procedure rules, statutory requirements, guidance and codes of practice
- (c) compliance with the Budget and Policy Framework, including directorate and service budgets, business plans and any other policies, arrangements, procedures, rules, practices or protocols in force from time to time

- (d) due consultation and proper advice is taken and consideration of alternative options before decisions are reached
- (e) impartiality and an absence of bias, pre-determination or conflicts of interest
- (f) any interests are properly declared
- (g) reasons are given for decisions
- (h) decisions are properly recorded and published
- (i) decisions are proportionate to the desired outcome
- (j) assessing the impact on human rights, equality, diversity and sustainability
- (k) a presumption in favour of transparency and openness
- (l) clarity of aims and desired outcomes
- (m) records are kept of decisions taken and reasons are given for them
- (n) following best practice, securing best value and making the most efficient and effective use of resources

- 1.23 The core objective is to ensure that decisions are made at the most appropriate level closest to the local or immediate point of service delivery, or at the level that is closest to those who will be affected by the decision in question.
- 1.24 The Council has set out to achieve this by putting in place a system of delegation known as a ‘cascade of powers’. Under this system its operational powers have been delegated to the fullest extent and range possible through the hierarchy of the Cabinet, committees and the officer structure. Under this system, power follows responsibility so powers ultimately rest where they need to be so that the decisions that need to be taken to deliver the authority’s objectives can be taken at the most appropriate level.
- 1.25 Officers tend to take the majority of operational day-to-day decisions because they operate at the point closest to service delivery. For this reason, the Council has decided that unless a power or function is specifically reserved by law or in this Constitution to the Council, the Cabinet or a committee, it stands delegated to officers to the fullest extent necessary to enable them to do everything that their role requires of them from time to time.
- 1.26 Any ambiguity that may arise as to whether a decision-maker is authorised to take any particular decision is to be resolved by reference back up through the hierarchy of the ‘chain of cascade’, and legal advice should be sought if necessary. There should, however, be a presumption against referring (or calling) decisions back up the chain unless it is absolutely necessary to do so.
- 1.27 Individual decision-makers may nevertheless consider it would be prudent for a decision that would otherwise fall to be taken by them to instead be taken (or ratified) by:
- (a) in the case of an officer, by their manager or another officer with equivalent authority
 - (b) in the case of a decision-maker under a bespoke delegation, by the person or body who made that delegation
- 1.28 Individual decision-makers should also have particular regard as to whether a decision should be made in conjunction with any officer or member and the need to consult and take advice as appropriate.

Overview and Scrutiny function – Part 7

- 1.29 The Council operates an Overview and Scrutiny function that undertakes a number of roles including monitoring the decisions made by the Cabinet, advising the Council on forthcoming decisions, and the development of policy. The function can call-in a decision which has been made by the Cabinet but not yet implemented. This enables consideration as to whether the decision is appropriate and the function may recommend that the Cabinet reconsiders the decision. Further details of the call-in process are set out in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules in Part 7.2.
- 1.30 The Overview and Scrutiny function will develop a work programme and support policy development, providing scrutiny decisions are made where appropriate, holding decision-makers to account and calling-in executive decisions to review any concerns about the making of the decision. Further details are set out in Part 7. Overview and Scrutiny contributes to the work of the Cabinet and the Council as a whole by providing:
- (a) robust arrangements for holding the Cabinet to account;
 - (b) effective scrutiny of cross-cutting issues and other public sector bodies;
 - (c) clearly defined arrangements and responsibility for scrutiny of strategic and other issues; and
 - (d) multi-agency scrutiny of local issues within communities.

Community Forums and Boards – Part 4

- 1.31 The Council may decide to establish Community Forums and Boards. These may be established to respond to a specific issue or meet on a regular basis to bring forward issues in a local area to the attention of the Council. They can also be based around specific groups or issues across the whole local authority area. The informal nature of the forums allows participation from representatives of other local bodies such as parish councillors. Community Forums do not have formal decision-making powers but they are able to make representations to the appropriate Committee, Councillor or officer.

The Council's staff – Part 9

- 1.32 The Council has employed staff working in many different ways to deliver services. Staff are referred to in this Constitution as officers. They give advice, implement decisions and manage the day-to-day delivery of services, ensuring that they operate impartially and work with all elected members. The most senior of these is the Chief Executive who is also the Head of Paid Service. All officers are required to ensure that the Council operates within the law and uses its resources wisely. The Protocol which governs the relationships between officers and Members of the Council is in Part 8.4.

Public Participation – Part 2

- 1.33 Participation arrangements for members of the public, residents of the area, businesses, community organisations, visitors and the Council's customers are set

out in Part 2. Some of these are legal rights, whilst others depend on the Council's own processes.

- 1.34 Where members of the public use specific Council services, for example as a parent of a school pupil, they have additional rights. These are not covered in this Constitution.

2.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- 2.1 In West Northamptonshire, residents, community organisations, businesses and visitors are able to get involved in the management of the area. The Council encourages and actively supports people getting involved. Our governance is designed to make it easy for people to give us their views to help influence decision making and the actions the Council takes. To encourage involvement this section has gathered together the key ways in which the public and others outside the Council can get involved.

Councillors

- 2.2 The area of West Northamptonshire Council is divided into 31 administrative areas, called wards. Each ward has three elected councillors who are elected every four years. There is more information about elections and how to register to vote on the Council's website. Although they have responsibility for the whole of the Council area, councillors also have a particular responsibility to the residents of their ward. Details of who your local councillor is, and how to get in touch with them are available on the Council's website. A councillor may also hold scheduled sessions where residents can meet them face to face to talk about issues and to get advice and ask their councillor to raise matters with the Council on their behalf.

Cabinet

- 2.3 The Cabinet consists of the Leader and Cabinet Members who are responsible for particular services and activities. You can check who the Cabinet Member is for a particular matter on the Council's website. The Cabinet has developed a Forward Plan which is also published on the Council's website. It indicates the most important decisions (known as Key Decisions) which the Cabinet will be taking in the future and when this is likely to be done, so that anyone can attend the public meetings considering those decisions.

Overview and Scrutiny Committees

- 2.4 The Council has three Overview and Scrutiny committees which deal with separate parts of the Council's work. These committees help the Council to develop new policy and act as a "critical friend" to hold decision makers to account. Overview and Scrutiny committees also carry out investigations and reviews, and welcome suggestions from residents and businesses as to areas they could investigate.

Community Forums and Boards

- 2.5 Community Forums and Boards may take place on specific topics and/or in local areas. They are not formal meetings and this gives them a more relaxed way of working. A Forum or Board can be made up of residents (including sections of residents such as young people), community and voluntary groups, public sector bodies and local businesses.

Can I attend meetings?

- 2.6 Meetings of the Council, the Cabinet and the committees are open to the public. You can also usually watch them live through our website ([West Northamptonshire Council - YouTube](#)).
- 2.7 There are some occasions when we need to discuss confidential details. We can only do this when there are legal reasons such as personal information being discussed, which means meetings have to go into private session. When this happens, a formal decision is made to exclude the press and public from the meeting while these issues are discussed. As soon as the item has been dealt with, the public can return to the meeting unless there are other confidential items. If an agenda item is to be considered in private, this will be clearly marked on the agenda for the meeting.
- 2.8 The dates and times of our meetings are published on our website and agendas are made available at least five days ahead of the meeting, so you can see what items will be discussed.

Can I speak at meetings?

- 2.9 You can speak at Council, Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings. Statements must be relevant to a matter that is on the agenda for the particular meeting.
- 2.10 If you wish to make a statement, you must register to do so by 12 noon on the day of the meeting by contacting Democratic Services (democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk). You will normally be expected to attend the meeting to read out your statement. You will have a maximum of 3 minutes in which to make your statement, which will be taken into account during the subsequent debate on the matter.
- 2.11 Up to three speakers are permitted to speak on any agenda item although this may be extended at the Chair's discretion.
- 2.12 You can also put questions (up to a maximum of two) to the Chair of the Council, members of Cabinet and Chairs of committees. Questions are not generally read out because they are circulated prior to the meeting; but if they are, they must be no longer than 3 minutes.
- 2.13 You will need to submit the question in writing which must be received by 10.00am, three clear working days before the meeting of the Council at which it is to be asked. Questions need to be framed so as to elicit information rather than make a statement.
- 2.14 The total time allowed for questions is a maximum of 30 minutes, but there is a discretion of the Chair who, in exercising their discretion, will have regard to the business to be transacted at the meeting and the objective of ensuring that the meeting is managed efficiently.

Petitions

- 2.15 The Council welcomes petitions and recognises that petitions are one way that people express their concerns about issues affecting communities within the West Northamptonshire area.

- 2.16 Details of the Council's Petition Scheme can be found on the website ([Petition the council | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk)) or can be requested by post from Democratic Services, West Northamptonshire Council, One Angel Square, 4 Angel Street, Northampton, NN1 1ED.

Budget and Policy Development

- 2.17 The Council is particularly keen to encourage public participation in the preparation of the Council's budget and in the development of policies so that our residents are able to directly influence the framework of decisions. When setting the Budget or agreeing policy we will consider options to ensure the maximum opportunity for contribution before a decision is finally made by all the councillors sitting in full Council.

Public Consultation

- 2.18 We try to consult as widely and as fairly as possible. Sometimes, with matters such as planning and licensing applications, there are specific statutory consultation processes that the Council must follow. Other than this, we will try to consult on important decisions as widely as possible and give feedback about the outcome of the consultations.
- 2.19 We follow principles of good consultation (called Gunning Principles) when we consult. This means that we make sure:
- (a) consultation is carried out at a stage when the Council has not made up its mind on any proposals;
 - (b) we give enough information and reasons for any proposals to enable you to understand their impact and respond;
 - (c) we give you enough time to consider our proposals and respond to them; and
 - (d) we will consider all responses to the consultation when finalising the decision.

Wider Engagement

- 2.20 The Council is keen to engage more generally with the public and in particular with those who are seeking British Citizenship and young people about citizenship and the role of Local Government in the structure of British Democracy. To do this we may run specific engagement sessions or support schools and others in the conduct of their own elections. Details of any sessions will be available on the Council and Democracy Section of our Website or you can contact Democratic Services to request specific involvement.

Social Media

- 2.21 You can also get updates from West Northamptonshire Council on social media and by following the Council's social media.
- 2.22 Many local councillors have their own social media accounts too.

Community Rights

- 2.23 The Localism Act 2011 introduced rights and powers for individuals and communities to take over public services, community assets and influence planning and development.
- 2.24 The community rights are a set of powers that give local people a greater say over how their community develops. They give local people the chance to decide what is built and how their area should develop. Groups of people have the chance to deliver local services and develop them into community enterprises. More details can be found on the website or by contacting Democratic Services by email (democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk) or by post or in person (1 Angel Square, Angel St, Northampton NN1 1ED).
- 2.25 There are five Community Rights:
- (a) **Community Right to Bid** - allows communities and parish councils to nominate buildings or land for listing by the local authority as an 'asset of community value'. If the asset comes up for sale, the community can 'pause' the sale and take up to six months to find the funding required to buy the asset.
 - (b) **Community Right to Build** - gives communities the power to build new shops, housing or community facilities without going through the normal planning process. It gives local organisations the right to bring forward small-scale community-led developments.
 - (c) **Community Right to Challenge** - gives local groups the opportunity to express their interest in taking over a local service where they think they can do it differently and better.
 - (d) **Community Right to Reclaim Land** - allows communities to challenge councils and some other public bodies to release their unused and underused land so that it can be brought back into use.
 - (e) **Community Asset Transfer** - the transfer of management and/or ownership of appropriate land or buildings from a public body to a community-based organisation, at less than market value, in order to promote social, economic or environmental well-being.

Museums

- 2.26 The Council has powers to operate a museum service for public benefit according to the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 and the Local Government Act 1972. The museum holds collections of objects, artworks and archives for public benefit, which should not be distributed for private gain or profit. The museum is a permanent institution in the service of the public, which acquires, cares for, researches, and makes accessible the collections in its care for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment. It is operated by statutory regulation and judicial process and is part of the Arts Council England Museum Accreditation scheme, or where this is not possible, follows Museum Accreditation practice.

3.0 FULL COUNCIL

3.1 Role

3.1.1 The full Council (or the Council) is the term for the assembly of all of the elected members who sit on the Council. There are 93 members on the West Northamptonshire Council and they make some decisions together, including:

- (a) Setting the Council’s budget;
- (b) Agreeing the overarching policy of the Council – called the Policy Framework;
- (c) Electing the Executive Leader;
- (d) Appointing the Council’s non-executive committees.

3.2 Executive and Non-Executive Functions

3.2.1 Decisions taken by the Council are divided by law into two types: Executive and Non-Executive.

3.2.2 The law¹ specifies which functions are the responsibility of the Council, which are the responsibility of the Executive (Cabinet), and which may (but need not) be the responsibility of the Executive (Local Choice functions). All other functions not specified are the responsibility of the Executive.

3.2.3 The Council operates a Leader and Council form of Executive. References to ‘the Executive’ means the Leader and Cabinet, with Executive decisions being taken by the Leader, Cabinet, Cabinet committees, Cabinet Members or officers under delegated authority in accordance with, and in order to implement, the Budget and Policy Framework.

3.2.4 Non-Executive functions are either reserved to the Council or delegated by the Council to committees, sub-committees, officers or another local authority.

3.3 Local Choice Functions

3.3.1 The law² describes the decisions that are a matter of local choice. It is up to the Council to decide whether or not these functions should be the responsibility of the Executive. Having regard to government guidance, the Council has decided that Local Choice functions will be Executive or Non-Executive as set out in the table below:

LOCAL CHOICE FUNCTION	STATUS OF FUNCTION	DELEGATION TO OFFICERS	DELEGATION TO NON-EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES
1. Any function under a local Act other than a function specified	Executive	The relevant member of the Executive Leadership Team and where this is	-

¹ The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 and subsequent regulations giving effect to section 13 of the Local Government Act 2000

² Schedule 2 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000

LOCAL CHOICE FUNCTION	STATUS OF FUNCTION	DELEGATION TO OFFICERS	DELEGATION TO NON-EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES
or referred to in regulation 2 or Schedule 1.		not clear to be determined by the Chief Executive	
2. Other than those reserved to a Non-Executive committee, the determination of appeals against any decision made by or on behalf of the authority.	Executive	The Leader in consultation with the Director of Legal and Democratic Services	-
3. The appointment of review boards under regulations under section 34(4) (determination of claims and reviews) of the Social Security Act 1998	Non-Executive	-	Education Appeals Committee
4. The making of arrangements pursuant to section 67(1) of, and Schedule 18 to, the 1998 Act (reviews of exclusion of pupils). This is now s.51A of the Education Act 2002	Non-Executive	-	Education Appeals Committee
5. The making of arrangements pursuant to section 94(1) and (4) of, and Schedule 24 to, the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 Act (admission appeals)	Non-Executive	-	Education Appeals Committee
6. The making of arrangements pursuant to section 95(2) of, and Schedule 25 to, the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 Act (children to whom section 87 applies: appeals by governing bodies)	Non-Executive	-	Education Appeals Committee
7. Any function relating to contaminated land.	Executive	Executive Director Place and Economy	-
8. The discharge of any function relating to the control of pollution or the management of air quality	Executive	Executive Director Place and Economy	-
9. The service of an abatement notice in respect of a statutory nuisance	Executive	Executive Director Place and Economy	-
10. The passing of a resolution that Schedule 2 to the Noise and Statutory Nuisance Act 1993 should apply in the authority's area	Executive	Executive Director Place and Economy	-
11. The inspection of the authority's area to detect any statutory nuisance	Executive	Executive Director Place and Economy	-

LOCAL CHOICE FUNCTION	STATUS OF FUNCTION	DELEGATION TO OFFICERS	DELEGATION TO NON-EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES
12. The investigation of any complaint as to the existence of a statutory nuisance	Executive	Executive Director Place and Economy	-
13. The obtaining of information under section 330 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as to interests in land	Executive	Executive Director Place and Economy	-
14. The making of agreements for the execution of highways works	Executive	Executive Director Place and Economy	-
15. The obtaining of particulars of persons interested in land under section 16 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976	Executive	Executive Director Place and Economy	-
16. The appointment of any individual - (a) to any office other than an office in which they are employed by the authority (b) to any body other than (i) the authority; (ii) a joint committee of two or more authorities; or (c) to any committee or sub-committee of such a body	Executive/Non-Executive	The Chief Executive where the appointment relates to Non-Executive functions. The Leader where the appointment relates to Executive powers.	-
17. The making of agreements with other local authorities for the placing of staff at the disposal of those other authorities	Executive/Non-Executive	The Leader where the appointment relates to Executive powers. The Council where the appointment relates to Non-Executive functions.	-

3.4 Budget and Policy Framework

The Council is responsible for setting the Budget and Policy Framework. This sets out the broad financial envelope and the Policy Framework for the individual decisions made by the Executive.

1. Budget

1.1 The Budget is the identification and allocation of financial resources by the Council, including:

- (a) Revenue expenditure
- (b) Contingency and reserve funds
- (c) Council Tax
- (d) Borrowing requirements and limits
- (e) Capital expenditure
- (f) Medium Term Financial Plan

- (g) Any limitations to, conditions on or rules governing the management of budgets, virement between budgets, treatment of underspends, windfall income or reserves contained within the Finance and Contract Procedure Rules

2. Policy Framework

2.1 The Council has agreed that the following list of plans and strategies relevant to its functions will sit within the Policy Framework, some of which are required by law³ to be decided by Full Council, usually on the recommendation of Cabinet:

- (a) Children and Young People's Plan
- (b) Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy
- (c) Plans, documents and alterations that together comprise the Local Plan
- (d) Licensing Authority Policy Statement
- (e) Local Transport Plan
- (f) Youth Justice Plan
- (g) The Corporate Plan
- (h) Minerals and Waste Development Framework, comprising the following Local Development Documents:
 - (i) Minerals and Waste Core Strategy;
 - (ii) Locations for Minerals Development;
 - (iii) Locations for Waste Development;
 - (iv) Control and Management of (Minerals and Waste) Development;
 - (v) Development and Implementation Principles for Minerals and Waste Development (Supplementary Planning Document).

3.5 Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules

1. The framework for Executive decisions

1.1 The Council will be responsible for the adoption of its Budget and Policy Framework as set out in 3.4 above. Once the Budget and Policy Framework is in place, it will be the Cabinet's responsibility to take implementation decisions in accordance with it.

2. Process for developing the Policy Framework

2.1 The process by which the Budget and Policy Framework shall be developed is:

- (a) The Cabinet will publicise by including in the Forward Plan a timetable for making proposals to the Council for the adoption of any plan, strategy or budget that forms part of the Budget and Policy Framework, and its arrangements for consultation after publication of those initial proposals. The Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny committees will also be notified.

^{3 3} Regulation 4 and Schedule 3 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000

- (b) If the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee wishes to respond to the Cabinet through that consultation process, then it may do so. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee may investigate, research or report in detail with policy recommendations before the end of the consultation period. The Cabinet will take any response from an Overview and Scrutiny Committee into account in drawing up firm proposals for submission to the Council, and its report to Council will reflect the comments made by consultees and the Cabinet's response.
- (c) Once the Cabinet has approved firm proposals, the Monitoring Officer will refer them at the earliest opportunity to the Council for decision.
- (d) In reaching a decision, the Council may adopt the Cabinet's proposals. But if the Council has any objections to the Cabinet's proposals, then before it amends, approves or adopts any plan, strategy or budget, it must inform the Leader of those objections and require the Cabinet to reconsider. The Cabinet may, within such reasonable period as the Monitoring Officer may determine (but which shall not be less than 5 working days), submit revised proposals or inform the Council of the Cabinet's disagreement with the Council's objections and the reasons for this. Once that period has expired, the Council in amending, approving or adopting any plan, strategy or budget, must take into account any revised proposals and the views of the Cabinet.
- (e) In the case of budget proposals submitted to the Council after 8 February in any financial year and any budget proposals submitted following designation or nomination by the Secretary of State, then the Council may amend, approve or adopt the Cabinet's proposals and need not require the Cabinet to reconsider.
- (f) In approving the Budget and Policy Framework, the Council will also specify the extent of virement within the Budget and degree of in-year changes to the Policy Framework which may be undertaken by the Cabinet, in accordance with Rules 5 and 6 (virement and in-year adjustments). Any other changes to the Budget and Policy Framework are reserved to the Council.

3. Decisions outside the Budget and Policy Framework

- (a) Subject to the provisions of Rule 5 (virement) the Cabinet, committees of the Cabinet and any officers, or joint arrangements discharging Executive functions may only take decisions which are in line with the Policy Framework. If any of these bodies or persons wish to make a decision which is contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework, or contrary to, or not wholly in accordance with the Budget approved by full Council, then that decision may only be taken by the Council, subject to Rule 4 (urgent decisions outside the Budget and Policy Framework) below.
- (b) If the Cabinet, a committee of the Cabinet or any officers, or joint arrangements discharging Executive functions want to make such a decision, they shall take advice from the Monitoring Officer and/or the Chief Finance Officer as to whether the decision they want to make would be contrary to the Policy Framework, or contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the Budget. If the advice of either of those officers is that the decision would not be in line with the existing budget and/or Policy Framework, then the decision must be referred by that body or person to the Council for decision, unless the decision

is a matter of urgency - in which case the provisions in Rule 4 (urgent decisions outside the Budget and Policy Framework) shall apply.

4. Urgent decisions outside the Budget and Policy Framework

- (a) The Cabinet, a committee of the Cabinet, specified officers acting under urgency provisions, or joint arrangements discharging executive functions may take a decision which is contrary to the Council's Policy Framework or contrary to, or not wholly in accordance with, the Budget approved by full Council if the decision is a matter of urgency. However, the decision may only be taken:
 - (i) if it is not practical to convene a quorate meeting of the full Council; and
 - (ii) if the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee agrees that the decision is a matter of urgency.
- (b) The reasons why it is not practical to convene a quorate meeting of full Council and the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee's consent to the decision being taken as a matter of urgency must be noted on the record of the decision. In the absence of the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the consent of the Chair of the Council, shall be obtained - and in the absence of both, the consent of the Vice Chair of the Council shall be obtained.
- (c) Following the decision, the decision taker will provide a full report to the next available Council meeting explaining the decision, the reasons for it and why the decision was treated as a matter of urgency.

5. Virement

The scheme of virement is set out in the Financial Procedure Rules in Part 9.7 below.

6. In-year changes to Policy Framework

The responsibility for agreeing the Budget and Policy Framework lies with the Council, and decisions by the Cabinet, or officers, or joint arrangements discharging executive functions must be in line with it. No changes to any policy and strategy which make up the policy and budget framework may be made by those bodies or individuals except those changes:

- (a) necessary to ensure compliance with the law, or ministerial direction; or
- (b) in relation to the Policy Framework in respect of a policy which would normally be agreed annually by the Council following consultation, but where the existing policy document is silent on the matter under consideration.

7. Call-in of decisions outside the Budget and Policy Framework

- (a) Council can only consider call-in decisions or proposed decisions which relate to an executive decision which is contrary to the Policy Framework, or contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the Budget. Where councillors are of the opinion that this is the case they shall seek advice from the Monitoring Officer and/or the Chief Finance Officer.

- (b) In respect of functions which are the responsibility of the Cabinet, the Monitoring Officer's report and/or Chief Finance Officer's report shall be to the Cabinet with a copy to every member of the Council. Regardless of whether the decision is delegated or not, the Cabinet must meet to decide what action to take in respect of the Monitoring Officer's report and/or Chief Finance Officer's report and to prepare a report to Council in the event that the Monitoring Officer and/or the Chief Finance Officer conclude that the decision was a departure; and to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee if the Monitoring Officer and/or the Chief Finance Officer conclude that the decision was not a departure.
- (c) If the decision has yet to be made, or has been made but not yet implemented, and the advice from the Monitoring Officer and/or the Chief Finance Officer is that the decision is or would be contrary to the Policy Framework or contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the Budget, councillors may, in accordance with the call-in procedure set out in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, refer the matter to Council. In such cases, no further action will be taken in respect of the decision or its implementation until the Council has met and considered the matter. The Council shall meet within 10 working days of the request by members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee unless the Executive Leader, or in their absence the Deputy Leader, agrees that the Council need not necessarily meet within the specified period. At the meeting it will receive a report of the decision or proposals and the advice of the Monitoring Officer and/or the Chief Finance Officer.
- (d) The Council may either:
 - (i) endorse a decision or proposal of the executive decision taker as falling within the existing budget and Policy Framework. In this case no further action is required, save that the decision of the Council be minuted and circulated to all councillors in the normal way; or
 - (ii) amend the Council's financial regulations or policy concerned to encompass the decision or proposal of the body responsible for that executive function and agree to the decision with immediate effect. In this case, no further action is required save that the decision of the Council be minuted and circulated to all councillors in the normal way; or
 - (iii) where the Council accepts that the decision or proposal is contrary to the Policy Framework or contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the Budget, and does not amend the existing framework to accommodate it, require the Cabinet to reconsider the matter in accordance with the advice of either the Monitoring Officer and/or the Chief Finance Officer.

3.6 Council Meeting Procedure Rules

1. Full Council meetings

Time and place of meetings

- 1.1 All Full Council meetings shall start at 6.00pm or, where it is impracticable to hold the meeting at the usual time, such other time as the Chair or the Monitoring Officer shall direct. The place of the meeting will be notified on the agenda for the meeting.

2. Annual Meeting of the Council

Timing

- 2.1 In a year when there is an Ordinary Election of Members, the Annual Meeting shall take place within 21 days from the retirement of the outgoing Members. In any other year, the Annual Meeting shall take place on such a day in the month of May or June as the Council may fix.

Business

- 2.2 At the Annual Meeting the Council will:

- (a) Elect the Chair of the Council who will then preside;
- (b) Appoint the Vice Chair of Council;
- (c) Approve the minutes of the last meeting;
- (d) Receive any declarations of interest from councillors;
- (e) Receive any apologies for absence from councillors;
- (f) Receive any announcements from the Chair;
- (g) Elect the Executive Leader in any year in which the Leader's term of office expires (for a four-year term), or if the office of Leader becomes vacant (for the remainder of the four-year term of councillors). The term of office of the Leader shall, subject to earlier removal, end on the day of the Annual Meeting following the ordinary election of councillors;
- (h) Note the appointments to the role of Deputy Leader and to the Cabinet;
- (i) Receive any announcements from the Leader;
- (j) Appoint at least one Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a Standards Committee, an Audit Committee and such other committees as required;
- (k) Approve a programme of ordinary meetings of the Council for the year;
- (l) Approve the allocation of seats to political groups in accordance with the political balance rules;
- (m) Delegate to the Monitoring Officer the power to appoint councillors to committees and sub-committees in accordance with the wishes of the Group Leaders except where appointments to those bodies is exercisable only by the Cabinet.

3. Ordinary Meetings of the Council

- 3.1 Ordinary meetings of the Council shall take place in accordance with a programme decided at the Council's Annual Meeting. Ordinary meetings will:

- (a) Elect a person to preside if both the Chair and the Vice Chair of the Council are not present;
- (b) Approve the minutes of the last meeting;
- (c) Receive any declarations of interest from Members;
- (d) Receive any announcements from the Chair and Leader;
- (e) Provide for 30 minutes in total to respond to any questions relating to West Northamptonshire Council from members of the public who are residents of, or working in West Northamptonshire;
- (f) Provide 15 minutes in total to receive a Priority Opposition Motion to be notified by the Leader of the largest political group not forming part of the Administration.
- (g) Provide 45 minutes in total to receive written reports from Portfolio Holders and provide responses to questions from Members;
- (h) Deal with any business adjourned from the last Council meeting;
- (i) Receive a report from the Audit Committee, ordinarily in June and other than in a year of ordinary elections, detailing their activities during the past year and proposed work programme for the following year for approval by the Council;
- (j) Consider motions; and
- (k) Consider any other business specified in the summons to the meeting, including consideration of proposals from the Cabinet in relation to the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

4. Extraordinary Meetings

Calling Extraordinary Meetings

- 4.1 The Monitoring Officer may call, and those listed below may require the Monitoring Officer to call, extraordinary Council meetings in addition to ordinary meetings:
- (a) The Council by resolution;
 - (b) The Chair of the Council;
 - (c) Any five councillors with a signed request to the Chair of the Council; or
 - (d) The Executive Leader.

Items of Business at Extraordinary Meetings

- 4.2 Only business specified in the summons may be transacted at an extraordinary meeting of the Council.

Motion to remove the Leader

- 4.3 A motion to remove the Leader from office may only be:
- (a) Made at an extraordinary meeting convened specifically for that purpose not less than 21 days from the submission of the motion;
 - (b) Submitted in the form of a requisition signed by a majority of the Leading Group where that group holds a majority of seats on the Council.
- 4.4 Where there is no majority on the Council, the requisition must be signed by not less than one third of the members of the Council with members from at least two political groups; and

- 4.5 Where the Council passes a resolution to remove the Leader, a new Leader is to be elected at the meeting at which the Leader is removed from office.

5. Budget meetings of the Council

- 5.1 Budget meetings shall:

- (a) Appoint a person to preside if the Chair and Vice Chair are not present;
- (b) Approve the minutes of the last meeting;
- (c) Receive any declarations of interest from councillors;
- (d) Receive announcements from the Chair;
- (e) Receive any statements from members of the public who are residents of, or working in, West Northamptonshire relating to an item of business on the public part of the agenda of that meeting;
- (f) Receive and consider the Council plan, budget and associated reports; and
- (g) Any other urgent business as agreed by the Chair.

6. Chair and Vice Chair of the Council

- 6.1 The Chair of the Council, or in their absence the Vice Chair (who will have the same powers and duties as the Chair), will preside at meetings of the Council. Where both the Chair and Vice Chair are absent, the Council will appoint another councillor, other than a member of the Cabinet, to chair the meeting, who will have the same powers and duties as the Chair.

Out of Order

- 6.2 The Chair may at any time rule out of order and reject any motion, amendment, statement, question, representation, answer or written statement which, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer:
- (a) Does not relate to a matter for which the Council has responsibility;
 - (b) Is defamatory, frivolous, offensive, vexatious, unlawful or otherwise improper or irrelevant;
 - (c) Requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information;
 - (d) Names or identifies individual service users, members of staff or members of staff of partner agencies; or
 - (e) Is otherwise contrary to the law or would place the Council at risk of litigation.

7. Quorum

- 7.1 The quorum of meetings of the Council will be one quarter (rounded up) of the total membership. During any meeting, if the Chair counts the number of councillors present and declares there is not a quorum present, then the meeting will adjourn immediately. Remaining business will be considered at a time and date fixed by the Chair. If the Chair does not fix a date, the remaining business will be considered at the next ordinary meeting.

8. What the Council can decide

8.1 The Council can decide Non-Executive matters and those matters reserved to full Council. The Council has no power to decide Executive matters. The Council sets the Budget and Policy Framework within which Executive decisions are made.

9. Order of business

9.1 Business shall be dealt with in the order in which it is set out in the agenda unless the person presiding at the meeting of the Council decides otherwise.

10. Extension of the meeting

10.1 If the business of a Council meeting has not been concluded by 9.30pm, the Chair will draw the attention of the meeting to the time and to this Rule.

10.2 In the case of any motions or recommendations on the agenda that have not been dealt with by 9.30 pm the Chair will decide whether to end the meeting or to deal with the outstanding matters provided that those matters can reasonably be dealt with by 9.45pm.

10.3 Where the outstanding matters cannot be dealt with by that time, each item will be put to the vote without further debate and an unrecorded vote will be taken on whether the item should be accepted, referred, deferred or withdrawn.

10.4 Any proposal to refer, defer or withdraw an item that has not yet been dealt with must be moved and seconded before any vote is taken in accordance with paragraph 10.3 above. If such a proposal is made, it shall be voted on without debate.

11. Urgent business

11.1 Business cannot be normally dealt with at a Council meeting unless it is included in the Summons. The Chair may allow business which is not specified in the Summons to be dealt with if it is required by law to be dealt with by a certain date or is brought before the Council as a matter of urgency.

12. Confirmation of minutes

12.1 Minutes of the last Council meeting shall be confirmed at the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

12.2 Only matters relating to the accuracy of the minutes can be raised, which must be done by way of a motion which is proposed, seconded and voted upon. Where no issues are raised, or after the motion has been dealt with, the Chair shall initial each page and sign the minutes.

13. Record of Executive Decisions

13.1 The Record of Executive Decisions, as well as the reports prepared by the Executive for the Council will be submitted to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

13.2 These will be noted and received by a decision of the Council.

13.3 Any question about the accuracy of any matter before the Council from the Executive must be considered and determined by the Executive. It is not a matter for the Council. The Leader is able to make changes on behalf of the Executive but may choose to do so only with the agreement of Cabinet.

14. Matters for decision by the Council

- 14.1 All matters for decision by the Council shall be included with the agenda, other than items of urgency under Rule 11 above.
- 14.2 When the item is reached on the agenda, the Leader, the relevant Portfolio Holder, the Chair of the relevant Committee or another councillor will, where appropriate, move the recommendation or advice of the Cabinet or Committee, or endorsement of a Cabinet or a committee decision. Another councillor may second the motion and may reserve the right to speak until later in the debate.
- 14.3 The Chair cannot ask the Council to agree to withdraw a recommendation of the Cabinet or a committee unless new and relevant information has become available after the decision of the body concerned. The information must be disclosed to the Council.

15. Procedural Motions that may be moved without notice

- 15.1 The following motions and amendments may be moved at a Council meeting without notice.
- (a) Appointment of a Chair of the meeting at which the motion is made;
 - (b) Motions relating to the accuracy of the minutes of the Council, a committee or sub-committee;
 - (c) That an item of business specified in the summons should have precedence;
 - (d) Reference to the Council, a committee, sub-committee or the Cabinet;
 - (e) Appointment of or appointment to committees, sub-committees or the Cabinet occasioned by an item mentioned in the summons to the meeting;
 - (f) Receipt of Records of Executive Decisions;
 - (g) Adoption of recommendations of the Cabinet, committees and Sub- committees and any consequent resolutions;
 - (h) That leave is given to withdraw a motion;
 - (i) That leave is given to alter a motion by the mover of that motion;
 - (j) Receipt of reports of officers and any consequent resolutions;
 - (k) Extending the time limit for speeches;
 - (l) Amendment to reports of which notification has been included within the summons of the meeting but where the reports were circulated at a later date than the summons;
 - (m) That the Council proceeds to the next business;
 - (n) That the question be now put;
 - (o) That the debate be now adjourned;
 - (p) That the Council do now adjourn;
 - (q) Authorising the sealing of documents;
 - (r) Suspending Meeting Procedure Rules, in accordance with Procedure Rule 50;
 - (s) Motion under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) to exclude the press and public;
 - (t) That a councillor named under Procedure Rule 47 should not be heard further or should leave the meeting; and
 - (u) Giving consent of the Council where consent of the Council is required by these Meeting Procedure Rules.

16. Public participation at Council meetings

- 16.1 The Council welcomes public participation from anyone who lives, works or studies in West Northamptonshire, or who has a direct connection to a service provided by the

Council. Public participation can take the form of presenting petitions, making statements or asking questions.

16.2 Questions may also be asked at Cabinet and shall be dealt with as set out in the Cabinet Meeting Procedure Rules.

17. Petitions

17.1 The Council has adopted a Petitions Scheme and details of this such as: the purpose of a petition, the eligibility criteria and relevant thresholds for making petitions, the procedure and review mechanisms can be found on the Council's website ([Petition the council | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/Petition-the-council)).

18. Statements

18.1 Up to three members of the public are permitted to speak for up to three minutes each on any agenda item although this may be extended at the Chair's discretion.

18.2 Those wishing to make a statement must register to do so at least 24 hours prior to the meeting by contacting Democratic Services by email (democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk) or by post or in person (1 Angel Square, Angel St, Northampton NN1 1ED).

18.3 Statements must be relevant to the powers and duties of the Council and be clear and concise. A statement may be ruled out of order in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 6.2.

19. Public Questions

19.1 At ordinary meetings of Full Council, questions can be asked by members of the public of the Chair of Council, members of Cabinet and Chair of committees.

19.2 The total time set aside for such questions and answers will be limited to 30 minutes which can be extended at the Chair's discretion.

20. Notice of questions

20.1 No person may submit more than two questions at any one meeting.

20.2 No question may be sub-divided into more than two related parts.

20.3 Questions must be delivered in writing or by email to Democratic Services no later than 10am, three clear working days before the meeting. The period of notice is to allow sufficient time for a response to be formulated.

20.4 In exceptional circumstances and in cases of urgency, the Chair may allow questions without the full period of notice having been given where they are satisfied there is sufficient justification. In these circumstances, there is no guarantee that a full reply will be given at the meeting.

20.5 Notice of each question must include the name and address of the questioner, (in respect of an organisation, the name of the organisation and the questioner's position within the organisation) and to whom the question is to be put.

21. Scope of questions

21.1 The question must be relevant to the powers and duties of the Council and be clear, succinct and concise.

21.2 A question will be rejected where it:

- (a) Has been ruled out of order in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 6.2;
- (b) Is considered by the Chair to be inappropriate for the particular meeting.

21.3 The Chair's ruling on rejection of a question will be final, following consultation with the Monitoring Officer.

21.4 Where a question is rejected on the above grounds, the questioner shall be advised of the reasons for rejection.

22. At the meeting

22.1 Questions will be dealt with in order of receipt, subject to the Chair's discretion to group together questions on the same or similar subject.

22.2 Questions will be taken as read. However, if a questioner wishes to ask their question at the meeting, they will be given up to three minutes to ask the question.

22.3 Subject to time constraints, questions which are submitted by the deadline will be answered at the meeting.

22.4 Clear, concise and succinct written replies will be given to questions by the relevant Cabinet member or committee chair or their nominee, but shall not be the subject of any further debate. Where the reply cannot be given at the council meeting, a written answer will be provided to the questioner within five working days of the meeting.

22.5 Any questions which cannot be dealt with during the time allocated for questions will be dealt with by a written response, sent to the questioner where possible within five working days of the meeting. A copy of the response will be provided to all Members.

23. Supplementary questions

23.1 For each question submitted, the questioner will be permitted to ask one supplementary question without notice which must be relevant to the original question or arise from the response given.

23.2 The Chair may reject the supplementary question on the grounds listed in Rule 6.2 above.

23.3 The person to whom the question has been put or another Member on their behalf, shall answer the supplementary question if they are able to do so at the time. If this is not possible, a written response will be provided to the questioner where possible within five working days of the meeting.

24. Form of response

24.1 A response may take the following forms:

- (a) A direct oral answer;
- (b) Where the answer is contained within a publication of the Council or in any report or minutes by reference to those documents;
- (c) A written reply.

25. No debate on questions

25.1 Ordinarily, no debate shall be allowed on questions presented or responses given. In exceptional circumstances only, the Chair may allow discussion. No decision can be made arising from a question other than to refer it to Full Council, Cabinet or a

committee by way of a motion which shall be moved, seconded and voted on without discussion.

26. Priority Opposition Motion

- 26.1 A member nominated by the Leader of the largest political group not forming part of the Administration may move a single Priority Motion on notice (in accordance with Rule 28).
- 26.2 The proposer may speak for up to five minutes, the seconder may speak for up to three minutes, and the member responding on behalf of the Administration may speak for five minutes. No other questions or debate shall be allowed. The total time allowed for the item will be 15 minutes.

27. Questions relating to Portfolio Holder reports

- 27.1 Cabinet Overviews will be circulated to all Members before the start of the meeting.
- 27.2 A period of up to 45 minutes in total will be allowed at Council meetings during which Portfolio Holders will be able to give any update required on their report (with a time limit of 2 minutes) and upon which Members will be able to ask the relevant Portfolio Holder questions without notice (with a time limit of 2 minutes per speaker). Each Portfolio Holder will then have a single opportunity to reply to all questions.
- 27.3 In order to keep to the 45-minute limit and/or maintain fairness between Members, the Chair may limit the number of questions (or further questions) to be asked, either in total or by any one Member.

28. Notices of Motion

Procedure

- 28.1 Notice of every motion (other than a motion which may be moved without notice under Procedure Rule 15) shall be given in writing, signed by the Member(s) giving the notice, and delivered at least seven clear days before the next meeting of the Council, to the Monitoring Officer by whom it shall be dated, in the order in which it is received.
- 28.2 Motions that have been received and not ruled Out of Order will be shared with the leader of each political group (and/or their nominee) prior to the publication of the summons, where possible.
- 28.3 The number of motions on notice at any one meeting shall not exceed five, including the Priority Opposition Motion, except where they relate to a report on the agenda.
- 28.4 The largest political group not forming part of the Administration may move up to two motions on notice at each Council meeting. Other opposition political groups may move a maximum of two motions on notice in total between them. The number of motions on notice submitted by the political group(s) forming the Administration shall be limited to one.
- 28.5 Motions shall be taken in the order of receipt of notice; and the consideration of motions shall not take longer than 60 minutes in total.

Scope

- 28.6 Motions must be about matters for which the Council has direct responsibility or influence.
- 28.7 Motions must be capable of being passed as a formal resolution.

- 28.8 The Chair, following consultation with the Monitoring Officer, may rule a motion Out of Order under Rule 6.2,
- 28.9 A motion will not be accepted if it is substantially the same as a question which has been put or an address made by some other person at the same meeting of the Council or at another meeting of the Council in the preceding six months.

Motions to be set out in summons

- 28.10 The summons for every ordinary meeting of the Council will set out all motions of which notice has been duly given, unless the Member giving the notice has intimated in writing, when giving it, that they proposed to move it at some later meeting, or has since withdrawn it. The motions will be listed in the summons in the order in which they have been received.

Withdrawal of Motion which is before the Council

- 28.11 Where a notice of motion is before the Council having been formally moved and seconded and the mover wishes subsequently to withdraw it, they may do so with the consent of the seconder.

Motions not moved

- 28.12 If a motion set out in the summons is not moved either by a councillor who gave notice of it or by some other councillor on their behalf it shall, unless postponed by consent of the Council, be treated as withdrawn and shall not be moved without fresh notice.

Deferment of a Notice of Motion

- 28.13 Where a notice of motion has been moved and seconded, and referred for advice, the consideration of the motion may be deferred where the mover and seconder signify in writing their agreement to the deferral and the Chair of the Council indicates, in writing, their agreement on behalf of the Council. The matter would then come to a subsequent meeting of the Council for report and decision.

29. Rules of Debate

- 29.1 The rules of debate to be followed at Council meetings are set out below.

Motions and Amendments

- 29.2 No motion or amendment shall be discussed unless it has been proposed and seconded. Where required by the Chair, motions or amendments shall be put in writing and handed to the Chair before they are further discussed or put to the meeting. At meetings other than those of the full Council, the Chair of that meeting may, at their discretion, allow a motion or amendment to be put which is not in writing, provided that the Chair has concluded that the wording of the motion or amendment is understood by all members of the body concerned. This requirement does not apply to motions which do not require notice.

Seconders' Speech

29.3 When seconding a motion or amendment, a councillor may advise the Chair that they will reserve their right to speak until a later period in the debate.

Only one councillor to stand at a time

29.4 When speaking at a Council meeting a councillor shall, if possible, stand and address the Chair. While a councillor is speaking the other councillors will remain seated, unless rising, if possible, on a point of order or in personal explanation.

Content and length of speeches

29.5 A councillor will confine their speech to the question under discussion, a personal explanation or a point of order. The speech of the mover of a motion shall not exceed five minutes and all other speeches shall not exceed three minutes.

When a councillor may speak again

29.6 At a Council meeting a councillor who has spoken on any motion shall not speak again whilst it is the subject of debate, except:

- (a) To speak once on an amendment moved by another councillor;
- (b) If the motion has been amended since they last spoke, to move a further amendment;
- (c) If their first speech was on an amendment moved by another councillor, to speak on the main issue, whether or not the amendment on which they spoke was carried;
- (d) In exercise of a right of reply under these rules;
- (e) On a point of order referring to a specific Procedure Rule (which must be cited on rising);
- (f) By way of personal explanation; or
- (g) To move one of the motions specified as being able to be moved without notice, when the procedure for moving a motion without notice must be followed.

29.7 At committees or sub-committees, councillors may, at the discretion of the Chair, speak more than once.

Amendments

29.8 An amendment to a motion must:

- (a) Be relevant to the motion;
- (b) Add and/or delete a word or words;
- (c) Not introduce a new topic;
- (d) Not negate the motion;
- (e) Be worded so that, if it is agreed by the council, it can be passed as a valid resolution.

29.9 The Chair, following consultation with the Monitoring Officer, may rule an amendment Out of Order under Rule 6.3. An amendment will not be accepted if it is substantially the same as a motion or amendment which has already been submitted to the same meeting of the Council.

Notice of Amendments

29.10 Amendments to the Budget and Policy Framework at Budget council meetings must be received by the Executive Director Finance at least five clear working days before the meeting. A councillor who wishes to propose an amendment to any other report included with the summons or a motion submitted on the summons shall be required to submit the amendment in writing to the Monitoring Officer before the start of the meeting.

Number of Amendments

29.11 Only one amendment may be moved and discussed at a time. No further amendment shall be moved until the amendment under discussion has been disposed of.

Status of Amendments

29.12 If an amendment is lost, another amendment may be moved on the original motion. If an amendment is carried, the motion as amended shall take the place of the original motion and shall become the motion upon which any further amendment may be moved.

Alterations to Motions or Amendments

29.13 A councillor may alter a motion or amendment of which they have given notice and may also, with the consent of the seconder, alter a motion or amendment which they have moved. In both cases, the consent of the meeting is required. There should be no discussion on whether consent should or should not be given.

Withdrawal of Motion

29.14 A motion or amendment may be withdrawn by the mover provided the seconder and the meeting, without discussion, agree. Once the mover has asked for permission to withdraw, there should be no further discussion, unless the meeting refuses to agree to the request.

Right of Reply

29.15 The mover of the motion shall have a right to reply at the close of the debate on the motion, immediately before it is put to the vote. If an amendment is moved, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply at the close of the debate on the amendment but shall not otherwise speak on it. The mover of the amendment shall have no right of reply to the debate on their amendment.

Motions which may be moved during debate

29.16 When a motion is under debate no other motion shall be moved except the following:

- (a) To amend the motion (subject to Rule 30.8);
- (b) To adjourn the meeting;
- (c) To adjourn the debate;
- (d) To proceed to the next business;
- (e) To suspend Procedure Rules;
- (f) To refer a matter to the Council, Cabinet, a committee or sub-committee for consideration or reconsideration;
- (g) That the question be now put;
- (h) That a councillor be not further heard;
- (i) By the Chair under Procedure Rule 46 that a councillor do leave the meeting;
- (j) A motion under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) to exclude the public.

Closure Motions

29.17 A councillor may move, without comment, at the conclusion of a speech of another councillor, "That the Council proceed to the next business", "That the question be now put", "That the debate be now adjourned", or "That the Council do now adjourn". When one of these Motions has been seconded the Chair shall proceed as follows:

- (a) On a motion to proceed to next business - unless in their opinion the matter before the meeting has been insufficiently discussed, they shall first give the mover of the original motion the right of reply, and then put to the vote the motion to proceed to next business;
- (b) On a motion that the question be now put - unless in their opinion the matter before the meeting has been insufficiently discussed, they shall put to the vote the motion that the question be now put and, if it is passed, give the mover of the original motion the right of reply before putting the motion to the vote;
- (c) On a motion to adjourn the debate or the meeting - if in their opinion the matter before the meeting has been insufficiently discussed on that occasion they shall put the adjournment motion to the vote without giving the mover of the original motion the right of reply on that occasion.

Points of Order

29.18 A councillor may rise (or where necessary, instead raise their hand) on a point of order or in personal explanation and shall be entitled to be heard immediately. A point of order shall relate only to an alleged breach of a Procedure Rule or statutory provision and the councillor shall specify the Procedure Rule or statutory provision and the way in which they consider it has been breached. A personal explanation shall be confined to some material part of a former speech by them which may appear to have been misunderstood or misquoted in the current debate.

Ruling of Chair on a Point of Order/Personal Explanation

29.19 The ruling of the Chair of the meeting on a point of order or on the admissibility of a personal explanation shall not be open to discussion and shall be final. The Chair shall

consult on any question of interpretation with the Monitoring Officer or their designated nominee prior to making a ruling.

Respect for the Chair

29.20 At the Council meeting whenever the Chair rises during a debate a councillor then standing shall sit down and the Council shall be silent.

30. Rules of Debate at Budget meetings

30.1 The following rules of debate apply to Budget meetings as defined in Rule 5 above.

Order, Content and Length of Speeches

30.2 At a budget meeting of the Council, the following rules shall apply to debate on the annual budget.

30.3 The exact length of speeches for each proposer and management of the debate is at the discretion of the Chair and will be announced before the start of the meeting.

- (a) The Chair will call the Executive Leader, or their nominee, to propose the Budget. The proposer will move the Budget. The seconder will have up to three minutes to second the Budget.
- (b) Once the Budget has been seconded, the Chair will call the other group leaders, or their nominees, to speak. Each will be called in order of precedence according to the number of councillors in each group. Where two groups have the same number of members, the Chair shall exercise their discretion.
- (c) The Leader of the principal opposition group, or their nominee, may make a statement or propose an alternative budget or amendment. If an alternative budget or amendment has been proposed, the seconder will have up to three minutes to speak.
- (d) The Leaders of each of the minor opposition groups, or their nominees, may make a statement or propose an alternative budget or amendment. If an alternative budget or amendment has been proposed, the seconder will have up to three minutes to speak.
- (e) If an opposition group proposes an alternative budget or amendment, then after each amendment has been seconded it shall be debated. The normal rules of debate shall apply. The proposer of the amendment has a right of reply. The proposer of the Administration's budget also has a right of reply prior to the vote. Each alternative budget or amendment will be debated and voted in the order they were proposed. Each vote must be a recorded vote.
- (f) After each opposition group alternative budget or amendment has been voted on, the debate will return to the substantive motion - the Administration's Budget - which may or may not have been amended.
- (g) Prior to the debate on the substantive motion, the mover of the Administration's budget shall be permitted to propose an amendment that is minor in nature. A minor amendment is an amendment with a financial impact equal to or below the key decision threshold. The normal rules of debate shall apply to the debate on a minor amendment. The normal deadlines for the submission of such an amendment shall not apply. The mover of the Administration's budget has a right of reply prior to the vote. The vote must be a recorded vote.

- (h) Once the vote has been taken on a minor amendment, or if no such amendment has been proposed, the debate on the substantive motion will take place. All members of the Council are allowed to contribute to the debate, except the mover or seconder of original motion (unless the seconder has reserved their right to speak).
- (i) No further amendments are allowed at this stage by any of the members of the Council.
- (j) After the debate on the substantive motion, the mover of the Administration's budget has a right of reply (up to 5 minutes). A recorded vote must then be taken on the substantive budget (which may have been amended) and the debate is concluded.

Alternative Budgets and Amendments to the Budget

- 30.4 In order to be approved, all alternative Budget proposals that any political group or member wishes to be considered must be provided in final form, following prior consultation and written approval of the Chief Finance Officer, five clear working days in advance of the Budget meeting.
- 30.5 Any submissions not received within five clear working days of the Budget council meeting will not be allowed.
- 30.6 Any submissions not prepared in a form acceptable to the Chief Finance Officer as being capable of being adopted by the council as a lawful budget will not be allowed.. The text of all alternative budgets or proposed amendments to the Budget must be submitted to the Monitoring Officer by 5pm, five clear working days before the meeting. The Monitoring Officer shall comply with the wishes of the Leader of the relevant political group in determining when to make the documents available to other councillors, the press and public, subject to this being no later than the start of the meeting at which the Budget is to be discussed.
- 30.7 Alternative budgets or proposed amendments to the Budget will be considered in the order set out above. Only one alternative budget or proposed amendments to the Budget may be moved and discussed at any one time unless the Chair decides otherwise.
- 30.8 No further amendment may be moved until the alternative budget or amendment to the Budget under discussion has been dealt with.
- 30.9 If an alternative budget or proposed amendments to the Budget are carried, the motion as amended takes the place of the original motion. This becomes the substantive motion to which any further amendments which have already been notified are moved.

31. Rescission of earlier resolution

- 31.1 At a meeting of the Council, no motion or amendment shall be moved to rescind any resolution of the Council which was passed within the preceding six months or which is to the same effect as one which has been rejected within that period.
- 31.2 Such a motion may be moved if:
 - (a) It is recommended by the Cabinet or a committee; or
 - (b) Notice of such motion has been given under Rule 29 and signed by at least one third of the total number of councillors (31) who include members from more than one political group.

32. Voting

- 32.1 Each Councillor has one vote.
- 32.2 Voting will be by a show of hands or, where practical and the means are available to those present, by suitable electronic means.
- 32.3 When a councillor asks for a recorded vote to be taken, and 10 members of the Council (or one quarter of a committee) stand in their places to support the request, the vote will be recorded to show whether each Councillor voted for or against the motion or abstained. If necessary, a councillor may raise their hand instead of standing in order to indicate their support for a request for a recorded vote.
- 32.4 A recorded vote will not be taken if the vote has already begun to be taken by a show of hands.
- 32.5 A councillor may require, after a vote is completed, that the minutes of the meeting record how they voted or abstained.
- 32.6 A councillor may, immediately after the item of business is voted upon, request that a lost motion or amendment be recorded in the minutes.
- 32.7 Where there are equal votes cast for a motion or amendment the Chair or the person presiding may exercise a second or casting vote.

33. Offices and Appointments

- 33.1 If on a vote no person receives more than half of the votes cast, the name of the person with the least number of votes will be withdrawn. Further votes will be held until one person receives a clear majority.

34. Election of Chair of committees and sub-committees

- 34.1 The Chair of every committee and sub-committee excluding the Cabinet will be elected at the annual meeting of the Council where possible.
- 34.2 The councillor elected to each office must be a member of the relevant committee or sub-committee.
- 34.3 Where a vacancy occurs in any office, an election will be held at the next ordinary meeting of the committee or sub-committee concerned.
- 34.4 Unless the Council decides otherwise, the election will be conducted by a show of hands and may relate to a number of offices.

35. Urgent business – Non-Executive Matters

- 35.1 An item of urgent business which has to be decided before the next meeting of the Council and which does not fall within the Executive's functions and responsibility can be determined by the Head of Paid Service, subject to the procedure set out below.
- 35.2 Where any matter is urgent and cannot await the next meeting, the Head of Paid Service may take the necessary action, provided that they have first consulted the relevant Chair (or Vice Chair if the Chair is not available).
- 35.3 A copy of the consultation document shall be sent to the appropriate Cabinet Member, the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the group leaders and the councillors for the area concerned, if the matter particularly affects one or more electoral areas.
- 35.4 Any such action shall be recorded in writing, consideration being given after consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer.

- 35.5 The Monitoring Officer shall supply details of any decision or action taken by the Head of Paid Service under these provisions to the next meeting of the committee or sub-committee that would have taken the decision if it had not been urgent.
- 35.6 A report of any action under this Procedure Rule shall be made available by electronic means to all councillors.

3.7 Committee and Sub-Committee Meeting Procedure Rules

1. Programme of meetings

- 1.1 Meetings of committees and sub-committees will be set out in the calendar of meetings approved by the Council under Rule 1.16 above. Alterations to the date, time and/or venue for meetings, as well as the inclusion of additional meetings, shall only be where it is impracticable to hold the meeting at the usual time and shall be matters for the Chair of each committee to determine as set out in Rule 1.2 below.
- 1.2 When it is necessary to alter the date, time and/or venue of a meeting, or to arrange a special meeting, the Monitoring Officer will consult the Chair of the relevant committee or sub-committee before any action is taken. The Chair of the committee or sub-committee will then determine the matter.

2. Chairing

- 2.1 Where a Chair and Vice Chair are absent from a meeting of the relevant body, a Chair will be appointed from those members of the body present, provided the meeting is quorate and subject to any restrictions on the eligibility of Executive members for appointment.
- 2.2 In committee or sub-committee meetings, whenever the Chair rises from their seat, the councillors should remain in their seats and the committee or sub-committee shall be silent.

3. Quorum at committees and sub-committees

- 3.1 No item of business will be transacted at a meeting of a committee or sub-committee unless there is at least one quarter of the members of the body present which will in each case be rounded up.
- 3.2 Any variants to Rule 39.1 will be set out in the committee or sub-committee's terms of reference.
- 3.3 In the case of the Alcohol and Gambling Licensing Committee and its sub-committees these Rules are subject to and applied as stated in the Licensing Act 2003 (Hearings) Regulations 2005.

4. Minutes of committees and sub-committees

- 4.1 The minutes of a committee or sub-committee must be confirmed at its next meeting.
- 4.2 Only matters relating to the accuracy of the minutes can be raised. Where accuracy is questioned, this must be by a motion which is proposed, seconded and voted upon.

- 4.3 Where no issues of accuracy are raised, or after any motion has been dealt with, the Chair shall sign the minutes.
- 4.4 The minutes of any sub-committee must be submitted to the next suitable meeting of the parent committee by the sub-committee Chair.
- 4.5 Members may ask a question or comment on any minute. The Chair of the sub-committee will then reply. There will be no debate on any question or comment raised under this procedure and no further motions can be moved.
- 4.6 Where a Member has a question or comment on an exempt, private or confidential Minute, the question or comment must be given in writing to the Monitoring Officer at least one hour before the start of the meeting.
- 4.7 Any question about the accuracy of any minute of a body must be considered and determined by that body at its next suitable meeting.

5. Requests by Members for items of business to be included on agendas of a committee or sub-committee

- 5.1 This Rule sets out details of the process by which a councillor can ask for an item of business to be included on the agenda of a committee or sub-committee meeting.
- 5.2 This Rule does not apply to special meetings of committees and sub-committees or to the Cabinet.
- 5.3 A councillor may, by notice given to the Monitoring Officer no later than ten clear working days before the appropriate meeting, request that an item of business be included on the agenda of a committee or sub-committee.
- 5.4 A councillor may not give notice of more than one item of business for any one meeting. The notice shall state the nature of the business and shall include the name of that councillor. A notice may be submitted electronically provided the notice has been originated by that councillor.
- 5.5 This procedure shall not apply where the item of business, if agreed, would have the effect of rescinding or amending any resolution passed by a committee or sub-committee of the Council within the preceding 6 months.
- 5.6 Items arising from such notices shall appear on the agenda after the ordinary public or private agenda items.
- 5.7 A member of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a statutory right to have an item, within the remit of that particular body, included on the agenda and discussed at the next meeting of that body. The restrictions in Rule 41.4 above on the number of items shall not apply to items submitted under this paragraph.

6. Committee and Sub-Committee Agendas - Urgent items of business

- 6.1 Generally, business will only be transacted at meetings of committees and sub-committees which appears on the agenda and which has been available for public inspection at least five clear working days before the meeting or, where the meeting is convened at short notice, from the time the meeting is convened.
- 6.2 The Chair of the committee or sub-committee may agree to deal with an item of business at the meeting if, in their opinion, the matter is urgent given the circumstances requiring a decision. The Chair's ruling and the reasons for urgency will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

7. Attendance of councillors at committees and sub-committees of which they are not members

- 7.1 Notwithstanding their rights as a member of the public, a councillor may attend any meeting of a committee or sub-committee to which they have not been appointed, for the purposes of performing their duties as a councillor, including when exempt or private and confidential business is transacted.
- 7.2 A councillor will be given, when they arrive at the meeting a copy of the agenda and relevant papers, subject to any restrictions imposed under the Access to Information Procedure Rules.
- 7.3 The councillor has no right to vote but may speak with the consent of the Chair of the meeting.

8. Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Sub-Committees

- 8.1 In applying these Rules to Overview and Scrutiny committees and sub-committees, regard shall be had to the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules which are contained in Part 7 of this Constitution.

3.8 General Provisions

1. Records of attendance

- 1.1 The Monitoring Officer will keep a record of Members attending any meeting of the Council, the Cabinet, and any committee or sub-committee.

2. Disclosure of confidential/exempt matters

- 2.1 No Councillor shall disclose to any person the whole or any part of the contents of any agenda or any matter arising during the proceedings, report or other document which is marked “confidential” or “not for publication” unless and until the document has been made available to the public or the press by or on behalf of the Council, the Cabinet, a committee or sub-committee.
- 2.2 All councillors will familiarise themselves and not contravene the Access to Information Rules or the Members’ Code of Conduct set out within the Constitution.

3. Substitute Members

- 3.1 Political groups may nominate some or all their councillors to be substitutes for appointed members of committees, joint committees, sub-committees, working groups and panels (and the Monitoring Officer shall have authority to give effect to those nominations in accordance with this procedure rule), provided that in the case of the:
 - (a) Regulatory committees and sub-committees, substitutes must have received suitable training
 - (b) Scrutiny committees and Audit and Governance Committee, all councillors except Cabinet members are permitted to be substitutes

- 3.2 Each political group shall notify the Monitoring Officer of its substitute members and, in respect of each substitute member, which committees, joint committees, sub-committees, working groups and panels they may serve on.
- 3.3 Notice of substitution (or any cancellation) stating the name of the substitute must be given to Democratic Services before the commencement of the meeting concerned. Notification is for each meeting or until further notice.
- 3.4 If the original appointed member arrives when the meeting is in progress, the substitution will remain effective and the original appointed member will not be allowed to participate in the decision making. It is not possible to substitute for part of a meeting only.
- 3.5 The chair shall inform the meeting of any substitutions before the commencement of the meeting.
- 3.6 Substitute members have all the powers and duties (including compliance with any mandatory training requirements) of any appointed member, but are not able to exercise any special powers or duties exercisable by the appointed member.

4. Disorderly conduct by Members

- 4.1 If at a meeting any councillor, in the opinion of the person presiding, misconducts themselves in any way, the person presiding or any other councillor may move "That the councillor be not further heard". The motion, if seconded, shall be put and determined without discussion.
- 4.2 If the councillor continues the misconduct, the person presiding may either move "That the councillor do leave the meeting" (in which case the motion shall be put and determined without seconding or discussion); or adjourn the meeting.
- 4.3 In the event of general disturbance at any meeting which, in the opinion of the person presiding, renders the due and orderly dispatch of business impossible, the person presiding will have the power to adjourn the meeting.

5. Disturbance by members of the public

- 5.1 If a member of the public interrupts the proceedings at any meeting the person presiding shall issue a warning to them. If they continue, the person presiding shall order their removal from the meeting.
- 5.2 In cases of general disturbance in any part of the meeting room open to the public, the person presiding shall order that part to be cleared or if necessary adjourn the meeting.

6. Variation and revocation of Procedure Rules

- 6.1 Any motion to vary or revoke these Rules shall, when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

7. Suspension of Procedure Rules

- 7.1 These Procedure Rules may be suspended in respect of any business at a meeting of the Council, a committee or sub-committee where its suspension is moved except where this would be in contravention of statute.

- 7.2 A motion to suspend Procedure Rules shall not be moved without notice unless there shall be present at least one-third of the Members of the Council or that committee or sub-committee respectively.

8. Interpretation of Procedure Rules

- 8.1 The ruling of the person presiding as to the construction or application of any of these Procedure Rules, or as to any proceedings of the Council, shall not be challenged at any meeting.
- 8.2 The person presiding, shall consult with the Monitoring Officer or their nominee on any question of interpretation.

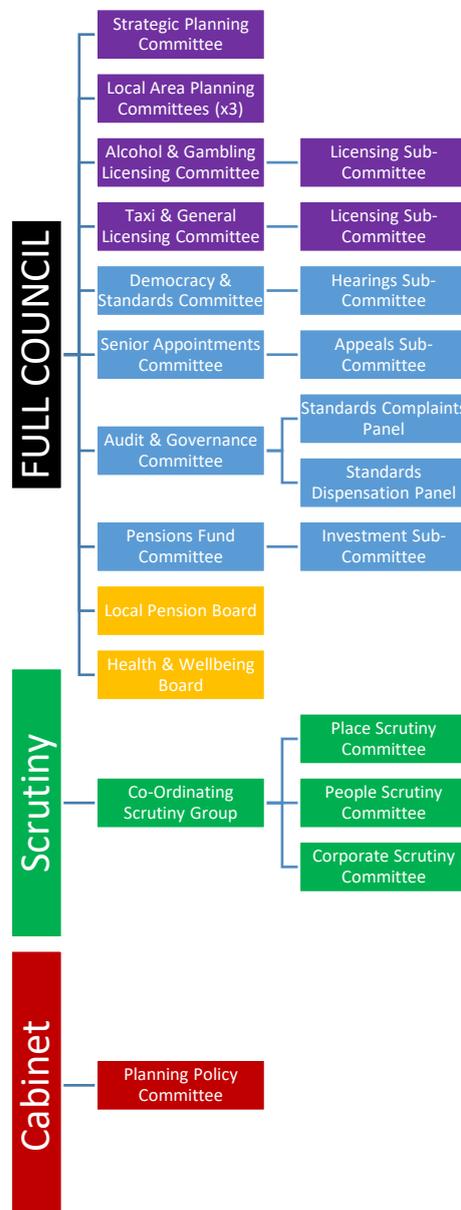
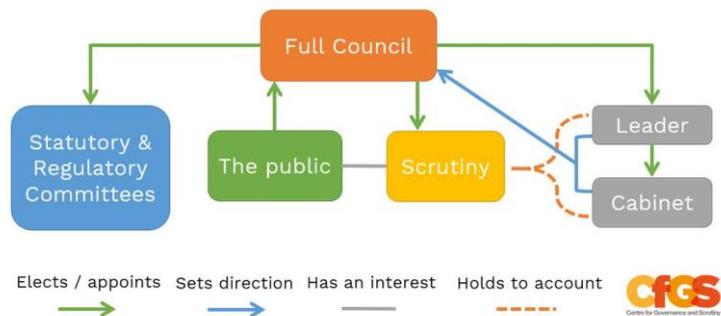
9. Submission of Notices by Members – Electronic Means

- 9.1 A councillor may communicate, by electronic means, any notice under any of the Council's Procedural Rules to initiate any process or procedure provided it is clear that the notice has been originated by that Member.

4.0 COMMITTEES

4.1 Committee Structure

Council governance & decision-making



4.2 Alcohol and Gambling Licensing Committee

Members 15: Quorum 5. Appointments will be made having regard to the rules on political proportionality.

- (a) The Alcohol and Gambling Licensing Committee is responsible for determining licensing policy and applications in accordance with its role and functions set out below.
- (b) Members shall not participate as members of the Alcohol and Gambling Licensing Committee or any of its sub-committees until they have received appropriate training in respect of their functions on the committee or sub-committees.

4.2.1 Role and Functions

- (a) To deal with all the licensing functions of the Council under the Licensing Act 2003 (“the 2003 Act”) and the Gambling Act 2005 (“the 2005 Act”) (except such functions as cannot be delegated).
- (b) For the avoidance of doubt, the Alcohol and Gambling Licensing Committee shall exercise an advisory role in relation to executive functions.
- (c) To approve licensing policy in compliance with the provisions of the 2003 Act, the 2005 Act and any regulations made thereunder (except matters specifically reserved by statute to Council or the Cabinet).
- (d) The Alcohol and Gambling Licensing Committee has the power to appoint such sub-committees as may from time to time be necessary to discharge its duties under the 2003 and 2005 Acts.
- (e) Sub-committees will have full delegated powers to determine all applications made under the 2003 and 2005 Acts.
- (f) Each sub-committee will comprise three Members drawn from the Alcohol and Gambling Licensing Committee.

4.2.2 Sitting as a sub-committee comprising 3 Members (drawn from the main Committee on an ad-hoc basis):

- (a) To hold hearings to determine licensing applications under the 2003 Act, where a representation has been received, except where there is a valid delegation to officers under the provisions of parts 9.2.1 and 9.2.3 of this Constitution insofar as they apply to the delegation of non-executive powers and duties set out in the 2003 Act and associated regulations;
- (b) to determine applications for a provisional statement or the grant, variation, or transfer of a premises licence under Part 8 of the 2005 Act where a representation has been received or where the Executive Director of Place and Economy proposes that the power under Section 169(1)(b) be exercised to exclude mandatory premises licence conditions;
- (c) to determine all applications for the review or summary review of a premises or club premises licence under the 2005 Act;
- (d) to determine applications for club gaming and club machine permits under the 2005 Act where objections have been received and matters relating to the cancellation of club gaming and club machine permits or licensed premises gaming machine permits; and

- (e) to determine all matters relating to temporary or occasional use notices under the 2005 Act where objections have been received.

4.3 Taxi and General Licensing Committee

Members 15: Quorum 5. Appointments will be made having regard to the rules on political proportionality.

- (a) The Taxi and General Licensing Committee is responsible for determining licensing policy and applications in accordance with its role and functions set out below.
- (b) Members shall not participate as members of the Taxi and General Licensing Committee or any of its sub-committees until they have received appropriate training in respect of their functions on the Committee or sub-committees.

4.3.1 Role and Functions

- (a) To deal with all non-executive functions relating to licensing and registration as set out in Schedule 1 of the Functions and Responsibilities Regulations.
- (b) To deal with all functions relating to health and safety under any relevant statutory provision within the meaning of Part 1 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, to the extent that those functions are discharged otherwise than in the Council's capacity as an employer.
- (c) For the avoidance of doubt, the Taxi and General Licensing Committee shall exercise an advisory role in relation to executive functions, such as the fixing of fares for hackney carriages.
- (d) To approve licensing policy relating to the licensing of private hire vehicles and Hackney carriages in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (the 1976 Act), the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 (the 1847 Act) and any associated regulations; and any other policy approval matters concerning schemes of licensing administered by the Council, either on a statutory or discretionary basis (e.g. Street Trading Licenses/Consents, Scrap Metal Licenses); except matters specifically reserved by statute to Council or the Cabinet.
- (e) The Taxi and General Licensing Committee has the power to appoint such sub-committees as may from time to time be necessary to discharge its duties.
- (f) Sub-committees will have full delegated powers to determine contested applications and adjudicate over the review of licences.
- (g) Each sub-committee will comprise three Members drawn from the Taxi and General Licensing Committee.

4.3.2 Sitting as a sub-committee comprising 3 Members (drawn from the main Committee on a politically proportionate basis):

- (a) To determine all matters relating to the grant, renewal or review of taxi licences (which, for the avoidance of doubt, shall include hackney carriage and private hire vehicle driver and operator licences) and to decide whether to suspend or revoke such licences in accordance with the 1847 and 1976 Acts, except where there is a valid delegation to officers from the Taxi and

General Licensing Committee made in accordance with parts 9.2.1 and 9.2.3 of this Constitution insofar as they apply to the delegation of non-executive powers and duties set out in the 1847 and 1976 Acts, associated regulations and other statutory and discretionary licensing schemes;

- (b) in cases where the Assistant Director Regulatory Services has on public safety grounds revoked with immediate effect a taxi licence in accordance with section 61 (2B) of the 1976 Act, to determine an application for the grant of a new licence submitted by the driver/operator whose earlier licence was revoked; and
- (c) to determine all matters relating to street trading licences and consents where representation have been received.

4.4 Strategic Planning Committee

Members 13: Quorum 4. Appointments will be made having regard to the rules on political proportionality.

4.4.1 Members shall not participate as members of the Strategic Planning Committee until they have received appropriate training in respect of their functions on the committee

4.4.2 Role and Functions

- (a) Functions relating to town and country planning and development control as specified in Part A of Schedule 1 of the Local Authorities Functions and Responsibilities (England) Regulations 2000 including in relation to strategic applications meeting the thresholds set out in (i), (ii) and (iii) below
 - (i) Large-scale major developments defined (by the Government's planning application statistical returns) as those of 200 houses (or 4 hectares) or more; or
 - (ii) commercial developments of 10,000 square metres (or 2 hectares) or more; or
 - (iii) strategically important developments (as identified by the Assistant Director – Growth and Investment, following consultation with the Chair of the Local Planning Committee for the area in which the development is proposed).
- (b) Applications called-in that cross the boundary of two local area committees.
- (c) Any application where the Assistant Director – Growth and Investment considers it inappropriate to exercise delegated powers having regard to the public representations received and consultee responses.
- (d) There shall be no referral down of applications from Strategic Planning Committee to Local Area Planning committees.

4.5 Local Area Planning Committees

4.5.1 There are three Local Area Planning Committees in West Northamptonshire, which reflect the areas of the existing local plans for Daventry, South Northamptonshire and Northampton.

Northampton Local Area Planning Committee

Members 11: Quorum 4. Not politically balanced.

Daventry Local Area Planning Committee

Members 9: Quorum 3. Not politically balanced.

South Northamptonshire Local Area Planning Committee

Members 9: Quorum 3. Not politically balanced.

4.5.2 The Local Area Planning Committees are not politically balanced as they fall within the political balance exemption for area committees; but should reflect the political make-up of the relevant area. The political make up of each area is determined by the wards which the committee serves. The members elected to those wards determine the political balance for the area and the committee.

4.5.3 Members shall not participate as members of a Local Area Planning Committee until they have received appropriate training in respect of their functions on the committee.

4.5.4 Functions relating to town and country planning and development control as specified in Part A of Schedule 1 of the Local Authorities Functions and Responsibilities (England) Regulations 2000 that do not fall within the responsibilities of the Strategic Planning Committee.

4.5.5 To consider planning applications not within the remit of the Strategic Planning Committee and not delegated to officers except where the Assistant Director – Growth and Investment considers it inappropriate to exercise delegated powers having considered public representations and consultee responses. These include:

- (a) Major Developments below the limits set for the Strategic Planning Committee;
- (b) Applications which do not meet the criteria for Major Development;
- (c) Change of Use;
- (d) Householder Developments;
- (e) Consent to display advertisements under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992 (as amended);
- (f) Shop fronts;
- (g) Listed Building Consents;
- (h) Conservation Area Consents.

4.5.6 There shall be no referral up of applications from the Local Area Planning committees to the Strategic Planning Committee

4.5.7 The Assistant Director - Growth and Investment, after consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, shall be responsible for determining whether an application falls within the remit of Strategic Planning Committee or the relevant Local Area Planning Committee.

4.6 Democracy and Standards Committee

Members 9: Quorum 3. Appointments will be made having regard to the rules on political proportionality.

4.6.1 The purpose of the Democracy and Standards Committee is:

- (a) to have overall responsibility for the Council's Constitution and decision making governance;
- (b) to make necessary decisions in relation to Elections and to have responsibility for Community Governance and Boundary Reviews on behalf of the Council.
- (c) to oversee and develop the Council's Code of Conduct and the overall standards of conduct for Council Members, co-opted Members, and Parish and Town councillors of West Northamptonshire.

The Committee will have the roles and functions set out below.

4.6.2 In relation to the Democratic functions of the Committee

- (a) Reviewing the Council's Constitution and decision-making governance, i.e. the guidance and documents that support decision making, e.g. the Forward Plan guidance and the rules on officer records, and recommending any proposed changes to the Council;
- (b) Conducting polling station reviews and other election functions which it is necessary for the Council to decide (but not the functions delegated directly by statute to the Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer);
- (c) Preparing submissions on behalf of the Council to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in relation to the governance of the area;
- (d) Preparing submissions on behalf of the Council to the Parliamentary Boundary Commission for England.

4.6.3 In relation to the Standards functions of the Committee

- (a) Promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Members and co-opted Members of the Council, Parish and Town Councils;
- (b) Keeping the Member Code of Conduct and, where appropriate, the Planning Code of Conduct under review and make recommendations to Council on any amendment or revisions to the Codes;
- (c) Advising, training or arranging training for Members and co-opted Members of the Council, Parish and Town Councils on matters relating to the Member Code of Conduct and the Planning Code of Conduct;
- (d) Giving general guidance and advice to Members and Co-opted Members of the Council, Parish and Town Councils on Member's interests and keeping under review the Registers of Members' Interests maintained by the Monitoring Officer and the Register of Gifts and Hospitality;
- (e) Granting dispensations to Members and co-opted Members from requirements relating to interests;
- (f) Keeping the Council's arrangements for dealing with standards complaints under review and making recommendations to Council on any amendment or revisions to the arrangements;

- (g) Assessing and/or referring for investigation allegations of misconduct on the part of Members and co-opted Members of the Council, Parish and Town Councils, if so requested by the Monitoring Officer;
- (h) Determining allegations of misconduct on the part of Members and co-opted Members of the Council, Parish and Town Councils;
- (i) To be a consultee in relation to the Council's Officer Code of Conduct;
- (j) Making recommendations to Council with regard to the appointment of Independent Persons;
- (k) Overseeing the Council's Protocol on Member/Officer Relations and making recommendations to Council on any amendment or revisions to the protocol;
- (l) Receiving an annual report from the Monitoring Officer detailing complaints received, complaints dealt with and resolutions achieved;
- (m) Exercising all the Council's functions, as specified in Regulation 2 of the Local Authority (Functions and Responsibility) (England) Regulations 2000 insofar as such functions are not the responsibility of the Cabinet, Council or any other committee of the Council.

4.6.4 Hearings Sub-Committee

3 Members (drawn from the Democracy and Standards Committee on a politically proportional basis). In addition, where the subject member is a parish/town councillor, another parish or town councillor who is not connected to the subject member will be co-opted as a non-voting member of the Sub-Committee.

To determine, in accordance with the Council's Arrangements for Dealing with Standards Complaints, complaints referred to the sub-committee following completion of an investigation into allegations of misconduct on the part of Members and co-opted Members of the Council, Parish and Town Council.

4.7 Audit and Governance Committee

Members 9: Quorum 3. Appointments will be made having regard to the rules on political proportionality.

Purpose:

4.7.1 The purpose of the Audit and Governance Committee is to:

- (a) Provide independent assurance as to the Council's governance, risk management framework and associated control environment;
- (b) Provide independent scrutiny of the Council's financial and non-financial performance and oversee the Council's financial reporting process;
- (c) Act as an advisory committee to the Council and the Cabinet on audit and governance issues.

Terms of Reference:

4.7.2 Audit:

- (a) To consider the annual report of the internal audit service and to consider a summary of actual and proposed internal audit activity and the levels of assurance over the Council's corporate governance arrangements;
- (b) To consider summaries of specific internal audit reports as requested;
- (c) To consider and approve the Council's arrangements for the internal audit service;
- (d) To consider a report from internal audit on agreed recommendations not implemented within a reasonable timescale;
- (e) To consider any high priority recommendations contained in internal audit reports or 'limited assurance' audit reports;
- (f) To consider the external auditor's annual letter, relevant reports, and the report to those charged with governance;
- (g) To consider specific reports as agreed with the external auditor;
- (h) To comment on the scope and depth of external audit work and ensure that it gives the Council good value for money;
- (i) Through the Executive Director of Finance liaise with the Audit Commission over the appointment of the council's external auditor;
- (j) Through the Executive Director of Finance commission specific pieces of work from internal and external audit if there is a perceived need expressed by Committee members and sufficient funding available for such work.

4.7.3 Corporate Governance:

- (a) Maintain an overview of all aspects of the Council's Constitution, including Finance Reservations in the Scheme of Delegation, contract procedure rules and financial regulations. Any proposed changes to the Constitution shall be referred to the Democracy & Standards Committee;
- (b) Review any issue referred to it within these Terms of Reference by the Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer or any body of the Council;
- (c) Monitor the effective development and operation of risk management and corporate governance within the Council;
- (d) Approve and monitor the Council's 'whistle-blowing', anti-fraud and anti-corruption policies;
- (e) Review and make recommendations on the Council's Annual Governance Statement;
- (f) Consider the Council's corporate governance arrangements and make recommendations to ensure compliance best practice;
- (g) Monitor the Council's compliance with its own and other published standards and controls;
- (h) Consider reports dealing with risk management across the organisation and those reports which identify key risks the Council faces, seeking assurance of appropriate management action;
- (i) The Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee shall act as the Member Risk Champion;
- (j) To have oversight the Council's Performance Management Framework so far as it relates to the Corporate Governance Functions of the committee;
- (k) Such other matters as required by law or guidance to be the proper remit of the Audit and Governance Committee;
- (l) To receive annually statistical reports and details of complaints received and investigated through the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure which have

resulted in payments or other benefits being provided by the Council in cases of maladministration;

- (m) Receive on behalf of the Council reports issued by the Local Government Ombudsman into investigations that the Council's actions have amounted to maladministration causing injustice.

4.7.4 Financial Reporting:

- (a) View the Council's annual statement of accounts and specifically consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed, and whether there are any concerns arising from the financial statements, or the audit which should be brought to the attention of the Council;
- (b) Consider reports of the external auditor to those in charge of governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts.

4.8 Pensions Fund Committee

1. The Pensions Fund Committee
 - a. Role and Function
 - b. Membership, Chair and Quorum
 - c. Terms of Reference
 - d. Membership breakdown
2. The Investment Sub-Committee
 - a. Role and Function
 - b. Membership, Chair and Quorum
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3. The Joint Committee (of the ACCESS Asset Pool)
 - a. Role and Function
 - b. Membership, Chair and Quorum
 - c. Terms of Reference
4. The Local Pension Board

1. The Pensions Fund Committee

1.1 Role and Function

To be responsible for the Council's statutory function as administering authority under the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations and associated legislation under Sections 7, 12 and 24 of the Superannuation Act 1972. The Committee will be established under s.101 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Pension Committee will be provided with full delegated powers to discharge the following functions on behalf of the Council to deal with all matters relating to the Northamptonshire Local Government Pension Scheme.

1.2 Membership, Chairing and Quorum

Number of Members	13
Chair and Vice Chair's Term of Office	<p>Term of office will be one year.</p> <p>The appointment /removal of the Chair will be a function of the Council. The appointment of the Vice Chair shall be a function of the Pension Committee.</p> <p>The Chair and Vice Chair of the Pension Committee will represent the Northamptonshire Pension Fund on the Joint Committee of the ACCESS pool.</p>
Substitute Members Permitted	Designated substitutes only due to the skills and knowledge requirements
Political balance rules apply	Yes, within West Northamptonshire Council membership
Restrictions on Membership	None
Quorum	5
Number of ordinary meetings per Council year	A minimum of 4
Voting rights	All representatives have equal voting rights
Training requirements	Members may not take part on the meetings of the Pension Committee unless they are committed to the skills and knowledge requirements set out by the Chair.

1.3 Terms of Reference

- (a) To deal with all matters relating to the Northamptonshire Pension Fund Local Government Pension Scheme.
- (b) Authority to set the Pension Fund's objectives and determine and maintain appropriate strategies, policies and procedures with ongoing monitoring in the following areas:
 - (i) Funding Strategy – ongoing monitoring and management of the liabilities including ensuring appropriate funding plans are in place for all employers in the Fund. Overseeing the triennial valuation and interim valuations and working with the actuary in determining the appropriate level of employer contributions for each employer.
 - (ii) Investment Strategy – to determine the Fund's investment objectives and to set and review the long term high level investment strategy to ensure these are aligned with the Fund's specific liability profile and risk appetite
 - (iii) Administration Strategy – the administration of the Fund including collecting payments due, calculating and paying benefits, gathering from and providing information to scheme members and employers.
 - (iv) Communications Strategy – determining the methods of communications with the various stakeholders including scheme members and employers.
 - (v) Discretions – determining how the various administering authority discretions are operated for the Fund.

- (vi) Risk Management Strategy – to include regular monitoring of the Fund’s key risks and agreeing how they are managed and/or mitigated.
 - (vii) Governance – other key governance documents concerning the management and administration of the Northamptonshire Pension Fund such as strategies, policies and procedures such as the Overpayments of Pension Policy and Reporting Breaches of the Law to the Pensions Regulator.
- (c) Authority to approve and apply the policy on, and to take decisions relating to, employers joining and leaving the Fund and bulk transfers in and out of the Fund. This includes which employers are entitled to join the Fund, any requirements relating to their entry, ongoing monitoring and the basis for leaving the Fund.
- (d) Authority to consider and agree business plans at least annually and monitor progress against them.
- (e) Authority to develop and maintain a skills and knowledge framework for all Pension Committee and Investment sub-committee members and for all officers of the Fund, including:
- (i) Determining the Fund’s knowledge and skills framework;
 - (ii) Identifying training requirements;
 - (iii) Developing training plans; and
 - (iv) Monitoring attendance at training events.
- (f) Authority to select, appoint, monitor and where necessary terminate advisers to the Fund not solely relating to investment matters.
- (g) Authority to agree the Administering Authority responses to consultations on LGPS matters and other matters where they may impact on the Fund or its stakeholders.
- (h) Authority to consider and determine where necessary, alternative investment strategies for participating employers.
- (i) Authority to oversee the work of the Investment sub-committee and consider any matters put to them by the Investment sub-committee.
- (j) Authority to set up sub-committees and task and finish groups including jointly with other LGPS Administering Authorities.
- (k) Authority to review and amend the Strategic Investment policies on an appropriate regular basis, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer.
- (l) Authority to manage any other strategic or key matters pertaining to the Fund not specifically listed above.
- (m) Production of an annual report for consideration by the Council.
- (n) Consider and review the financial accounts in advance of approval by the Audit Committee.
- (o) In relation to pooled asset arrangements under the ACCESS Joint Committee:
- (i) Providing a representative to sit on the Joint Committee to represent the interests of the Northamptonshire Pension Fund
 - (ii) Determining the requirements of the Administering Authority in relation to the provision of services by ACCESS to enable it to execute its investment strategy effectively.
 - (iii) Receiving and considering reports from the ACCESS Joint Committee in order to ensure that the Fund’s investor rights and views are represented appropriately.

- (iv) Ensuring arrangements are in place to identify and manage the risks and costs associated with investment pooling.

1.4 Membership breakdown of the Pensions Fund Committee

Representing	Number of Representatives	Term of Office	Method of Appointment
West Northamptonshire Council (the administering authority)	7	4 years from Council election	Determined by West Northamptonshire Council
North Northamptonshire Council	2	4 years	Determined by North Northamptonshire Council
All other employers	2	4 years	Nominations to be determined by eligible employers. Details of the selection process to be determined by Chair.
Active Scheme Members	1	4 years	Determined by Unison. Where Unison fails to nominate a representative for any period of 6 months or more, nominations will be requested from all eligible active members and a representative will be picked following interviews. Details of process to be agreed by the Chair.
Deferred and Pensioner Members	1	4 years	Determined by Unison. Where Unison fails to nominate a representative for any period of 6 months or more, nominations will be requested from all eligible active members and a representative will be picked following interviews. Details of process to be agreed by the Chair.
Total	13		

2. Investment Sub-Committee

2.1 Role and Function

The Investment sub-committee undertake the day to day management of the Fund's investments through implementing the investment strategy, reviewing and monitoring the asset allocation and appointing and reviewing the performance of investment managers outside of the ACCESS asset pool.

2.2 Membership, Chairing and Quorum

Number of Members	7
Chair and Vice Chair's Term of Office	The Chair and Vice Chair of the Board shall also be the Chair and Vice Chair of the Investment sub-committee
Substitute Members Permitted	Designated substitutes only due to the skills and knowledge requirements
Political balance rules apply	Yes, within West Northamptonshire membership
Restrictions on Membership	Representatives must be derived from the membership of the Pension Committee
Quorum	4
Number of ordinary meetings per Council year	A minimum of 4
Voting rights	All representatives have equal voting rights
Training requirements	Members may not take part on the meetings of the Investment sub-committee unless they are committed to the skills and knowledge requirements set out by the Chair.

2.3 Terms of Reference

- (a) Authority to implement the Fund’s investment strategy including setting benchmarks and targets for the Fund’s investment managers and reviewing performance against those benchmarks.
- (b) Authority to review and maintain the asset allocation of the Fund within parameters agreed with the Pension Committee.
- (c) Authority to appoint and terminate investment managers to the Fund, including through divestment from holdings within the ACCESS asset pool, and to monitor the performance of investment managers leading to review and decisions on termination where necessary.
- (d) Authority to appoint and monitor and where necessary terminate external advisors and service providers solely relating to investment matters, for example, the Fund Custodian, independent investment advisers, and investment consultants.
- (e) Authority to monitor the risks inherent in the Fund’s investment strategy in relation to the Fund’s funding level.
- (f) Authority to monitor and review:
 - (i) Legislative, financial and economic changes relating to investments and their potential impact on the Fund;
 - (ii) The investment management fees paid by the Fund and to implement any actions deemed necessary;
 - (iii) The transactions costs incurred by the Fund across its investment mandates and raise relevant issues and concerns with the investment providers as necessary;
 - (iv) The investment provider’s adoption of responsible investment considerations, including carbon benchmarking, corporate governance matters and a review of compliance with the UK Stewardship Code.
- (g) Authority to receive reports from investment providers.

- (h) Authority to undertake any task as delegated by the Pension Committee.
- (i) Authority to refer any matter to the Pension Committee as they consider appropriate and to provide minutes and such other information as they may request from time to time.

2.4 Membership breakdown of the Investment Sub-Committee

Representing	Number of Representatives	Term of Office	Method of Appointment
West Northamptonshire Council (the administering authority)	4	4 years from Council election	Determined by West Northamptonshire Council
North Northamptonshire Council	1	4 years from Council election	Determined by West Northamptonshire Council
All other employers	1	4 years	Determined by non-West Northamptonshire Council employer representatives on the Committee. Details of process to be agreed by the Chair.
Scheme Members	1	4 years	Determined by Unison. Where Unison fails to nominate a representative for any period of 6 months or more, nominations will be requested from all eligible active members and a representative will be picked following interviews. Details of process to be agreed by the Chair.
Total	7		

3. The Joint Committee (of the ACCESS asset pool)

3.1 Role and Function

The Joint Committee is the formal decision-making body within the ACCESS asset pool. The Joint Committee has been appointed by the 11 administering authorities under s.102 of the Local Government Act 1972, with delegated authority from the Full Council of each administering authority within the pool to be responsible for ongoing contract management and budget management in relation to the pooling of LGPS pension fund assets. The Joint Committee is supported by the officer Working Group and the ACCESS Support Unit. Each administering authority within the ACCESS asset pool has signed and is bound by the terms of an Inter-Authority Agreement.

3.2 Membership, Chairing and Quorum

The Joint Committee consists of one elected councillor appointed by each council. The member so appointed must, at the time of the appointment, be an elected councillor serving as a member of the committee of a council which discharges the duties the functions of that council as Local Government Pension Scheme administering authority.

Each council may appoint a substitute. Any substitute must meet the eligibility requirements above. The substitute may attend any meeting of the Joint Committee or any of its sub-committees in place of that authority's principal member if notice that the substitute will attend is given to the secretary of the Joint Committee by the council concerned.

The Joint Committee meet at least four times each year.

The quorum of a meeting is at least 8 members who are entitled to attend and vote.

Each elected Member has one vote.

Kent County Council provides secretariat support to the Joint Committee and publishes electronic copies of agenda and unrestricted public items on their website.

3.3 Terms of Reference (as detailed in the Inter-Authority Agreement).

Part 1 – Operating the Pool and taking advice

- (a) The Joint Committee (JC) shall consult with and consider the advice of the Section 151 Officer Group (and, where requested, the Monitoring Officers and from appropriate professional advisers) in discharging its functions, recording, if appropriate, where such advice is not followed and the rationale for not doing so. It may decide to procure such professional advisers on such terms as it thinks fit. Accordingly, any procurement of advisers must comply with the constitution of the Council designated to undertake the procurement and that Council will enter into a contract with the appointed adviser on behalf of the Councils.
- (b) The JC shall decide which functions shall be performed by the ACCESS Support Unit (ASU).
- (c) The JC shall at all times have regards to the ACCESS Pool's principles of governing and collaboration.

Part 2 – Functions in relation to the Operator(s)

- (a) Specifying Operator services – Deciding, in consultation with the Councils, the specification of Services and functions that each Operator will be required to deliver including the sub-funds and classes of investments required to enable each Council to execute its investment strategy.
- (b) Procuring an Operator – Agreeing the method and process for the procurement and selection of one or more Operators.
- (c) Appointing an Operator – Making a recommendation to the Councils as to the identity of each Operator and the terms upon which each Operator is to be appointed.
- (d) Reviewing the Performance of an Operator – Keeping the performance of each Operator under review and making arrangements to ensure that the JC is provided with regular and sufficient reports from the ASU to enable it to do so including but not limited to:

- (i) The performance of an Operator against its contractual requirements and any other performance measures such as the Service Level Agreement and Key Performance Indicators and officer recommendations on any remedial action;
 - (ii) Sub-fund investment performance;
 - (iii) Investment and operational costs including the annual review of investment manager costs;
 - (iv) Performance against the strategic business plan agreed by the Councils.
- (e) Managing the Operator(s) – the JC shall:
- (i) Make recommendations to the Councils about the termination or extension of the Operator Agreement(s)
 - (ii) Make decisions about any other action to be taken to manage an Operator Agreement including the giving of any instruction or the making of any recommendation to the relevant Operator including but not restricted to recommendations on investment managers (with any regulatory constraints that may apply); and
 - (iii) Make recommendations to the Councils about appropriate arrangements to replace an Operator Agreement on its termination.

Part 3 – Functions in relation to management of Pool Assets

- (a) The joint committee shall make recommendations to the councils on the strategic plan for transition of assets that are to become Pool Assets.

Part 4 – Functions Concerning Pool Aligned Assets

- (a) The JC shall make recommendations to the Councils about Pool Aligned Assets in accordance with this Agreement or any other delegation to the JC by the Councils.
- (b) Specifying services of Pool Aligned Assets Provider(s) – Deciding, in consultation with the Councils, the specification of Services which any Pool Aligned Assets Provider will be required to deliver including the sub-funds and classes of investments required to enable each Council to execute its investment strategy.
- (c) Procuring a Pool Aligned Assets Provider – Agreeing the method of and process for the procurement and selection of one or more Pool Aligned Assets Providers.
- (d) Appointing Pool Aligned Assets Provider – Making a recommendation to the Councils as to the identity of each Pool Aligned Assets Provider and the terms upon which each Pool Aligned Assets Provider is to be appointed.
- (e) Reviewing the Performance of a Pool Aligned Assets Provider – Keeping the performance of each Pool Aligned Assets Provider under review and making arrangements to ensure that the JC is provided with regular and sufficient reports from the ASU to enable it do so including but not limited to:
 - (i) The performance of the Pool Aligned Assets Provider against its contractual requirements and any other performance measures such as any Service Level Agreement and Key Performance Indicators and office recommendations on any remedial action;
 - (ii) Investment performance of the Pool Aligned Assets Vehicle(s) or sub-funds, as appropriate;

- (iii) Performance against the strategic business plan agreed by the Councils.

Part 5 – Functions Concerning Business Planning and Budget

- (a) Having taken account of any advice from the Section 151 Officers Group (or, where relevant, recording the rationale for not following such advice), the JC shall:
 - (i) Make recommendations to the Councils about the annual strategic business plan for the Pool;
 - (ii) Determine the Budget necessary to implement that plan and meet the expenses of undertaking the Specified Functions (insofar as they will not be met by individual transaction costs paid by the Councils to the Operator) in accordance with Schedule 5 (Cost Sharing) of the Inter-Authority Agreement.
 - (iii) Keep the structure created by this agreement under review from time to time and make recommendations to the Councils about:
 - The future of the pool
 - Any changes in Inter-Authority Agreement
 - The respective merits of continuing to procure operator services by means of a third party or by creation of an operator owned by the Councils.

Part 6 – Functions Concerning Communications

- (a) The JC may agree a protocol for communications in respect of the Pool with third parties, including the LGPS Scheme Advisory Board, other LGPS administering authorities, press and relevant Government departments.

Part 7 – Review of this Agreement

- (a) The JC is required to undertake a review of this agreement:
 - (i) To be completed 18 months before the expiry of each and every Operator Agreement, including as a result of the exercise of any option to terminate an Operator Agreement;
 - (ii) Whenever a Council gives notice of withdrawal under clause 12 (Withdrawal from Agreement) of the Inter-Authority Agreement; or
 - (iii) At such times as a Council may request under Clause 11 (Variation of Agreement) of the Inter-Authority Agreement.

4. The Local Pension Board

The administering authority (West Northamptonshire Council) as scheme manager under Section 4 of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 is required to establish a Local Pension Board in accordance with Section 5 of that Act and under Regulation 106 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 (as amended).

The Board is independent of the Pension Committee and is not a committee constituted under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 and therefore no general duties,

responsibilities or powers assigned to this such committees, sub-committees or officers under the constitution, standing orders or scheme of delegation of the administering authority apply to the Board unless expressly stated.

a. Role and Function

The role of the Local Pension Board is to assist the administering authority (West Northamptonshire Council) in its role as scheme manager of the Northamptonshire Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). This covers all aspects of governance and administration of the LGPS, including funding and investments. The Local Pension Board’s responsibilities are:

- To assist the administering authority in securing compliance with:
 - the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013;
 - other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the LGPS; and
 - the requirements imposed by the Pensions Regulator in relation to the LGPS; and
- To ensure the effective and efficient governance and administration of the LGPS.

b. Membership, Chairing and Quorum

Representatives	Number of seats	Term of appointment	Method of appointment
Scheme Employers	3	4 years	One councillor representative determined by West Northamptonshire Council. One councillor representative determined by North Northamptonshire Council. One representative of any other Scheme Employer that participates in the Northamptonshire Pension Fund appointed via an open selection process.
Scheme Members	3	4 years	Three representatives appointed via an open selection process. Any trade union members so appointed will represent Scheme Members.

All Local Pension Board members shall have the right to vote in meetings.

The Local Pension Board shall meet a minimum of four times a year. The date, hour and place of meetings shall be fixed by the Board. The Chair may call additional meetings if necessary. Quorum shall be three Local Pension Board members, provided that the employer and member sides are both represented.

No business requiring a formal resolution shall be transacted at any meeting of the Local Pension Board unless the meeting is quorate. If it arises during the course of a meeting that a quorum is no longer present, the Chair shall either suspend business until a quorum is re-established or declare the meeting at an end and arrange for the completion of the agenda

at the next meeting or at a special meeting. Only previously designated substitutes are permitted to attend due to the skills and knowledge requirements of Local Pension Board representatives.

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Local Pension Board shall be elected by the Board at its annual meeting. The normal term of office for the Chair and Vice Chair of the Local Pension Board shall be one year, subject to earlier removal by vote of the Local Pension Board.

Members may not be permitted to take part in meetings of the Local Pension Board unless they have complied with the training requirements as set out in the Public Services Pensions Act and in the CIPFA Skills and Knowledge requirements for Local Pension Board representatives.

c. Terms of Reference

The first core function of the Board is to assist the administering authority in securing compliance with the Regulations, any other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the Scheme, and requirements imposed by the Pensions Regulator in relation to the Scheme. Within this extent of this core function the Board may determine the areas it wishes to consider including but not restricted to:

- Review regular compliance monitoring reports which shall include reports to and decisions made under the Regulations by the Committee.
- Review management, administrative and governance processes and procedures in order to ensure they remain compliant with the Regulations, relevant legislation and in particular the Pension Regulator's Code of Practice.
- Review the compliance of scheme employers with their duties under the Regulations and relevant legislation.
- Assist with the development of and continually review such documentation as is required by the Regulations including the Governance Compliance Statement, Funding Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy Statement.
- Assist with the development of and continually review scheme member and employer communications as required by the Regulations and relevant legislation.
- Monitor complaints and performance on the administration and governance of the scheme.
- Review the implementation of revised policies and procedures following changes to the Scheme.
- Review the outcome of internal and external audit reports.
- Review draft accounts and Fund annual report.
- Review the compliance of particular cases, projects or process on request of the Committee.
- Any other area within the statement of purpose (i.e. assisting the Administering Authority) the Board deems appropriate.

The second core function of the Board is to ensure the effective and efficient governance and administration of the Scheme. Within this extent of this core function the Board may determine the areas it wishes to consider including but not restricted to:

- Assist with the development of improved customer services.

- Monitor performance of administration governance and investments against key performance targets and indicators.
- Monitor internal and external audit reports.
- Review the risk register as it relates to the scheme manager function of the authority.
- Assist with the development of improved management, administration and governance structures and policies.
- Review the outcome of actuarial reporting and valuations.
- Assist in the development and monitoring of process improvements on request of Committee.
- Any other area to ensuring effective and efficient governance of the scheme the Board deems appropriate.

4.9 Health and Wellbeing Board

Terms of Reference

4.9.1 Accountability

4.9.1.1 The West Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Board is a statutory committee of West Northamptonshire Council which:

- (a) Is established in accordance with section 194 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012.
- (b) Is treated as a committee of the Council under section 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 and provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
- (c) Will be subject to any amendment or replacement of regulation or guidance applicable to any legislation relevant to the functions, powers and duties of Health and Wellbeing Boards.

4.9.2 Role

4.9.2.1 The Board is a forum that enables leaders from across West Northamptonshire to secure better health and wellbeing outcomes for the local population, better quality of care for all patients and care users, better value for the taxpayer and reduce health inequalities by shaping the future of services through a more integrated approach to commissioning health and wellbeing related services.

4.9.2.2 The Board aims to achieve this by:

- (a) Providing a strategic lead for the local health and care system, and improving the commissioning of services across the NHS, local government and its partners.
- (b) Initiating and encouraging the integrated delivery of health, social care and other services with health and wellbeing related responsibilities (such as housing, leisure, planning community activity).
- (c) Holding the Integrated Care System to account through monitoring and assurance.
- (d) Providing a forum to increase democratic legitimacy in health, along with public and joint accountability of NHS, public health, social care for adults and children, and other commissioned services that the Board agrees are directly linked to health and wellbeing.

4.9.3 Responsibilities/duties

4.9.3.1 The statutory duties of the Board are:

- (a) The preparation of Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs) which assess the current and future health and social care needs of the local population.
- (b) The preparation of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy (HWS).
- (c) To encourage the integration of health and social care services, in particular providing appropriate advice, assistance or support for the purposes of integration of services under section 75 of the National Health Service Act 2006.
- (d) To encourage close working between commissioners of health-related services (such as housing and many other local government services) and commissioners of health and social care services.
- (e) Overseeing the publication of the Directors of Public Health Annual Report.
- (f) To endorse and oversee the successful implementation of local arrangements for the Better Care Fund (BCF), Improved Better Care Fund (IBCF) and Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG).
- (g) To review NHS Northamptonshire Clinical Commissioning Group and West Northamptonshire Council local commissioning plans to ensure they take due regard of the JHWS and the JSNA, writing formally to the local authority leadership or NHS England as appropriate, if in its opinion the plans do not.
- (h) To advise the Care Quality Commission, NHS England, Trust Development Authority or NHS Improvement (as appropriate), where the Board has concerns about standards of service delivery or financial probity.
- (i) Publication of a Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment.
- (j) To undertake any additional responsibilities as delegated by the West Northamptonshire Council.

4.9.4 Authority

- 4.9.4.1 The Board may seek any information it requires from any employee of a constituent member organisation via a Member and all constituent members and Members are directed to co-operate with any reasonable request made by the Board.
- 4.9.4.2 The Board may obtain independent professional advice and to secure the attendance of outsiders with relevant experience and expertise if it considers this necessary. The costs, if any, of obtaining such third party advice shall be shared among the constituent organisations as agreed between them.
- 4.9.4.3 The Board shall receive written and oral evidence from senior staff, and other partners, as appropriate.
- 4.9.4.4 The Board shall seek to ensure there is an acceptable balance between the value of the information it receives and the time and other costs it takes to acquire and process it.

4.9.5 Appointments

- 4.9.5.1 The Chair of the Board will be recommended by the Leader of West Northamptonshire Council. The Chair can be an independent co-opted member. Vice Chairs will be appointed by the Board.
- 4.9.5.2 The Chair and Vice Chairs' term of office shall last for a maximum of two years, where they will be appointed or replaced as approved by Full Council.

4.9.6 Membership

- 4.9.6.1 The following are statutory members of the Board as stipulated in section 194 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012:
- (a) At least one elected member of the local authority nominated by the Leader of the local authority.
 - (b) The director of adult social services for the local authority.
 - (c) The director of children's services for the local authority.
 - (d) The director of public health for the local authority.
 - (e) A representative of the Local Healthwatch organisation for the local authority.
 - (f) A representative of each relevant clinical commissioning group (a person may, with the agreement of the Health and Wellbeing Board, represent more than one clinical commissioning group on the Board).
- 4.9.6.2 The Board may appoint additional persons to become members of the Board as it thinks appropriate.
- 4.9.6.3 West Northamptonshire Council must consult the Board before appointing a non-statutory member to the Board.
- 4.9.6.4 Members of the Board shall each name a deputy who will have the authority to make decisions in the event that they are unable to attend a meeting.
- 4.9.6.5 In the absence of the Chair then one of the Vice Chairs shall preside. If all are absent the Board shall appoint, from amongst its members, an Acting Chair for the meeting in question.
- 4.9.6.6 Individuals may be listed under membership of the Board as Special Advisors by invitation for specific issues and expertise.

4.9.7 Code of Conduct

- 4.9.7.1 All members of the Board are covered by West Northamptonshire Council's Code of Conduct and must adhere to that Code of Conduct when acting in the capacity of a Board member.
- 4.9.7.2 Where any Board member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Registerable Interest, which will require them to leave the meeting for the duration of discussion on that item, they must make this known at the commencement of the meeting. They may remain and address the board on the relevant matter but must leave the room prior to any debate, voting or decision-making process.

4.9.8 Quorum

- 4.9.8.1 A quorum for any meeting shall be one-quarter of the members of the Board including at least one elected Member, one officer and one representative from a Clinical Commissioning Group. No business requiring a decision shall take place where the meeting is not quorate, if this arises during a meeting the Chair must either suspend business until the meeting is again quorate or declare the meeting closed.

4.9.9 Voting Arrangements

- 4.9.9.1 Unless the Council decides otherwise, all full members of the Health and Wellbeing Board have voting rights; only full Board members (or nominated

deputies in their absence) shall sit at the Board room table, or join virtually so that the right to vote is obvious.

- 4.9.9.2 Decisions shall be made on the basis of a show of hands of a majority of voting members present. The Chair may exercise a second or casting vote.

4.9.10 Meeting Frequency

- 4.9.10.1 The Board shall meet on a quarterly basis. The date, hour and place of meetings shall be fixed by the Board.
- 4.9.10.2 The Chair may convene an extraordinary meeting at short notice to consider matters of urgency. The notice must state the business to be transacted and no other business is to be transacted at the meeting.
- 4.9.10.3 The Chair will be required to consider convening a special meeting of the Board if they are in receipt of a written requisition to do so signed by no less than three of the constituent members of the Board. Such requisition shall specify the business to be transacted and no other business shall be transacted as such meeting. The meeting, if convened by the Chair, must be held within seven days of the Chair's receipt of the requisition.
- 4.9.10.4 The Chair of the Board, or majority of those present at a Board meeting, may adjourn meetings of the Board at any time, to be reconvened at any other day, hour and place, as the Board decides.

4.9.11 Sub-Groups

- 4.9.11.1 The Board can establish sub-groups based on the Board's priority areas which will be reviewed on an annual basis. The sub-groups will be informal officer groups, ensuring that the views of patients and service users are included. The sub-groups should provide an overview of work undertaken and any issues arising for discussion at Health and Wellbeing Board meetings to be considered by members.

4.9.12 Visitors and Speakers

- 4.9.12.1 As the Board is a public meeting, observers may attend and will be seated in a viewing area or observe via YouTube if the meetings are held virtually.
- 4.9.12.2 Presenters who are not full Board Members may attend the meeting and should sit in the viewing area. They will be invited to address the floor by the Chair when their agenda item arrives.
- 4.9.12.3 The public who wish to address the Board on matters listed on the agenda for a specific meeting may do so for a period of not exceeding 3 minutes at the commencement of that meeting, only with the agreement of the Chair, and provided they have given 48 hours' written notice of the matter to be raised to the Chair and Board secretariat.

4.9.13 Meeting Administration

- 4.9.13.1 The Board secretariat shall give at least five clear working days' notice in writing to each member for every ordinary meeting of the Board, to include any agenda of the business to be transacted at the meeting.

- 4.9.13.2 Papers for each Board meeting will be sent out five clear working days in advance. Late papers will be sent out or tabled only in exceptional circumstances, and not without the prior consent of the Chair.
- 4.9.13.3 The Board shall hold meetings, or parts of meetings, in private session when deemed appropriate in view of the nature of business to be discussed. The Board must first pass a resolution for the exclusion of press and public. The following must be stated at this time:

“In respect of the following items the Chair moves 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”.

4.10 Senior Appointments Committee

4.10.1 Membership

- 4.10.1.1 Leader, Deputy Leader, Relevant Portfolio Holder, Leader of the Opposition, and three other councillors. The Committee is required to be politically balanced.

4.10.2 Terms of Reference of the Senior Appointments Committee

- 4.10.2.1 To recommend to the Council the appointment and, where appropriate, the dismissal of the Chief Executive, the Executive Director Finance or the Director of Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer), in accordance with the Staff Employment Procedure Rules (see section 9.5).
- 4.10.2.2 To make appointments or dismissals as appropriate of the following roles:
- Director of Children’s Services
 - Director of Transformation
 - Executive Director Adults, Communities and Wellbeing
 - Executive Director Place and Economy
 - Executive Director Corporate Services
 - Assistant Chief Executive
 - Director of Public Health
- 4.10.2.3 To take disciplinary action other than dismissal in respect of the Head of Paid Service, Chief Finance Officer or Monitoring Officer.
- 4.10.2.4 To undertake associated activities, including the interview and dismissal processes generally for the roles outlined.

5.0 EXECUTIVE

5.1 The Role of the Cabinet

- a. The Functions of a local authority are divided into two broad categories: Executive and non-Executive. The Council and its committees decide non-Executive matters and these are described in Parts 3 and 4 of the Constitution. All other decisions are made by the Executive.
- b. West Northamptonshire Council is operating a Leader and Cabinet model form of Executive Arrangements. This means that the Council will elect a Leader from among the members of the Council. The Executive will consist of the Leader and at least 2 other members and not more than 9 other members, one of whom must be appointed Deputy Leader.
- c. The function of determining Executive Portfolios sits with the Executive Leader and can be varied at the discretion of the Leader.
- d. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Council may not be members of the Executive. Further details are set out in the Cabinet Procedure Rules below.

5.2 Cabinet Arrangements

Cabinet Decisions

- 5.2.1. The arrangements for the discharge of executive functions are determined by the Leader. The Leader may provide for executive functions to be discharged by:
- (a) The Leader;
 - (b) The Cabinet as a whole;
 - (c) A committee of the Cabinet;
 - (d) An individual member of the Cabinet;
 - (e) An officer;
 - (f) An Area committee;
 - (g) Joint Arrangements including the Community Networks; or
 - (h) Another Local Authority.

Delegation by the Leader

- 5.2.2. At the Annual Meeting of the Council, the Leader shall present to the Council their proposals for Cabinet delegations, to the extent that they have been formulated at that time. The Leader shall provide to the Monitoring Officer within ten working days of the Annual Meeting a written record of Cabinet delegations made by them for publication, together with notice of the Portfolios to be established. In discharging these responsibilities, the Leader shall have regard to the recommendations of the

Monitoring Officer and Chief Executive as to the scope and formation of the Portfolios.

- 5.2.3. Any subsequent 'in year' amendments shall, as they occur, be notified by the Leader in writing within one working day to the Monitoring Officer who shall notify all Members in writing of the amendment and maintain a record of them.
- 5.2.4. The document presented by the Leader shall contain the following information about executive functions in relation to the coming year:
- (a) the names, addresses and electoral divisions of the councillors appointed to the Cabinet by the Leader;
 - (b) the nature of the responsibilities attached to the Portfolios allocated to those appointed to the Cabinet;
 - (c) the extent of any authority delegated to Cabinet Members individually, including details of the limitation(s) on their authority;
 - (d) the terms of reference and Constitution of such Cabinet committees as the Leader appoints and the names of Cabinet Members appointed to them;
 - (e) the nature and extent of any delegation of executive functions to Area committees, any other authority or any joint arrangements and the names of those Cabinet Members appointed to any joint committee for the coming year; and
 - (f) the nature and extent of any delegation to officers with details of any limitation on that delegation, and the title of the officer to whom the delegation is made. This may simply be the endorsement of the Scheme of Delegation approved by Council.

Cabinet Portfolios

- 5.2.5. Cabinet portfolios showing details of portfolio holders and their key areas of responsibility can be found on the Council's website ([Document West Northamptonshire Council Executive Portfolios - 2021 - West Northamptonshire Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)) or by contacting Democratic Services.

Sub-Delegation of Executive Functions

- 5.2.6. Where the Cabinet, a committee of the Cabinet or an individual member of the Cabinet is responsible for an executive function, they may delegate further to an area committee, joint arrangements or an officer.
- 5.2.7. Unless the Leader directs otherwise, functions delegated to the Cabinet may be delegated further to a committee of the Cabinet or to an officer.
- 5.2.8. Unless the Leader directs otherwise, functions delegated to a committee of the Cabinet may be delegated further to an officer.

5.2.9. The delegation of Cabinet functions does not prevent the discharge of those functions by the person or body who made the delegation or a person or body with a higher right of delegation.

The Council's Scheme of Delegation and Executive Functions

5.2.10. Subject to paragraph 5.2.11 below, the Council's Scheme of Delegation shall be subject to adoption by the Council and may only be amended by the Council, save for delegations relating to executive functions which may be varied by the Leader or in accordance with the authority delegated to the Monitoring Officer. It shall comprise the details required in Part 9.2 of the Constitution, the Scheme of Delegation to officers in this Constitution and such further delegations as are made in accordance with this Constitution or other powers available to the Council.

5.2.11. If the Leader decides to delegate executive functions, they may amend the Scheme of Delegation relating to executive functions accordingly at any time during the year. To do so, the Leader must give written notice to the Monitoring Officer and to the person, body or committee concerned. The notice must set out the extent of the amendment to the Scheme of Delegation and whether it entails the withdrawal of delegation from any person, body, committee or the Cabinet as a whole. The Leader shall confirm, through their announcements any changes at the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

5.2.12. Where the Leader seeks to withdraw delegation from a sub-committee, notice shall be deemed to be served on that committee when served on its Chair.

Planning Policy Committee

Purpose

5.2.13. The purpose of the Committee is to exercise the Council's executive functions in relation to the preparation and, where applicable, approval of planning policy and neighbourhood planning documents.

Membership

5.2.14. The members of the Committee represent as far as possible the political balance of the Council as a whole but this is not a counting committee for the purposes of establishing political balance.

5.2.15. Membership shall consist of:

- (a) Three Executive Members
- (b) Seven Non-Executive Members (4 Conservative, 2 Labour, 1 Liberal Democrat)

5.2.16. As this is an Executive committee only the Executive members have a vote, but the aim of the committee is to try to establish broad consensus about the development of planning policy.

Terms of Reference

5.2.17. The exercise of the Council's functions, powers and duties (where not otherwise delegated to officers) in relation to the following:

- (a) To oversee the preparation of the West Northamptonshire Local Plan to ensure that it meets the 'tests of soundness' set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- (b) To oversee the preparation of the Local Development Scheme and Statement of Community Involvement and approve those documents.
- (c) To consider and recommend the content of the Local Plan for consideration and formal approval by full Council for either public consultation (preferred options or pre-submission versions), submissions to the Secretary of State (to be examined by a Planning Inspector), or final adoption (following receipt of the Planning Inspector's report).
- (d) To oversee the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and other planning documents for public consultation and, where applicable, approve those documents for final adoption.
- (e) To approve the preparation and subsequent publication of studies, surveys and other technical documents that form part of the evidence base needed to justify the content of the Local Plan, SPDs and other planning documents.
- (f) Approve the work programme required for the committee to undertake its functions effectively and in a timely manner.
- (g) Approve non-statutory planning policy and guidance to be considered by the Council, the Planning Committees, this committee and officers in the discharge of statutory planning functions.
- (h) To carry out the Executive functions of the Council in relation to the approval of planning documents and recommendation of planning documents by the Executive to Council. Matters reserved to full Council or Non-Executive approvals fall outside the remit of this committee.
- (i) To carry out the Executive functions of the Council in relation to Neighbourhood Planning in particular to proceed to referendum, and if successful, make neighbourhood plans within the time limits that apply.

Meeting Times

5.2.18. The Committee will meet at 6pm on a working day and up to 12 times per year.

5.2.19. Items for Planning Policy Committee will appear on the Forward Plan and arrangements for the committee will comply with the Executive Procedure Rules set out in the Constitution.

5.3 Cabinet Procedure Rules

1 Meetings of the Cabinet

- 1.1 The Cabinet will meet as indicated in the Council's programme of meetings. The Cabinet or the Leader may agree to change the date or time of any programmed meeting subject to compliance with the requirements of Part 5.4 (Access to Information Procedure Rules) of this Constitution, to cancel a meeting where there is insufficient business to be transacted and/or to arrange additional meetings as it/they see fit. Locations of meetings will be published in the calendar of meetings.
- 1.2 The Cabinet may meet in public or in private, subject to legal requirements and the Access to Information Procedure Rules set out in this Constitution.
- 1.3 The Leader will chair meetings of the Cabinet or in their absence, the Deputy Leader will chair. Where both the Leader and Deputy Leader are absent, the Members present, may appoint one member of the Cabinet to chair that meeting.
- 1.4 All members of the Cabinet shall be entitled to attend meetings of the Cabinet.
- 1.5 Attendance by other Members of the Council or the public shall be in accordance with the Access to Information Procedure Rules, by invitation under Rule 1.6 below, or as set out in Rules 4.1 to 4.2 below.
- 1.6 The Cabinet may invite any person it considers appropriate, to its meetings to discuss matters of mutual interest or concern, or to advise. Such persons may only be given access to confidential and/or exempt information on terms to be decided by the Monitoring Officer so as to ensure that the Access to Information Procedure Rules are observed.

2 Quorum at meetings of the Cabinet

- 2.1 No business shall be transacted where at any time during the meeting of the Cabinet, or a committee or sub-committee established by the Cabinet, there are fewer than one third of members of the Cabinet, a committee or sub-committee of the Cabinet present.

3 Taking of decisions by the Cabinet

- 3.1 Cabinet decisions, including those taken under delegated powers, shall not take effect until they have been recorded in writing, as required under the Access to Information Procedure Rules, and shall not be implemented where the right of call-in has been exercised until the call-in process has been concluded. Records of Cabinet decisions must be confirmed at the next meeting.

4 Members attending and speaking at Cabinet meetings

- 4.1 The Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny committees shall be entitled to attend any formal public meeting of the Cabinet and to speak to any matter on the agenda for that meeting.
- 4.2 Other Members of the Council may also speak at such meetings, subject to the rights

of the Leader (or person presiding in their absence) to ensure that the business of the Cabinet is discharged efficiently and effectively. Those members shall be required to provide no less than 30 minutes' prior notice of their wish to attend and speak.

5 Business at Cabinet meetings

- 5.1 The business to be transacted at meetings of the Cabinet will be set out in an agenda for the meeting in question, subject to any requirements or exemptions under the Access to Information Procedure Rules.
- 5.2 The agenda may be supported by additional papers prepared by officers or by or on behalf of other bodies, subject to requirements in the Access to Information Procedure Rules and disclosure of confidential or exempt information.
- 5.3 The Cabinet is obliged to consider matters referred to it by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee, or by the Full Council. A standing item shall be placed on agendas of public meetings of the Cabinet for this purpose.
- 5.4 The Access to Information Procedure Rules will apply to notice of meetings, agendas, and access to reports and background papers. Where matters are for decision, the agenda must stipulate those that are Key Decisions and those that are not, in accordance with the Access to Information Procedure Rules.
- 5.5 The Cabinet will, at each formal meeting, confirm the record of decisions taken at its previous meeting as a correct record.
- 5.6 The Monitoring Officer or their nominee shall be responsible for preparing and distributing the agenda for Cabinet meetings, attending meetings for the purpose of advising the Cabinet on matters relating to the application and interpretation of the constitution, and recording decisions as required under this Constitution.
- 5.7 In taking decisions, the Cabinet must satisfy itself that it has before it adequate and appropriate advice from its service, legal and financial advisers who shall be present at any meeting where a decision is being taken and that advice is taken into consideration in determining the matter. Where there is any doubt about vires or probity then advice must be obtained from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer.
- 5.8 Any member of the Cabinet may require the Monitoring Officer to place an item on the agenda for a stipulated meeting of the Cabinet.
- 5.9 The Monitoring Officer will ensure that any matters referred to the Cabinet by the Council or an Overview and Scrutiny committee are placed on the agenda for the next appropriate meeting of the Cabinet.
- 5.10 Any councillor may request the Leader to place an item on the agenda of a meeting of the Cabinet. The Leader shall have sole discretion as to whether or not to accede to such a request but shall consult the Monitoring Officer prior to making a decision. If such a request is granted, the Leader shall have sole discretion as to whether the councillor in question can speak to the item at the meeting in question.

- 5.11 The Head of Paid Service, the Monitoring Officer and/or the Section 151 Officer can include an item for consideration on the agenda of a Cabinet meeting. In pursuance of their statutory duties, they can require that a special meeting of the Cabinet be convened.
- 5.12 Business cannot be conducted at formal meetings of the Cabinet unless it is included on the agenda for the meeting. Where it is urgent, the requirements of the Access to Information Procedure Rules must be complied with.
- 5.13 The Cabinet will report to the Council as required under the Access to Information Procedure Rules on any matter which is classified as a Key Decision and is dealt with under special urgency procedures.
- 5.14 Questions can be submitted by members of the public at meetings of the Cabinet in accordance with Council Procedure Rules.

6 Voting at Cabinet meetings

- 6.1 Voting at Cabinet meetings will be by a show of hands and any Member may require, immediately after the vote is taken, that the minutes of the meeting record how they voted or abstained. Where there are equal votes cast, the Leader or, in their absence, the person chairing may exercise a second or casting vote.
- 6.2 Voting for any office or appointment, including any paid appointment, where more than one person is nominated shall be in accordance with Council Meeting Procedure Rule 34.

7 Cabinet – committees and sub-committees

- 7.1 The Cabinet may appoint such committees or sub-committees as it considers necessary and appropriate to assist in the discharge of its functions. In making such appointments, the Cabinet must specify the name of the Committee/sub-committee, its membership (including its Chair and, if appropriate, Vice Chair) and the terms of reference of the body.

8 Motion under Council Meeting Procedure Rule 29

- 8.1 A mover of a motion under Council Meeting Procedure Rule 29 which has been referred to the Cabinet for consideration may attend the meeting of the Cabinet when their motion is under consideration and explain the motion. The mover of the motion will be advised of the date and time of the meeting when the matter is to be considered and they will be sent an electronic copy of the relevant papers.

9 Resolving disputes

- 9.1 In the case of any dispute during the proceedings of the Cabinet, the relevant parts of this Constitution will apply and after considering the application of the relevant provisions, the person chairing the meeting will rule on the issue in question and their ruling will be final.

10 Reserves/substitute members

10.1 There shall be no reserve or substitute members of the Cabinet.

11 Approval of urgent business

11.1 Where any matter is urgent and cannot await the next meeting, the Head of Paid Service may take the necessary action, provided that they have first consulted the Leader (or Deputy Leader if they are not available). The decision taken shall be reported to the next public meeting of the Cabinet.

12 Conflicts of interest

12.1 Where the Leader or any Cabinet Member has a conflict of interest, they will follow the requirements of the Council's Members' Code of Conduct in relation to such interests, including any restrictions on participating in the debate or voting upon the issue in question.

12.2 If all (or a majority) of the members of the Cabinet present have a conflict of interest, then consideration will be given to applying to the Monitoring Officer for a dispensation from the provisions of the Code.

12.3 If the discharge of a Cabinet function has been delegated to another body or individual and a conflict of interest arises for that body or individual, then it will fall to the body or individual who delegated the matter to take the decision.

5.4 Access to Information Procedure Rules

1 General

1.1 These rules apply to all public meetings of the Cabinet, Council, its committees and sub-committees, joint committees.

1.2 In these Rules the word "meeting" means a meeting or meetings of any of these bodies unless specified otherwise.

1.3 These rules do not affect any other specific rights to information contained elsewhere in this Constitution or the law.

1.4 Members of the public may attend all public meetings subject to the exceptions contained in these Rules.

1.5 Members of the press and public are also entitled to film, audio record and report on meetings of the Council, committees, Cabinet and Joint committees, except in circumstances where the press and public have been excluded as permitted by law. Any such filming, audio recording or reporting shall be in accordance with any guidelines published by the Council on its website or made available at the meeting.

2 Notice of meetings

2.1 The Council will give at least five clear working days' notice of any such meeting by publicising, including by electronic means, relevant details, unless Rule 13 (Special

Urgency) has been applied.

3 Agenda and supporting papers - rights of access

- 3.1 Copies of the agenda and supporting papers will be made available on the Council's website, for inspection by the public at least five clear working days before the meeting. Where an item is added to an agenda later, a supplementary agenda will be made available, with any supporting papers, to the public as soon as possible.
- 3.2 The Council will supply on request copies of any agenda and reports which are open to public inspection, and if the Monitoring Officer thinks fit, copies of any further documents supplied to councillors relating to that item.
- 3.3 The Council may require any person to make a payment in advance covering postage and costs connected to the supply of the papers in Rule 3.2 above.

4 Access to decision records, minutes, agenda and supporting papers after a meeting

- 4.1 The Council will make electronically available, for a period of six years from the date of the meeting:
 - (a) the minutes of the meeting where, under these rules or the Constitution minutes are required to be made, excluding any part of the minutes relating to the conduct of business when the public were not present or where exempt or confidential information would be disclosed;
 - (b) the records of decisions taken, together with reasons by the Cabinet excluding any part of the record relating to the conduct of business when the public were not present or where exempt or confidential information would be disclosed;
 - (c) where information relating to a decision is considered in private, a summary of the proceedings to provide a reasonably fair and coherent record, excluding any information which is of a confidential or exempt nature; and
 - (d) the agenda and supporting papers covering items which were considered when the public were entitled to be present.

5 Background documents

- 5.1 The officer, in whose name an item is to be submitted for decision, will set out in the agenda a list of the background documents which in their opinion:
 - (a) relate to the subject matter of the item in question;
 - (b) discloses any facts or matters on which the agenda item or an important part of it has been based; and
 - (c) has been relied upon to a material extent in preparing the agenda item.
- 5.2 The requirements in Rule 5.1 above do not apply to or include any published works or any document in whole or in part which would disclose confidential or exempt

information.

- 5.3 Background documents which have been made available for public inspection will continue to be available for a period of four years from the date the decision is made.

6 Definition of confidential and exempt information

- 6.1 For the purposes of these Rules the definitions of confidential and exempt information are set out below.

6.2 Confidential Information means information supplied or given to the Council by a government department on terms which forbid its disclosure to the public or is information which cannot be disclosed to the public due to a prohibition in any enactment or by Order of the Courts.

6.3 Exempt Information is information falling within any of the categories set out in Appendix 1 subject to the conditions noted in that Appendix.

7 Exclusion of the press and public from meetings

Confidential information – requirement to exclude

- 7.1 The press and public will be excluded from meetings whenever it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the proceedings, that confidential information, as described in Rule 6.2 above will be disclosed.

Exempt information – discretion to exclude

- 7.2 In the case of exempt information, the press and public may be excluded from a meeting where Rule 6.3 and Appendix 1 applies.

8 No public right of access to agenda papers

- 8.1 The Monitoring Officer, where they consider it necessary, may refuse access by the public to any agenda or supporting papers which in their opinion relate to items during which, in accordance with Rule 7 above, the meeting is likely not to be open to the public. Any such papers will be clearly marked “Not for Publication” and will contain the category of information to be disclosed as set out in Appendix 1 to these Rules. Similar provisions apply to the disclosures of documents related to decisions of the Council, including the Cabinet.

9 The Cabinet: application of these rules

- 9.1 Rules 10 to 20 will apply to the Cabinet and any committees or sub-committees which it may establish from time to time.

9.2 Where the Cabinet, including a committee or sub-committee of the Cabinet meet to discuss a Key Decision, with an officer or officers present, within 28 days of the date according to the Forward Plan by which it is to be decided, then the Cabinet must comply with Rules 1 to 8 above unless Rule 12 (general exception) or 13 (special urgency) apply. This requirement does not apply where the sole purpose of the meeting is for officers to brief councillors.

10 Definition of Key Decision and procedure before taking a Key Decision

- 10.1 A Key Decision means an executive decision, which is likely:
- (a) to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
 - (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards or electoral divisions in the area of the Council.
- 10.2 In deciding what amounts to 'significant' in relation to paragraph 10.1a above, a guidance threshold figure of £500,000 is suggested, but discretion should be used to determine whether the amount in question is significant with regard to the particular budget area to which the decision relates.
- 10.3 Subject to Rules 12 or 13, a Key Decision cannot be taken unless:
- (a) a notice ("the Forward Plan") has been published in connection with the matter in question and made available to the public at the main office(s) of the Council;
 - (b) at least 28 clear calendar days have elapsed since publication of the Forward Plan; and
 - (c) where the decision is to be taken at a meeting of the Cabinet, including a committee or sub-committee of the Cabinet, public notice of the meeting has been given under Rule 2 above.

11 The Forward Plan

- 11.1 The Forward Plan will be prepared on behalf of the Leader on a monthly basis to cover a four-month period beginning with the first day of any month. The Forward Plan will be rolled forward and published each month to cover the four-month period beginning again with the new date of publication. There will be instances where it is impracticable to include an item in the Forward Plan. In this case Rule 12 or 13 below will apply.
- 11.2 The Forward Plan will contain such matters as the Leader has reason to believe will be Key Decisions to be taken by the Leader, the Cabinet, a Portfolio Holder, a committee or sub-committee of the Cabinet or an Office Holder in the course of the discharge of a Cabinet function during the period covered by the Forward Plan.
- 11.3 The Forward Plan will describe in respect of each matter the following particulars:
- (a) that a key decision is to be made;
 - (b) the matter relating to the decision to be made;
 - (c) the name and title of the decision taker if an individual, or the name and details of the membership where the decision taker is a body;
 - (d) the date on which, or the period within which, the decision will be taken;

- (e) the identity of the principal groups whom the decision taker proposes to consult before taking the decision;
- (f) the means by which any such consultation is proposed to be undertaken;
- (g) the steps any person might take to make representations to the Cabinet or decision taker about the matter before the decision is made, and the date by which those steps must be taken;
- (h) a list of the documents submitted to the decision taker for consideration in relation to the matter;
- (i) the address from which, subject to any prohibition or restriction on their disclosure, copies of, or extracts from, any document listed in the Forward Plan is available;
- (j) that other documents relevant to the matter may be submitted to the decision taker; and
- (k) the procedure for requesting details of those documents (if any) as they become available.

11.4 Where in relation to any matter where the public may be excluded from a public meeting under Rule 7, or documents relating to the decision need not be disclosed to the public, the Forward Plan must contain the particulars of the matter, but may not contain any confidential information, exempt information or particulars of the advice of a political adviser or assistant.

12 General exception for Key Decisions

12.1 If a matter which is likely to be a Key Decision has not been included in the Forward Plan then, subject to Rule 13, the decision may still be taken if:

- (a) the decision has to be taken by such a date that it is impracticable to comply with Rules 10.3 and 11;
- (b) the Monitoring Officer has informed the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny committee, or if there is no such person, each member of the Committee in writing, by notice, of the matter to which the decision is to be made;
- (c) the Monitoring Officer has made copies of that notice available to the public at the main office of the Council and published it on the Council's website; and
- (d) at least five clear working days have elapsed since the Monitoring Officer complied with their obligations under this paragraph.

12.2 As soon as practicable after complying with Rule 12.1, the Monitoring Officer shall make available at the main office of the Council and publish on the Council's website a notice setting out the reasons why compliance with Rules 10.3 and 11 is not possible.

12.3 Where such a decision is taken by the Cabinet, it must be taken in public subject to

any requirements relating to the disclosure of confidential or exempt information and the exclusion of the public.

13 Special urgency for Key Decisions

- 13.1 If by virtue of the date by which a key decision must be taken, the requirements of Rule 12 above cannot be followed, then the decision can only be taken if the decision maker (if an individual) or the Chair of the body taking the decision, obtains the agreement of the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny committee that the taking of the decision cannot be reasonably deferred. If there is no Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or if they are unable to act, then the agreement of the Chair of the Council, or in their absence the Vice Chair will suffice.
- 13.2 In addition to the requirement for the Chair to agree to the matter being dealt with as urgent business, the Chair and Vice Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be consulted, and may comment, on the subject matter of the decision itself.

14 Report to Council

- 14.1 If an Overview and Scrutiny Committee is of the opinion that a Key Decision has been taken which was not:

- (a) included in the Forward Plan; or
- (b) the subject of the general exception procedure under Rule 12 above; or
- (c) the subject of an agreement with an Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair, or the Chair/Vice Chair of the Council under Rule 13 above;

the Committee may require the Cabinet to submit a report to the Council within such reasonable time as the Committee specifies.

- 14.2 In response to any requirement under Rule 14.1 above, the Cabinet will prepare a report for submission to the next available meeting of the Council. However, if the next meeting of the Council is within 7 days of the resolution of the Cabinet, then the report may be submitted to the subsequent meeting. The report to the Council will set out particulars of the decision, the individual or body taking the decision, and if the Cabinet is of the opinion that it was not a key decision, the reasons for that opinion.

15 Record of decisions of the Cabinet

- 15.1 After any meeting of the Cabinet or any of its committees or sub-committees, whether held in public or private, the Monitoring Officer or their nominee shall produce as soon as practicable a written statement of every decision taken at that meeting. The record will include:

- (a) a record of the decision including the date it was made;
- (b) a record of the reasons for the decision;

- (c) details of any alternative options considered and rejected;
 - (d) a record of any conflict of interest relating to the matter decided which is declared by any member of the decision-making body; and
 - (e) in respect of any declared conflict of interest, a note of any dispensation granted by the Monitoring Officer.
- 15.2 Where an executive decision is taken by an individual member that member shall, as soon as reasonably practicable, produce or instruct the Monitoring Officer or their nominee to produce, a written statement of that decision including the matters stated in Rule 15.1 (a) to (c) and:
- (a) a record of any conflict of interest declared by any executive member who was consulted by the member who made the decision and which relates to that decision; and
 - (b) in respect of any declared conflict of interest, a note of any dispensation granted by the Monitoring Officer.

16 Cabinet meetings relating to matters that are not Key Decisions

- 16.1 Meetings of the Cabinet at which any decisions are to be taken shall be held in public, subject to the requirements of Rules 7 and 8 above.

17 Meeting of the Cabinet in private

- 17.1 Where a meeting of the Cabinet, including a committee or sub-committee of the Cabinet, is to be held in private under these Rules, at least 28 clear days before the meeting, the Cabinet shall make available at the main office of the Council a notice of its intention to hold a meeting in private giving reasons as to why the meeting is to be held in private.
- 17.2 At least five clear days before the meeting, the Cabinet must make available at the main office of the Council a further notice of its intention to hold a meeting in private containing: the reasons as to why the meeting is to be held in private; details of any representations received by the Cabinet about why the meeting should be open to the public; and a statement of the Cabinet's response to any such representations.
- 17.3 All members of the Cabinet shall be entitled to be given five clear working days' notice of the meeting, unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice on urgency grounds.
- 17.4 Copies of the notices required by Rules 17.1 and 17.3 shall be sent to the Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny committees.
- 17.5 Where the date by which a private meeting must be held makes compliance with Rules 17.1 and 17.2 impracticable, the meeting may only be held in private where the Cabinet has obtained agreement from:
- (a) the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny committee; or
 - (b) if there is no such person, or if a Chair of an Overview and Scrutiny committee

is unable to act, the Chair of the Council; or

- (c) where there is no Chair of either an Overview and Scrutiny Committee or of the Council able to act, the Vice Chair of the Council;

that the meeting is urgent and cannot reasonably be deferred.

- 17.6 As soon as reasonably practicable after the decision-making body has obtained agreement under Rule 17.5 it must make available at the Council's main office and publish on the Council's website a notice setting out why the meeting is urgent and cannot reasonably be deferred.

18 Attendance at private meetings of the Cabinet

- 18.1 Any member of the Cabinet may attend a private meeting of a committee or sub-committee of the Cabinet whether they are members of that body unless the body determines otherwise.
- 18.2 Any Cabinet member who is not a member of such a committee or sub-committee shall be entitled to speak with the consent of the person presiding but not to vote.

19 Officer attendance at Cabinet meetings

- 19.1 The Head of Paid Service, the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer, or their nominees, are entitled to attend any meeting of the Cabinet. The Cabinet cannot meet unless the Monitoring Officer has been given reasonable notice that a meeting is to take place. This provision also applies to committees and sub-committees of the Cabinet.
- 19.2 A private meeting of the Cabinet, including a committee or sub-committee of the Cabinet, may only take place in the presence of the Monitoring Officer or their nominee, who shall have responsibility for recording and publishing any decisions.

20 Key Decisions by Portfolio Holders

- 20.1 Where an individual member of the Cabinet receives a report which they intend to take into account in making any Key Decision, then they will not make the decision until at least five clear working days after receipt of that report.
- 20.2 On giving of such a report to a Portfolio Holder, the person who prepared the report will give a copy of it to the relevant Chair of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee as soon as reasonably practicable and make it publicly available at the same time.
- 20.3 As soon as reasonably practicable after a Key Decision has been taken by a Portfolio Holder, a written record of the decision must be produced in accordance with Rule 15.2 above.
- 20.4 The provisions of Rules 4 and 5 will also apply to the making of decisions by Portfolio Holders. This does not require the disclosure of exempt or confidential information or advice from a political assistant.

21 Record of Executive and Non-Executive decisions taken by officers

- 21.1 As soon as reasonably practicable after an officer has made a decision which is an Executive decision (i.e. the responsibility of the Cabinet) a written statement will be prepared including:
- (a) a record of the decision including the date it was made;
 - (b) a record of the reasons for the decision;
 - (c) details of any alternative options considered and rejected by the officer when making the decision;
 - (d) a record of any conflict of interest declared by any executive member who is consulted by the officer which relates to the decision; and
 - (e) in respect of any declared conflict of interest, a note of dispensation granted by the Monitoring Officer.
- 21.2 Any record prepared in accordance with Rule 21.1 and any report considered by the officer and relevant to the decision will be available for public inspection at the main office of the Council and on the Council's website.
- 21.3 Rules 21.1 to 21.2 will relate to decisions taken by officers in accordance with their powers and duties set out within the Scheme of Delegation or otherwise under an express delegation from the Cabinet, Council, its committees, sub-committees or any joint committee in which the Council is involved. Rules 21.1 to 21.2 shall not apply to day-to-day administrative or operational decisions taken by officers in connection with the discharge of functions which are the responsibility of the Cabinet.
- 21.4 As soon as reasonably practicable after an officer has made a decision under an express delegation from the Council, its committees, sub-committees or any Joint Committee in which the Council is involved, or under a general delegation from one of these bodies where the effect of the decision is to grant a permission or licence, affect the rights of an individual or award a contract or incur expenditure, which in either case materially affects the Council's position, a written statement will be prepared including:
- (a) a record of the decision including the date it was made;
 - (b) a record of the reasons for the decision;
 - (c) details of any alternative options considered and rejected by the officer when making the decision; and
 - (d) a record of the name of any councillor who has declared an interest (for decisions taken under an express delegation).
- 21.5 Any record prepared in accordance with Rule 21.4 together with any background papers considered by the officer and relevant to the decision will be available for public inspection at the main office of the Council and on the Council's website.
- 21.6 Rules 21.4 to 21.5 do not apply to:

- (a) routine administrative and organisational decisions;
- (b) decisions on operational matters such as day to day variations in services;
- (c) decisions if the whole or part of the record contains confidential or exempt information; and
- (d) decisions that are already required to be published by other legislation, provided the record published includes the date the decision was taken and the reasons for the decision.

22 Access to documents – Overview and Scrutiny committees

- 22.1 Subject to Rule 22.4 below, any member of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee is entitled to copies of any document which is in the possession or control of the Leader and/or the Cabinet including its committees and sub-committees and which contains material relating to:
- (a) any business transacted at a public or private meeting of the Cabinet including any of its committees and sub-committees;
 - (b) any decision taken by an individual member of the Cabinet; or
 - (c) any executive decision taken by an officer in accordance with Part 9.2 of this Constitution.
- 22.2 Where a member of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee (including its sub-committees) requests a document which falls within Rule 22.1 the Leader must provide that document as soon as reasonably practicable and, in any case, no later than 10 clear working days after the Leader receives the request.
- 22.3 Subject to Rule 22.4 the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny committees is entitled to see papers in relation to private decisions of the Cabinet before the decision is made.
- 22.4 Where the Leader so determines, a member of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee will not be entitled to:
- (a) any document that is in draft form;
 - (b) any such document or part of a document that contains exempt or confidential information, unless that information is relevant to an action or decision they are reviewing or scrutinising, or any review contained in any programme of work of the Committee.
- 22.5 The Leader must provide the relevant Overview and Scrutiny committee with a written statement setting out the reasons for their decision.

23 Additional rights of access for councillors

- 23.1 All councillors will be entitled to inspect any document which is in the possession or under the control of the Leader and or the Cabinet including its committees or sub-

committees and contains material relating to any business to be transacted at a public meeting; any business previously transacted at a private meeting; any decision made by an individual member; or an executive decision by an officer unless in the opinion of the Monitoring Officer it contains exempt information falling within the categories of exempt information as set out in Appendix 1; or it contains the advice of a political advisor.

- 23.2 All councillors will be entitled to inspect any document (except those available only in draft form) in the possession or under the control of the Leader or the Cabinet including its committees and sub-committees which relates to any Key Decision unless Rule 23.1 above applies.
- 23.3 In relation to public meetings, where a document is required to be available for inspection by all councillors under Rule 23.1 it must be available for at least 5 clear working days before the meeting except where the meeting is convened at shorter notice or an item is added to an agenda at shorter notice, in which case the document must be available for inspection when the meeting is convened or the item is added to the agenda.
- 23.4 In relation to private meetings, decisions made by an individual member or executive decisions made by an officer, where a document is required to be available for inspection by all councillors under Rule 23.1 it must be available within 24 hours of the meeting concluding, or where an executive decision is made by an individual member or an officer, within 24 hours of the decision being made.
- 23.5 These rights of a councillor are additional to any other right they may have.

Appendix 1 - Descriptions of Exempt Information

Exempt information means information falling within the following categories (subject to any qualification):

- 1) Information relating to any individual.
- 2) Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
- 3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
- 4) Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
- 5) Information in respect of which a claim of legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
- 6) Information which reveals that the authority proposes
 - (a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which

requirements are imposed on a person; or

(b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.

- 7) Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

Qualifications

Information falling within paragraph 3 above is not exempt information if it is required to be registered under:

- (a) the Companies Acts (as defined in section 2 of the Companies Act 2006);
- (b) the Friendly Societies Act 1974;
- (c) the Friendly Societies Act 1992;
- (d) the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014;
- (e) the Building Societies Act 1986; or
- (f) the Charities Act 2011

Information is not exempt information if it relates to proposed development for which the local planning authority may grant itself planning permission or permission in principle pursuant to regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992.

Information which falls within any of the paragraphs 1-7 above is Exempt information if and so long as in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

There is no legal definition of 'public interest', but the following are relevant considerations in favour of disclosure:

- (a) The information would assist public understanding of an issue that is subject to current public debate.
- (b) Proper debate cannot take place without wide availability of all the relevant information.
- (c) The issue affects a wide range of individuals or companies.
- (d) Facts and analysis behind major policy decisions.
- (e) Allowing individuals to understand decisions made by public authorities affecting their lives and, in some cases, assisting individuals in challenging those decisions.
- (f) Accountability for proceeds of sale of assets in public ownership.
- (g) Openness and accountability for tender processes and prices.

- (h) Public interest in public bodies obtaining value for money.
- (i) Public health or public safety.
- (j) Damage to the environment.
- (k) Contingency plans in an emergency.
- (l) Promoting accountability and transparency for decisions taken by public authorities and the spending of public money.

A practice of applying "Exempt" status to a report without reasons being set out and consideration of the public interest is not acceptable.

6.0 JOINT ARRANGEMENTS

6.1 West and North Shared Services Joint Committee

Terms of Reference of the Joint Committee

1. The Joint Committee's role is to oversee the management of those services which are provided on a Northamptonshire-wide basis on behalf of North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire Councils to ensure effective delivery of such services and to provide strategic direction
2. The Joint Committee is specifically responsible for:
 - (a) Developing and agreeing the strategy for each of the services.
 - (b) Approving the Service Plans for the specified functions including targets for service quality, performance and efficiency.
 - (c) Agreeing the responsibilities of each Council to deliver the Service Plans and agreed strategy, including any specific responsibilities of the Provider Council and that the responsibilities are documented within the Service Plans.
 - (d) Ensuring that the services are provided within the policy and budget set by the councils.
 - (e) Ensuring that the arrangements ensure that each Council's statutory responsibilities are met.
 - (f) Reviewing the performance of the services and initiating additional/remedial action where appropriate.
 - (g) Ensuring that clear operational policies are in place and that these are complied with.
 - (h) Ensuring the provision of adequate funds and other resources to enable delivery.
 - (i) Agreeing the basis for apportioning cost between the two Councils and the amount to be apportioned.
 - (j) Ensuring that effective risk management arrangements are in place, that the services are subject to adequate and independent audit and that any audit recommendations are acted upon.
 - (k) Approving business cases for proposed changes and overseeing the progress of subsequent work.
 - (l) Ensuring that there are robust plans for any disaggregation of services and that there is a smooth transition to new service delivery arrangements.
 - (m) Resolving issues that are referred to the Joint Committee by relevant Chief Officers of the Service.
 - (n) Delegating functions of the Joint Committee to officers of either Council under s.101 Local Government Act 1972.
 - (o) Agreeing arrangements to place staff employed by one of the authorities at the disposal of the other authority to carry out the functions of the Joint Committee as described above under s.113 Local Government Act 1972.

- (p) Take decisions in relation to the commissioning and procurement of services either hosted or under a lead authority arrangement from a third party.
- (q) Providing an Annual Report to each of the two Councils on the performance, finances and proposed service improvements including any arrangements for disaggregation.

Procedure Rules of the Joint Committee

- (a) Each council shall appoint three Members (being Executive members of that Council) as its nominated members of the Joint Committee. The Members appointed will have full voting rights.
- (b) Each council may nominate one or more substitute Members to attend any meeting in place of an appointed Member subject to notification being given to the Monitoring Officer via the relevant Democratic Services before the start of the meeting. The Member appointed as a substitute shall have full voting rights.
- (c) Each member of the Joint Committee shall comply with the Code of Conduct of their Council when acting as a member of the Joint Committee.
- (d) Each member of the Joint Committee shall serve on the Joint Committee for as long as they are appointed to the Joint Committee by the relevant Council but a Member shall cease to be a member of the Joint Committee if they cease to be a member of the Executive appointing them or if the relevant Council removes them from the Joint Committee.
- (e) Meetings of the Joint Committee shall be carried out on a rotational basis in the North and West Council areas or by remote means where this is permitted by law.
- (f) The Council hosting the first meeting shall appoint one of its nominated members as Chair and that member shall remain Chair until the first meeting taking place after the elapse of 6 months from the time of their appointment unless they cease to be a member of the Joint Committee. On the expiry of the first Chair's term of office as Chair, the Council which did not appoint the first Chair shall appoint one of its nominated members as Chair for a period of 6 months from the time of their appointment. The same procedure shall be followed for the appointment of the Chair in subsequent years.
- (g) The Council not appointing the Chair of the Joint Committee in any year shall appoint one of its nominated members as Vice Chair.
- (h) Proposed key decisions of the Joint Committee will be published on the Forward Plan for each Council in accordance with their own Access to Information Rules.
- (i) Requirements in relation to Overview and Scrutiny will be met in each case by the Overview and Scrutiny committees of the relevant Council. The relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be the closest to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee for each Council.
- (j) Meetings will be governed by the Executive Procedure Rules and the Access to Information Rules for each Council and where they differ by agreement between the Monitoring Officers of the two Councils as to which of the two sets of Rules will be applied.

- (k) The Joint Committee shall normally meet once every two months (bi-monthly) unless otherwise determined by the Joint Committee. Cancellation of meetings shall be agreed by the Joint Committee or both Leaders.
- (l) Additional meetings can be called by Monitoring Officer for the Chair by providing at least five clear days' notice to members of the Joint Committee, for the purposes of resolving urgent matters arising between the bi-monthly meetings. Additional meetings may be called if either Leader requests it.
- (m) The Democratic Services for the Chair will send out the agenda, record minutes and arrange for the sign off of minutes in accordance with the procedure rules for the relevant Council.
- (n) A meeting of the Joint Committee will require a quorum of at least two members from each Council.
- (o) The rules of the Joint Committee will otherwise be the rules of the Council associated with the Chair for the time being, and where there is any conflict or uncertainty the relevant rules will be agreed between the Monitoring Officers for each of the Councils.
- (p) Public speaking at the Joint Committee will be at the discretion of the Chair but in any event limited to one speaker for or against an item on the agenda for a maximum of two minutes.

6.2 Rainsbrook Crematorium Joint Committee

In February 2011, Daventry District Council agreed to establish a Joint Committee with Rugby Borough Council to create and operate a crematorium facility to meet the needs of both areas. Rainsbrook Crematorium based in Rugby is managed by the Rainsbrook Crematorium Joint Committee. Each council has a 50% share and appoints two elected members.

A Collaboration Agreement (March 2013) provides for the delegation of functions (crematoria and ancillary services) to the Joint Committee. Daventry District Council were responsible for the construction of the crematorium. Rugby Borough Council are responsible for the operation of the crematorium. The Joint Committee provides oversight and exercises decision-making powers.

Terms of Reference

- (a) The committee shall comprise four members in total, two being nominated by each authority. All members of the Committee shall be Members of the authority by which they are nominated.
- (b) The committee shall appoint its own Chair and Vice Chair subject to the rules that:
 - (i) each year the Chair shall be drawn from members of the committee from one authority, and the following year from members of the committee from the other authority; and
 - (ii) the Vice Chair shall be a member of the committee from the authority which is not currently providing the Chair.

- (c) The quorum of the Committee shall be two members, being at least one from each authority.
- (d) The Chair or in their absence the Vice Chair may exercise a second or casting vote.
- (e) The Committee shall exercise on behalf of the authorities the functions of providing crematoria and ancillary services under the Cremation Act 1902, section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, the Local Authorities (Land) Act 1963 and all other powers enabling the provision and operation of crematoria and related services.
- (f) The Committee shall arrange to discharge its responsibilities through officers of the authorities subject to the requirements that:
 - (iii) administration of the Committee shall be exercised through officers of Rugby Borough Council;
 - (iv) creation of the crematorium shall be exercised through officers of Daventry District Council;
 - (v) practical operation of the crematorium shall be exercised through officers of Rugby Borough Council.

6.3 PATROL Adjudication Joint Committee

Representation: one Member from each Council

Over 300 local authorities in England (outside London) and Wales who undertake civil traffic enforcement are members of the PATROL (**P**arking and **T**raffic **R**egulations **O**utside **L**ondon) Adjudication Joint Committee. Such authorities are required by statute to make provision for independent adjudication of traffic enforcement decisions.

The PATROL Adjudication Joint Committee has been established to enable all councils having Civil Enforcement Area Orders to carry out civil enforcement of parking contraventions, in exercise of their functions under Section 81 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 and Regulations 16 and 17 of the Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions (England) General Regulations 2007.

The main function of the Joint Committee is to provide resources to support independent adjudicators and their staff, who together comprise the Traffic Penalty Tribunal. The relationship between the adjudicators and the Joint Committee is derived from and governed by the Traffic Management Act 2004 and, in the case of the Bus Lane Adjudication Service Joint Committee, the Transport Act 2000.

Additional information

Further details are available from the PATROL website: www.patrol-uk.info/patrol-joint-committee.

6.4 Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Representation: 5 Members of West Northamptonshire Council
5 Members of North Northamptonshire Council
3 independent co-opted lay members

The Police, Fire and Crime Panel is responsible for carrying out the powers and duties of the of the Police and Crime Panel as provided for within the Police Reform & Social Responsibility Act 2011 and the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire (Fire and Rescue Authority) Order 2018.

6.5 Children’s Trust Joint Committee

Terms of Reference

Purpose

The West Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire Councils have established a Joint Committee (The Children’s Trust Joint Committee) pursuant to powers under the Local Government Acts 1972 and 2000.

The Joint Committee discharges functions on behalf of the two councils as follows and is convened as and when required, to:

- (a) Exercise the functions on behalf of both councils insofar as they relate to the joint ownership of, and commissioning of services from, the jointly owned local authority company ‘The Northamptonshire Children’s Trust’ (NCT)
- (b) Exercise the functions of the councils in respect of the discharge of the functions and the delivery of the support services to NCT under the Support Services Agreement;
- (c) Consider all matters arising in relation to the discharge of the functions, the delivery of the services and their financial position;
- (d) Ensure the effective, efficient discharge of the functions and delivery of the services;
- (e) Agree the responsibilities of each council required to support the discharge of the functions and the delivery of the services;
- (f) Monitor and review the performance of discharge of the functions and the delivery of the services;
- (g) Consider matters reported to the Joint Committee by the Joint Officer Boards and the Councils;
- (h) Determine those disputes or differences arising between the councils in respect of the discharge of the functions and/or delivery of the services referred to the Joint Committee by the Joint Officer Boards;
- (i) With the assistance, support and advice of the Joint Officer Boards and the councils, develop the strategies and plans for the longer-term discharge of the functions and the delivery of the services beyond the arrangements provided for in the Support Services Agreement.

The Joint Committee is not a self-standing legal entity but part of its constituent authorities. Any legal commitment entered into pursuant to a decision of the Joint Committee must be made by either of the authorities which will be indemnified appropriately.

These terms of reference govern the conduct of meetings of the Joint Committee and except, where expressly stated otherwise, take precedence over the Constitutions of each council so far as they relate to the matters for which the Joint Committee is established. The Joint Committee may vary the terms of reference rules as it considers appropriate.

Definitions

Any reference to Access to Information legislation shall mean Part VA of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).”

Functions

The Joint Committee will discharge functions on behalf of both councils.

Membership

There are 6 elected members of the Joint Committee, 3 appointed from each council. Appointments are made in line with each council’s governance arrangements. The appointments should include the Leader of each council and a Member whose portfolio areas include responsibility for Children’s Services.

Appointments will be made for a maximum period not extending beyond each Member’s remaining term of office as a councillor.

As nominees of their respective councils, members of the Joint Committee are governed by the provisions of their own council’s codes and protocols including the Members’ Code of Conduct and the rules on disclosable pecuniary interests.

Each council will utilise existing mechanisms for substitution as laid down in their own Procedure Rules.

Chair

Each council will appoint one Member as a Co-Chair each of whom, in rotation, presides over meetings of the Joint Committee.

Meeting venues shall rotate between the councils’ main offices with the Co-Chair from the council which is hosting the meeting presiding over the meeting. Where the host Co-Chair is not present, the Joint Committee shall appoint an alternate Co-Chair from amongst its number to preside over the meeting.

The Joint Committee may establish sub-committees to undertake elements of its work if required and subject to the approval of each council.

Delegation to Officers

The Joint Committee may delegate specific functions to officers of either of the councils. Any such delegation may be subject to the requirement for the officer to consult with or obtain the prior agreement of an officer (or officers) of the other council. It may also be subject to the requirement for the officer with delegated authority to consult with the Co-Chairs of the Joint Committee before exercising their delegated authority.

Administration

Organisational and clerking support for the Joint Committee will be provided for by the host authority.

Budget

The Joint Committee will not have an allocated budget.

Agenda Management

All prospective items of business for the Joint Committee shall be agreed by the Joint Officer Board in accordance with the wider NCT agreements and governance and shall be confined to the matters set out in these terms of reference.

To comply with Access to Information legislation in the publication of agendas including Forward Plan requirements, those functions delegated to the Joint Committee for determination and defined as key decisions must be included in the Forward Plan for the Joint Committee.

Meetings

The Joint Committee will meet as and when required for the purposes of fulfilling its function with regards dispute resolution.

The quorum for a meeting of the Joint Committee shall be at least two members from each council.

Access to meetings and papers of the Joint Committee by the press and public is subject to Part VA of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and Part 2 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to information) (England) Regulations 2012.

Notice of Meetings

The host authority clerk of the Joint Committee will give notice to the public of the time and place of any meeting in accordance with the Access to Information requirements. At least five clear working days in advance of a meeting the host authority clerk of the Joint Committee will publish the agenda via the website of the host authority and distribute a copy of the papers to all members of the Joint Committee.

Member Participation

Any Member of each council who is not a member of the Joint Committee may ask a question or address the Joint Committee with the consent of the Co-Chair of the meeting at which they wish to speak.

Business to be Transacted

Standing items for each meeting of the Joint Committee will include the following:

- (a) Apologies for absence
- (b) Declarations of Interest
- (c) Minutes of the Last Meeting
- (d) Substantive items for consideration

The Co-Chair may vary the order of business and take urgent items as specified in the Access to Information Requirements at their discretion. An item of business may not be considered at a meeting unless:

- (a) A copy of the agenda included the item (or a copy of the item) is open to inspection by the public for at least five clear days before the meeting; or
- (b) Where the meeting is convened at shorter notice from the time the meeting is convened; or
- (c) By reason of special circumstances which shall be specified in the minutes the Co-Chair of the meeting (following consultation with the other Co-Chair) is of the opinion that the item should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency "Special Circumstances" justifying an item being considered as a matter of urgency will relate to both why the decision could not be made at a later meeting allowing the proper time for inspection of documents by the public as well as why the item or report could not have been available for inspection for five clear days before the meeting.

Cancellation of Meetings

If in the event a dispute is resolved prior to the meeting of the Joint Committee called to resolve the issue, after consultation with all three Co-chairs the meeting will be cancelled

Rules of Debate

Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the Rules of Debate set out within the Committee Procedure Rules of West Northamptonshire Council.

Request for Determination of Business

Any member of the Joint Committee may request at any time that the Joint Committee move to vote upon the current item of consideration.

Urgency Procedure

Where all Co-Chairs of the Joint Committee are of a view that an urgent decision is required in respect of any matter within the Joint Committee's terms of reference and it cannot wait until an Ordinary meeting of the Joint Committee has been called and notice been given under Paragraph 12 of this Schedule (Notice of Meetings), then arrangements will be made to call an urgent meeting of the Joint Committee.

Voting

With regards the Joint Committee's function in the resolution of disputes under the conflict resolution mechanism, each elected member will be entitled to one vote.

Where there is an equality of votes the Co-chair may exercise a second or casting vote. However, if the matter cannot be resolved between the councils then the dispute resolution procedure may be engaged.

Minutes

At the next suitable meeting of the Joint Committee, the Co-Chair presiding will move a motion that the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as a correct record. The meeting may only consider the accuracy of the minutes. Once agreed, the Co-Chair presiding at the meeting will initial each page and sign the minutes.

Exclusion of Public and Press

Members of the public and press may only be excluded from a meeting of the Joint Committee either in accordance with the Access to Information requirements or in the event of disturbance.

A motion may be moved at any time for the exclusion of the public from the whole or any part of the proceedings. The motion shall specify by reference to Section 100(A) Local Government Act 1972 the reason for the exclusion in relation to each item of business for which it is proposed that the public be excluded.

The public must be excluded from meetings whenever it is likely, in view of the nature of business to be transacted, or the nature of the proceedings that confidential information would be disclosed.

If there is a general disturbance making orderly business impossible, the Co-Chair may adjourn the meeting for as long as they think is necessary.

To comply with the Executive Arrangements (Access to Information) Regulations 2012 all background papers will be published as part of the Joint Committee agenda and be made available to the public via the website of each authority.

Overview and Scrutiny

Decisions of the Joint Committee will be Executive and subject to scrutiny and call-in. For any Joint Committee meeting, including decisions, the minutes will be published within two working days. On the publication of the minutes of a meeting of the Joint Committee, 5 clear days must elapse (not including the date of publication and weekend days and bank holidays) before decisions can be implemented.

Decisions of the Joint Committee which are defined as executive decisions will be subject to the “call-in” arrangements operating in each Council as set out in its constitution. Where a decision is called in, arrangements will be made at the earliest opportunity for it to be heard.

Joint Arrangements between the NCT and West Northamptonshire Council are in accordance with the agreements made by Northamptonshire County Council prior to re-organisation. These agreements are binding on the Council and cannot be altered other than as set out below.

Nature of Decision	Council	Executive	Conditions
In relation to the Northamptonshire Children’s Trust, to approve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The appointment and removal of the Chair and Chief Executive, or alterations to their terms of appointment; b. The appointment and removal of a Council Director to the Board of the Trust; c. Any changes to the membership of the Trust; d. Any changes to the Articles of Association; e. The voluntary winding up of the company (of the Trust) or its dissolution; 		X	In accordance with the limitations and consents required under the Articles of Association of the Trust and the Governance Side Agreement.

f. Any changes to governance arrangements arising from the annual review thereof.			
In relation to the Northamptonshire Children's Trust, to annually approve the Business Plan and Interim Business Plan and any in year variation to these plans.		X	In accordance with the limitations and consents required under the Articles of Association of the Trust and the Governance Side Agreement.
In relation to the company of the Children's Trust, to approve the entering into by the company (the Trust) for: any new third party contracts for the provision of services by the Company to third parties which are outside the scope of the Service Delivery Contract and/or the Business Plan or Interim Business Plan.		X	<p>a) In accordance with the limitations and consents required under the Articles of Association of the Trust and the Governance Side Agreement.</p> <p>b) Where the value exceeds £500,000.</p>
<p>In relation to the company of the Children's Trust, to approve the entering into by the company (the Trust):</p> <p>a. any borrowing, credit facility, or investment arrangements with third parties;</p> <p>b. any other contractual arrangement with the Council for the provision of other services to the Council;</p> <p>c. any proposal to form any legal entity or undertaking in which the Company would be a member, shareholder or hold any analogous position in any jurisdiction or acquiring shares in any other company;</p> <p>d. participating by the Company in any partnership or joint venture, amalgamation with another company or business undertaking;</p>		X	<p>In accordance with the limitations and consents required under the Articles of Association of the Trust and the Governance Side Agreement.</p> <p>In relation to (a) other than trade credit in the ordinary course of business.</p> <p>In relation to (b), and (d) only to the extent that any such arrangement falls outside the</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. the Company giving any guarantee, suretyship or indemnity outside the ordinary course of its business to secure the liabilities of any person or assume the obligations of any person (other than the Company or a wholly owned subsidiary of the Company); f. the selling or disposing of any part of the business (including assets) of the Company; g. dealing with any surpluses of the Company, other than those surpluses which are agreed, pursuant to the Business Plan or Service Delivery Contract, that may be retained by the Company; h. the Company acquiring, or agreeing to acquire, any freehold or leasehold interest in or licence over land; i. the Company creating any encumbrance over the whole or a significant part of its undertaking or assets; j. any changes to the company name, trading name or registered office of the Company or physically relocating the headquarters of the Company; k. the Company commencing, settling or defending any significant claim, proceedings or other litigation brought by or against it, except where they are a part of the Company's ordinary course of business and/or operations; and l. acquiring assets outside the scope of the Service Delivery Contract and/or the Business Plan or Interim Business Plan. 			<p>scope of the Service Delivery Contract and/or the Business Plan or Interim Business Plan.</p> <p>In relation to (h), except where the Council is the seller, lessor or licensor of the land in question.</p> <p>In relation to (l), where the amount is more than £100,000.</p>
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6.6 Northamptonshire Safeguarding Adults Board

The Northamptonshire Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) is a multi-agency partnership, which provides strategic leadership for adult safeguarding across West and North Northamptonshire. It has an independent Chair and its remit is to agree objectives, set priorities and co-ordinate the strategic development of adult safeguarding.

The overarching purpose of SAB is to help and safeguard adults with care and support needs. It does this by:

- (a) Assuring itself that local safeguarding arrangements are in place as defined by the Care Act 2014 and supporting statutory guidance

- (b) Assuring itself that safeguarding practice is person-centred and outcome-focused
- (c) Working collaboratively to prevent abuse and neglect where possible
- (d) Ensuring agencies and individuals give timely and proportionate responses when abuse or neglect have occurred
- (e) Assuring itself that safeguarding practice is continuously improving and enhancing the quality of life of adults in its area

Safeguarding leads from agencies across the Health Economy, Local Authorities, Northamptonshire Police, Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service, Community Safety Partnerships, the Probation Service, and the Voluntary and Community support the activities of the Board. Without the hard work of its members, we would not learn, develop and grow.

SAB governance arrangements are undertaken by statutory partners and a number of other key officers:

- (a) Kettering General Hospital
- (b) NHS Northamptonshire Clinical Commissioning Groups
- (c) North Northamptonshire Council - Adult Social Care
- (d) North Northamptonshire Council - Cabinet member responsible for Adult Social Care
- (e) North Northamptonshire Council - Opposition member
- (f) Northampton General Hospital
- (g) Northamptonshire Healthcare Foundation Trust
- (h) Northamptonshire Police
- (i) Principal Social Workers
- (j) West Northamptonshire Council – Adult Social Care
- (k) West Northamptonshire Council - Cabinet member responsible for Adult Social Care
- (l) West Northamptonshire Council - Opposition Member

A separate multi-agency Delivery Group supports the strategic direction of the Board.

The SAB has three core duties:

- (a) To develop and publish a strategic plan setting out how it will meet its objectives, what each member will do to implement the strategy and, in developing the plan, consult the local Healthwatch organisation and the community.
- (b) To commission safeguarding adults reviews (SARs) for any cases that meet the criteria for these and implement the findings.
- (c) To publish an annual report detailing how effective its work has been, as well as report the findings of any SARs and reference any ongoing reviews.

Full details of the LSAB can be found on its website: [Northamptonshire Safeguarding Adults Board \(northamptonshiresab.org.uk\)](http://northamptonshiresab.org.uk)

6.7 Channel Panel

The Channel Panel is established under section 36 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, which sets out the duty on local authorities and partners of local panels to provide support for people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. It is a key part of work to prevent extremism through supporting those who may be vulnerable to radicalisation by assessing the nature and extent of the potential risk and, where necessary, providing an appropriate support package tailored to an individual's needs.

Channel provides a multi-agency approach to protect people at risk of being drawn into extremism. It uses existing collaboration between the adults and children's services, youth offending service, community safety partnership, police, health sectors (NHS and Clinical Commissioning Group) and probation services to:

- Identify individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism;
- Assess the nature and extent of that risk; and
- Develop the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned.

As Northamptonshire is a low risk area, there is no regular standing Channel Panel. Once a referral has been made the panel meets every six weeks to provide early intervention to protect and divert the individual(s) away from extremism.

Through its Chair, the panel regularly reports to the Chief Executive of West Northamptonshire Council and to the relevant Commander in Northamptonshire Police on Channel referrals.

6.8 Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

The Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP) is a statutory multi-agency partnership established in accordance with the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Working Together to Safeguard Children statutory guidance. It provides arrangements under which the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies work together to coordinate their services, identify and respond to the needs of children, commission and publish local safeguarding practice reviews and provide scrutiny to ensure the effectiveness of the arrangements.

The three safeguarding partners in relation to the local authority's area are defined under the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017) as:

- (a) the Local Authority (West and North Northamptonshire Councils)
- (b) a Clinical Commissioning Group for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area (Nene and Corby Clinical Commissioning Groups)
- (c) the Chief Officer of Police for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area (Northamptonshire Police)

The purpose of the SCP is to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Northamptonshire. This is done by coordinating the work of those people and all organisations working in the county ensuring that what they do is effective. It is also to support and enable local agencies to work together in a system where:

- (a) Excellent practice is the norm
- (b) Partner agencies hold one another to account effectively
- (c) There is early identification of “new” safeguarding issues
- (d) Learning is promoted and embedded
- (e) Information is shared effectively
- (f) The public can feel confident that children are protected from harm

In addition, the SCP’s values are:

- (a) A child-centred approach to safeguarding ensuring their voice is heard and understood;
- (b) Effective ways to identify and support children and families who would benefit from early help;
- (c) A culture of continuous review and learning; and
- (d) Constructive and mutual challenge between partners to keep children safe.

The SCP is not an operational body. Its role is to ensure the coordination and effectiveness of the services provided to children, young people and their families by member organisations.

Full details of the SCP can be found on its website: [Home - Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board \(northamptonshirescb.org.uk\)](http://northamptonshirescb.org.uk).

7.0 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

7.1 Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements

1 The Role of Overview and Scrutiny

- 1.1 The Council operates an Overview and Scrutiny function that undertakes a number of roles including:
- (a) monitoring the decisions of the Cabinet;
 - (b) advising the Council on forthcoming decisions;
 - (c) the development and review of policy; and
 - (d) call-in of a decision which has been made by the Cabinet but not yet implemented.
- 1.2 The Overview and Scrutiny function will develop a work plan as well as supporting policy development, providing pre-decision scrutiny where appropriate, holding decision-makers to account and exercising the formal call-in of executive decisions to review any concerns about the making of the decision.
- 1.3 Further details are set out in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules in this Constitution.

7.2 Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules

1 The Overview and Scrutiny committees

- 1.1 The Council will have 3 Overview and Scrutiny committees:
- (a) Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 - (b) People Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 - (c) Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- 1.2 The Overview and Scrutiny committees will consult with other parts of the Council as appropriate, including the Cabinet, on the preparation of any work programme.
- 1.3 The Overview and Scrutiny committees will take into account any views expressed following consultation under Rule 1.2 above in drawing-up any work programme. They should also take into account the resources, both officer and financial, available to support its proposals.
- 1.4 A Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group, comprised of the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny committees, shall be responsible for approving the work programmes prepared by the Overview and Scrutiny committees.
- 1.5 Once any programme has been approved, a copy will be sent to all Members of the Council and all relevant officers.

- 1.6 The relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall respond, as soon as it may consider it is possible to do so, to requests from the Council and the Cabinet, to review particular areas of Council activities. Where it does so, it will report its findings and any recommendations back to the Cabinet and/or Council in accordance with Rule 5 below.

2 Co-optees

- 2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny committees shall be entitled to appoint non-councillors as voting or non-voting co-optees as required or permitted by relevant legislation.
- 2.2 The People Overview and Scrutiny Committee may make provision for the appointment of voting co-optees in order to assist in fulfilling its responsibilities under the National Health Service Act 2006.
- 2.3 The People Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall appoint voting representatives in accordance with the Education Act 1996. These representatives have the right to vote on any question which relates to any education functions which are the responsibility of the Cabinet. Parent Governor Representatives will be appointed in accordance with the guidance published by the relevant government department.

3 Agenda for meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny committees

- 3.1 Matters to be considered will be set out in an agenda, together with supporting papers.
- 3.2 Any member of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall be entitled to request, in writing, that an item be included on the agenda of their committee. Any such item shall appear on the agenda for the next meeting of the committee in question. The committee will decide how the item should be considered and whether or not it can be included in its work programme.
- 3.3 Similarly, the Leader or an individual member of the Cabinet may give notice in writing requesting an item to appear on an agenda of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee, relating to their areas of responsibility. The relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee will decide how the item should be considered and whether or not it can be included in its work programme.
- 3.4 Subject to Procedure Rule 41 of the Meeting Procedure Rules, any other councillor may give notice in writing to the Monitoring Officer, requesting an item to appear on an agenda of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The item shall be included after consulting the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

4 Councillor Call for Action

- 4.1 The Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) enables any member of the council to bring matters of community concern (including crime and disorder issues) within their ward to the attention of the council via the Scrutiny process. It is intended to enhance the council's Scrutiny arrangements and provide a formal mechanism to enable elected members to seek positive outcomes for the citizens they represent, provided all other means of resolution have been exhausted.

4.2 A CCfA will be included on an Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda if the Chair is satisfied that:

- (a) the member has made all reasonable efforts to resolve the matter via liaison with council officers and/or relevant partner agencies; and
- (b) the issue of concern relates to the discharge of a council function (including where this is undertaken with partners and other service providers); and
- (c) the issue of concern has a demonstrable impact on all or part of the member's ward; and
- (d) The CCfA does not relate to:
 - (i) individual complaints concerning personal grievances or commercial issues, for which the council's complaints procedure should be followed;
 - (ii) matters that have a statutory appeals process, e.g. planning and licensing applications, council tax queries, housing benefits complaints, issues under dispute in a court of law, etc;
 - (iii) matters where there is a statutory right of review or appeal (not including the right to complain to the Ombudsman), e.g. a matter relating to a housing benefit appeal;
 - (iv) matters that are vexatious, discriminatory or unreasonable;
 - (v) matters of wider council policy, i.e. if an issue affects more than one ward it may be appropriate to refer it to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee for consideration of its wider strategic or policy implications, rather than focusing on one particular ward;
 - (vi) questioning Cabinet decisions that have been taken but not yet implemented, for which the call-In procedure may be used.

4.3 Having considered a CCfA, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may take one or more of the following actions:

- (a) ask for further information to be brought to a future meeting
- (b) require the attendance of Cabinet members or senior officers to attend a future meeting to answer questions
- (c) set up a Task and Finish Group to undertake an in-depth review
- (d) make a report or recommendations to full Council, the Cabinet or partner agency and:
 - (i) publish that report
 - (ii) request full Council or Cabinet to consider and respond to the report, setting out what action it proposes to take and to publish its response
 - (iii) request a partner agency to have regard to the report when exercising its functions

4.4 If the Overview and Scrutiny Committee decides to take any action then it will inform the member who raised the CCfA and provide them with a copy of any report or recommendations made in relation to the CCfA, together with any response received from full Council, the Cabinet or a partner agency.

4.5 If the Overview and Scrutiny Committee decides not to consider a CCfA or on

consideration decides no further action is necessary, it will inform the member who raised the CCfA and explain the reasons why.

5 Policy review and development

- 5.1 Notwithstanding any policy review matters set out in the work programme of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee, in accordance with the procedure set out within the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules, Overview and Scrutiny has a key role in policy and budget development.
- 5.2 The relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall consider any matter referred to it by the Leader/Cabinet in accordance with those procedures and, having considered the matter, shall report to the Leader/Cabinet with comments and/or proposals. In the case of cross-cutting matters, the Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group may recommend a particular Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers such matters.

6 Reports from an Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 6.1 Once recommendations have been formed, an Overview and Scrutiny Committee may submit a formal report for consideration by the Cabinet (if the proposals relate to an executive function and are consistent with the existing budgetary and Policy Framework), or to the Council as appropriate (if the recommendation would require a departure from or a change to the agreed budget and Policy Framework).
- 6.2 The Council or the Cabinet shall consider the report of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the next available meeting. The Council or the Cabinet shall respond to that Overview and Scrutiny Committee within two months (or following the next available meeting in the case of the Council) of it being submitted.

7 Minority Reports

- 7.1 Where an Overview and Scrutiny Committee cannot agree on a single, final report to the Cabinet then one minority report may be submitted to the Cabinet with the majority report. In order for a minority report to be produced, no fewer than three voting members of the committee must support such a proposal.
- 7.2 Procedure for dealing with Minority Reports
 - 7.3.1 At the conclusion of an inquiry and at the point of agreeing a final report detailing the Committee's conclusions and recommendations, an Overview and Scrutiny Committee may be unable to reach a general consensus. Members in the minority may wish to express a view different from that of the majority. In these circumstances, Members with a minority view may choose to submit a minority report.
 - 7.3.2 The intention to submit a minority report must be declared within the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting at the time the majority report is agreed. Such an intention must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and referred to in the final report as part of the Committee's resolutions. Where a committee has agreed its final report and there has been no declared intention to produce a minority report, a minority report cannot then be subsequently submitted.

- 7.3.3 Where the intention to produce a minority report has been recorded in the minutes, Democratic Services will contact the appropriate Member or Members to confirm submission dates. The minority report should be delivered to the Democratic Services within 5 working days after the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.
- 7.3.4 In order that a minority report is given the opportunity to be noted in context by the Cabinet, where it has been produced within the agreed timescale it will be attached as an appendix to the majority report.
- 7.3.5 The Monitoring Officer will determine if a minority report should be exempt from publication, in which case the usual procedures for the publication of exempt reports apply.
- 7.3.6 The drafting and submission of the minority report remains the responsibility of the councillors who have proposed it and not Democratic Services. The report will include details of the councillors who have submitted the minority report, as well as its issues and any alternative recommendations.
- 7.3.7 It is normally expected that an Overview and Scrutiny Committee will have taken into account all the relevant information available and as such a minority report will be based on the same evidence as a majority report.

8 Rights of Overview and Scrutiny Committee members to documents

- 8.1 In addition to their rights as councillors, members of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee have the additional right of access to documents, and to notice of meetings as set out in the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part 5 of this Constitution.

9 Councillors and Officers giving account

- 9.1 An Overview and Scrutiny Committee may scrutinise and review decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any Council function. As well as reviewing the documentation, in fulfilling its scrutiny role, it may require the Leader or any Portfolio Holder, to attend before it to explain in relation to matters within their remit:

- (a) any particular decision or series of decisions;
- (b) the extent to which the actions taken implement Council policy; and/or
- (c) their performance,

and it is the duty of those persons to attend if so required.

- 9.2 Where an Overview and Scrutiny Committee requires an officer to attend to answer questions or discuss issues, this will be agreed with the Monitoring Officer.
- 9.3 Where it is agreed that an officer should appear to answer questions, their evidence should, as far as possible, be confined to questions of fact and explanation relating to policies and decisions. Officers may explain: -

- (a) what the policies are;
 - (b) the justification and objectives of those policies as the Cabinet sees them;
 - (c) the extent to which those objectives have been met; and
 - (d) how administrative factors may have affected both the choice of policy measures and the manner of their implementation.
- 9.4 Officers may be asked to explain and justify advice they have given to the Cabinet prior to decisions being taken. They may also be asked to explain and justify decisions they have taken under delegated powers from the Cabinet.
- 9.5 Officers should not be expected and should avoid being drawn into discussions of politically contentious matters and any officer input should be consistent with the requirements for political impartiality.
- 9.6 The requirements of any protocols on Member/Officer relationships and the Code of Conduct must be adhered to where an officer is attending an Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 9.7 Where any councillor or Officer is required to attend an Overview and Scrutiny Committee under this provision, the Chair of that Committee will inform the Monitoring Officer, who will inform the councillor or Officer in writing giving at least ten clear working days' notice of the meeting. The notice will state the nature of the item on which they are required to attend to give account and whether any papers are required to be produced for the Committee. Where the account to be given to an Overview and Scrutiny Committee will require the production of a report, then the councillor or Officer concerned will be given reasonable and sufficient notice to allow for its preparation.
- 9.8 Where, in exceptional circumstances, the councillor or Officer is unable to attend on the required date, then the Committee shall, in consultation with the councillor or Officer, arrange an alternative date for attendance.

10 Attendance by others

- 10.1 An Overview and Scrutiny Committee may invite individuals other than those referred to in Rules 8.1 and 8.2 to address it, discuss issues of local concern and/or answer questions.

11 Call-in

- 11.1 Call-in is the exercise of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee's statutory power in section 21(3) of the Local Government Act 2000 to review an Executive decision that has been made but not yet implemented. Where a decision is called in and an Overview and Scrutiny Committee decides to refer it back to the Cabinet for reconsideration, it cannot be implemented until the call-in procedure is complete.
- 11.2 Any decision of the Cabinet, an individual member of the Cabinet or a committee of the Cabinet, or a Key Decision made by an officer under authority delegated by the Cabinet, is subject to call-in. A decision may be called in only once. A

recommendation by the Council may not be called in.

11.3 The call-in procedure and the powers to refer a decision back for reconsideration may only be exercised by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee, within the remit of its respective terms of reference.

11.4 Call-in of decisions which may be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework shall be governed by the provisions of the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules set out elsewhere within this Constitution.

11.5 The Call-In Procedure

11.5.1 Once made, an Executive decision shall be published, in the form of a decision note, within two working days at the Council's main offices and on its public website. The decisions digest will be sent to all members of the Council within the same timescale.

11.5.2 The decisions digest will bear the date on which it is published and will specify that the decision will be effective on the expiry of 5 clear working days after the publication of the decision and may then be implemented, unless called in under this provision within that 5 clear working day period. The deadline for a call-in request will be specified in the decisions digest.

11.5.3 Requests for call-in may be made by the submission of a notice in accordance with paragraph 11.5.4 below. A request shall only be considered to be valid if it is signed by at least 7 members of the Council who are not members of the Cabinet. One of the requestors must identify themselves as the originator of the request and the request must specify the nature of the grounds relied upon.

11.5.4 A call-in request must be in the form of a written notice submitted to the Monitoring Officer and received before the published deadline. Either one notice containing all required signatures or up to 7 separate emails (as appropriate) will be acceptable.

11.5.5 The notice must set out (a) the resolution or resolutions that the member(s) wish to call-in; (b) the reasons why they wish the Overview and Scrutiny committee to consider referring it back to the Cabinet, with particular reference to the principles of decision making set out elsewhere within this Constitution and (c) the alternative course of action or recommendations that they wish to propose.

11.5.6 The call-in request will be deemed valid unless either:

- (a) The procedures set out in Procedure Rules 11.5.3 to 11.5.5 above have not been properly followed;
- (b) A similar decision has been called in to the committee previously;
- (c) The Executive decision has been recorded as urgent in accordance with Paragraph 12 below; or

- (d) The Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee, considers the call-in to be frivolous, vexatious or clearly outside the call-in provisions;

in which case the Monitoring Officer may reject the call-in request.

11.5.7 Before deciding on its validity, the Monitoring Officer may seek clarification of the call-in request from the member(s) concerned.

11.5.8 Upon deciding on its validity, the Monitoring Officer shall forthwith notify the member(s) concerned, the Executive Leader and relevant Cabinet Member, the Chair and Vice Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Head of Paid Service.

11.6 Consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

11.6.1 The Monitoring Officer will ensure that any valid call-in is reported to the next available meeting of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee, or will convene a special meeting if so agreed by the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

11.6.2 The originator of the request for call-in will be expected to attend the meeting of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny committee to explain their reasons for the call-in and the alternative course of action or recommendations they wish to propose.

11.6.3 Having considered the call-in and the reasons given, the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee may either: -

- (a) Refer it back to the decision-making person or body for reconsideration, normally in time for its next scheduled meeting, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns and any alternative recommendations;
- (b) If it considers that the decision is outside the Council's budget and Policy Framework, refer the matter to full Council after seeking the advice of the Monitoring Officer and/or Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules; or
- (c) Decide to take no further action, in which case the original Executive decision will be effective immediately.

11.7 Decisions Referred Back to the Decision-Maker

11.7.1 If a decision is referred back to the original decision maker, that person or body shall then reconsider the matter, taking into account any concerns and recommendations of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and make a final decision, amending the decision or not, and give reasons for the decision.

11.7.2 If a decision relates to an Executive function only the Cabinet can ultimately decide the matter, provided that it is in accordance with the Council's budget and Policy Framework.

12 Call-In and Urgency

- 12.1 The call-in procedure set out above shall not apply where the decision being taken is urgent. A decision is urgent if:
- (a) A call-in would prevent the Council reaching a decision that is required by statute within a specified timescale; or
 - (b) Any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests and the reasons for urgency are reported to the decision-making body or person before the decision is taken.
- 12.2 The decision note shall state whether the decision is an urgent one, and therefore not subject to call-in.
- 12.3 The Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee must agree to the decision being treated as a matter of urgency. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee's consent shall be required. In the absence of that person, the Chair of the Council's consent shall be required. In the absence of the Chair of the Council, the Vice Chair of the Council's consent shall be required.
- 12.4 Where the Cabinet has recorded a decision as urgent, the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee may retrospectively review actions arising from that decision but cannot delay its implementation.

13 The Party Whip

- 13.1 It is generally accepted that the Party Whip should be suspended in respect of Overview and Scrutiny matters. However, when considering any matter in respect of which a member of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee is subject to a formal party whip, the councillor must declare the existence of the whip, and the nature of it before the commencement of the Committee's deliberations on the matter. The declaration, and the detail of the whipping arrangements, shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

14 Task and Finish Panels

- 14.1 An Overview and Scrutiny Committee may appoint such task and finish panels as it considers appropriate to undertake specific tasks on its behalf. Whilst these will be on a task and finish basis in most cases, the Committee is not precluded from establishing such Panels on a more permanent basis subject to regular review. Task and finish panel members do not have to be members of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee but may not be members of the Cabinet.
- 14.2 Where a committee establishes any Panel under Rule 14.1 above, it will set out the name of the Panel, its membership (including the Chair and, if appropriate, the Vice Chair) and the terms of reference including relevant dates for completion of the task or review.
- 14.3 Any such Task and Finish Panel shall have the powers set out in Paragraph 8 above in relation to councillors and officers giving account.

14.4 Any report prepared by a Task and Finish Panel shall be subject to review by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to being submitted for consideration by Council or the Cabinet.

15 Procedure at Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings

15.1 An Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall consider the following business:

- (a) record of the last meeting;
- (b) consideration of any matter referred to the Committee by the Council or by the Cabinet;
- (c) consideration of any matter referred to the Committee for advice in relation to call-in or a decision;
- (d) responses of the Cabinet on reports of that Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and
- (e) the business otherwise set out on the agenda for the meeting.

15.2 Where an Overview and Scrutiny Committee conducts investigations (e.g. with a view to policy development), the Committee may also ask people to attend to give evidence at its meetings, which are to be conducted in accordance with the following principles:

- (a) the investigation be conducted fairly, and all members of the Committee be given the opportunity to ask questions of attendees, and to contribute and speak;
- (b) those assisting the Committee by giving evidence be treated with respect and courtesy; and
- (c) the investigation be conducted so as to maximise the efficiency of the investigation or analysis.

15.3 Following any investigation or review, the relevant Committee shall prepare a report for submission to the Cabinet and/or Council as appropriate and shall, unless there are exceptional reasons, make its report and findings public.

8.0 COUNCILLORS

8.1 Roles of Councillors and Officer Holders

Part A All councillors

8.1.1 Responsibilities

1. Be at the centre of community life:
 - Spend time out and about, learning about the communities that you represent, supporting your residents, working with local organisations (such as GPs, schools, police, local businesses and voluntary organisations) developing a shared understanding of local issues and ensuring that communities make the most of all the opportunities available to them.
 - Build good working relationships and earn the trust and respect of local partners, other members and council officers
 - Be an active member of local networks and partnerships, for example by acting as a school governor.
 - Communicate regularly with your community including communicating council policy and decisions.
2. Contribute actively to the formation and scrutiny of the Council's policies, budgets, strategies and services.
3. Represent effectively the whole community with a special duty to their constituents, including those who did not vote for them.
4. Represent the Council on outside bodies as required.
5. Participate constructively in the good governance of the Council.
6. Fulfil the statutory and locally determined requirements of an elected Member of a local authority, including compliance with all relevant codes of conduct, regulations, protocols and procedures, and participation in those decisions and activities reserved for the full Council.
7. Share responsibility with officers of the council to act as effective and caring corporate parents for looked after children.

8.1.2 Key Tasks

1. Attend and participate effectively as a member of any committee to which the councillor is appointed.

2. Participate in the activities of any outside body to which the councillor is appointed, providing two-way communication between the organisations, and reporting as required to the Council. To develop and maintain a working knowledge of the Council's policies and practices in relation to that body and of the community's needs and aspirations.
3. Participate in the scrutiny or performance review of the services of the Authority including where the Council so decides, the scrutiny of policies and budget, and their effectiveness in achieving the strategic objectives of the Council.
4. Participate in any advisory group to which the councillor is appointed, as convened by the Cabinet from time to time.
5. Participate, as appropriate, in consultation with the community and with other organisations.
6. Develop and maintain a working knowledge of the Council's services, management arrangements, organisation and activities, powers/duties, and constraints.
7. Contribute constructively to open government and democratic renewal through active encouragement to the community to participate in the governance of the West Northamptonshire area.
8. Maintain professional working relationships with all Members and Officers.
9. Identify and participate in opportunities for further development and training as a councillor and keep abreast of developments in national and local government.

8.1.3 Additional Responsibilities and Tasks for Cabinet councillors

These role profiles should be read in conjunction with the role profile for all councillors.

Part B Executive Leader

8.1.4 Responsibilities

1. Ensure efficient and effective services, where they are relevant to the needs of the community and the responsibility of the West Northamptonshire Council, in the short, medium and long term.
2. Provide visible political leadership in relation to citizens, stakeholders and partners in the overall co-ordination of policies, strategies and service delivery affecting the locality.
3. Lead the Cabinet in its work to develop the Policy Framework and budget and take overall political control of the Council within the agreed Policy Framework.

4. Lead the development of local and regional strategic partnerships.
5. Ensure the appropriate representation of the Council on key outside bodies.

8.1.5 Key Tasks

1. Provide leadership to the Council and its political administration, and lead the presentation of the recommendations, plans, policies and decisions of the Cabinet and the Council.
2. Represent the Council's political and strategic decision-making in the community and in discussions with regional, national and international organisations and others in order to pursue matters of interest to the Council and its communities and to keep the Council and the Cabinet informed accordingly.
3. Appoint members of the Cabinet and allocate Cabinet portfolios.
4. Develop and maintain good working relations and effective channels of communication with the Chair of each Scrutiny Committee
5. Direct, manage and chair meetings of the Cabinet and to take responsibility, individually and/or collectively for any specific portfolio, including providing a political lead in proposing new policy, strategy, budget and service standards and reviews, as well as acting as spokesperson for the Council.
6. Direct and manage the Chief Executive, and to meet regularly (with or without the Cabinet) with the Chief Executive and other relevant senior officers to consider and recommend action within approved policies and strategies.
7. Consider the development and training needs of the Cabinet and members generally and arrange for training sessions or suitable briefings as appropriate.
8. Receive and act as appropriate upon representations from councillors, the public, organisations and senior officers.

Part C All Cabinet councillors with Portfolio

8.1.6 Responsibilities

1. Take responsibility within the Cabinet on the basis of collective decision making and such individual delegation that may apply, for a portfolio of services or functions of the Council.
2. Input into the Cabinet any information, intelligence or factors considered relevant to the issues under consideration by the Cabinet.

3. Contribute actively through the portfolio and membership of the Cabinet to the formation, implementation, monitoring and scrutiny of the Council's policies, budgets, strategies and services.

8.1.7 Key Tasks

1. Participate in the Cabinet and to implement agreed policies by taking responsibility individually and/or collectively for any portfolio allocated by the Executive Leader, including proposing new policy, strategy, programming, budget and service standards, and leading performance review.
2. Develop a clear understanding and in depth knowledge of the respective portfolio, the scope and range of the relevant services for which they are responsible and an awareness of current agreed policies and budgetary implications in respect of those services.
3. Consult and communicate with all members, council officers, key partners and the community as appropriate to ensure policies, strategies, budgets and decisions are well informed and that Council policies are widely understood and positively promoted.
4. Ensure that the Council is briefed at the appropriate time on significant issues within the respective portfolio – i.e. those which have financial or other major resource implications or which will result in a change to established policy.
5. Act as spokesperson for the Council and answer and account to the Council and the community on matters within the portfolio.
6. Work closely with the Chief Executive, Director and other senior officers responsible for the services within the portfolio and the relevant Overview Committee Chair.
7. Work with officers on the implementation of agreed plans, policies and programmes within the portfolio and inform the Cabinet of progress and performance.
8. Participate in scrutiny or performance reviews of services as requested by a Scrutiny Committee.
9. Represent the Council and the Cabinet in the community and elsewhere as required by the Leader.

8.1.8 Additional Responsibilities and Tasks for Non-Cabinet councillors

Part D Chair of the Council

8.1.9 Responsibilities

1. Uphold and promote the purposes of the Constitution and to interpret the Constitution when necessary.
2. Preside over meetings of the Council so that its business can be carried out efficiently and with regard to the rights of councillors and the interests of the community.
3. Ensure that the Council meeting is a forum for the debate of matters of concern to the local community and the place at which members are able to hold the Cabinet to account.
4. Promote public involvement in the Council's activities.
5. Be the conscience of the Council, and act impartially.
6. Attend such civic and ceremonial functions as the Council and/or they determine appropriate and take precedence at formal occasions.
7. Ensure that the dignity of the office and Council is maintained at all times.

8.1.10 Key Tasks

1. Chair all meetings of the full Council.
2. Chair major consultation meetings organised by the Council, as appropriate.
3. Set the standard of conduct to be expected from all councillors.
4. Help represent the Council in the community and in discussions with regional, national and international organisations and others.
5. Attend functions appropriate to the position of Chair of the Council.
6. Act as host to visiting Royalty, civic dignitaries and other important visitors.
7. Meet with relevant officers to ensure the receipt of appropriate advice to enable effective decisions.

8.2 Members' Code of Conduct

PART 1: THE CODE

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The Members' Code of Conduct is intended to promote high standards of behaviour amongst councillors of West Northamptonshire Council.

The Code is underpinned by the following seven Nolan principles of public life, which should be adhered to when interpreting the meaning of the Code. councillors should behave with:

1. **Selflessness** – and act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not act in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.
2. **Integrity** – and should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.
3. **Objectivity** – in carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits; choices should be made on merit.
4. **Accountability** – and are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
5. **Openness** – and should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
6. **Honesty** – and declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
7. **Leadership** – and should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

SECTION 2: GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. Introduction and Interpretation

1.1 This Code applies to all councillors and co-opted members of West Northamptonshire Council. It is your responsibility to comply with the provisions of this Code.

1.2 In this Code:

- (a) "the Council" refers to West Northamptonshire Council.

(b) “Councillor” means any person being a Member of West Northamptonshire Council.

(c) “Meeting” means any meeting of:

- (i) the Council
- (ii) the Cabinet
- (iii) any of the Council’s or the Cabinet’s committees, sub-committees, joint committees, joint sub-committees, or area committees
- (iv) any of the Council’s advisory groups and executive boards, working parties and panels.

2. Scope

2.1 This Code applies to you whenever you are acting in the capacity as a Member of the Council: not only when attending meetings. For example, it will also include Members’ dealings with officers, Members’ dealings with the public, when Members represent the Council on outside bodies, any statements made by a Member on behalf of the Council, etc.

3. General Obligations

3.1 You must treat others with respect.

3.2 You must not do anything which may cause the Council to fall foul of UK equalities legislation.

3.3 You must not bully or intimidate any person or do anything which compromises the independence of those who work for the Council.

3.4 For the purposes of this paragraph, bullying is defined as: “offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Examples of bullying include:

- (a) spreading malicious rumours, or insulting someone by word or behaviour.
- (b) copying communications that are critical about someone to others who do not need to know.
- (c) ridiculing or demeaning someone – picking on them or setting them up to fail.
- (d) exclusion or victimization.
- (e) unfair treatment.

- (f) overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position.
 - (g) unwelcome sexual advances – touching, standing too close, display of offensive materials, asking for sexual favours, making decisions on the basis of sexual advances being accepted or rejected.
 - (h) making threats or comments about job security without foundation.
 - (i) deliberately undermining a competent worker by overloading and constant criticism.
 - (j) preventing individuals progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities.
- 3.5 You must not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is or may be:
- (a) a complainant;
 - (b) a witness; or
 - (c) involved in the administration of this Code.
- 3.6 You must not make trivial or malicious allegations against others.
- 3.7 You must not do anything which compromises or may compromise the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, the Council.
- 3.8 You must not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your office or the Council into disrepute.
- 3.9 You must not accept any gifts or hospitality that could be seen by the public as likely to influence your judgement in relation to any matter that you deal with in your official capacity.
- 3.10 You must not pass on information given to you in confidence by anyone, or information acquired by you which you believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, unless:
- (a) you have the consent of a person authorised to give it
 - (b) you are required by law to do so
 - (c) the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional advice, provided that they agree not to pass on the information to any other person; or
 - (d) the disclosure is:

- (i) reasonable and in the public interest; and
 - (ii) made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the Council.
- 3.11 You must not prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law.
- 3.12 You must not use or attempt to use your position as a councillor improperly to confer on, or secure for yourself or any other person, an advantage or disadvantage.
- 3.13 You must, when using, or authorising the use by others of, the resources of the Council:
 - (a) act in accordance with the Council's reasonable requirements
 - (b) ensure that such resources are not used improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes).
- 3.14 You must have regard to any Local Authority Code of Publicity made under the Local Government Act 1986.
- 3.15 You must comply with any formal standards investigation into your conduct or the conduct of another councillor.
- 3.16 You must, when reaching decisions on any matter, have regard to any relevant advice provided to you by:
 - (a) the Council's Chief Finance Officer; or
 - (b) the Council's Monitoring Officer
- 3.17 You must give reasons for all decisions in accordance with any statutory requirements and any reasonable additional requirements imposed by the Council.

SECTION 3: INTERESTS

1. Registration of Interests

- 1.1 Within 28 days of this Code being adopted by your Council or your election or appointment to office (where that is later) you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in Appendix A (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) and Appendix B (Other Registerable Interests).
- 1.2 You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest in Appendix A or B, or of any change to a

registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.

- 1.3 The register of interests of all councillors is a public record and must be available online for members of the public to view.
- 1.4 Under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 and the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012, you must give the Monitoring Officer written notice of any pecuniary or other interests (and any changes), which apply to you or where it is an interest of your spouse or partner (a person with whom you are living as a husband and wife; or a person with whom you are living with as if you are civil partners) within 28 days of:
 - (a) election or appointment to office (if that is later);
 - (b) any change to the interests;
 - (c) disclosing an interest at a meeting (where not otherwise entered on the register);
 - (d) becoming aware of the interest when solely discharging a function of the authority as a member of the council's Cabinet.
- 1.5 It is a prosecutable offence to fail to notify the Monitoring Officer of your interests or knowingly/recklessly provide false or misleading information.

2. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

- 2.1 Where a matter arises at a meeting in which you have an interest in Appendix A, you must declare the interest (unless it is sensitive - see section 5 below), not participate, or participate further, in any discussion or vote further on the matter and must not remain in the room unless granted a dispensation.

3. Other registerable interests

- 3.1 Where a matter arises at a meeting in which you have an interest in Appendix B, you must declare the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but must not take part in any vote on the matter unless you have been granted a dispensation.

4. Non-registerable interests

- 4.1 Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to your own financial interest (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest) or your own wellbeing or is otherwise to your advantage or relates to a financial interest or wellbeing or is otherwise to the advantage of a relative, friend or close associate, you must disclose the interest and not vote on the matter unless granted a dispensation. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting.
- 4.2 Where a matter arises at a meeting which affects your own financial interest or a financial interest of a relative, friend, close associate or body covered by Appendix B

you must disclose the interest;

- 4.3 Where the matter referred to in paragraph 4.2 affects the financial interest to a greater extent than if affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the area affected by the decision and a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest, you must not vote on the matter unless granted a dispensation. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting.

5. Sensitive Interests

- 5.1 Where you consider (and the Council's Monitoring Officer agrees) that the nature of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, or other interest is such that disclosure of the details of the interest could lead to you or a person connected with you being subject to intimidation or violence, it is a "sensitive interest" for the purposes of the Code. The details of the sensitive interest do not need to be disclosed to a meeting, although the fact that you have a sensitive interest must be disclosed.
- 5.2 In granting any dispensation, the overriding concern should be the safety and welfare of the councillor and their family. If the Monitoring Officer is satisfied that there is a genuine and well-founded threat of violence or intimidation to the councillor if their details were published by the Council, then such details should not be published. Receiving criticism or complaint may not amount to such and may be seen as simply part of the expected role of an elected politician. The Monitoring Officer will usually ask for evidence to substantiate the threat to hold on record.
- 5.3 It should be noted that, even if a dispensation is granted, the Register shall still show the existence of an interest with an explanatory note saying that the details have been withheld under these provisions.

6. Single Member Action

- 6.1 If you are empowered to discharge functions of the Council acting alone (for example, as a member of the Cabinet), and:
- (a) have and are aware that you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter to be dealt with by you in that role, you must not take any action, or further action on the matter (except for the purposes of enabling the matter to be dealt with by other means);
 - (b) have and are aware that you have an interest in any matter dealt with by you in that role, which relates to an interest in Appendix B ('Other Registerable Interest'), you must not take any action, or further action, on the matter (except for the purposes of enabling the matter to be dealt with by other means);

- (c) the matter to be dealt with by you in that role relates to your own financial interest (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest) or your own wellbeing or is otherwise to your advantage or relates to a financial interest or wellbeing or is otherwise to the advantage of a relative, friend or close associate, you must not take any action or further action on the matter (except for the purposes of enabling the matter to be dealt with by other means) and you must notify the Monitoring Officer;
- (d) the matter to be dealt with by you in that role affects your own financial interest or a financial interest of a relative, friend close associate or body covered by Appendix B, you must notify the Monitoring Officer before taking any action or further action, and if the Monitoring Officer determines that the matter affects the financial interest to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the area affected by the decision and a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest, you must not take any action or further action.

APPENDIX A – DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

1. Breaches of the rules relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests may lead to criminal sanctions being imposed.
2. You have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest if it is of a description specified in regulations made by the Secretary of State and either:
 - 2.1 it is an interest of yours, or
 - 2.2 it is an interest of:
 - (a) your spouse or civil partner
 - (b) a person with whom you are living as husband and wife, or
 - (c) a person with whom you are living as if you were civil partners; and
 - (d) you are aware that that other person has the interest.
3. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests are:

INTEREST	DESCRIPTION
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on by you for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the Council) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by you in carrying out duties as a Member, or towards your election expenses.

	This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract which is made between you (or a body in which you have a beneficial interest) and the Council (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the Council.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the Council for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to your knowledge) (a) the landlord is the Council; and (b) the tenant is a body in which you have a beneficial interest.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where: (a) that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the Council; and (b) either (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) where the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

“body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest” means a firm in which the relevant person is a partner or a body corporate of which the relevant person is a director, or in the securities of which the relevant person has a beneficial interest;

“director” includes a member of the committee of management of a registered society within the meaning given by section 1(1) of the co-operative and community benefit Societies Act 2014, other than a society registered as a credit union.

“land” excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not carry with it a right for the relevant person (alone or jointly with another) to occupy the land or to receive income;

“securities” means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

APPENDIX B - OTHER REGISTERABLE INTERESTS

1. Any body of which you are in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by the Council;
2. Any body-
 - (a) exercising functions of a public nature;
 - (b) directed to charitable purposes; or
 - (c) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management;
3. Any gifts or hospitality worth more than an estimated value of £10 which you have received by virtue of your office, or a series of gifts or hospitality, from the same source within any 12-month period which together are worth more than an estimated value of £10.

PART 2: GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY OFFERED TO COUNCILLORS

1. General Principles

- 1.1 Councillors should treat with caution any offer of a gift, favour or hospitality that is made to them. Whilst the person or organisation making the offer may be doing so entirely without expectation of gain, the public may see it differently if that person or organisation is doing business, or seeking to do business with the Council. Councillors should ask themselves “Would I have been given this if I was not on the Council?”
- 1.2 It is essential that any suggestion of improper influence should be avoided. When receiving offers of gifts and hospitality, councillors should be particularly sensitive as to their timing in relation to decisions which the Council may be taking. For example, hospitality must not be accepted knowingly from interested parties during the tendering period of a contract, or whilst an application for planning permission or some other kind of permission/decision is being considered by the Council.
- 1.3 Councillors may come into contact with individuals seeking to enhance the prospects of their business. Sometimes suppliers (or potential suppliers/tenderers for services) make approaches to councillors with a view to demonstrating a particular product or service. In order to avoid suspicion of unhealthy influence, councillors should ensure that such offers are advised to appropriate officers.

- 1.4 As with all other aspects of this Code, councillors should be confident that whatever they do should be seen to be an example to the community of proper conduct and behaviour.

2. Registering Gifts and Hospitality

- 2.1 This Code of Conduct sets out the requirement for councillors to register the receipt of any gift or hospitality worth £10 or over that they receive in connection with their official duties as a councillor. If in doubt as to the value, the councillor should register the offer anyway. An accumulation of gifts from the same source over a short period that adds up to £10 or more should also be registered. The Member must register the gift or hospitality and its source by completing a written declaration within 28 days of receiving it.
- 2.2 The Council will maintain a register of gifts and hospitality received by councillors where the value is £10 or more in value. The register is maintained by Democratic Services on behalf of the Monitoring Officer. Members should immediately notify Democratic Services of any such gifts or hospitality received and enter the relevant details in the register. The register will be made available to the public via the Council's website. It will be updated at least quarterly.
- 2.3 Councillors do not need to register gifts and hospitality that are not related to their role as a councillor.

8.3 Member Complaints Procedure

1. Context

- 1.1 These "Arrangements" set out how you may make a complaint that a Member of this Council has failed to comply with the Council's Members' Code of Conduct, or in the case of a Parish or Town Councillor, that Parish or Town Council's Code of Conduct, and sets out how the Council will deal with it.
- 1.2 These Arrangements include the appointment of at least two Independent Persons, whose views must be sought by the Council before it takes a decision on an allegation which it has decided warrants investigation, and whose views can be sought by the Council at any other stage, or by a Member against whom an allegation has been made.

2. The Code of Conduct

- 2.1 The Council has adopted a Code of Conduct for Members, which is set out elsewhere within the constitution.

3. Making a complaint

3.1 If you wish to make a complaint, please write to:

The Monitoring Officer
West Northamptonshire Council
One Angel Square
Angel Street
Northampton
NN1 1ED

or e-mail the Monitoring Officer at: monitoringofficer@westnorthants.gov.uk.

3.2 The Monitoring Officer is a senior officer of the Council who has statutory responsibility for maintaining the Register of Members' Interests and who is responsible for administering the process in respect of complaints of alleged Member misconduct.

3.3 In order to ensure that we have all the information which we need to be able to process your complaint, please use the complaint form, which is available on request or can be downloaded from the Council's website, next to the Code of Conduct.

3.4 You are required to provide us with your name and a contact address or email address, so that we can acknowledge receipt of your complaint and keep you informed of its progress. If you want to keep your name and address confidential, please indicate this in the space provided on the complaint form, in which case we will not disclose your name and address to the Member against whom you make the complaint, without your prior consent. The Council does not normally investigate anonymous complaints, unless there is a clear public interest in doing so.

3.5 The Monitoring Officer will acknowledge receipt of your complaint as soon as possible after receiving it and will keep you informed of the progress of your complaint.

4. Initial Assessment of Complaints Received

4.1 The Monitoring Officer will review all complaints received by the Council and may consult with at least one of the Independent Persons (see section 13 below) at this stage. In assessing the complaint, the Monitoring Officer will apply the following 'public interest' test:

'CAN' we investigate your complaint?

(a) Is the person you are complaining about a councillor?

(b) Did the conduct occur within the last six months?

(c) Is the conduct something that is covered by the code?

- 4.2 If a complaint has been made but does not fall within the scope or intent of these arrangements, the Monitoring Officer may still decide to take informal action in order to resolve the matter.
- 4.3 If the Monitoring Officer determines the complaint can be investigated, the following test will be applied:
- ‘SHOULD’ we investigate your complaint?
- (a) Is there evidence which supports the complaint?
 - (b) Is the conduct something which it is possible to investigate?
 - (c) Would an investigation be proportionate and in the public interest?
- 4.4 If the Monitoring Officer determines the complaint should be investigated, they will then decide whether the complaint:
- (a) warrants investigation or,
 - (b) may be suitable for alternative resolution without investigation,
- 4.5 For the complaint to be admissible it must be in a legible format and relate to an existing Member of the Council.
- 4.6 In determining whether or not the complaint should be referred for investigation or to seek alternative resolution the Monitoring Officer and Independent Persons will have regard to a range of factors including the following:
- (a) Whether there is sufficient information upon which to base a decision;
 - (b) How serious is the alleged complaint;
 - (c) Is the complaint politically motivated, vexatious or tit for tat;
 - (d) Did the action complained about occur recently or not;
 - (e) Do the allegations relate to actions occurring whilst the Member was acting in their official capacity or do they relate to their private life;
 - (f) Whether the matter is considered suitable for alternative resolution and whether either the Member concerned or the complainant is not prepared to accept this as a solution.
- 4.7 The initial assessment of the complaint will be held as soon as possible after receipt of your complaint and you will be informed, in writing, of the outcome by the Monitoring Officer. You will be informed on progress throughout the process.

- 4.8 Unless exceptional circumstances exist that indicate otherwise, the Monitoring Officer will inform the Member concerned of the receipt and nature of the complaint and invite their comments.
- 4.9 Where the Monitoring Officer requires additional information in order to come to a decision, they may come back to you for such information, and may request information from the Member against whom your complaint is directed.
- 4.10 If, during the assessment of the initial complaint, it becomes clear that either the Monitoring Officer or the Independent Person have a conflict of interest in relation to the complaint, they will not play any further role in the assessment of the complaint. In order that the complaint can be assessed, steps will be taken to appoint a Monitoring Officer (or suitably qualified person) or an Independent Person from another authority to assess the complaint and take any further steps required under this procedure.

5. Alternative Resolution

- 5.1 In appropriate cases, the Monitoring Officer may seek to resolve the complaint informally, without the need for a formal investigation. The Monitoring Officer must consult with an Independent Person about this course of action. Such informal resolution may involve the Member accepting that their conduct was unacceptable and offering an apology, or other remedial action by the Council. Where the Member or the Council makes a reasonable offer of informal resolution, but you are not willing to accept that offer, the Monitoring Officer (and Independent Person) will take account of this in deciding whether the complaint warrants a formal investigation.
- 5.2 If your complaint identifies criminal conduct or breach of other regulation by any person, the Monitoring Officer has the power to call-in the Police and other regulatory agencies.

6. If the Complaint is referred for Investigation how is the investigation conducted?

- 6.1 If the Monitoring Officer decides that a complaint merits formal investigation, they will appoint an Investigating Officer, who may be another senior officer of the Council, an officer of another Council or an external investigator. The Monitoring Officer will agree an investigation plan with the Investigating Officer. The Investigating Officer will decide whether they need to meet or speak to you to understand the nature of your complaint. If so, then you can explain your understanding of events and suggest what documents the Investigating Officer needs to see and who the Investigating Officer needs to interview. The Monitoring Officer will consult with an Independent Person about the need for a formal investigation.
- 6.2 The Investigating Officer would normally write to the Member against whom you have complained and provide them with a copy of your complaint. The Member would be

asked to provide their explanation of events. The Investigating Officer will identify what documents they need to see and who they need to interview. In exceptional cases, where it is appropriate to keep your identity confidential, or disclosure of details of the complaint to the Member might prejudice the investigation, the Monitoring Officer can delete your name and address from the papers given to the Member, or delay notifying the Member until the investigation has progressed sufficiently.

6.3 At the end of their investigation, the Investigating Officer will produce a draft report and will send copies of that draft report, in confidence, to you and to the Member concerned, to give you both an opportunity to identify any matter in that draft report which you disagree with or which you consider requires further consideration.

6.4 Having received and taken account of any comments which you may make on the draft report, the Investigating Officer will send it to the Monitoring Officer.

7. What happens if the Investigating Officer concludes that there is no evidence of a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct?

7.1 The Monitoring Officer will, in consultation with the Independent Persons, review the Investigating Officer's report and, if they are satisfied that the Investigating Officer's report is sufficient, the Monitoring Officer will write to you and to the Member concerned, notifying you that no further action is required.

8. What happens if the Investigating Officer concludes that there is evidence of a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct?

8.1 The Monitoring Officer will, in consultation with an Independent Person, review the Investigating Officer's report and will then either send the matter for local hearing before the Hearings Sub-Committee made up of councillors from the Council's Democracy and Standards Committee or seek an alternative resolution.

8.2 Local Resolution

The Monitoring Officer and Independent Person may consider that the matter can be resolved without the need for a hearing. Such resolution may include the Member accepting that their conduct was unacceptable and offering an apology, and/or other remedial action by the Council. If the Member complies with the suggested resolution, the Monitoring Officer will report the matter to the Democracy and Standards Committee for information, but will take no further action.

8.3 Local Hearing

If the Monitoring Officer and Independent Person consider that local resolution is not appropriate or it isn't possible to achieve, the Monitoring Officer will report the Investigating Officer's report to the Hearings Sub-Committee, which will conduct a

local hearing in private to decide whether the Member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct and, if so, whether to take any action in respect of the Member.

In summary, the Monitoring Officer will conduct a “pre-hearing process”, requiring the Member to give their response to the Investigating Officer’s report. This is in order to identify what is likely to be agreed and what is likely to be contentious at the hearing. The Chair of the Hearings Sub-Committee may issue directions as to the manner in which the hearing will be conducted. At the hearing, the Investigating Officer will present their report, call such witnesses as they consider necessary and make representations to substantiate their conclusion that the Member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct. For this purpose, the Investigating Officer may ask you as the complainant to attend and give evidence to the Hearings Sub-Committee.

The Member will then have an opportunity to give their evidence, to call witnesses and to make representations to the Hearings Sub-Committee as to why they consider that they did not fail to comply with the Code of Conduct.

The Hearings Sub-Committee, with the benefit of any advice from an Independent Person, may conclude that the Member did not fail to comply with the Code of Conduct and so dismiss the complaint. Alternatively, if the Hearings sub-committee finds that the Member did fail to comply with the Code of Conduct, the Chair will inform the Member of this finding and the Hearings Sub-Committee will then consider what action, if any, the Hearings Sub-Committee should take as a result of the Member’s failure to comply with the Code of Conduct. In doing this, the Hearings Sub-Committee will give the Member an opportunity to make representations to the Panel and will consult an Independent Person.

If the Member wishes to make representations to the Panel and/or consult with an Independent Person the Hearing will adjourn, normally for one week, and reconvene to hear any representation or statement from the Member before either confirming or amending their decision. If the Member does not wish to make representations to the Panel, or consult with an Independent Person, the decision of the Panel will stand as announced.

9. What action can the Hearings Sub-Committee take where a Member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct?

9.1 The Council has delegated to the Hearings Sub-Committee such of its powers to take action in respect of individual members (including town and parish council members) as may be necessary to promote and maintain high standards of conduct.

9.2 If, following an investigation and hearing, it is established that a member has failed to comply with their council’s Member Code of Conduct, one or more of the following sanctions may be applied:

- (a) Publish findings in respect of the member’s conduct;

- (b) Report findings to the relevant council for information;
- (c) Recommend to the relevant council that the member be issued with a formal censure or be reprimanded;
- (d) Recommend to the member's Group Leader (or in the case of un-grouped members, recommend to the relevant Council or committees) that they be removed from any or all committees or sub-committees of the council;
- (e) Where Executive arrangements exist, recommend to the Executive Leader that the member be removed from Cabinet, or removed from particular portfolio responsibilities;
- (f) Instruct the Monitoring Officer to arrange or recommend training for the member;
- (g) Instruct the Monitoring Officer to mediate between the complainant and the Member;
- (h) Remove or recommend the removal of the member from any outside appointments to which they have been appointed or nominated by their council where the complaint relates to that appointment and for a specified period of time;
- (i) Withdraw or recommend withdrawal of facilities provided to the member by their council, such as a computer, website and/or email and internet access, which may have been abused or improperly used;
- (j) Exclude or recommend the exclusion of the member from their council's offices or other premises, with the exception of meeting rooms as necessary for attending full Council, committee and sub-committee meetings.
- (k) Recommend that the member concerned makes a formal written or oral apology to the full Council.

9.3 There are no powers that allow the Council to suspend or disqualify a Member or to withdraw Members' basic allowances. However, removing a Member from the Cabinet or other Committee may lead to a loss of a Special Responsibility Allowance that position was entitled to for the period of the suspension.

10. What happens at the end of the hearing?

10.1 At the end of the hearing, the Chair will state the decision of the Hearings Sub-Committee as to whether the Member failed to comply with the Code of Conduct and as to any actions which the Hearings Sub-Committee resolves to take.

10.2 As soon as reasonably practicable thereafter and subject to any adjournment as set

out in 8.3 above, the Monitoring Officer shall prepare a formal decision notice in consultation with the Chair of the Hearings Sub-Committee and send a copy to you and to the Member. The decision notice will be made available for public inspection after 20 working days have elapsed from the date the decision notice was issued (provided there has not been a request for a review under paragraph 11 of these Arrangements) and the decision reported to the next convenient meetings of the Democracy and Standards Committee and of the Council.

11. Appeals and Reviews

- 11.1 There is no right of appeal for you as complainant or for the Member against a decision of the Monitoring Officer.
- 11.2 However, a review of the decision of the Hearings Sub-Committee may be sought by you or the Member concerned in the following circumstances:
- (a) where you or the Member concerned consider that the Local Hearing was not conducted in accordance with the process set out in these Arrangements or the principles of natural justice (see below); or
 - (b) where significant new evidence is available which has not been considered by the Hearings Sub-Committee.
- 11.3 Any such request for a review should be made to the Monitoring Officer in writing (by letter or e-mail) within 20 working days from the date the decision notice was issued to the parties and:
- (a) if made pursuant to paragraph 11.2a above, must set out specifically how it is considered the Local Hearing was not conducted in accordance with the process set out in these Arrangements or the principles of natural justice; or
 - (b) if made pursuant to paragraph 11.2b above, must include copies of the new evidence or explain what the evidence is.
- 11.4 The Monitoring Officer may reject the request for a review if after consultation with an Independent Person they conclude that substantive reasons have not been provided to support the request or the further evidence provided is insufficient to support a request for a review. Simply expressing disagreement with the Hearings Sub-Committee's decision or repeating the original complaint will result in the request for review being rejected. If the request for review is rejected, you and the Member will be advised in writing of the reasons for rejection.
- 11.5 If a request for a review is received (provided it is not rejected), the Monitoring Officer will notify the complainant and Member concerned and convene a meeting of the Review Panel.

- 11.6 The Review Panel will review the Hearings Sub-Committee's decision in private. The Review Panel will have the documentation considered by the Hearings Sub-Committee and the decision notice of the Hearings Sub-Committee before it. It will not conduct a re-hearing. It will only consider the request for the review, (including any new evidence presented with the request for review) together with the complainant or subject Member's response to the request for the review and response to any new evidence. The Review Panel will also have the discretion to re-hear any of the original evidence if it considers this necessary
- 11.7 The Review Panel will either:
- (a) confirm the original decision of the Hearings Sub-Committee; or
 - (b) disagree with the original decision of the Hearings Sub-Committee and substitute its own decision (which may only be a decision that was open to the Hearings Sub-Committee).
- 11.8 At the end of the review, the Chair of the Review Panel will explain the Review Panel's reasons for its decision. Within 5 working days of the decision of the Review Panel, the Monitoring Officer shall prepare a formal decision notice in consultation with the Chair of the Review Panel and send a copy to you and to the Member. The decision notice will be made available for public inspection and will be reported to the next convenient meeting of the Democracy and the Council.
- 11.9 Unless in the opinion of the Monitoring Officer in consultation with an Independent Person exceptional circumstances exist, the Review Panel must make a decision within two calendar months of the receipt of the request for a review.
- 11.10 There is no right of appeal of the decision of the Review Panel which is final.
- 11.11 If you feel that the Council has failed to deal with your complaint properly, you may make a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman or take your own legal advice as to options that might be open to you.

12. What is the Hearings Sub-Committee?

- 12.1 The Hearings Sub-Committee is a sub-committee of the Council's Democracy and Standards Committee. It will comprise three members of the Democracy and Standards Committee.
- 12.2 Independent Persons are invited to attend all meetings of the Hearings Sub-Committee and their views are sought and taken into consideration before the Hearings Sub-Committee takes any decision on whether the Member's conduct constitutes a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct and as to any action to be taken following a finding of failure to comply with the Code of Conduct.

13. What is the Review Panel?

- 13.1 The Review Panel is a sub-committee of the Council's Democracy and Standards Committee. It will comprise three members of the Democracy and Standards Committee who did not sit on the Hearings Sub-Committee, have not previously been involved in the matter concerned and who do not otherwise have any conflict of interest.
- 13.2 Independent Persons are invited to attend all meetings of the Review Panel and their views are sought and taken into consideration before the Review Panel takes any decision on whether the Member's conduct constitutes a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct and as to any action to be taken following a finding of failure to comply with the Code of Conduct.

14. Who are the Independent Persons?

- 14.1 The Council has five Independent Persons.
- 14.2 A person cannot be "independent" if they:
- (a) are, or have been within the past five years, a Member, co-opted Member or officer of the Council or of a parish council within the Council's area; or
 - (b) are a relative or close friend of a person involved in making or determining the complaint. For this purpose, "relative" means:
 - (i) the other person's spouse or civil partner;
 - (ii) living with the other person as husband and wife or as if they were civil partners;
 - (iii) a grandparent of the other person;
 - (iv) a lineal descendant of a grandparent of the other person;
 - (v) a parent, sibling or child of a person within paragraphs (i) or (ii);
 - (vi) the spouse or civil partner of a person within paragraph (iii), (iv) or (v); or
 - (vii) living with a person within paragraph (iii), (iv) or (v) as husband and wife or as if they were civil partners.

15. Being accompanied at a Local Hearing or Review Panel meeting

- 15.1 Both the complainant and the Member complained about may choose to bring another person with them to the Local Hearing and any Review Panel meeting (if one takes place) to support (but not represent) them. It shall be a matter for the Chair of the Hearings Sub-Committee and the Chair of the Review Panel to issue directions

as to the manner in which a supporting person may participate in the Local Hearing/Review Panel meeting, to ensure there is a balance between a party's need to be supported and the need for the Hearings Sub-Committee and/Review Panel to conduct its business fairly and efficiently.

16. Principles of Natural Justice

- 16.1 For the avoidance of doubt, it is expressly stated that the procedures in these Arrangements must be conducted in accordance with the principles of natural justice. In summary, this means that each party has the right to a fair hearing, the right to make their case to an impartial person/group of people, and that the decision makers in this process act without bias or apparent bias, act impartially and do not create any procedural irregularities.

17. Service

- 17.1 Where it is necessary for any documentation to be sent to a member against whom an allegation of breach of the Code has been made, those documents may be sent by recorded delivery post to that member's usual address and/or by e-mail to the e-mail address notified to the Council. Any documents sent by such a method are deemed to be served for the purpose of these arrangements.

18. Revision of these arrangements

- 18.1 The Council may by resolution agree to amend these arrangements and has delegated to the Chair of the Hearings Sub-Committee (and the Chair of the Review Panel in cases where there is a review), the right to depart from these arrangements where they consider that it is expedient to do so in order to secure the effective and fair consideration of any matter.

8.4 Member/Officer Protocol

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A good relationship between councillors and officers is characterised by mutual respect and trust and is essential to the successful working of the organisation. Councillors and officers should speak to each other openly and honestly; they are indispensable to each other. Nothing in this Protocol is intended to change that relationship.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Protocol is to help councillors and officers perform effectively by giving guidance on their respective roles and expectations and on their relationship with each other. It is intended to promote clarity and the smooth running of the Council, and ensure that impartial and objective advice is obtained.
- 1.3 The Protocol also gives guidance on what to do on the rare occasions when things go wrong. Responsibility for the operation of this Protocol lies with the Chief Executive of the Council and the Monitoring Officer.
- 1.4 The Protocol must be read and operated in the context of all relevant legislation, national and local Codes of Conduct, the Council's Codes of Conduct and other supporting procedures such as the Complaints and Whistleblowing procedures, commissioning and procedure for confidential reporting. Breach of this protocol may also constitute a breach of the councillor, and the Employee, Codes of Conduct.

2. Roles of councillors and Officers

- 2.1 Councillors and officers are servants of the public and they are indispensable to one another. Their responsibilities are distinct. Councillors are responsible to the electorate and set policy and direction. They are elected to serve a term of office. Officers are employed by and responsible to the whole Council. An officer's job is to give advice to the Council, and to carry out the Council's work under the direction and control of the Council, the Cabinet, and relevant committees, etc. Mutual respect and co-operation between councillors and officers are essential to good local government.

Councillors

- 2.2 Councillors have the following main areas of responsibility:
 - (a) contributing to determining the policy of the Council and giving it leadership;
 - (b) monitoring and reviewing the performance of the Council in implementing that policy and delivering services;
 - (c) representing the Council in their local areas and externally;
 - (d) acting on behalf of their constituents.

- 2.3 All councillors must respect the impartiality of officers' information and advice, must not ask them to undertake work of a party-political nature, or to do anything that would put them in difficulty in the event of a change in the political composition of the Council.
- 2.4 Councillors must recognise that no officer should be expected to give political advice, and those that are in 'politically restricted' posts are specifically debarred from engaging in active political work.
- 2.5 When dealing with Council business, councillors must be mindful of the provisions relating to interests in the councillor Code of Conduct and avoid involvement in matters that could be deemed to be breaches of these provisions. Councillors should also be aware of legislative constraints on their behaviour. For example, they should not visit certain Council establishments without the appropriate checks having been completed.

Members of the Cabinet and Committee Chairs

- 2.6 Members of the Cabinet and Chairs and Vice Chairs of committees, Boards, Panels etc, have additional responsibilities and their relationships with officers whilst carrying out those roles may be different from, and more complex than those of councillors without those responsibilities.

Officers

- 2.7 An officer's role is:
- (a) to give advice and information to all councillors on an impartial basis, using their professional expertise and
 - (b) to implement the policies determined by the Council, provided the policies are within the law.
- 2.8 In all advice, including reports, it is the responsibility of the officer to express their own advice in an objective and professional manner, and make recommendations based on this. An officer may report the views of individual councillors on an issue. If the councillor wishes to express a view contrary to the recommendation, they must not pressure the officer to make a recommendation contrary to the officer's professional view.
- 2.9 Certain officers e.g. Chief Executive of the Council, Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) have responsibilities in law over and above their obligations to the Council and to individual councillors. These obligations should be respected. These officers must not be obstructed in the discharge of these responsibilities, and/or be victimised for discharging these responsibilities.
- 2.10 Officers who are professionally qualified may be bound to observe professional

standards in giving advice and councillors must respect this. Officers will also be bound by the limits of their authority in the Council.

3. Expectations

3.1 Councillors can expect from officers:

- (a) A commitment to the Council as a whole, and not to any political group;
- (b) A working partnership;
- (c) An understanding of and support for respective roles, workloads and pressures;
- (d) Timely response to enquiries and complaints;
- (e) Objective advice, not influenced by political views or preference, which does not compromise the political neutrality of officers;
- (f) Regular, up to date information on matters that can reasonably be considered appropriate and relevant to their needs, having regard to any individual responsibilities that they have and positions that they hold;
- (g) Awareness of and sensitivity to the political environment;
- (h) Respect, courtesy and dignified behaviour appropriate to the occasion;
- (i) Training and development in order to carry out their role effectively;
- (j) A high level of integrity and confidentiality, appropriate to the situation;
- (k) Not to have officers' personal issues raised with them outside the agreed procedures;
- (l) That they will not attempt to influence improperly any councillor to advance officers' personal interests, those of others, or influence improperly a decision;
- (m) At all times compliance with the Code of Conduct for Officers;
- (n) Support for the role of councillors as the local representatives of the Council, within any scheme of support for councillors, which may be approved by the Council.

3.2 Whenever a public meeting is organised by the Council to consider a local issue, all the councillors representing the ward or wards affected should, as a matter of course, be invited to attend the meeting unless a lead Councillor has been agreed. Similarly, whenever the Council undertakes any form of consultative exercise on a local issue, the ward councillors should be notified at the outset of the exercise.

3.3 Correspondence between an individual councillor and an officer should not normally be copied by the officer to any other councillor without that councillor's consent. Officers should not be copied into political group correspondence.

3.4 Officers can expect from councillors:

- (a) A working partnership;
- (b) An understanding of and support for respective roles, workloads and pressures; and of officer work/life balance;
- (c) Leadership and direction;
- (d) Respect, courtesy and dignified behaviour appropriate to the occasion;
- (e) A high level of integrity and confidentiality, appropriate to the situation;
- (f) Not to be subject to intimidation, harassment or bullying;
- (g) Not to have councillors' personal issues raised with them outside the agreed procedures;
- (h) Not attempt to influence improperly any officer to advance their personal interests, or those of others, or influence improperly a decision;
- (i) That councillors will at all times comply with the Council's councillors Code of Conduct;
- (j) That councillors will not comment adversely on the conduct or capability of an individual Council employee or officer at meetings held in public;
- (k) The councillors will not ask for support other than to assist in carrying out their roles in the Council.

4. Limitations on Behaviour

4.1 The distinct roles of councillors and officers necessarily impose limitations upon behaviour. By way of illustration, and not as an exclusive list:

- (a) Close personal relationships between councillors and officers can confuse these separate roles and get in the way of the proper discharge of the Council's functions, not least in creating the perception in others that a particular councillor or officer may secure advantageous treatment for themselves, their group or otherwise. Where close personal relationships do exist, it is necessary to ensure that confidential knowledge is respected and not discussed inappropriately;
- (b) The need to maintain these separate roles means that there are limits to the matters on which officers should be expected to give advice. Officers are unlikely

to be able to give advice on personal matters and should not give advice on party political matters;

- (c) Relationships with particular individuals or party groups should not be such as to give cause for suspicion that an officer favours that councillor or group above others. The issue of officer attendance and advice to political groups is specifically covered below.

5. Political Groups

- 5.1 The operation of political groups is an integral feature of local government, and such political groups have an important part to play in the development of policy and the political management of the Council. It is in the interests of the Council to support the effective operation of political groups, but the operation of political groups can pose difficulties in terms of the impartiality of officers (note: the Cabinet is not a political group even if all members are from a single party).

6. Officer Attendance

- 6.1 Any political group may request the Statutory Officers, Executive Directors or Assistant Directors to attend a meeting of the group to advise on any particular matter relating to the Council.
- 6.2 An officer may decline a request to attend if they are of the opinion that the particular issue is of such a political nature that it would be inappropriate to attend.
- 6.3 Officers' advice to political groups will be limited to a statement of material facts and identification of options and the merits and demerits of such options for the Council. Advice will not deal with any political implications of the matter or any option, and officers will not make any political recommendation to a political group.
- 6.4 Where an officer attends a political group, the Chief Executive of the Council will advise all other groups that the officer has attended and the subject upon which they have advised and ensure that other groups are afforded the same opportunity.
- 6.5 Where officers provide information and advice to a party group meeting in relation to a matter of Council business, this cannot act as a substitute for providing all necessary information and advice to the Cabinet, relevant committee or sub-committee where the matter in question is concerned.
- 6.6 Officers will respect the confidentiality of any lawful matter, which they hear in the course of attending a political group meeting.

8. When Things go Wrong

- 7.1 From time to time the relationship between councillors and officers may break down or become strained. If this is the case, issues will be dealt with informally where

possible, or through conciliation by an appropriate senior manager or councillor.

7.2 Procedure for officers

Formal complaints against councillors must follow the Code of Conduct processes found elsewhere in the Constitution. Before an officer initiates a complaint under the Code of Conduct or the Whistleblowing Procedure, they should consider raising their concerns about the behaviour of a given councillor with the Monitoring Officer.

7.3 Procedure for councillors

- (a) In the event that a councillor remains dissatisfied with the conduct, behaviour or performance of an officer, the matter should be raised with an appropriate Executive Director, usually one with authority over the officer concerned. Where the officer concerned is an Executive Director, the matter should be raised with the Chief Executive. Where the officer concerned is the Chief Executive, the matter should be raised with the Monitoring Officer.
- (b) Prior to a councillor approaching the relevant Executive Director, the councillor should consider discussing the issue informally with the Leader or Deputy Leader or another appropriate Executive Director.
- (c) If the matter cannot be resolved informally, it may be necessary to invoke the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.

8.5 Planning Protocol

1 Background and Scope

- 1.1 This Planning Protocol should be read in conjunction with the terms of reference provided for the Strategic Planning Committee and the Local Area Planning committees.
- 1.2 The Planning Protocol takes into account the ethical framework introduced by the Localism Act 2011, the National Planning Policy Framework and relevant planning practice guidance, and the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by West Northamptonshire Council.
- 1.3 The aim of this Protocol is to ensure that:
 - (a) Planning decisions are made openly, impartially with sound judgement, and for justifiable planning reasons; and
 - (b) Throughout the planning process there are no grounds for suggesting that a decision has been biased, not impartial or not well founded in any way.
- 1.4 The Planning Protocol applies to members of the Planning committees and officers.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 The Planning committees operate in a quasi-judicial manner. There is recourse through the courts and the Planning Inspectorate if a decision on a regulatory planning matter is not correctly made - with possible financial penalties for the Council. This places an important responsibility on those who serve on the Planning committees.
- 2.2 The role of a Member on a Planning Committee involves balancing representing the needs and interests of the council area as a whole, with the need to maintain the ethic of impartial decision making on what can be highly controversial proposals. This Protocol has therefore been established to provide guidance for Members and officers in dealing with planning matters to avoid grounds for allegations of malpractice.
- 2.3 All Members serving on a Planning Committee are required to abide by this Protocol.

3. General Roles and Conduct

- 3.1 The basis of the planning system is the consideration of private proposals against wider public interests, with often strongly opposing views. Whilst Members should take account of those views, they should not favour any person, company, group or locality; nor put themselves in a position where they appear to do so. Decisions

should clearly be based upon the development plan and material planning considerations.

- 3.2 The role of Members at a Planning Committee is not to represent the views of their constituents, but to consider planning applications in the interests of the whole Council area. When voting on applications, Members may therefore decide to vote against the views expressed by their constituents.
- 3.3 Members who do not feel that they can act in this way should consider whether they are best suited to serving on a Planning Committee.
- 3.4 Members whose business or other interests bring them into frequent contact with the planning system should consider whether it is appropriate or practical to accept appointment to a Planning Committee: nor should other Members seek to appoint such a Member to a Planning Committee.
- 3.5 The role of officers at Planning Committee is to advise the Members on professional matters, and to assist in the smooth running of the meeting.
- 3.6 If Members have questions about a development proposal, they are encouraged to contact the case officer in advance. The officer will then provide advice and answer any questions about the report and the proposal, which will result in more efficient use of the Planning Committee's time and more transparent decision making.

4. Training

- 4.1 No Member shall attend any meeting of a Planning Committee as a committee Member or a substitute for a committee Member unless they have undergone such mandatory training in planning procedures as the Council requires.
- 4.2 Members should endeavour to attend any other specialised training or informal briefing sessions provided, to improve and keep up-to-date knowledge of planning law, regulations, procedures, Codes of Practice and the Development Plans beyond the minimum referred to above.

5. General Principles for Dealing with Planning Matters

- 5.1 A Member should consider the interests of local residents and businesses as a whole and should not favour any individuals or groups. They should also act in the interests of the whole Council area.
- 5.2 A Member shall not accept a nomination to serve on a Planning Committee unless they agree to abide by the terms of the Planning Protocol.
- 5.3 Members (and officers) should not act as paid agents or consultants on planning matters within the jurisdiction of the Council as local planning authority.

- 5.4 Planning applications will be determined in a transparent, fair and open manner and Members should have regard only to the development plan and material planning considerations and should disregard all other factors.
- 5.5 Members participating at meetings should ensure that they are present for the whole presentation by officers and subsequent debate on a particular matter. This is to ensure that they are able to hear all the relevant evidence and debate in relation to a proposal. In the event that a Member misses part of an item being discussed then they must not vote.
- 5.6 Members should retain an open mind about planning matters until they are in possession of all the relevant information to be presented.
- 5.7 Members should pay full regard to officers' professional recommendations, relevant national/regional planning statements and guidance, and relevant Development Plan Policies.
- 5.8 Members are recommended to be cautious of social contact with applicants and agents.
- 5.9 Members should not disclose to a third party information submitted to them or a committee on a confidential basis.

6. Determination of Planning Applications

- 6.1 Members determining applications will take account of all the relevant information presented before reaching a decision and should not commit themselves to a final opinion before having done so.
- 6.2 In considering the merits of planning applications Members should have regard only to relevant planning matters and should disregard all other factors and considerations.
- 6.3 Members should pay full regard to the professional officer recommendation, relevant national/regional planning guidance and relevant Development Plan Policies.
- 6.4 Members can always ask for clarification from officers. However, if there are issues which require factual clarification, preferably these should be directed to the case officer before the committee meeting, not at the meeting itself.
- 6.5 Members will then debate the application, including giving an indication of how they intend to vote.
- 6.6 After Members have debated the application, a vote will be taken.
- 6.7 Whilst officers will provide professional advice and a recommendation on every application and matter considered, it is the responsibility of Members, acting in the

interests of the whole Council, to decide what weight to attach to the advice given and to the considerations of each individual application. In this way, Members may decide to apply different weight to certain issues and may reach a decision contrary to officer advice.

- 6.8 If, in moving contrary to the advice and/or recommendation in an officer's report, Members require further advice about the details of the motion, the meeting can be adjourned for a short time to allow Members and officers to draft the motion. This may include reasons for the decision that are relevant to the planning considerations on the application, and which are capable of being supported and substantiated should an appeal be lodged.
- 6.9 Where Members propose to determine a planning matter contrary to officers' advice, full and proper reasons based on material planning considerations must be given at decision time.
- 6.10 Members may move that any vote should be recorded at any meeting of the Planning Committee. This means that a formal record is taken of how each individual Member voted (For, Against, or Abstain).

7. Officer Reports to Committee

- 7.1 Reports should be accurate and cover, among other things, the relevant planning matters of objections and the relevant planning matters raised by people who have been consulted in respect of an application.
- 7.2 Relevant points will include a clear exposition of the site or related history, the relevant Development Plan Policies and all other relevant material planning considerations.
- 7.3 Reports should include a clear written recommendation of action.
- 7.4 Reports should list the topics that will be addressed by conditions and if possible also include draft Heads of Terms (where applicable) to a legal agreement, if the recommendation is to grant planning permission.
- 7.5 Reports should contain a technical appraisal which clearly justifies the recommendation made by the officer.
- 7.6 If the recommendation in the report is contrary to the provisions of the Local Plan, the material considerations which justify this must be clearly stated.
- 7.7 Where an application is recommended for refusal the reasons will be set out in full in the officer's report.

8. Disclosable Pecuniary and Personal Interests

- 8.1 The Code of Conduct sets out requirements for Members on declaring personal and disclosable pecuniary interests and the consequences of having such interests. These must be followed scrupulously and Members should review their situation regularly.
- 8.2 Members should avoid membership of the Planning committees if it entails, or would entail, frequent declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.
- 8.3 A Member with a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of a particular planning matter must declare it and take no part in the discussion or the determination of the proposal. The Member may in their personal capacity and if registered to speak make representations and answer questions prior to any debate on the matter but thereafter should leave the room while the item is considered and determined. The responsibility for this rests with each Member and they may wish to consult with the Monitoring Officer or legal advisor to the committee at the earliest opportunity if in any doubt.
- 8.4 Ward Members who are also members of a Planning committee may participate in the committee debate on an application in their ward and subject to any disclosable pecuniary interest will normally be allowed to vote on the application.
- 8.5 A Member who has a disclosable interest in a planning matter is still able to represent the interests of their Ward constituents at committee meetings in respect of that matter, subject to the Council's rules on public participation at committees. Alternatively, the Member could advise constituents to address their representations to another ward Member or a Member of an adjacent ward who is not so affected.

9. Pre-determination and Predisposition

- 9.1 Members of the Planning Committees need to take account of the general public's expectation that a planning application will be processed and determined in a transparently open and fair manner, in which members taking the decision will take account of all the evidence presented before arriving at a decision, not take into account irrelevant evidence or representations and that to commit themselves one way or the other before hearing all the arguments and evidence makes them vulnerable to an accusation of partiality. A Member may voice their concerns publicly before a meeting but they should make it clear that they will not form a final opinion until they have considered all the information.
- 9.2 Members must not prejudice their ability to participate in planning decisions at a Planning committee by making up their mind, or clearly appearing to have made up their mind (particularly in relation to an external interest or lobby group), on how they will vote on any planning matter prior to formal consideration of the matter at the relevant Planning committee and hearing the officer's presentation and evidence and arguments on both sides.

- 9.3 Pre-determining a matter in this way and then taking part in the decision will put the Council at risk of a finding of maladministration and of legal proceedings on the grounds of there being a danger of bias or a failure to take into account all of the factors enabling the proposal to be considered on its merits.
- 9.4 If a Member has made up their mind prior to the meeting, or have made public comments which indicate that they might have done, and is not able to reconsider their previously held view, then they will not be able to participate on the matter.
- 9.5 Members who are members of a Planning committee and who in that capacity attend any ancillary meeting or committee/sub-committee need to avoid any appearance of bias or of having predetermined their views before taking a decision on a planning application or on planning policies. Section 25 of the Localism Act 2011 provides that a Member should not be regarded as having a closed mind simply because they previously did or said something that, directly or indirectly, indicated what view they might take in relation to any particular meeting, provided they remain open to listening to all the arguments and changing their mind in the light of all the information presented at a relevant meeting. A Member in this position will always be judged against an objective test of whether the reasonable onlooker with knowledge of the relevant facts, would consider that the Member was biased.
- 9.6 Circumstances may also arise where a Member has had significant personal involvement with an applicant, agent or interested party, (whether or not in connection with the particular matter before the Planning Committee), which could lead an observer who knows the relevant facts to reasonably think the Member's interest is so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest. In these circumstances the Member should declare a disclosable interest, observe the Council's rules on Public Participation at committees, and withdraw from the meeting.
- 9.7 Members must be aware that they are likely to have pre-determined a matter where the Council is the landowner, developer or applicant and they have acted as, or could be perceived as being, a chief advocate for the proposal.
- 9.8 For advice on predetermination and predisposition, Members should seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer.

10. Lobbying of Councillors

- 10.1 Lobbying is a normal part of the planning process. It is recognised that those affected by a proposal will often seek to influence the decision by an approach to their local Member or to members of a Planning Committee. However, such lobbying can lead to the impartiality and integrity of a member being called into question. The information provided by lobbyists may represent a selective and incomplete picture of the relevant considerations in respect of a planning matter.

- 10.2 Members of a Planning committee are free to listen to any point of view about a planning proposal. Even though they may agree with a particular view, members of a Planning committee should take care not to express an opinion which may be taken by the public as indicating that they or the authority had already made up their mind on the issue before they have been exposed to all the evidence and arguments. In such situations, Members should restrict themselves to giving procedural advice, including suggesting to those who are lobbying, that they should speak or write to the relevant officer in order that their opinions can be included in the officer's report to the committee. If they do express an opinion, it should be made clear that the Member will only be in a position to take a final decision after having heard all the relevant evidence and arguments at committee.
- 10.3 Members can raise with officers issues which have been raised by their constituents, It is always good practice that they make it clear that they can only make a final decision after hearing all the relevant arguments and taking into account all relevant material and planning considerations at Planning committees.
- 10.4 If a member of a Planning committee responds to lobbying by deciding to go public in support of a particular outcome; or actively campaigns for it, they should make clear in their public comments and/or at committee when the decision is under consideration that the views expressed are/were provisional and they will come to a final view once they have weighed all the evidence and listened to all the arguments presented at the committee meeting. If a Member is of the view that they are unable to make an unbiased decision they should not participate in the decision. If they consider the public comments they have made mean the public perception is that they will be unable to make a decision without bias, they may in the interests of maintaining public confidence decide not to participate in a decision.
- 10.5 If any Member, whether or not a committee member, speaks on behalf of a lobby group at the decision making committee, they must withdraw once they have spoken in order to counter any suggestion that their presence may have some influence on the said committee in making its final decision.
- 10.6 If a Member requires advice about being lobbied, they should seek advice from the Monitoring Officer as soon as possible and preferably well before any meeting takes place at which they think the issue might arise.

11. Political Influence

- 11.1 Given that the point at which a decision on a planning application is made cannot occur before a Planning committee meeting, when all available information is to hand and has been duly considered, any political group meeting prior to the committee meeting should not be used to decide how Members should vote and political whips must not be used.

11.2 Members of the Planning committees should avoid organising support for or against a planning application and avoid lobbying other Members. Such actions can easily be misunderstood by parties to the application and by the general public. Where a member of a Planning committee wishes to act as a facilitator to a local group regarding a particular application, they should indicate that they will need to absent themselves from the vote on that particular application when it was being considered.

12. Pre-application Discussions

12.1 Discussions between a potential applicant and the Council prior to the submission of an application can be of considerable benefit to both parties. Such discussions should not, however, become or be seen to become, part of a lobbying process. Any such discussions should take place within clear guidelines.

12.2 Where Members are involved in pre-application discussions, at least one officer should attend any meetings and a follow-up letter is advisable, particularly when documentary material has been left with the Council. A written note should be made of all meetings.

12.3 All officers taking part in such discussions should make clear whether or not they are the decision-maker.

12.4 Any advice that is given should not be partial, nor seen to be partial, by any party involved. It should always be made clear at the outset that the discussions will not bind a Council to making a particular decision and that any views expressed are personal and provisional. Advice and observations should be based on the adopted plan and material considerations.

12.5 The following terms of engagement shall apply:

(a) Presentations by applicants should be limited to the development proposal and a question and answer session on factual matters. The understanding must be that the engagement is in order to improve understanding. Where appropriate such meetings may take place on site and incorporate a site visit. Officers of appropriate seniority should attend presentations.

(b) Members should maintain an impartial listening and questioning role and avoid expressing an opinion or giving advice beyond outlining the adopted local policies. Questions to clarify aspects of a proposal, or the expressions of policy concerns are legitimate as long as they do not develop into negotiations. It should be made clear at the outset of the meeting that discussions are not binding, and that views expressed are not part of the determination process. It should be made clear in introductory remarks that any statements should be categorised as 'without prejudice'.

- (c) If the applicant requests the views of the authority, these will be communicated subsequently and in writing by officers. In such communication, officers will make it clear that any views expressed prior to formal determination of an application are preliminary.
- (d) A written note of the proceedings should be kept - to include a record of officer attendance and follow up.
- (e) Follow up to the meeting should occur with a letter emphasising the informative nature of the meeting.
- (f) A note should also be taken of any potentially contentious telephone discussions in respect of an application.

13. Site Visits

- 13.1 When deciding whether a site visit is appropriate prior to the meeting at which the planning application is to be considered, all circumstances should be considered including whether:
- (a) Matters of judgement are involved on the context of the site such as the effect on landscape, impact on character, residential amenity, or highway considerations rather than purely on principle;
 - (b) It is a finely balanced case; or
 - (c) It is a contentious application where there are strong local views.
- 13.2 Members are expected to register their request for a site inspection in connection with a particular application or proposal with the Assistant Director: Growth, Climate & Regeneration within 25 days of notification of receipt of a planning application (by email to jim.Newton@westnorthants.gov.uk or by post to Assistant Director: Growth, Climate & Regeneration, Place & Growth Directorate, West Northamptonshire Council, One Angel Square, Angel Street, Northampton NN1 1ED).
- 13.3 The site visits will normally be held once the officer report has been prepared and prior to the meeting of the Planning committee.
- 13.4 Where visits are arranged, they must be undertaken in a consistent manner, and Members should not enter into any conversation with other people on site and must avoid any comment which could be construed as bias.
- 13.5 Members should not carry out unaccompanied site inspections (other than for the purpose of seeing the site), contact landowners themselves or arrange to go onto sites without a Planning Officer present. Members need to exercise caution with regard to being lobbied on such site inspections.

- 13.6 The primary aim of a site visit is to enable Members to judge for themselves the likely impacts of the proposed development and appreciate the issues involved. All members of a Planning committee are encouraged to attend the site visits.
- 13.7 Site visits should only be attended by Members and officers. No representations will be permitted during the site visit from parishes, members of the public, applicants or agents.
- 13.8 Ward Members should be invited to attend all site visits and invited to attend the Planning committee meeting in respect of applications within or affecting their wards.
- 13.9 Where a Member proposes deferral of a planning application at a Planning committee meeting in order that a site inspection may be carried out, the planning reason for conducting such an inspection should be clearly stated.
- 13.10 Any of the Members responsible for calling an application into a Planning committee may wish to attend the site visit to explain why they called the application in to Planning committee.

14. Call-Ins

- 14.1 Planning applications can be 'called-in' to a Planning committee for determination.
- 14.2 Applications can be called in by any Member of the Council.
- 14.3 Call-in requests must be submitted in writing to the Assistant Director: Growth, Climate & Regeneration within 21 days from the beginning of the consultation period, or within 7 days from the beginning of any subsequent re-consultation period.
- 14.4 Call-ins have to be based on valid and relevant planning grounds. Any issue relating to the propriety of the specified planning grounds will be determined by the Monitoring Officer.
- 14.5 By making a call-in request, a Member is indicating that they consider the issues require debate by the Planning Committee.
- 14.6 A Member who has called-in a planning application is expected to attend the Planning Committee meeting at which the application they referred is to be discussed, to address the Planning Committee and explain their views on the application and expand on their call-in reasons.
- 14.7 The Member who has called-in an application is required to register to speak on the item in accordance with the Planning Protocol on Speaking at Planning Committees.
- 14.8 If a Member who has called-in an application does not register to speak on the item or having registered to speak is not present at the start of the Planning Committee meeting at which the application is to be considered, then the item will be withdrawn

from the agenda and determined by an officer in accordance with the Council's scheme of delegations.

15. Where a Member Represents Two Councils

15.1 A Member is able to take part in the debate on a proposal by a consultee body (for example as a member of a parish council) provided:

- (a) The proposal does not substantially affect the wellbeing or financial standing of the consultee body;
- (b) The Member makes it clear to the consultee body that:
 - (i) Their views are expressed on the limited information before them only;
 - (ii) They must reserve judgement and the independence to make up their own mind based on their overriding duty to the whole community and not just to the people in that area, ward or parish.

15.2 Members will disclose the interest regarding their membership or role when the relevant Planning Committee comes to consider the proposal.

15.3 Members may take the opportunity to exercise their separate speaking rights as a local Member.

15.4 When exercising this right, they should:

- (a) Advise the committee that they wish to speak in this capacity in accordance with the Public Speaking Arrangements;
- (b) Remove themselves from the Member seating area for the duration of that item; and
- (c) Ensure that their actions are recorded.

16. Conduct of Ward Members (non-members of the Planning Committee)

16.1 Ward Members have an important role to play as representatives of their communities and to bring local information to the decision-making process. Ward Members may therefore become involved in discussions with officers about individual applications. However, they should remember that it is very easy to create the impression that they are using their position to influence the progress of the application. Any discussions with officers should be seen to be open and above board. Officers should make a note on the file of any such discussions.

16.2 Ward Members who are not members of a Planning committee can make representations on planning applications in their Ward and may attend meetings of a

Planning committee and, with the Chair's agreement, may address the committee on such applications in accordance with the rules on public speaking.

- 16.3 Any representations or address should relate to the planning merits of a planning application. This will not apply if the Member is also a Parish/Town Councillor and the Parish/Town Council is the applicant. In that circumstance, if the Member wishes to address the committee directly, they should register to speak in their capacity as the applicant.
- 16.4 When making representations on behalf of their constituents, Members should make it clear that it is their constituents' views and not their own that are being expressed. Furthermore, any representations on behalf of constituents must be expressed in such a way that no individual or group feels that they have been unfairly represented.
- 16.5 If a Ward Member speaks on behalf of a lobby group at the decision-making committee, they should withdraw from the meeting once any public or Ward Member speaking opportunities have been completed.
- 16.6 A Member who has declared a prejudicial interest in a planning application, and is therefore unable to represent the interests of their Ward in respect of that application, should advise constituents to address their representations to another Member who is not so affected.
- 16.7 Being a Member of another Council that has expressed a view on an application does not prevent a Planning Committee Member reaching the same or a different view when the application is considered on its merits by the Planning committee. However, the Member should approach the decision making process afresh and not express a final view in advance of the committee meeting or act as an advocate for another Council. To do so would give an appearance of bias.

17. Development Proposals submitted by Councillors and Officers

- 17.1 A Member who acts as an agent to people pursuing a planning matter or who has submitted, or intends to submit, or is closely connected with someone (e.g. a spouse, close relative or close social acquaintance) who has submitted, or intends to submit, a planning application should play no part in the decision making process for that proposal. This includes refraining from any form of lobbying of other Members. Nor should such a Member:
 - (a) Use their position to gain access to officers to pursue their interest; or
 - (b) Bring improper pressure to bear on officers.
- 17.2 They should preferably appoint an agent to act on their behalf in negotiations or discussions, particularly in respect of major or controversial developments.

- 17.3 Members should notify the Assistant Director of Economic Growth and Regeneration and/or the Monitoring Officer of any application with which they are connected directly or indirectly before it is submitted to the Council.
- 17.4 Where a Member or officer or their agent submits an application in a personal capacity (either as an individual or through a company, firm or body with which they are connected) it shall always be considered by the Planning Committee. The Monitoring Officer shall be notified of the application and confirm in the report to Committee that the application has been dealt with in accordance with this Protocol.
- 17.5 A member of a Planning Committee contemplating making a planning application for development which is clearly contrary to approved planning policies should consider whether they should resign from the committee before submitting it.
- 17.6 A Member who has received (or is closely connected with someone who has received) a planning permission should ensure that the terms of that planning permission are scrupulously observed, both in respect of compliance with the submitted documents and in respect of compliance with the conditions imposed.

18. Planning Applications by the Council

- 18.1 The Council itself requires planning permission to carry out or authorise certain types of development on land it owns. Where these are major applications, they will be determined by the relevant Planning Committee. Proposals for the Council's own development will be treated with the same transparency and impartiality as those by private developers.

19. Regular Review of Decisions

- 19.1 Members should visit a sample of implemented planning permissions on a regular basis to assess the quality of the decisions made. Such a review should be undertaken at least annually.

8.6 Protocol on Speaking at Planning Committees

This Protocol details the rules on public speaking at the Strategic Planning Committee and each of the Council’s three Local Area Planning Committees.

As an overarching, guiding principle, decisions should always be taken in a fair and transparent manner to ensure there are no grounds for suggesting that a planning decision has in any way been biased, partial, or not well founded.

The separate Planning Protocol (see above) applies to Members at all times when they are involving themselves in the planning process. The Monitoring Officer can also provide guidance to Members in relation to conduct on planning matters, as necessary.

1. Speaking at Planning Committee Meetings

1.1 The following can speak at Planning Committee Meetings

- (a) The applicant or their agent.
- (b) Up to two persons who wish to object up to two persons who wish to support an individual planning application, an enforcement recommendation or any other quasi-judicial matter on the Agenda. If there are more than two objectors/supporters, each group may organise a spokesperson to speak on their behalf.
- (c) Ward Councillors who are not members of the Planning Committee. (If Ward Councillors sit on the Planning Committee, they may nominate a substitute Councillor to speak).
- (d) Members of Parliament with the whole or part of their constituency within West Northamptonshire Council’s boundaries.
- (e) A representative of a Parish Council in whose area the application relates.

1.2 Additional speakers may be allowed at the discretion of the Chair of the Committee.

1.3 Arrangements for Speaking

It is necessary to register with Democratic Services as soon as possible and in any event not later than midday on the last working day before the Committee. This applies to all speakers, including Ward Councillors. Speakers are required to indicate whether they will be speaking against or in support of an application.

Speakers may register by telephone, email or in writing using the following contact details:

Contact details for registration			
Planning Committee	E-mail address	Tel. no.	Postal Address

Daventry Local Area Planning Committee	MemberSupport.ddc@westnorthants.gov.uk	01327 302324 / 302236	Democratic Services, Lodge Road, Daventry, Northants, NN11 4FP
Northampton Local Area Planning Committee	democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk	01604 837722	Democratic Services, One Angel Square, Angel Street, Northampton , NN1 1ED, for the attention of The Democratic Services Officer, Planning Committee.
South Northamptonshire Local Area Planning Committee	democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk	01327 322043	Democratic Services, The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester, NN12 6AD
Strategic Planning Committee	democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk	01327 322195	Democratic Services, The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester, NN12 6AD

Late representations will not be heard. If there are several objectors/supporters, each group should organise a spokesperson to speak on their behalf. In the absence of agreement, the Council will operate a “first come first served” policy. In the event that more than two people have already registered, a person wishing to make their views known to the Committee may contact their Ward Councillor to request that they put across their points.

Where a member of the public has registered to speak but fails to attend the meeting, the Chair shall have discretion to reallocate that speaking place to another member of the public present who would otherwise have wished to speak. For the avoidance of doubt, such reallocation will be on a like-for-like basis, i.e. if the original registration was ‘for’, the reallocated place will also be ‘for’.

If objectors intend to speak, the applicant will be contacted to ensure that they have the opportunity to reply.

2. Procedure at the Meeting

The discussion on applications will be in the following order:

- (a) The Chair of the Committee will announce the application
- (b) the [*Head of Planning tbc*] or their representative may present the item and will add any further information relevant to the application and report
- (c) Members of the public can then speak in the following order:
 - (i) Objector
 - (ii) Parish or Town Council(s)
 - (iii) MP
 - (iv) Ward Councillor(s)
 - (v) Supporter
 - (vi) Applicant/agent
- (d) A planning officer may summarise issues before the matter is debated by the Planning Committee Members and a vote taken.

The Chair has discretion to permit questions from the Planning Committee Members to the various speakers, after the end of their allotted 3 minutes.

A planning officer may summarise issues before the matter is debated by the Planning Committee Members and a vote taken.

In the event of any dispute over these procedures or the protocol, the Chair's decision is final.

2.1 Time

All speakers either in support or against the application or speaking on behalf of the applicant will be allowed a maximum of three minutes to address the Committee. Participants addressing the Committee will be advised when they have 60 seconds of their allotted three minutes remaining and will be expected to cease talking immediately on being advised that their three minutes is up.

2.2 Notes

- (a) Any speakers who are not members of the Committee are only allowed to make statements. They may not ask questions of officers, the Committee or each other and must take no further part in the procedure once they have finished their address to the Committee.
- (b) Consideration of an application will not be delayed simply because someone who has registered to speak is unable to attend the meeting.
- (c) Addresses should only be about planning issues and should not refer to non-planning issues, such as private property rights, moral issues, loss of views or effects on property values.
- (d) Fresh material may not be circulated to the councillors, which has not first been seen by Planning officers.
- (e) Speakers may speak about material planning considerations and relevant facts pertinent to any planning application submitted to the Council that they have made a written representation on, and which is on the agenda for determination at the Committee. Some examples of material planning

considerations include:

- (i) the environmental impact of the development
- (ii) the impact of the development on the highway network
- (iii) any policy in the Council's Local Development Framework, or the relevant Local Plan for your area.
- (iv) central and regional Government planning policy guidance, circulars, orders and statutory instruments

(f) Issues that may be taken into account by the Committee include:

- (i) planning laws and previous decisions
- (ii) noise, disturbance, smells
- (iii) residential amenity
- (iv) design, appearance and layout
- (v) impact on trees, listed buildings and conservation areas
- (vi) public open space

(g) Issues that will not be taken into account by the Committee include:

- (i) boundary disputes
- (ii) private rights of way, private covenants or agreements
- (iii) the applicant's conduct, private affairs or how a business is run
- (iv) the applicant's motives (including profit)
- (v) the impact on property values
- (vi) suspected further development
- (vii) loss of views over other people's land
- (viii) land ownership

(h) The circulation of plans, photographs, or other material at the Committee meeting will not be permitted. Any such documentation should be submitted to the Assistant Director Economic Growth and Regeneration marked for the attention of the relevant Planning Officer as part of the existing consultation arrangements.

8.7 Scheme of Members' Allowances

1. Allowances for the period 11 May 2021 to 31 March 2022

Post Holder	Amount
Basic Allowance (All Members)	£13,750
Leader	£34,375
Deputy Leader	£24,063
Cabinet Members	£20,625
Lead Member for Children's Services	£22,825
Chair of the Council	£10,313
Vice Chair of the Council	£6,875
Chair of Strategic Planning Committee	£13,750
Chair of Area Planning committees	£13,750
Chair of Planning Policy Committee *	£nil
Chair of Licensing Committee	£13,750
Chair of Audit Committee	£13,750
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	£13,750
Vice Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	£2,750
Chair of Pension Fund Committee *	£nil
Chair of Senior Appointments Committee *	£nil
Chair of Democracy and Standards Committee	£13,750
Party Group Leaders:	
Leader of the Largest Opposition Group	£11,000
Leader of the second largest Opposition Group	£5,500
Leader of the third largest Opposition Group	£2,750
Leader of the fourth largest Opposition Group	£1,375
Co-Optees and Independent Persons:	

Co-opted members of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee	£500
Co-opted members of the Northamptonshire Police and Crime Panel	£500
Independent Persons to the Democracy and Standards Committee	£500

*Cabinet members will be appointed to these roles.

2. Limitations on Payment of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA):

Members may not receive more than one SRA, and where a Member occupies multiple roles with an SRA they shall be entitled to receive the higher SRA from the roles they hold.

3. Indexation

Allowances shall be adjusted annually by an amount equivalent to the officers' annual pay award. Adjustment to the Scheme of Allowances by indexation is limited to a maximum period of four years, however Members may request the Independent Remuneration Panel to review allowances at an earlier time.

4. Other Allowances

Members may make claims for the following expenditure when undertaking official Council business. The approved duties are the categories contained in the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 shown in Part 5.

4.1 Travelling

4.1.1 Sustainable modes of transport are encouraged where possible. The use of a Member's car, motorcycle or bicycle for approved duties (see Part 5 for list of approved duties) will be paid at the same rate as the officers, i.e. the rate published from time to time by HM Revenue and Customs: www.hmrc.gov.uk/rates/travel.htm.

4.1.2 The agreed rates as at February 2021 are as follows, including electric and hybrid models:

Cars and vans* 45p per mile

Motor cycles* 24p per mile

Bicycles (includes e-bikes) 20p per mile

4.1.3 Public Transport

(a) Train fares for approved duties to be paid at standard fare. Officers of the Council to book train fares for the Member.

(b) Bus fares for approved duties to be paid on production of a receipt/ticket.

(c) Approved taxi fares to be paid on production of a receipt. Officers of the Council to book a taxi for the Member where possible.

(d) Parking fees to be paid upon production of a receipt/ticket.

4.2 Subsistence

Subsistence Allowance	Breakfast (more than 4 hours away before 11am).	£6.00
	Lunch (business journeys entailing working away from normal place of work between 12 and 2pm).	£8.00
	Dinner (can be claimed when required to work outside of usual rostered requirements and away from usual place of work after 8.30pm).	£12.00
Overnight expenses	Accommodation (if a member is required to stay overnight); overnight accommodation bookings to be made by officers of the Council.	

4.3 Dependent Carers' Allowance

4.3.1 The maximum rates at which dependent care may be claimed is:

(a) Where professional care is provided, an hourly rate of £20 per hour will be paid.

(b) Where care is provided by friends or relatives an hourly rate of £10 per hour will be paid.

There is no upper limit for a claim.

5. Forgoing Allowances and Part-Year Entitlements

5.1 A councillor, co-opted member or independent person may elect to give up any part of their entitlement to an allowance under this scheme by notifying Democratic Services in writing.

5.2 Where a Member ceases to be a member of West Northamptonshire Council, or ceases to occupy a role attracting an SRA, that the Member only receives pro-rata payment for the period that they are entitled to receive an allowance. The authority may require that such part of any allowance as relates to any such period be repaid to the authority where an overpayment is made.

6. Approved Duties

6.1 Members may make claims for travel, subsistence and dependant carers' allowance when undertaking official Council business in line with the approved duties categories contained in the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 set out below:

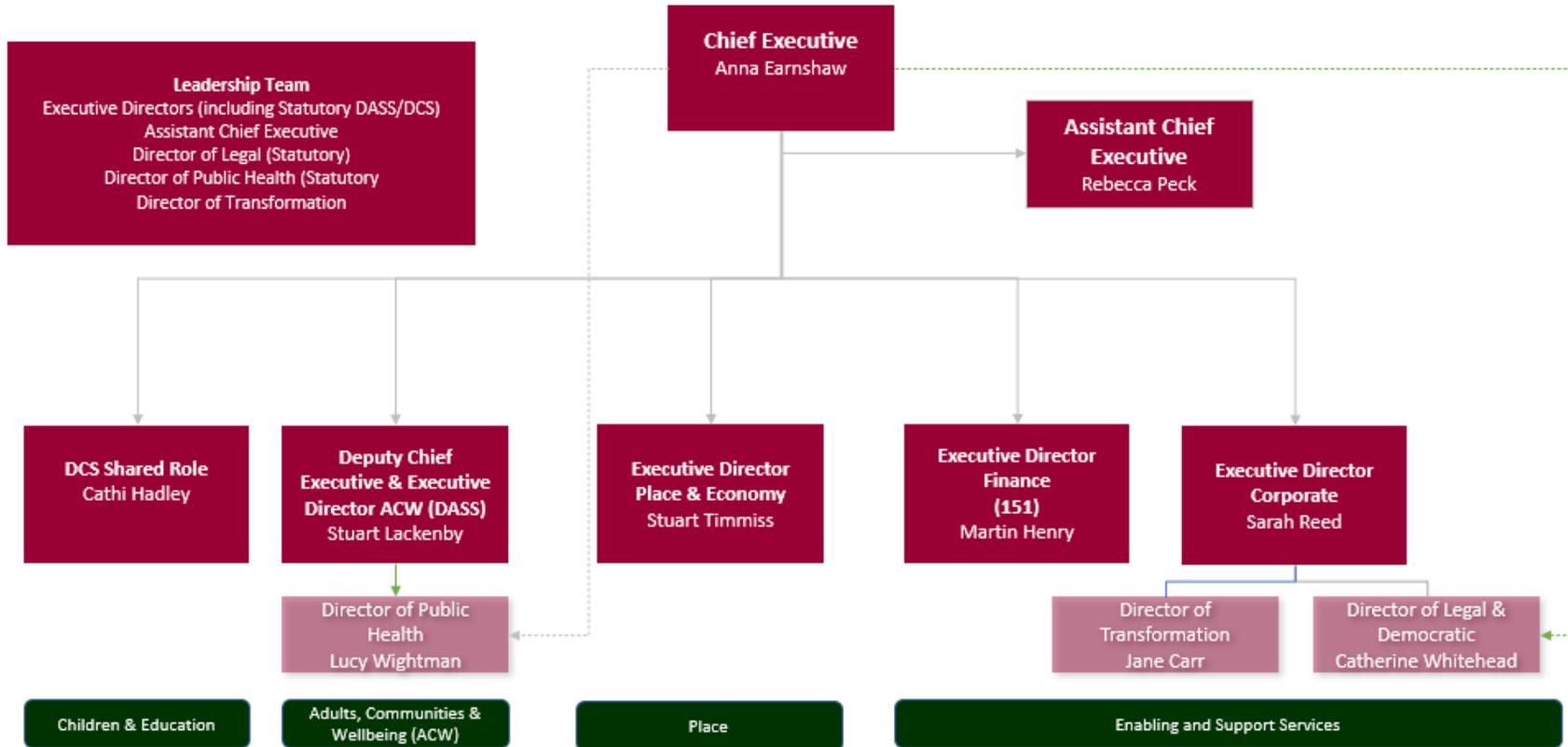
- (a) the attendance at a meeting of the authority or of any committee or subcommittee of the authority, or of any other body to which the authority makes appointments or nominations, or of any committee or subcommittee of such a body;
- (b) the attendance at any other meeting, the holding of which is authorised by the authority, or a committee or sub-committee of the authority, or a joint committee of the authority and one or more local authority within the meaning of section 270(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, or a subcommittee of such a joint committee provided that:
 - (i) where the authority is divided into two or more political groups it is a meeting to which members of at least two such groups have been invited, or
 - (ii) if the authority is not so divided, it is a meeting to which at least two members of the authority have been invited;
- (c) the attendance at a meeting of any association of authorities of which the authority is a member; (d) the attendance at a meeting of the executive or a meeting of any of its committees, where the authority is operating executive arrangements;
- (d) the performance of any duty in pursuance of any standing order made under section 135 of the Local Government Act 1972 requiring a member or members to be present while tender documents are opened;
- (e) the performance of any duty in connection with the discharge of any function of the authority conferred by or under any enactment and empowering or requiring the authority to inspect or authorise the inspection of premises;
- (f) the performance of any duty in connection with arrangements made by the authority for the attendance of pupils at any school approved for the purposes of section 342 (approval of non-maintained special schools) of the Education Act 1996, and
- (g) the carrying out of any other duty approved by the authority, or any duty of a class so approved, for the purpose of, or in connection with, the discharge of the functions of the authority or of any of its committees or sub-committees. The law prevents payment for:
 - (i) Members' surgeries
 - (ii) Political activities
 - (iii) School Governor meetings (Section 58 of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986)

9.0 OFFICERS

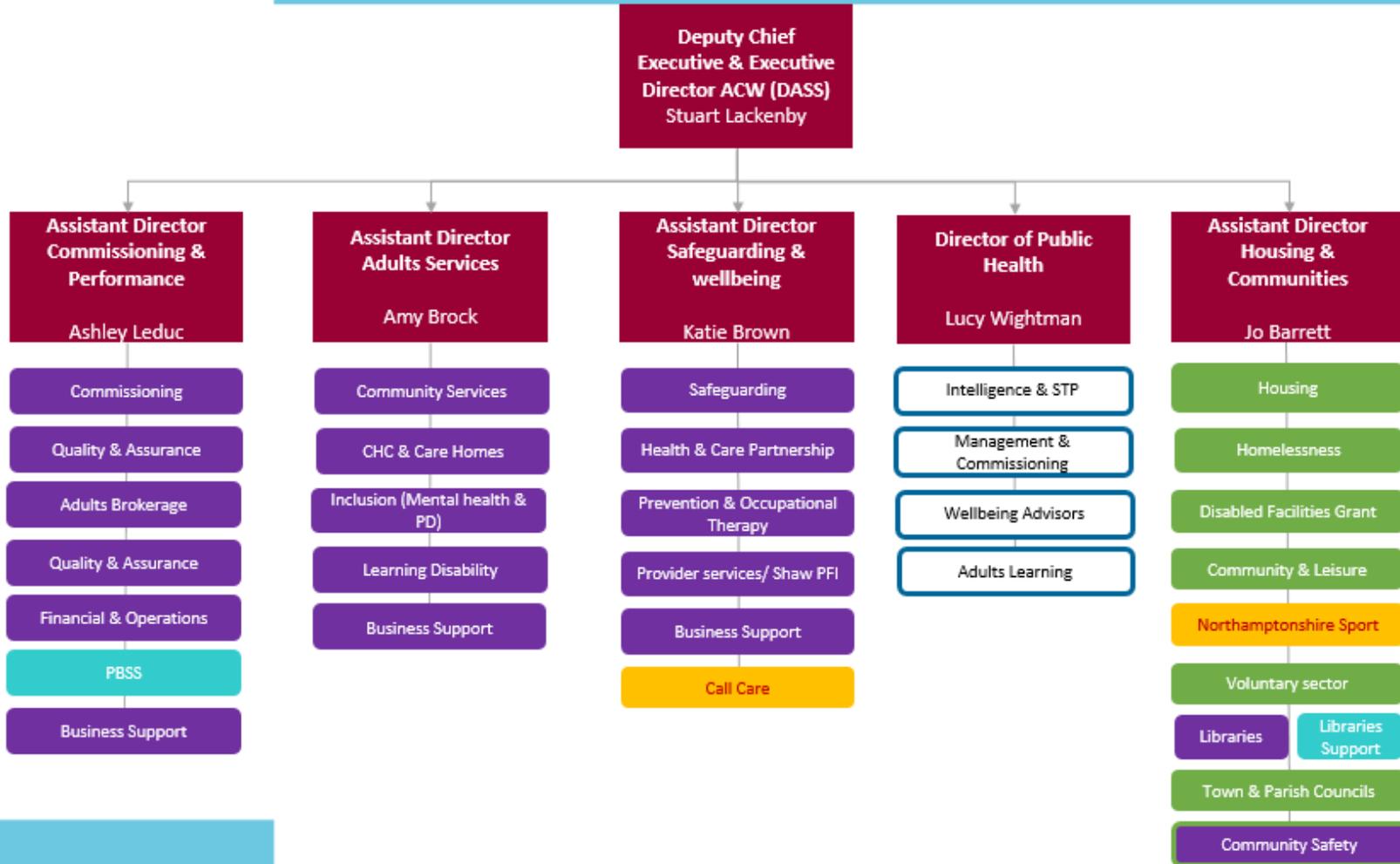
9.1 Management Structure



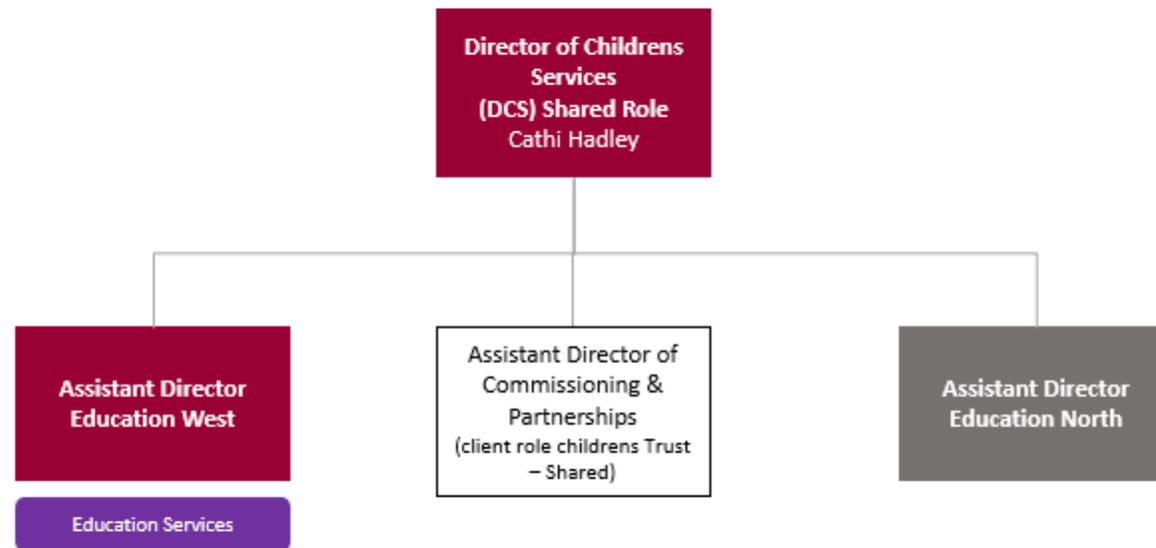
Executive Leadership team



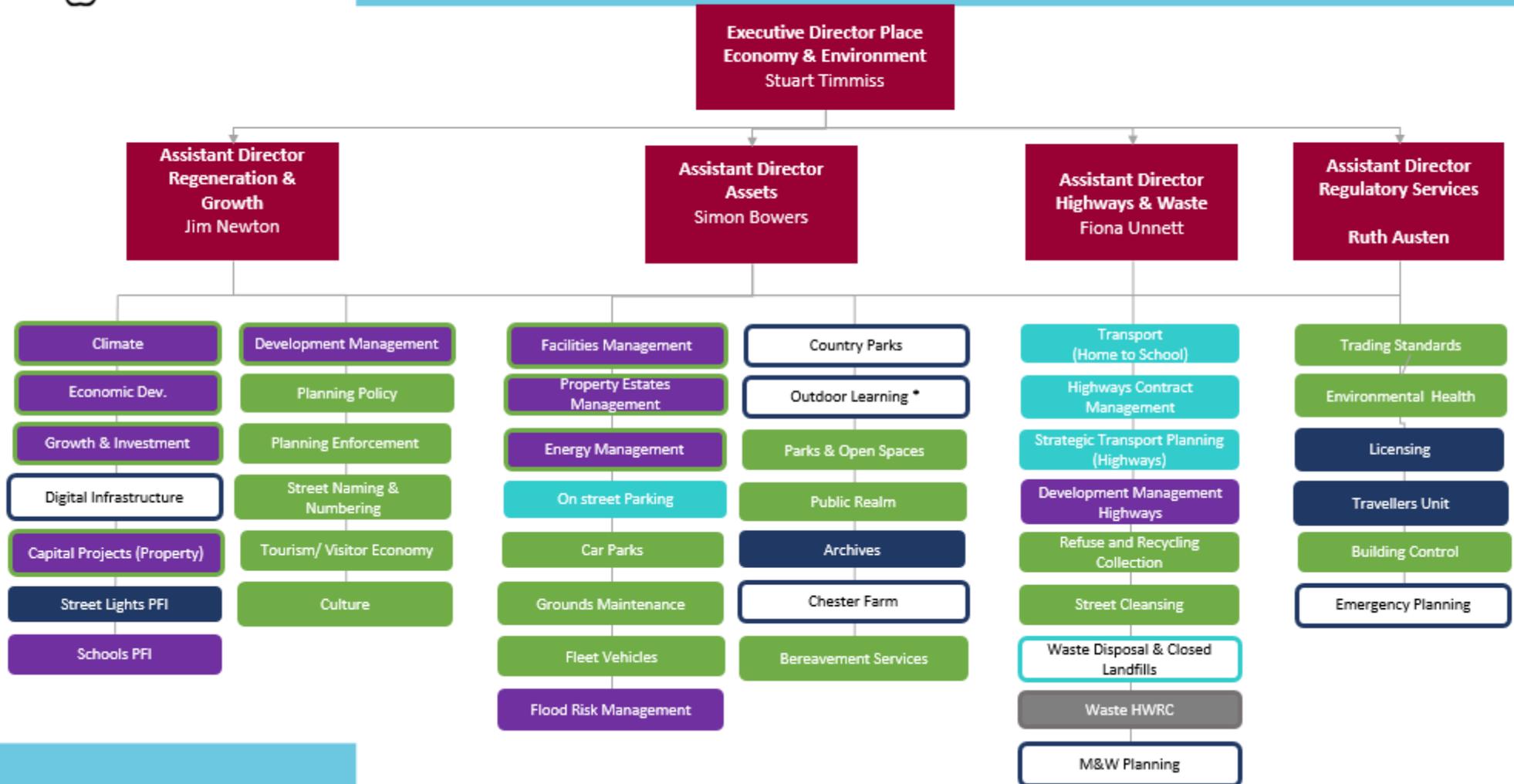
Adults, Communities & Wellbeing Directorate



Childrens Services Directorate



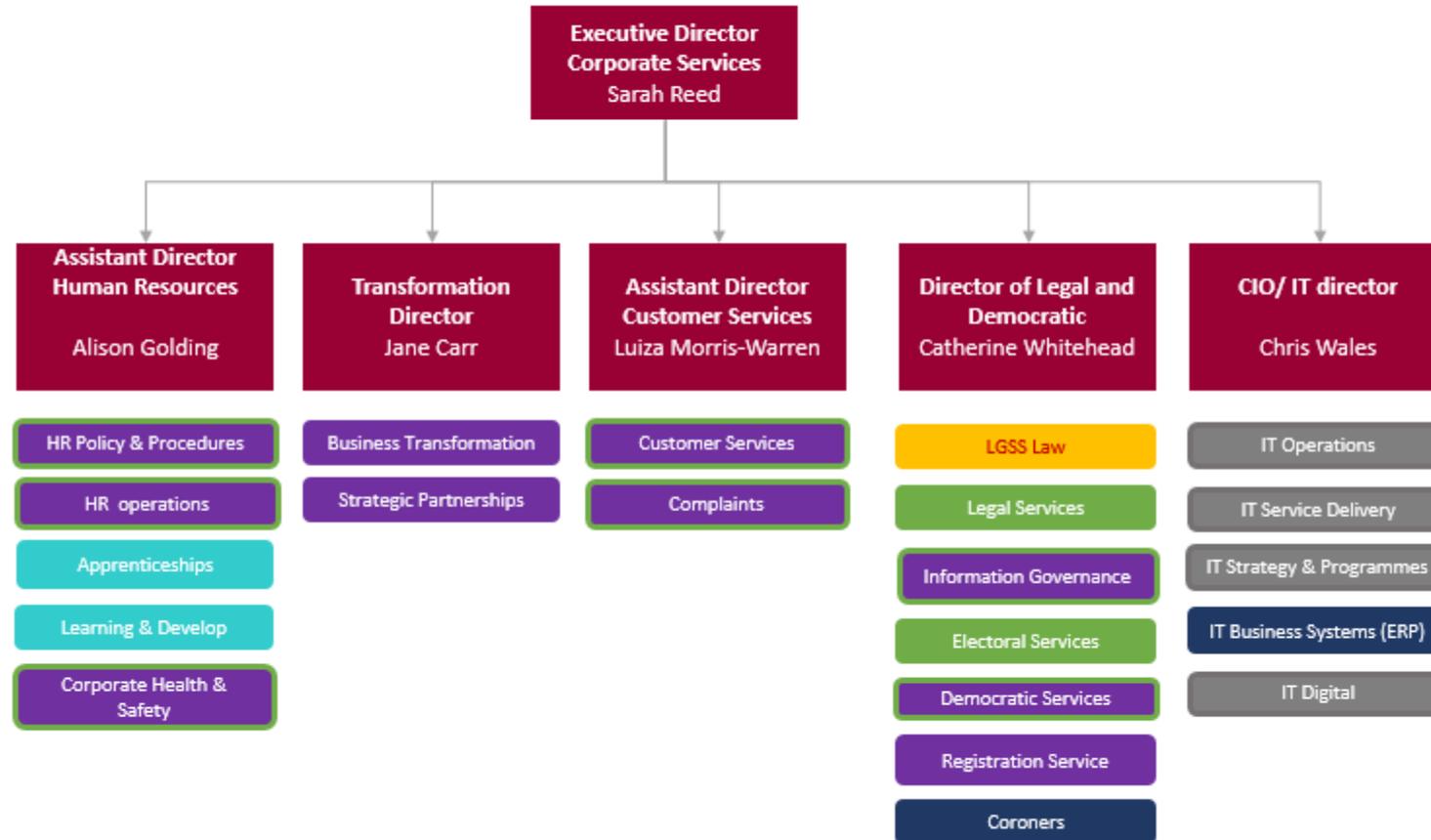
Place, Economy & Environment Directorate



Finances & Resources Directorate



Corporate Services Directorate



9.2 Scheme of Delegation to Officers

INTRODUCTIONS AND PERMISSIONS

Introduction

1. The West Northamptonshire Council has adopted vision and values supporting a Corporate Plan. To support the delivery of the Corporate Plan, managerial and operational decisions are taken, within a framework of democratic accountability, at the most appropriate level, which is usually the closest point of contact to the citizen. This scheme is to be interpreted widely to give effect to this overall purpose by empowering staff to carry out their functions and deliver the Council's services within the Budget and Policy Framework set by the Council, and subject to the guidelines set by the Council, the Cabinet and the Council's management team.

Overall Limitations

2. Any exercise of delegated powers is subject to the following overriding limitations.

Member Consultation

3. Officers set out in the scheme are expected to:
 - (a) maintain a close liaison with the appropriate portfolio holder or in their absence the Leader;
 - (b) consult relevant portfolio holders when exercising temporary or project specific delegations;
 - (c) ensure the Ward Councillor(s) is/are consulted or advised of the exercise of any delegated powers that particularly affect their area ; and
 - (d) ensure that the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service), Executive Director of Finance (s.151 Officer) and the Director of the Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer) are consulted and advised of any decisions as necessary.
4. Portfolio holders for the relevant area should be consulted on the exercise of a delegated power in all cases where:
 - (a) there is likely to be opposition from members of the public;
 - (b) where there are political sensitivities;
 - (c) there is likely to be media (including social media) interest or
 - (d) expenditure is unusual for the Budget area.

5. Before exercising any delegated power, officers must consider whether to consult with the relevant portfolio holder on the exercise of delegated powers or not to exercise delegated powers but to refer the matter to the relevant member or member body to decide.
6. The Leader or any Cabinet Member may at any time, following consultation with the Chief Executive and relevant officer, require a particular issue or any aspect of delegated powers to be referred to the appropriate member body for a decision.
7. This does not limit the general requirements set out elsewhere in the constitution to consult with relevant ward members, scrutiny chairs and interested groups in reaching decisions.

Reservations

8. The scheme does not delegate to officers:
 - (a) any matter reserved to full Council;
 - (b) any matter which by law may not be delegated to an officer;
 - (c) any Key Decision; or
 - (d) any matter expressly withdrawn from delegation by the Council, committees, Leader or Cabinet.

Restrictions

9. Any exercise of delegated powers is subject to
 - (a) any statutory restrictions;
 - (b) the Budget and Policy Framework;
 - (c) any provision contained in this Constitution including the Procedure Rules;
 - (d) any financial limits set out in the revenue or capital budgets except as set out in the Financial Procedure Rules;
 - (e) any policy set by the Council or its committees, the Cabinet or the Chief Executive; and
 - (f) the Code of Conduct for Employees.

Permissions

10. This scheme delegates to the Assistant Chief Executive, Executive Directors and Directors all the powers and duties relevant to those areas of responsibility detailed within

the areas of responsibility below that rest with the Council or which have been delegated or granted to the Council, subject to the limitations, restrictions, reservations and requirements for consultation set out above. This includes all powers and duties under all legislation present and future within those descriptions and all powers and duties incidental to that legislation including but not limited to:

a. Powers in relation to staff

Take any action in accordance with the Council's agreed policies and procedures with respect to the recruitment, appointment, promotion, training, grading, discipline, determination of wages and salary scales, determination of allowances, determination and application of conditions of service, including but not limited to allocation of leave, honorariums, ill health retirement and determination of establishment except as detailed in the Staff and Employment Exceptions chart.

b. Powers in relation to contracts and property

Powers in relation to contracts and property agreements to negotiate, put out to tender, bid, submit tenders, vary, terminate, dispute, extend and renew and in relation to contracts to buy and sell and in relation to property to acquire, dispose of, let and licence except as detailed in the Contracts and Property Exceptions Charts.

c. Powers in relation to planning

Powers to determine applications, grant permission, refuse permission, to publicise applications, to comment or make representations on applications, notifications and consultations, to raise objections, to require documentation and information, to take appropriate action on enforcement, to negotiate, complete, vary, discharge or amend planning obligations and agreements, process and determine all decisions relating to neighbourhood planning under the Localism Act 2011, other than as detailed in the Legal Exceptions Chart.

d. Powers in relation to finance

Powers to incur capital and revenue expenditure, to seek recovery of amounts owed, to exercise discretion in recovery, alter or waive repayment periods, or approve exemptions in relation to repayments, agree refunds, reduce or remit payments and waive fines, except as detailed in the Finance Exceptions Chart.

e. Powers in relation to legal action

Powers to authorise, appoint or nominate officers and to investigate, prosecute, enforce, lay informations, require individuals to disclose information, serve requisitions for information, publish information, apply to a court, sign notices,

issue, serve, vary, revoke and publish notices, including fixed penalty notices and serve documents, make prohibition orders, suspend or vary a prohibition order, take emergency remedial action, carry out works in default, issue certificates, issue consents, issue and grant licenses and license applications, issue permits, refuse, vary or revoke licensing applications, issue temporary exemption notices, obtain, introduce, operate, amend, extend, vary and revoke orders, impose conditions, introduce and maintain registers, exercise powers of entry without force, apply for a warrant, make, vary or revoke and in relation to land relevant to service functions to note applications for licences, planning, consents and approvals, a declaration and grant, vary, revoke and attach conditions to consents, except as detailed in the Legal Exceptions Chart.

The Chief Executive

11. The Chief Executive may carry out the powers and duties of the Assistant Chief Executive and Executive Directors and Director of Legal and Democratic in their absence or in consultation with them and will also have the following additional powers:

- (a) to carry out the powers and duties of any of the officers in their absence or in consultation with them;
- (b) to incur expenditure in the event of a civil emergency;
- (c) in cases of emergency to take any decision which could be taken by the Council, the Cabinet or a committee, in consultation with the Leader; emergency to include cases which fall short of a declared emergency but are nevertheless situations in which there will be a risk of significant detriment to the wellbeing of residents if action is not taken.
- (d) to alter the areas of responsibility of the Assistant Chief Executive, Executive Directors and Directors set out in the Areas of Responsibility section of this scheme;
- (e) to make arrangements for the appointment of Chief Officer roles and to make appointments to Deputy Chief Officer roles.
- (f) to agree the Human Resources Policies following relevant consultation.
- (g) to make any changes necessary to the Employee Code of Conduct following relevant consultation.

The Monitoring Officer

12. The Monitoring Officer has delegated authority to:

- (a) grant dispensations to councillors in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 with the power to refer any request for a dispensation back to the Democracy and Standards Committee.
- (b) To make consequential amendments to the Constitution to give effect to a lawful decision; as a direct consequence of a change made outside the council e.g. a change in legislation and to correct an error or resolve an inconsistency. All such changes to be reported to Council.
- (c) To Interpret the Constitution where the meaning is uncertain or there is a dispute about its meaning.

The Section 151 Officer

13. In addition to any powers delegated under section 2.10 above the Section 151 Officer has delegated authority to carry out those responsibilities set out as delegated to them in the Financial Procedure Regulations within this Constitution.

14. The Section 151 Officer has delegated authority to:

- (a) Manage the Council's responsibilities in its capacity as Lead Authority (in conjunction with North Northamptonshire Council) in providing the following services to other councils in accordance with a Shared Services Agreement dated 16 April 2016 made between Cambridgeshire County Council, Northamptonshire County Council, and Milton Keynes Council ('the "Agreement"):
 - (i) Business Systems
 - (ii) Performance and Governance
 - (iii) HR transactions and payroll
 - (iv) Pensions
- (b) Negotiate the Shared Services Plan required by the Agreement and make recommendations to the Councils party to that Agreement as to the provision of financial and other resources.
- (c) Authorise and manage delegations to other Councils made in accordance with the Agreement, including:
 - (i) Internal Audit and Risk Management
 - (ii) Insurance Services
 - (iii) Accounts Payable and Finance Helpdesk

(iv) Debt and Income

Assistant Chief Executive and Executive Directors and Director

15. The Assistant Chief Executive, Executive Directors and Directors may carry out the powers and duties of any direct reports within their area of responsibility in their absence or in consultation with them.

Officer Delegation

16. West Northamptonshire Council operates an 'executive' form of governance, under which most decisions are taken by a Leader and a small Executive or Cabinet of elected members. These members take decisions on executive functions. Other decisions - non-executive decisions - are taken by full Council, committees and sub-committees. In both cases, decisions can be delegated to officers. The non-executive functions are listed in legislation, principally The Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 (as amended) and includes decisions by full Council and committees on planning, licensing, staffing, audit, member conduct and other miscellaneous matters. Anything not in the list is an executive function.

17. Any delegation to an officer includes authority for any further delegation within the relevant Area of Responsibility. Officers shall devolve responsibilities for service delivery and management to those staff who represent the nearest practicable point of delivery to the service user.

Recording and Publishing Officer Decisions

18. This protocol establishes a system to document certain decisions taken by officers under delegated authority.

Types of officer decisions

19. An 'Executive decision' is one made in connection with the discharge of a function which is the responsibility of the Leader and Cabinet and which has been delegated to officers.

20. A 'Non-Executive decision' is one made in connection with the discharge of a function that is the responsibility of Full Council and its committees and which has been delegated to officers.

21. The significance of decisions taken under delegated powers will vary, and officers authorised to make delegated decisions need to exercise judgment in determining whether decisions are significant enough to require formal recording and publishing.

22. Although administrative and operational decisions are not required to be formally reported, they must be recorded within the service area so as to provide an audit trail.

23. Key Decisions, Material Decisions, Significant Decisions and Urgent Decisions are defined below:

24. **Key Decisions** are Executive decisions that are likely to:

- (a) result in expenditure or savings of £1million or more; or
- (b) have a significant effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards.

25. **Material Decisions** are Executive decisions (other than purely operational or administrative in nature) taken by officers under delegated powers by a specific resolution of the Cabinet/Cabinet Member or under the Scheme of Delegation:

- (a) That are contentious, controversial or politically sensitive; or
- (b) Where there is likely to be a strong public interest; or
- (c) Where there is significant variance in expenditure outside the agreed scope or budget for a project or issue; or
- (d) Raise new issues of policy

26. **Significant Decisions** are Non-Executive decisions (other than purely operational or administrative in nature) taken by officers under powers delegated by a specific resolution of Full Council, a committee or under the Scheme of Delegation and having wide public impact/interest; where the effect of the decision:

- (a) is to grant a permission or licence
- (b) affects the legal rights of an individual
- (c) is to award a contract or incur expenditure which 'materially' affects the authority's financial position

27. **Urgent Decisions** are decisions made in circumstances where:

- (a) a decision is required by statute or otherwise within a specified timescale; or
- (b) any delay likely to be caused by not making the decision would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests; or
- (c) any delay likely to be caused by not making the decision would be likely to expose the Council, its members or the public to a significant level of risk, loss, damage or disadvantage

28. The following types of officer decision must be formally recorded and published subject to the exceptions set out:

Type of Officer Decision	Exception	Publication
<p>Key Decisions</p> <p>Executive decisions that are likely to result in spending or savings that are 'significant':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in relation to the budget for the service or function in question or • in terms of the effect on communities living or working in two or more electoral divisions 	<p>Officers are only to take Key Decisions under the urgency provisions.</p>	<p>As soon as reasonably practicable after an officer has made a Key, Material or Significant decision, they must produce a written statement, available for inspection at County Hall and published on the Council's website, that includes details of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the decision and the date it was made; • the reasons for it;
<p>Material Decisions</p> <p>Executive decisions under powers delegated by a specific resolution of the Cabinet/Cabinet Member or under the Scheme of Delegation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That are contentious, controversial or politically sensitive; or • Where there is likely to be a strong public interest; or • Where there is significant variance in expenditure outside the agreed scope or budget for a project or issue; or • That raise new issues of policy. 	<p>Does not apply:</p> <p>(i) To routine operational, organisational or administrative decisions;</p> <p>(ii) Where the expenditure or saving has already been approved by Cabinet or Cabinet Member and the decision has been published;</p> <p>(iii) Confidential or Exempt Information; or</p> <p>(iv) Where the expenditure or saving is already recorded and published under separate statutory requirements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any alternative options considered and rejected; • any conflicts of interests declared by any Cabinet Member consulted by the officer and any dispensations granted by the Chief Executive in respect of any declared conflict; • the report considered by the decision-maker; • any background documents disclosing facts or matters on which the decision was based and which were relied on to a material extent in making the decision.
<p>Significant Decisions</p>	<p>Does not apply:</p>	<p>The decision record must be kept for inspection for 6 years and the background papers for 4 years.</p>

<p>Non-Executive decisions under powers delegated by a specific resolution of Full Council, a committee or under the Scheme of Delegation and having wide public impact/ interest; where the effect of the decision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is to grant a permission or licence • affects the legal rights of an individual • is to award a contract or incur expenditure which 'materially' affects the authority's financial position 	<p>(i) To routine operational, organisational or administrative decisions;</p> <p>(ii) Confidential or Exempt information;</p> <p>(iii) Where the date, details of and reasons for the decision are already required to be produced under a statutory requirement;</p> <p>(iv) If only the rights of an individual or business are affected, unless there is a wider public impact/ interest in the action.</p>	
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AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

See Management Structure charts above for a detailed list of functions. Further details of the contents of each heading is in the list held by the Chief Executive, which they have authority to change and responsibility for keeping up to date.

Chief Officer	Main Functions and Areas of Responsibility
Assistant Chief Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications and Engagement • Policy and Performance • Business Intelligence • Executive Support • Lord Lieutenant Support
Executive Director Adults, Communities and Wellbeing (DASS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning and Performance • Adults Services • Safeguarding and Wellbeing • Housing and Communities • Public Health
Director of Children's Services (DCS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Social Care • Education • Commissioning and Partnerships
Executive Director of Corporate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resources • Transformation • Customer and Corporate Services • Information Technology and Data Management • Legal and Democratic

Executive Director Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance and Accountancy • Finance and Strategy • Audit and Risk • Revenues and Benefits • Procurement • Pensions
Executive Director Place Economy and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory Services • Highways and Waste • Assets and Environment • Growth, Climate & Regeneration
Director of Legal and Democratic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths • Coroners • Elections Administration • Legal and Democratic Services • Information Governance
Director of Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Health • Intelligence and Local Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships • Management & Commissioning • Wellbeing Advisors • Adults Learning
Director of Transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Transformation • Strategic Partnerships

EXCEPTIONS – CONTRACTING

(In exercising delegated powers, officers are reminded to take account of the overall limitations of the scheme, as detailed in the introduction to the scheme)

All contracts and procurement must be in accordance with the Contract Rules in Part 9.6

***Contract value is over the whole contract and any extension provision not the annual spend**

Process	Over the Regulations Threshold	£100,000 to Regulations Threshold	£25,000 - £100,000	Over £5,000 - £25,000
Pre-Procurement Authorisation	Officer and Procurement Team. PGG Group. Executive Process if Key Decision	Officer and Procurement Team. Executive Process if Key Decision	Officer. Executive Process if Key Decision.	Officer. Executive Process if Key Decision.
Advertising	Head of Procurement through the Procurement Team	Head of Procurement through the Procurement Team	None	None

Procurement Process	Head of Procurement through the Procurement Team must be consulted	Head of Procurement through the Procurement Team must be consulted	Officer	Officer
Contract Execution	Written contract signed/sealed. Terms approved by Director of Legal and Democratic.	Written contract signed/sealed. Terms approved by Director of Legal and Democratic.	Written contract signed by one (1) Chief Officer or Officer with appropriate authority to enter into a Contract. Standard terms approved by Director of Legal and Democratic.	Officer Contract terms issued via purchase order.
Contract Register	Officer or Head of Procurement through the Procurement Team if leading procurement.	Officer or Head of Procurement through the Procurement Team if leading procurement.	Officer	Officer
Framework Agreements or DPSs	Head of Procurement through the Procurement Team. Executive Process if Key Decision	Head of Procurement through the Procurement Team. Executive Process if Key Decision	Officer. Executive Process if Key Decision	Officer. Executive Process if Key Decision
Waive Contract Procedure Rules	Chief Officer, Head of Procurement, s.151 Officer and Monitoring Officer. Executive Process if Key Decision	Chief Officer, Head of Procurement, s.151 Officer and Monitoring Officer. Executive Process if Key Decision	Chief Officer, Head of Procurement, s.151 Officer. Executive Process if Key Decision	Chief Officer Approval. Executive Process if Key Decision

Emergencies	Chief Officer on advice of Head of Procurement, s.151 Officer and Monitoring Officer. If Key Decision Executive Process.	Chief Officer on advice of Head of Procurement, s.151 Officer and Monitoring Officer. If Key Decision Executive Process.	Chief Officer on advice of Head of Procurement, s.151 Officer and Monitoring Officer If Key Decision Executive Process.	Chief Officer on advice of Head of Procurement, s.151 Officer and Monitoring Officer If Key Decision Executive Process.
Apply an exemption – use of negotiated procedure	Officer on advice of Head of Procurement through the Procurement Team and if Key Decision Cabinet	Officer on advice of Head of Procurement through the Procurement Team and if Key Decision Cabinet	Officer on advice of Head of Procurement through the Procurement Team	Officer on advice of Head of Procurement through the Procurement Team
Notification of Award	Officer on advice of Head of Procurement through the Procurement Team	Officer on advice of Head of Procurement through the Procurement Team	Officer	Officer
Contract Variations (material change)	Not permitted. A new Procurement is required.	Officer with the agreement of Director of Legal and Democratic	Officer with the agreement of Director of Legal and Democratic	Officer with the agreement of Director of Legal and Democratic
Non recovery of liquidated damages/settlement of formal claims	Director of Legal and Democratic and with the approval of s.151 Officer.	Director of Legal and Democratic and with the approval of s.151 Officer.	Officer with the approval of s151 Officer and Monitoring Officer.	With the agreement of the Executive Director
Extension of Fixed Term Contracts with option to extend	In consultation with relevant Cabinet Member and with the agreement of Head of Procurement and Director	In consultation with relevant Cabinet Member and with the agreement of Head of Procurement and Director	In consultation with relevant Cabinet Member and with the agreement of Head of Procurement and Director of	With the agreement of Head of Procurement and Director of Legal and Democratic.

	of Legal and Democratic.	of Legal and Democratic.	Legal and Democratic.	
Termination of Contract	Termination prior to its expiry date without first obtaining advice from Head of Procurement and Director of Legal and Democratic.	Authorised Officer in consultation with Director of Legal and Democratic.	Authorised Officer in consultation with Director of Legal and Democratic.	Authorised Officer in consultation with Director of Legal and Democratic.
Execution of Contracts		£1,000,000 or over shall be in writing sealed by affixing the Common Seal of the Council and attested by the Director of Legal and Democratic.	Over £250,000 but less than £1,000,000 shall be in writing and signed by the appropriate Chief Officer and the s.151 Officer or their nominated representative.	Up to £250,000 shall be in writing signed by the Chief Officer.

EXCEPTIONS – INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

(In exercising delegated powers, officers are reminded to take account of the overall limitations of the scheme, as detailed in the introduction to the scheme)

All contracts and procurement must be in accordance with the Contract Rules in Part 9.6

***Contract value is over the whole contract and any extension provision not the annual spend**

Process	Over £100,000	£5,000 - £100,000	Under £5,000
IT Hardware Any devices which store or process personal data and their associated peripherals. Including, but not limited to: printers, laptops, mobile phones, monitors, tablets, etc	Chief Information Officer and Head of Procurement through the Procurement Team. Executive Process if Key Decision	Chief Information Officer acting on the advice of the relevant officer from the service in question, and via the CIO's delegated team and ordering processes	Requests authorised by the Chief Information Officer and via the CIO's delegated team and ordering processes
Enterprise Application and Systems Any digital system, whether hosted			

internally or software-as-a-service (SaaS) that stores and uses council data; whether purchased directly as a system or outsourced to a third-party to run.			
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EXCEPTIONS PROPERTY

(In exercising delegated powers, officers are reminded to take account of the overall limitations of the scheme, as detailed in the introduction to the scheme). NB The term Property/Land includes all interests in Land including (wayleaves, easements, buildings). Values relate to 'the interest disposed of value' not 'the unrestricted value' of the land).

Process	Officer Delegation	Cabinet Approval	Council Approval	Secretary of State Approval
Disposal and Acquisition of Land				
Asset Management Plan	No	Yes	No	No
Acquisition over £500,000	No	Yes and a key decision	Where it exceeds the Capital or Revenue Budget	No
Acquisition under £500,000	Assistant Director Assets and Environment in consultation with the s151 Officer and Portfolio Holder	Not unless required by the Portfolio Holder	No	No
Disposal where the estimated value of the combined properties is over £500,000	No	Yes and a key decision	No	No unless required by law
Disposal at an undervalue	No (unless already set out in agreed policy)	Yes and a key decision	No	No unless required by law
Disposal of or allowing the occupation of or sharing the use of any property under £500,000	Assistant Director Assets and Environment in consultation with s151 Officer over £100k	No	No	No

Leases	Grant of leases up to 10 years or with discretion to break not exceeding 10 years	Grant of leases over 10 years	No	No
Non-Land Based Asset Disposal	Yes in accordance with the Finance Procedure Rules	No	No	No

EXCEPTIONS FINANCE

(In exercising delegated powers, officers are reminded to take account of the overall limitations of the scheme, as detailed in the introduction to the scheme.)

Exception	Over £500k	Up to £500k	Up to £100k	Up to £25k	Up to £1k
Capital Expenditure outside the Capital Programme	Council	Cabinet	CFO	Cabinet	Cabinet
Unbudgeted Revenue Expenditure	Council	Cabinet	CFO	Budget Manager	Budget Manager
Virements	Cabinet	CFO in consultation with Cabinet Portfolio	CFO	CFO	CFO
Ex gratia payments	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	CFO
Write off debts	Cabinet	Cabinet	Cabinet	CFO	CFO
Negotiate and Approve Borrowing Limits	Council	Cabinet	Cabinet	Cabinet	Cabinet
Submit bids for funding to the relevant body	Executive Director in consultation with CFO				
To agree conditions and approve agreements in relation to grant funding to be received by the Council	CFO	CFO	CFO	CFO	CFO
Write off any surplus or	Cabinet	CFO	CFO	CFO	Budget Manager

deficiencies in respect of items of stock					
Negotiate leasing arrangements	Executive Director Place and Economy in Consultation with CFO	Executive Director Place and Economy in Consultation with CFO	Executive Director Place and Economy in Consultation with CFO	Executive Director Place and Economy	Executive Director Place and Economy
Invest any temporary surplus of monies until such monies are required	CFO in accordance with Treasury Management Statement	CFO in accordance with Treasury Management Statement	CFO in accordance with Treasury Management Statement	CFO in accordance with Treasury Management Statement	CFO in accordance with Treasury Management Statement
Effect necessary insurances	CFO	CFO	CFO	CFO	CFO
Settle insurance claims	CFO and MO	CFO and MO	CFO and MO	CFO and MO	CFO
To vary the scale of fees and charges within year to reflect market conditions	Budget Manager and CFO	Budget Manager and CFO	Budget Manager and CFO	Budget Manager and CFO	Budget Manager
To set new fees and charges within year	Council (except where delegated)	Cabinet	Cabinet	CFO	CFO

EXCEPTIONS – STAFF AND EMPLOYMENT

	Officer Delegation	Statutory Cabinet Member Consultation	Member Decision	Council Decision
NB This element of the scheme is dictated by 2 LGHA 1989 and the Standing Orders Regulations				
Appointment of Chief Executive	No (cannot be carried out by officers.	Yes, through the MO	Yes must be made by Full Council	On recommendation from Senior Appointments Committee
Appointment of Chief Officers (Executive Directors)	No (possible exception where there is change management	Yes, through the MO	Senior Appointments Committee	Only if required by Council

	and the appointment is internal)			
Appointment of Deputy Chief Officers (Service Directors)	Yes	No	No	No
Appointment below Deputy Chief Officer (DCO)	Yes	Members cannot be involved in the appointments below DCO	Members cannot be involved in the appointments below DCO	Members cannot be involved in the appointments below DCO
Dismissal of Chief Executive (as Head of Paid Service)	Cannot be delegated to officers	Yes	An independent report must be prepared before a decision can be made	Special Meeting of Council must be convened
Dismissal of Statutory Chief Officers	Cannot be delegated solely to officers	No	In accordance with prescribed procedure	In accordance with prescribed procedure
Dismissal of non-Statutory Chief Officer	Not delegated solely to officers	No	In accordance with prescribed procedure	In accordance with prescribed procedure
Dismissal by way of redundancy or voluntary redundancy for Chief Officers	No	No	In accordance with prescribed procedure	In accordance with prescribed procedure
Dismissal of staff below Chief Officer	Chief Executive for DCOs, and Executive Directors below DCO	No	No	No
Determine Appeals against final written warnings below DCO	Relevant authorised managers.	No	No	No
Issue HR1 notices in respect of potential redundancies	Assistant Director HR	No	No	No

To carry out powers and duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act	Chief Executive	No	No	No
Issue 'certificates of opinion' as to whether or not the duties of a post fall within the criteria of political sensitivity	Assistant Director HR	No	No	No

EXCEPTIONS - LEGAL

In exercising delegated powers, officers are reminded to take account of the overall limitations of the scheme, as detailed in the introduction to the scheme.

Function	Officer
Determine all applications made under powers and duties of the local planning authority and planning legislation in relation to applications and enforcement	Executive Director Place and Economy except where: a) The decision would lead to a significant departure from the local plan b) Where called in by at least 1 member c) Major applications to develop the Council's own land d) Applications by relevant officers employed by the Council Applications deemed by the Executive Director to require a member decision.
Make applications to the Court of Protection for Receivership Orders in relation to clients lacking mental capacity to carry out their financial affairs	Executive Director of Adults, Communities and Wellbeing
Apply to become an appointee in relation to clients lacking capacity to carry out their financial affairs	Executive Director of Adults, Communities and Wellbeing
Carry out the health functions delegated to the Authority by an NHS body under arrangements between NHS bodies and local authorities pursuant to section 31 Health Act 1999	Executive Director of Adults, Communities and Wellbeing
Determine liability, demand payment, make arrangements for collection and take	Executive Director of Finance

action for recovery of Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates	
Defend and/or settle all claims made against the Council up to £100,000	Director Legal and Democratic
Determine details required by conditions imposed on any permission.	Executive Director of Place and Economy
Determine minor amendments to approved plans where these do not materially alter the form of the approved development	Executive Director of Place and Economy
All powers and functions of the Authority in respect hackney carriage and private hire licensing matters	Executive Director of Place and Economy, except where an applicant has relevant convictions/cautions or a current licence holder is similarly convicted/cautioned and/or where an applicant for, or the current holder of a Hackney Carriage/Private Hire drivers licence has nine or more points on their DVLA driving licence
All powers and functions in respect of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013.	Executive Director of Place and Economy
To approve Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs), unless they are likely to be considered to be sensitive or significant.	Executive Director of Adults, Communities and Wellbeing
To attest the seal of the Council (and to authorise any other Solicitor of the Council to attest the seal) and hold a book kept for the purpose that contains a consecutively numbered entry of every sealing initialled by the person who has attested the seal.	Director of Legal and Democratic
Under section 91 of the Local Government Act 1972 to appoint by order persons to fill vacancies in the office of parish [or community] councillor.	Director of Legal and Democratic
Issue proceedings, prosecute, defend, conduct, withdraw, settle or appeal any legal proceedings or process on behalf of the Council unless otherwise delegated.	Director Legal and Democratic
Institute criminal proceedings in respect of offences against any legislation (including byelaws) which the Council is allowed to enforce.	Director Legal and Democratic
Exercise the powers and functions of the local authority under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 or any variation or amendment thereof or regulations made thereunder.	Director of Legal and Democratic.
Authorise any officer of the Council to prosecute, or defend on its behalf, or to appear on its behalf in, proceedings before a Magistrates Court, in accordance with	Director Legal and Democratic

Section 223 of the Local Government Act 1972	
Make orders or take any other steps in relation to any legislation when instructed by the officer with the relevant area of responsibility	Director Legal and Democratic
Appoint Education Appeal Panel members, in accordance with the provisions of the Education (Admission Appeals Arrangements) (England) (Regulations 2002), as amended, such appointments to last for a period of three years then membership be re-assessed and re-appointments made as appropriate	Director Legal and Democratic
Determining applications affecting the registers of commons and village greens (under the Commons Act 2006 and any subsequent legislation).	Director of Legal and Democratic In the case of contested matters, or Matters which require oral representation or an inquiry, an Independent Inspector shall be appointed to determine the application.
To carry out powers in relation to assets of community value under Part 5 Chapter 3 of the Localism Act 2011.	Powers to determine whether an asset should be placed on the list – Executive Director of Place and Economy Powers to determine reviews – Director of Legal and Democratic

EXCEPTIONS - PENSIONS

(In exercising delegated powers, officers are reminded to take account of the overall limitations of the scheme, as detailed in the introduction to the scheme)

<p>Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) (Further delegations to Head of Pensions can be found in the administering authority's discretions or within individual policy or strategy documents published on the Pension Fund's website as approved by the Pension Committee).</p>	<p>Management and administration of the Local Government Pension Scheme Authority to maintain West Northamptonshire Council's responsibility for the management and administration of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations with regard to overriding legislation and guidance including statutory guidance, including the exercise of the administering authority's discretions.</p> <p>Membership of the ACCESS Asset Pool Section 151 Officers Group In relation to the Joint Committee (JC), a s102 committee of the Local Government Act 1972, of the ACCESS Asset Pool, the Section 151 Officer shall be bound by the terms of reference for the Section 151 Officer Group as detailed in the Inter-Authority Agreement:</p>
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Part 1 – Governing Principles

- The Section 151 Officers will co-operate to support the activities of the Pool in providing advice to or in consultation with the JC and they shall always act in line with the Governing Principle and Principles of Collaboration as set out in the Inter-Authority Agreement except to the extent that it is inconsistent with the discharge of their personal statutory duties.

Part 2 - Functions in relation to the Pool

- In response to decisions made by the JC, the Section 151 Officers shall (in addition and without prejudice to their existing statutory responsibilities in relation to the proper administration of the financial affairs of their own Councils) ensure the appropriate resourcing, support, advice and facilitation to the JC including, without limitation, in the following ways:

Discharging Section 151 Officer Functions

- **Staffing and Resourcing:** in relation to the provision of staff and resources to assist the JC in the exercise of its functions under this Agreement.
- **Cost Sharing:** in accordance with any local arrangements within their Councils, ensuring that their Councils' share of costs is provided to the relevant parties, whether under the business plan, budget or otherwise under Schedule 5 from time to time.
- **Pool Aligned Assets:** providing the JC, the ASU (ACCESS Support Unit) and any other relevant staff resources with such support as is reasonably required to engage with Pool Aligned Assets Providers.

Advising the Joint Committee

- **Budget and Business Planning:** making recommendations to the JC on budget and business plan matters, following input from the ASU in accordance with Schedule 5 of the Inter-Authority Agreement (Cost Sharing).
- Reviewing and advising on budget variations throughout each financial year.
- **Risk and Performance:** advising the JC on the identification of, and mitigation of any risk to the operation or success of the Pool.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Host Authority and Procurement Lead Authority Roles: making recommendations to the JC regarding the Host Authority and Procurement Lead Authority roles from time to time as necessary. ○ Amendments to the Inter-Authority Agreement: reviewing, in consultation with their respective Councils' Monitoring Officers, any material changes to the Inter-Authority Agreement, in accordance with provisions of clause 11 of the Inter-Authority Agreement (Variation of Agreement).
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EXCEPTIONS – NORTHAMPTON PARTNERSHIP HOMES LTD

Function	Delegated to Northampton Partnership Homes Ltd	Retained by the Council	Shared	Comments
Repairs and Maintenance	Y			Planned, cyclical and responsive.
Tenancy Management	Y			Housing management (including successions and exchanges), tenancy management, leaseholder management
Lettings			Y	Via choice-based lettings scheme in accordance with Council's lettings policy.
Supporting Tenants	Y			Sheltered accommodation, supported living and related advice.
Ecton Lane Travellers Site	Y			Details included within Schedule 1 of Service Specification
Consultation			Y	Council has statutory duties here and may wish to consult direct; generally expected that NPH would carry out consultations whether for itself or the Council.
Estate Management	Y			Details included within Schedule 1 of the service specification
Right to buys			Y	NPH to deal with applications, Council (via

				Pathfinder) to process legal work.
Management of non-housing assets on estates			Y	Council or deal with the commercial elements; shared where buildings contain both housing and commercial elements.
Housing advice and homelessness		Y		Council retains statutory functions – NPH to provide advice to tenants and homelessness prevention
Private sector initiatives		Y		Including private sector empty homes
Community initiatives			Y	Council to retain community safety and rough sleepers functions; parties to co-operate on community initiatives generally
Regeneration			Y	Parties to work together on regeneration plans to the housing estates
Policy development			Y	NPH will be required to comply with relevant new policies developed by the Council.
Stock surveys	Y			As per the Housing Asset Management Strategy
Aids and adaptations			Y	For all council homes – DFGs for private sector homes remains with Council
Insurance		Y		Subject to the provisions of clause 30 of the Agreement.
Management of HRA			Y	Council's statutory responsibility.
Empty Homes			Y	Details included within Schedule 1 service specification.
Housing litigation (conduct)		Y		Local Practice Direction dated 18 August 2020 ¹ from HHJ Hedley - Permitted rights of audience before District Judges and Deputy District Judges in the County Court at Northampton at rent possession claims and claims for the recovery rent, mesne profits, damages or any other sum claimed in respect of the occupation of a residential property
Housing litigation (representation)	Y			

				belonging to and for claims brought by West Northamptonshire Council provided that they have written authorisation from West Northamptonshire Council to appear before the court.
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9.3 List of Proper Officers

SCHEDULE OF APPOINTMENTS

PURPOSE OF APPOINTMENT	PROPER OFFICER
Any reference to the Clerk of a council which, by virtue of the Local Government Act 1972, is to be construed as a reference to the Proper Officer of the Council	Director of Legal and Democratic
Any reference to the Treasurer of a council which, by virtue of the Local Government Act 1972, is to be construed as reference to the Proper Officer of the Council	Director of Finance

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT 1936

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
85(2)	Serving a notice requiring action to deal with verminous people and things	Director of Public Health

REGISTRATION SERVICE ACT 1953

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
9(1) and (2)	Appointment of interim superintendent registrars and registrars	Director of Legal and Democratic
13(2)(h) and 3(b)	Powers under the local scheme of organisation	Director of Legal and Democratic
20	Proper officer to be subject to regulations made by the Registrar General	Director of Legal and Democratic

AGRICULTURE ACT 1970

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
67(3)	Appointment as Agricultural Analyst	Assistant Director: Regulatory Services

LOCAL AUTHORITY SOCIAL SERVICES ACT 1970

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
6(A1)	Director of Adult Social Services	Executive Director: Adults, Communities and Wellbeing

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1971

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
54(4)	Appointment as clerk of the local planning authority	Director of Legal and Democratic

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
13 (3)	Parish Trustee where no Parish Council	Director of Legal and Democratic
All appointments under sections 83, 84, 86, 88(2), 89(1)(b), 99 and Sch.12, 100A to F	To witness and receive declarations of acceptance of office of Chair, Vice Chair or councillor, resignations of councillors, vacancy in office, convening meetings to declare a vacancy, receipt of notice from electors regarding a vacancy, to issue a summons for a council meeting, all matters concerning agenda, papers and reports and minutes of meetings	Director of Legal and Democratic
115 (2)	Person to whom all officers shall pay monies received by them and due to Council	Executive Director of Finance
137(a)	Gives the Proper Officer power to require a voluntary organisation or similar body to supply information to them, where a local authority uses its powers under Section 137 to give financial assistant to that voluntary organisation or similar body above a relevant minimum	Executive Director of Finance
146(1)(a)	Statutory declarations and issue any certificate in relation to securities on change of name of authority or change of area	Executive Director of Finance
151	To be responsible for the administration of the financial affairs of the Council	Executive Director of Finance
All appointments 191, 204(3), 210(6) and (7), 223, 225(1), 228(3), 229(5), 233, 234, 236(9)-(10), 238, 248(2), Sch.12 para 4(2)(b) and 4(3) and Sch.14 para 25(7)	Receipt of notices from Ordnance Survey in relation to boundaries, powers in respect of charities, authorising officers to attend court, receipt of documents to be deposited, certification of photographic copies, receipt of service, signing of notice order or other document required by law, certifying copies of byelaws and keeping the roll of freemen. Provisions in relation to summons for meetings and copy resolutions	Director of Legal and Democratic
Sch.29, Para 4	Undertake duties at council elections which, under the Representation of the People Acts, are required to be undertaken not by the Returning Officer but by the Proper Officer	Director of Legal and Democratic
Sch.29 Pt.I Para.4(1)(b)	Adaptation, modification and amendment of enactments	Director of Legal and Democratic
Sch.29 Para 41	Proper Officer for Births, Marriages and Deaths	Director of Legal and Democratic

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1974

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
30(5)	Provides that the Proper Officer must give public notice of the ombudsman's reports	Director of Legal and Democratic

LOCAL ELECTIONS (PRINCIPAL AREA) RULES

	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
	Retention and public inspection of documents after an election	Returning Officer (Chief Executive)

LOCAL LAND CHARGES ACT 1975

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
3	Requires each registering authority to maintain a local land charges register. This duty falls on the local authority itself and not on the "Proper Officer"	Executive Director of Place and Economy
19	The officer to act as Local Registrar as defined in Section 3	Executive Director of Place and Economy

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 1976

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
16	Notices requiring details of interest in land	Any Chief Officer of the Council
41(1)	The officer to certify copies of any resolution, order, report or minutes of proceedings of the Authority as evidence in any legal proceedings	Director of Legal and Democratic

LOCAL AUTHORITIES CEMETERIES ORDER 1977

Regulation	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
10	To sign exclusive rights of burial	Executive Director of Place and Economy

RENT ACT 1977

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Officer
63	Appointment of rent officers under a scheme	Assistant Director Housing and Communities
Schedule 15, Part IV, para 7	Certification of provision of suitable alternative accommodation	Assistant Director Housing and Communities

HIGHWAYS ACT 1980

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
59(1)	Certify that extraordinary expenses have been incurred in maintaining the highway by reason of damage caused by excessive weight	Assistant Director: Highways and Waste
193 (1)	Certify that additional expenses have been incurred in the execution of wider than normal street works	Assistant Director: Highways and Waste
205 (3)-(5)	Undertake duties as specified in the schedules in relation to private street works	Assistant Director: Highways and Waste
210(2)	Certify amendments to estimated costs and provisional apportionment of costs under the private street works code	Assistant Director: Highways and Waste
211(1), 212(4), 216(2)-(3)	Make final apportionment of costs as detailed in the schedules under the private street works code	Assistant Director: Highways and Waste
295(1)	Issue notice requiring removal of materials from non - maintainable streets in which works are due to take place	Assistant Director: Highways and Waste
321	Authenticate notices and other documents	Assistant Director: Highways and Waste
Sch.9 para 4	Sign plans showing proposed prescribed improvement or building lines	Assistant Director: Highways and Waste

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE ACT 1983

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
8(1) and (2)(a)	Appointment as Electoral Registration Officer	Chief Executive
35(1)	Appointment as Returning Officer	Chief Executive
67(7)(b)	Receipt of notice of an election agent for local elections	Returning Officer
82 and 89	Receipt of election expense declarations and returns and the holding of those documents for public inspection	Returning Officer
128	Provides that a copy of any petition questioning a local government election shall be sent to proper officer who shall publish it in the local authority area	Returning Officer
131	Providing accommodation for holding election count	Chief Executive

BUILDING ACT 1984

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
61	Provides that the proper officer or any other authorised officer to be given free access to works or repairs to an underground drain	Executive Director of Place and Economy

78	To take action in relation to dangerous buildings and structures	Executive Director of Place and Economy
93	Provides that notices and other documents under this Act may be signed by the Proper Officer or by an officer authorised by them in writing	Executive Director of Place and Economy

PUBLIC HEALTH (CONTROL OF DISEASES) ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE ACT 2008 AND THE MILK AND DAIRIES (GENERAL) REGULATIONS 1959

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
48	Preparation of certificate to Justice of Peace for removal of body to mortuary and for burial within a prescribed time or immediately	Director of Public Health
59	Authentication of documents	Director of Public Health
61-62	Right to enter premises to ascertain whether there has been a contravention of a provision of the 1984 Act or a Part 2A order made pursuant to the 1984 Act	Director of Public Health
	Requirement to appoint a suitably qualified person as the Council's Medical Advisor on Environmental Health and Proper Officer for notifiable diseases	Director of Public Health
74	To act for such of the functions relating to notification, investigations, prevention and control of notifiable diseases and food poisoning.	Director of Public Health

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES ACT 1985

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
72(1)(a)	Chief Inspector of Weights and Measures	Assistant Director: Regulatory Services

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE ACT 1988

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
114, 115, 115A and 115B	Responsibility for Chief Financial Officer Reports	Executive Director of Finance
116	Notification to auditor of date, time and place of meeting to consider Section 114 report and of decision of such meeting	Executive Director of Finance
139A	Provision of information to the Secretary of State in relation to the exercise of their powers under this Act as and when required	Executive Director of Finance
Sch.4 (10)(1) Paragraphs 6 – 8 (10)(1) Paragraph 9	Where notice has to be served on the Council concerning:	Executive Director of Place and Economy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The acquisition of way leaves over Council-owned land The felling and lopping of trees, etc 	
Sch. 8, 36(8) Para 1, 36(8) Para 2	Where applications have to be made for consent to construct generating stations on Council-owned land Where applications for consent have to be served on the local planning authority	Executive Director of Place and Economy

PUBLIC HEALTH (INFECTIOUS DISEASES) REGULATIONS 1988

Regulation	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
6	Reporting of infectious diseases to the Chief Medical Officer	Director of Public Health
8	Submission of weekly or quarterly returns to the Registrar General	Director of Public Health
10	Arrangements for immunisation and vaccination	Director of Public Health
Sch.3 and 4	Reporting and issuing notices to prevent the spread of infection	Director of Public Health

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING ACT 1989

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
2(4), 3A, 15 - 17	Officer with whom the list of politically restricted posts shall be deposited; to grant exemptions from political restriction and matters relating to the establishment of political groups. Any responsibilities under the Local Government (committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990	Director of Legal and Democratic
4	Designation as Head of Paid Service	Chief Executive
5(1)	Designation as Monitoring Officer	Director of Legal and Democratic
18	Receipt of notice in writing that a councillor wishes to forego any part of entitlement to an allowance	Director of Legal and Democratic
19(1) and (4)	Receipt of notice of direct and indirect pecuniary interests	Director of Legal and Democratic

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT 1990

Regulation	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
149	Discharging the functions in this section for dealing with stray dogs	Assistant Director Regulatory Services

FOOD SAFETY ACT 1990

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
5	Authorised officer to act in matters arising under the Act	Assistant Director Regulatory

		Services
27(1)	Appointment of Public Analyst	Assistant Director Regulatory Services
49(3)	Any document which a food authority are authorised or required by or under this Act to give, make or issue may be signed on behalf of the authority (a) by the proper officer of the authority as respects documents relating to matters within their province; or (b) by any officer of the authority authorised by them in writing to sign documents of the particular kind, or, as the case may be, the particular document	Assistant Director Regulatory Services

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (COMMITTEES AND POLITICAL GROUPS) REGULATIONS 1990

Regulation	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
8(1), 8(5), 9(b), 10, 13(1), 14, 15 and 17	Notifications to and by the Proper Officer Give effect to the wishes of political groups in making appointments of members to committees	Director of Governance

CIVIL EVIDENCE ACT 1995

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
9	To certify Council records for the purposes of admitting the document in evidence in civil proceedings	Director of Legal and Democratic

PARTY WALL ETC. ACT 1996

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
	To select a third surveyor, if required, during a neighbour dispute about building projects	Executive Director of Place and Economy

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (CONTRACTS) ACT 1997

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
	Certification of relevant powers to enter into contracts	Executive Director of Finance

CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
12	To apply for the discharge or variation of a Child Safety Order	Director of Children's Services
17 and 37	To have regard to effect of the exercise of any function on the need to prevent crime and disorder and offending by children and young persons	Director of Children's Services

**CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998, SECTION 115
CRIME AND DISORDER (FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGY)
REGULATIONS 2007/1830**

Regulation	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
4(3)	Primary Designated Officer for information sharing	Director of Legal and Democratic

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
3	Producing a written statement of Executive decisions made at meetings	Director of Legal and Democratic
5	Making a copy of written statements of Executive decisions and associated reports available for inspection by the public	Director of Legal and Democratic
6	Making available for inspection a list of background papers	Director of Legal and Democratic
11(2)	Exclusion of whole or part of any report to the Cabinet where meeting is likely not to be open to the public	Director of Legal and Democratic
11(7)(c)	Provision to the press of other documents supplied to members of the Cabinet in connection with the item discussed	Director of Legal and Democratic
81	Establish and maintain a Register of Interests	Director of Legal and Democratic

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 SECTIONS 9G, 9GA AND 22
LOCAL AUTHORITIES (EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS) (MEETINGS AND ACCESS TO
INFORMATION) (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2012**

Regulation	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
7	Exclusion of whole or part of any reports to the Cabinet or Cabinet Member where they relate only to items during which the meeting is likely not to be open to the public	Director of Legal and Democratic
10	Inform the relevant Select Committee Chair or the committee members by notice in writing of decisions to be made, where it has been impracticable to comply with the publicity requirements (in the "Key Decisions Plan") and make available for public inspection notices relating to this	Director of Legal and Democratic
12	Produce a written statement of Cabinet decisions made at meetings	Director of Legal and Democratic
13	Produce a written statement of decisions made by individual Cabinet Members	Director of Legal and Democratic
14	Make a copy of written statements of Cabinet and Cabinet Member and officer executive decisions and associated reports available for inspection by the public	Director of Legal and Democratic

15 and 2	Make available for inspection a list of background papers	Director of Legal and Democratic
16(5)	Determine whether certain documents contain exempt information	Director of Legal and Democratic
16(7)	Determine whether certain documents contain advice provided by a political adviser or assistant	Director of Legal and Democratic
20	Determine whether documents contain confidential information, exempt information or the advice of a political adviser or assistant	Director of Legal and Democratic

LOCAL AUTHORITIES (REFERENDUMS) (PETITIONS AND DIRECTIONS) REGULATIONS 2000

Regulation	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
34	Publishing the verification number of local government electors for the purpose of petitions under the Local Government Act 2000	Director of Legal and Democratic

**REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 SECTION 30
THE REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS (PRESCRIPTION OF OFFICES, RANKS AND POSITION) ORDER 2000**

Regulation	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
2	Authorise the carrying out of directed surveillance of the conduct of a covert human intelligence source	Executive Directors, Director of Legal and Democratic, Chief Executive in accordance with Council's RIPA policy
21, 22, 27, 28 and 29	The Senior Responsible Officer for RIPA	Director of Legal and Democratic

**REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000, SECTIONS 22(2)(B) AND 25(2)
THE REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS (COMMUNICATIONS DATA) ORDER 2010
THE REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS (COVERT SURVEILLANCE AND PROPERTY INTERFERENCE: CODE OF PRACTICE) ORDER 2010
THE REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS (COVERT HUMAN INTELLIGENCE SOURCES: CODE OF PRACTICE) ORDER 2010**

Regulation	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
-	Designated Senior Responsible Officer for the use of surveillance and the acquisition and disclosure of communications data	Director of Legal and Democratic
Sch. 2 Part 2	Grant authorisation or give notice to obtain or disclose communications data for the purpose of preventing or detecting crime or of preventing disorder	Director of Legal and Democratic

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
36	Person to confirm or deny whether the disclosure of information is likely to prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs	Director of Legal and Democratic

ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE (MAPS IN DRAFT FORM) (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2001

Regulation	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
9-11	Authorised officer to receive deposit of reduced scale maps	Executive Director Place and Economy

LOCAL AUTHORITIES (STANDING ORDERS) (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2001

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
Sch.1 Part II paras 5 and 6	Functions in relation to notifying Executive appointments, dismissals etc .	Director of Legal and Democratic

MONEY LAUNDERING REGULATIONS 2003

Regulation	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
7(1)(a)	Nominated officer to receive disclosures of suspected money laundering	Executive Director of Finance

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2003

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
25	When the annual budget report is considered by Cabinet or by the County Council, the Chief Financial Officer must make a report on the robustness of the estimates made in determining the budget requirement and on the adequacy of the proposed level of financial reserves	Executive Director of Finance

CHILDREN ACT 2004

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
18	To carry out the role of the proper officer function of Director of Children's Services	Director of Children's Services

THE HOUSING ACT 2004

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
4(2) and 249	In relation to the inspection of premises and endorsing of a certificate of evidence.	Assistant Director of Housing & Communities

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ACT 2004

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
17	Appointment as Traffic Manager to perform such tasks as the authority considers will assist it to perform its network management duty	Executive Director Place and Economy

MARRIAGES AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS (APPROVED PREMISES) REGULATIONS 2005 (AS AMENDED)

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
	Proper Officer for the purposes of the Registration Act 1953, the Marriage Act 1949 (as amended by the Marriage Act 1994), the Civil Partnership Act 2004, the Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005 as amended and receive applications, set fees and offer discounts, where applicable	Director Legal and Democratic

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE ACT 2006

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
73A	Appointment as Director of Public Health	Director of Public Health

HEALTH ACT 2006

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
10(3)	Duty of an enforcement authority to enforce, as respects the premises, places and vehicles in relation to which it has enforcement functions, the provisions of this Chapter (smoke free premises) and regulations made under it	Assistant Director: Regulatory Services
10(5)	In this Chapter, "authorised officer", in relation to an enforcement authority, means any person (whether or not an officer of the authority) who is authorised by it in writing, either generally or specially, to act in matters arising under this Chapter	Authorised Officers
10(7)	Refers to Schedule 2 which lists the powers of entry, etc.	Assistant Director: Regulatory Services
10(9)(1)	An authorised officer of an enforcement authority (see section 10) who has reason to believe that a person has committed an offence under section 6(5) or 7(2) on premises, or in a place or vehicle, in relation to which the authorised officer has functions may give them a penalty notice in respect of the offence	Authorised Officer

SMOKE-FREE (PREMISES AND ENFORCEMENT) REGULATIONS 2006

Regulation	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
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3	To carry out the functions of an enforcement authority under Regulation 3	Assistant Director: Regulatory Services
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LOCAL ELECTIONS (PARISHES AND COMMUNITIES) RULES 2006

	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
	Retention and public inspection of documents after an election	Returning Officer

THE LOCAL ELECTIONS (PRINCIPAL AREAS) (ENGLAND AND WALES) RULES 2006

Regulation	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
Rule 50 and Sch.2	Receipt from Returning Officer of the names and persons elected to the Council	Director of Legal and Democratic
54	Registration officer for the retention and destruction of documents following an election	Director of Legal and Democratic

CRIME AND DISORDER (FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGY) REGULATIONS 2007/1830

Regulation	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
4(3)	Nominated officer to facilitate the sharing of information under an information sharing protocol	Assistant Director Housing and Communities

LOCAL DEMOCRACY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTRUCTION ACT 2009

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
31	Statutory Scrutiny Officer	Director of Legal and Democratic

WORKING TOGETHER TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN: A GUIDE TO INTER-AGENCY WORKING TO SAFEGUARD AND PROMOTE THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN (DFE GUIDANCE, MARCH 2010)

	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
-	Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Executive Director Adults Communities and Wellbeing
-	Caldicott Guardian	Executive Director Adults Communities and Wellbeing

THE HEALTH PROTECTION (NOTIFICATION) REGULATIONS 2010

Regulation	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
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2, 3 and 6	Receipt and disclosure of notification of suspected notifiable disease, infection or contamination in patients and dead persons	Director of Public Health
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LOCALISM ACT 2011

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
29	Establish, maintain and publish a Register of Interests	Director Legal and Democratic
31	Receipt of notice of members' disclosable pecuniary interests and entering such interests in the authority's register	Director Legal and Democratic
32	Consideration of whether a member's interest is a sensitive interest	Director Legal and Democratic
33(1)	Receiving applications for dispensations	Director Legal and Democratic
33(2)	Grant dispensations to members to speak only or to speak and vote on matters where they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest	Director Legal and Democratic
Sch.2, Pt1, Para.9FB	Designation as Scrutiny Officer	Executive Director Corporate Services

THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES (REFERENDUMS) (PETITIONS) REGULATIONS 2011

Regulation	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
7, 8, 11 and 13	Various steps relating to petitions	Director Legal and Democratic

THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES (EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS) (MEETINGS AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2012

Regulation	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
2, 7, 10, 12, 13-16, 20	Functions relating to the recording and publication of information relating to Executive decisions, including exclusion of information from agenda and reports relating to private meeting matters	Director Legal and Democratic
12-13	Grant dispensations in respect of conflicts of interest declared by an Executive member making a decision, or declared by an Executive member consulted by a member or officer taking such a decision	Director Legal and Democratic
12-14	Recording of executive decisions and by individual members and making documents available for inspection by members of the public	Director Legal and Democratic

NHS BODIES AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES (PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS, CARE TRUSTS, PUBLIC HEALTH AND LOCAL HEALTHWATCH) REGULATIONS 2012

Regulation	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
22(4)	Designated as Responsible Person for ensuring compliance with the regulations	Executive Director Adults Communities and Wellbeing
22(5)	Designated as Complaints Manager for managing the procedures for handling complaints	Executive Director Adults Communities and Wellbeing

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE ACT 2012

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
	Responsible person for ensuring that the Council complies with statutory requirements relating to complaints made to the Council about its public health functions and, where necessary, action is taken in light of the outcome of such complaints	Director of Legal and Democratic
73A(1)(a)	The exercise by the authority of its functions under section 2B, 111 or 249 or Schedule 1 – health improvement duties to take steps to improve the health of the people in the area	Director of Public Health
73A(1)(b)	The exercise by the authority of its functions by virtue of section 6C(1) or (3) – The exercise of the Secretary of State’s public health protection or health improvement functions that they delegate to local authorities, either by arrangement or under regulations – these include services mandated by regulations	Director of Public Health
73A(1)(c)	Anything done by the authority in pursuance or arrangements under section 7A – Any public health activity undertaken by the local authority under arrangements with the Secretary of State	Director of Public Health
73A(1)(d)	The exercise by the authority of any of its functions that relate to planning for, or responding to, emergencies involving a risk to public health	Director of Public Health
73A(1)(e)	The functions of the authority under section 325 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 - the local authority’s role in co-ordinating with the police, the probation service and the prison service to assess the risks posed by violent and sex offenders	Director of Public Health
73A(1)(f)	Other public health functions that the Secretary of State may specify in regulations	Director of Public Health

COUNTER-TERRORISM AND SECURITY ACT 2015

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
	The officer responsible for ensuring that the Council, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the	Executive Director Adults,

	need to prevent people vulnerable from being drawn into terrorism	Communities and Wellbeing
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DATA PROTECTION ACT 2018

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
69, 70 and 71	The designated Data Protection Officer to discharge functions associated with the Data Protection Act 2018	Data Protection Officer and Information Manager

LANDLORD AND TENANTS ACTS

	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
	To be the Proper Officer to serve and receive notices on behalf of the Council for the purposes of s.23 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1927 and s.66 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954	Executive Director of Place and Economy

OTHER MISCELLANEOUS PROPER OFFICER FUNCTIONS

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
	Any other miscellaneous proper or statutory officer functions not otherwise delegated by the Authority	Chief Executive or their nominee

IN THE ABSENCE OF THE DESIGNATED PROPER OFFICER:

- In the event of the Head of the Paid Service not being available to deal with matters for which they have been designated the proper officer, an Executive Director may be authorised by them to act as proper officer in their absence.
- In the event of any other designated officer being unable to fulfil their duties as proper officer, their deputy may be authorised to undertake such duties.
- Notwithstanding the above, a proper officer may at any time delegate or authorise other officers to perform the designated duties on their behalf.

9.4 Employee Code of Conduct

Code of conduct

The Council Code of Conduct sets out the general standards expected of all employees; these are in addition to any rules which apply in Service areas. The Code is not exhaustive and should be read in conjunction with other Council policies.

It is your responsibility to read this Code and to make sure your conduct meets its provisions at all times.

Some service areas will have their own service specific rules about behaviour, usually in relation to their service users. Employees must ensure that they understand the service specific rules, and discuss them with their line manager if they do not understand how they apply.

1. What are the principles?

The public have the right to expect the highest standards of integrity from our employees.

Employees should:

- (a) always conduct themselves in a proper manner
- (b) not allow personal or private interests to influence their conduct
- (c) not do anything as an employee which they could not justify to the Council
- (d) tell management of any breach of standards or procedure without fear of recrimination. If appropriate employees should use the Whistleblowing policy
- (e) engage in any investigations about actual or potential breaches of this code

If employees fail to follow this code they may be liable to disciplinary action which could lead to termination of employment.

2. What are the rules about gifts and hospitality?

There are no hard and fast rules about accepting hospitality or gifts offered on a personal basis. However, employees should treat any offers with extreme caution. The person or organisation making the offer may be:

- (a) doing, or hoping to do, business with the Council; or
- (b) applying to the Council for some kind of decision

In some cases, accepting the offer may constitute a criminal offence.

Employees should seek permission before any offers of gifts or hospitality above the value of £25 are accepted.

It is important that such offers of a gift or hospitality are recorded, even where the employee or their line manager, has decided to decline the offer. As a public service there is a need

to demonstrate impartiality and merit in remaining totally open about anything received and understand the perception of the general public regarding offers of gifts or hospitality. Please note that if there have been separate or previous offers from the same organisation or individual within the past three months which combined would total over £25.00 it is appropriate to declare the cumulative total.

If employees have any doubts about whether to accept a gift below £25, they should talk to their line manager. Guidance is provided in the Gifts and Hospitality Form. Managers should maintain a record of gifts and hospitalities received by their staff.

Hospitality or Gifts over the value of £25 should be declared through the Gifts and Hospitality form.

3. What are the rules about use of Council facilities?

Employees should only use Council premises, facilities or other resources for Council business, unless you have been given prior approval through your line manager. This includes:

- transport
- stationery
- secretarial services

4. What are the rules about the use of Information Technology?

Employees should use information technology in compliance with the Council's relevant Use of IT Policy. In addition to this policy, employees should make sure they understand and comply with the Council's guidance on Information Technology.

5. What are the rules about confidential and private information?

Employees may come into contact with confidential information during the course of their work and have a responsibility to maintain confidentiality and ensure their actions comply with the Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Confidential information includes any information regarding other employees, service users, financial information, information regarding business plans or other commercially sensitive information and any information or matter which relates to the affairs and/or services of the Council that should not be in the public domain.

Employees must never:

- disclose or share such information (oral, written or electronic) given in confidence or, information acquired during the course of their work to other people without a clear, legal basis for doing so e.g. safeguarding or crime prevention, and only when the identity of the individual requesting has been verified.
- access or use any information obtained in the course of their employment for personal gain or, to disadvantage or discredit the Council or anyone else.

The Council has specific rules on data security, outlined in the relevant Information Security Policy which you need to read and familiarise yourself with. You are required to comply with these rules when handling information. There are set procedures for releasing personal information and guidance for relevant Information Sharing. It is essential that employees follow these procedures and must seek advice from their line manager if unsure before releasing information or personal data.

6. What are the rules about financial conduct?

Employees must ensure that they use funds and resources entrusted to them for the purpose intended, and in a responsible and lawful manner. They should seek to safeguard such funds and resources from abuse, theft or waste and should strive to ensure value for money for the Council, service users and any public or charitable funds.

Employees should be aware that it is a serious criminal and disciplinary offence to corruptly receive or give any gift, loan, fee, reward or other advantage in return for doing (or not doing) anything, or showing favour (or disfavour) to any person or organisation. If an allegation of corrupt behaviour is made, this will be fully investigated.

Any form of bribery, either direct or indirect, is prohibited. Allegations of bribery or wrongdoing can be reported confidentially through the Whistleblowing policy. See also the Anti-Fraud policy.

Employees should manage the organisation's finances in compliance with the Council's financial procedure rules. This sets out individual financial responsibilities and provides more information on the Whistleblowing and Anti-Fraud policy.

7. What are the rules about declaring financial/personal interests in other organisations Which deal with the Council?

Employees must declare any financial/personal interest that they or their partner have or may have in any contract or proposed contract with the Council or its partners, including any interest they may have in tendering for a contract from the Service Area/Group – this interest may be direct or indirect.

Employees should also consider declaring non-financial interests. For example, they may do voluntary work for an organisation in receipt of grant aid from the Council.

An employee wishing to make a declaration should complete the Declaration of Conflict of Interest form providing as much detail as possible and submit this to their line manager.

See section 21 – Making a Declaration.

8. What are the rules about buying goods for personal use?

Employee should not use an official order, or the Council's name to buy goods for their personal use. To do so could lead to prosecution under the Theft Act and disciplinary action being taken which could result in termination of employment.

9. What are the rules about discount schemes offered to employees?

Employees should take care before accepting discounts or special terms from someone:

(a) who normally supplies the Council and,

(b) who is not offering this discount to members of the public

This does not apply if the supplier has an agreement with the Unions or the Council to supply goods or services on special terms. If an employee has doubts as to how to proceed, they should refer to their line manager in the first instance who will then discuss with their Executive Director who may refer to Legal Services where necessary.

10. What are the rules about equality issues?

Employees must ensure that they follow the Council's Equality, Inclusion and Diversity policies and conduct themselves in accordance with expected practice.

Managers must ensure that employees are aware of these policies, expected practice and how this applies to the work that the employee undertakes.

11. What are the rules about employees having other jobs?

Some contracts specify that an employee cannot undertake other jobs without written permission or, there are service specific or other circumstances that would prevent undertaking other jobs.

Where this does not apply, employees should make sure that any additional work they undertake does not:

(a) relate to their duties as an employee

(b) impact or affect the hours of work in their role with the Council and does not contravene any provisions under the Working Time Regulations or, their health and safety

(c) impact on their duties and effectiveness

(d) conflict with the interests of the Council (are they a competitor organisation, engaged in similar business or a customer of the Council. Do they provide or receive goods or services from the Council and is there any contractual arrangement with the Council)

(e) weaken public confidence in the Council

If you have any doubt as to whether a conflict exists you should complete a Declaration of conflict of interest form and submit this to your line manager.

In order to sustain service delivery and core functions, employees may be asked to curtail any other private work they have been carrying out when the Critical Incident Policy is invoked.

See section 21 – Making a Declaration

12. What are the rules about employee conduct outside work?

Generally, what employees do outside work is their own concern. However, they should avoid doing anything which might adversely affect the reputation of the Council, this includes comments on social media.

Further information and guidance is provided in the Council's relevant Use of IT Policy which covers Facebook, Social Media and use of mobile devices.

13. What are the rules about political impartiality?

Employees must be politically neutral when carrying out their work. This does not affect their right to be a member of a political party, unless they work within a specified politically restricted post.

Politically restricted posts fall into two categories - 'specified posts', and 'sensitive posts'. Specified posts include Tier 2 and above, and Political Assistants. Sensitive posts apply in Democratic Services and the Communications and Marketing team, based on their link to journalists and broadcasters. Further information and guidance is provided in the Council's document Politically restricted posts.

Employees can stand for election to local authorities, other than Northamptonshire County Council. They should complete a Declaration of conflict of interest form and submit this to their line manager to resolve any potential conflicts of interest and consideration of any requirements for time off.

See section 21 – Making a Declaration.

If an employee holds a politically restricted post, they can only be a member of a parish council.

14. What are the rules about employment of people who are relatives, partners, or have a close relationship?

Employees should not be involved in taking significant decisions where it involves a relative, partner or close friend.

This includes:

- (a) recruitment or appointment
- (b) disciplinary situations
- (c) promotional opportunities
- (d) pay related adjustments

Employees are expected to maintain professional relationships with colleagues. The general principle is that an outsider should not be able to detect any difference in the professional working relationship of people who have a close relationship to those who are not.

15. What are the rules about how employees interact with customers?

Employees should never allow any personal relationship with a customer to conflict with the duties of their employment, or the best interests of any customer or service user. They

must never allow themselves to be compromised by, or take advantage of, their relationship with a customer.

Some service areas will have their own service specific rules about behaviour in relation to their service users. This may be underpinned by professional Codes of Conduct or Guidance in relation to client group needs. Employees must ensure that they understand such service specific rules, and discuss them with their line manager if they do not understand how they apply.

16. What are the rules about employees' relationships with colleagues or Elected Members?

Mutual respect and trust between employees and councillors is essential to the effective operation of the Council. Any close personal familiarity can damage the relationship. It can also prove embarrassing to other employees and therefore, such familiarity should be avoided.

Any personal relationships that develop, which may conflict with the impartial performance of your duties, should be declared by completing a Declaration of conflict of interest form and submitting this to your line manager for consideration.

See section 21 – Making a Declaration.

17. What are the rules about media activities?

If an employee is contacted by the media, they should not respond individually, as media inquiries need to be directed immediately to the communications team.

Media includes any kind of published or broadcast material, including items published on the internet. Employees should contact the Communications Team for clarification if they are unsure about the rules regarding speaking to the media or sharing information externally.

In addition, employees should be aware of relevant Guidance on Social Networking Sites and Personal Internet Presence. The aim of this Guidance is:

- (a) to protect the reputation of the Council and its employees from intended or unintended abuse via personal employee usage of social networking and personal internet sites, and:
- (b) ensure that employees are aware of the potential legal implications of material which could be considered abusive or defamatory.

18. What are the rules about smoking?

In order to help support the health of our staff, deliver our services and maintain legal compliance the Council has a Smoke-free policy. For reputational and health reasons, smoking is prohibited within, or on Council controlled sites, including areas outside and around buildings where smokers should not be visible to the public and customers visiting council buildings, or be identifiable by their lanyards or ID badges. More information is provided in the relevant Smoke-free policy.

19. What are the rules about clothing and appearance?

Employees are expected to dress in a manner that is appropriate to the job role they undertake, and the environment in which they work. All employees are ambassadors for the organisation and therefore need to maintain a professional appearance, appropriate to their role. There are a variety of settings and roles within the organisation; for some areas health and safety issues will determine what constitutes appropriate dress, therefore employees should refer to any service specific rules, including those on personal protective clothing where relevant.

Managers are responsible for applying this in their specific setting; should an employee wear clothing that is inappropriate for the role they are undertaking, they can reasonably expect their manager to point this out to them. Managers can get support from the HR Advisory Team on what constitutes inappropriate clothing.

20. What are my responsibilities as a line manager?

As a line manager it is your responsibility to read this Code and to make sure you and your employees conduct meets its provision at all times. You are responsible for:

- (a) making sure that your staff are aware of the Code of Conduct
- (b) abide by the Code and thereby set your staff an example
- ~~(c)~~ taking appropriate action if any member of staff fails to follow this Code
- (d) seeking the advice of your HR Advisor if you have any doubt about how to proceed
- (e) keeping a record of gifts or hospitality received by your staff
- (f) reviewing any Declaration of conflict of interest form (whether at recruitment stage or following employment), escalating to your Executive Director
- (g) advising the employee of the outcome and retaining the information

It is also the line manager's responsibility to review the information and ensure:

- (a) where circumstances have changed and no longer relevant for the role the employee is undertaking or their involvement has ceased - the form should no longer be retained
- (b) If the employee moves to another role or service area, the information should be reviewed to ensure no conflict exists and where this remains relevant it is transferred and retained within that new role/service area
- (c) If the line manager leaves or moves to another role or service area, the information must be provided to the new manager where this remains relevant

For employees working in a social care setting – please also refer to the Adult Social Care and Healthcare Support Workers Code of Conduct – Skills for Care.

21. Making a Declaration

There are two instances in which a Declaration can be made;

- (a) New recruits – as part of the recruitment process and,
- (b) Where a conflict or potential conflict has been identified by an existing employee

Declarations will normally be made in circumstances of;

- (a) Financial/personal interests in other organisations which deal with the Council
- (b) Undertaking other jobs or engaging in other jobs or business
- (c) Political impartiality
- (d) Personal relationships

Conflict identified by existing employee

Where a conflict or potential conflict has been identified by an existing employee they should complete a Declaration of conflict of interest form and submit this to their line manager.

The employee's line manager will assess the contents of the form to ensure that sufficient information has been provided in order to determine whether the request is likely to be in conflict with or have a detrimental impact on the employee's or the Council's work.

The line manager may seek to consult their HR Advisor as required and then refer to the Executive Director for consideration. In circumstances that relate to financial/personal interests in other organisations the Executive Director will refer this to the Council's Monitoring Officer.

Declaration and levels of approval

Employees	Line Manager	Executive Director (and Monitoring Officer if involves Financial/Personal interests)
Assistant Director or Head of Service	Line Manager	Executive Director (and Monitoring Officer if involves Financial/Personal interests)
Director/Executive appointment	HR Assistant Director	Monitoring Officer

Failure to disclose a Conflict of Interest

If you fail to inform the Council of a possible conflict of interest could result in disciplinary action being taken and your employment being terminated.

22. Potential outcome of a Declaration

Any outcome as a result of a declaration being made must be advised and discussed with the employee to ensure they understand any implications and agreed actions where necessary.

Where it is found that the employees' involvement or actions are deemed unacceptable to continue, the employee may be asked to withdraw from that interest or the responsibilities may need to be changed.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest Form

Subject	Make a Declaration	Responsibility
Gifts & Hospitality	Record on Gifts & Hospitality form	Line Manager
Council facilities	No	Line Manager
Confidential & private information	No	Line Manager
Financial/Personal interests	Yes	Line Manager, Executive Director and Monitoring Officer
Buying Goods	No	Line Manager
Discount Schemes	No	Line Manager
Equality	No	Line Manager
Other jobs	Yes	Line Manager, Executive Director
Conduct outside work	No	Line Manager
Political Impartiality	Yes	Line Manager, Executive Director
Employment of relatives	No	Line Manager
Personal relationships	Yes	Line Manager, Executive Director

9.5 Staff Employment Procedure Rules

1. Definitions

In these Rules:

“The 1989 Act” means the Local Government and Housing Act 1989; “the 2000 Act” means the Local Government Act 2000;

“The 2001 Regulations” means the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) Regulations 2001;

“The 2015 Regulations” means the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015;

“Head of Paid Service”, “Chief Finance Officer”, “Monitoring Officer” and “disciplinary action” have the same meanings as set out in regulation 2 of the 2001 Regulations;

“Member of staff” means a person appointed to or holding paid office or employment to the Council;

“Independent Person” means a person appointed by the Council under section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011 or, where there are fewer than two such persons, such independent persons as have been appointed by another authority or authorities as the Council considers appropriate;

“Independent Persons Panel” means a committee appointed by the Council under section 102(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 for the purposes of advising the authority on matters relating to the dismissal of relevant officers in accordance with Schedule 3 of the 2001 Regulations, including or comprising at least two Independent Persons who have accepted an invitation to be considered for appointment to the Panel and who have been appointed to it in accordance with the following priority order:

- (a) an independent person who has been appointed by the Council and who is a local government elector in the Council’s area;
- (b) any other independent person who has been appointed by the Council;
- (c) an independent person who has been appointed by another council or councils.

“Statutory Chief Officer” has the same meaning as set out in section 2(6) of the 1989 Act and for this council will be:

- (a) Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service)
- (b) Executive Director Finance (Chief Finance Officer)
- (c) Director of Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer)
- (d) Executive Director Adults, Communities and Wellbeing and Deputy Chief Executive (Director of Adult Services)
- (e) Director of Children’s Services

(f) Director of Public Health;

“Non-Statutory Chief Officer” means a person who reports or who is directly accountable to the Head of Paid Service, to the Council, or any committee or sub-committee of the Council as set out in section 2(7) of the 1989 Act (other than persons whose duties are solely secretarial or clerical or are otherwise in the nature of support services) and for this council will be any other Executive Director, Director or Assistant Chief Executive appointed by the Council who are not Statutory Chief Officers;

“Deputy Chief Officer” are people who report directly or are directly accountable to one or more of the Statutory or Non-Statutory Chief Officers (other than persons whose duties are solely secretarial or clerical or are otherwise in the nature of support services) as set out in section 2(8) of the 1989 Act, and for this council will be its Assistant Directors.

2. Responsibility for Appointing, Dismissing and Disciplining Employees

- 2.1 Staff are employed, appointed, designated or engaged on behalf of the whole council and not by parts of the organisation or individuals.
- 2.2 The employment, appointment, designation or engagement of all staff will be in compliance with the law and any policies and practices of the Council.
- 2.3 The appointment or dismissal of the Head of Paid Service, the Chief Executive, the Executive Director Finance and the Director of Legal and Democratic may only be made by a meeting of the Full Council, which may either be direct or as confirmation of a recommendation from the Senior Appointments Committee.
- 2.4 The Senior Appointments Committee is responsible for the appointment and dismissal of Chief Officers apart from the Chief Executive, the Executive Director Finance and the Director of Legal and Democratic and for this purpose the Senior Appointments Committee must include at least one member of the Cabinet.
- 2.5 The Chief Executive or by an officer nominated by them is responsible for all appointments and dismissals in respect of staff positions that are not Chief Officers.
- 2.6 The procedures for such appointments and dismissals are set out in paragraphs 3 to 6 of these Rules. It should be noted that the designation of statutory officers such as the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer must be authorised by full Council before the offer of employment is made.
- 2.7 The Senior Appointments Committee is responsible for the function of taking disciplinary action other than dismissal in respect of the Head of Paid Service, Chief Finance Officer or Monitoring Officer.
- 2.8 With regard to recruitment, the Council will draw up a statement requiring any candidate for appointment as an officer to state in writing whether they are the parent, grandparent, partner, child, stepchild, adopted child, grandchild, brother, sister, uncle,

aunt, nephew, niece of an existing councillor or officer of the Council, or the partner of such persons. A candidate who deliberately fails to disclose such a relationship shall be disqualified from appointment and if appointed shall be liable to dismissal.

- 2.9 The Assistant Director HR shall ensure that the provisions contained in Clause 2.8 are reflected in application forms or in any accompanying detailed procedures for any post advertised.
- 2.10 The Assistant Director HR in consultation with the Leader shall be responsible for the suspension of the Head of Paid Service. The Head of Paid Service shall be responsible for the suspension of any Chief Officer. The appropriate Chief Officer (statutory or non-statutory) shall be responsible for the suspension of any Deputy Chief Officer.

3. Appointment of the Head of Paid Service

- 3.1 Where the Council proposes to appoint the Head of Paid Service, the Senior Appointments Committee will oversee the arrangements for filling the vacancy.
- 3.2 The Senior Appointments Committee shall:
- (a) draw up a statement specifying the duties and salary of the post of the Head of Paid Service and any qualifications or qualities to be sought in the person to be appointed;
 - (b) make arrangements for the post to be advertised in such a way as is likely to bring it to the attention of persons who are qualified to apply for it;
 - (c) make arrangements for a copy of the statement mentioned above to be sent to any person on request;
 - (d) select from the applications a short list of qualified candidates and interview those included in the short list.
- 3.3 Following the interview of candidates, the committee will come to a view as to the most suitable person for the position.
- 3.4 The committee must advise the Assistant Director HR of:
- (a) the name of the person in question:
 - (b) any other particulars that the committee consider are relevant to the appointment.
- 3.5 Within five clear working days of receiving the notification in 3.4 above, the Assistant Director HR will notify each member of the Cabinet of:
- (a) the information notified in paragraph 3.4 above;

- (b) the period within which any objection to the making of the offer is to be made by the Leader on behalf of the Cabinet to the Assistant Director HR; such period shall not exceed five clear working days.

3.6 An offer of appointment must wait until:

- (a) the Leader has, within the period of the notice under paragraph 3.5 above, notified the committee through the Assistant Director HR that neither they nor any member of the Cabinet has any objection to the making of the offer;
- (b) the Assistant Director HR has notified the committee that no objections have been received by them within the period of notice under 3.5 above;
- (c) the committee is satisfied that any objection received from the Leader within the notice period is not well founded. In this regard, where necessary the advice of the Director of Legal and Democratic (or if appropriate an alternative legal adviser) should be sought.

3.7 Where following the above procedure there are no objections to the proposed appointment or any objections are not upheld, the committee will recommend that person for appointment at the next meeting of the Full Council or at a specially convened meeting of the Council. If Full Council approves the recommendation, then a formal appointment can be made.

3.8 Where following interviews the committee is of the view that there is no suitable candidate, it will re-advertise the post.

3.9 Where Full Council does not approve the recommendation of the committee, it shall indicate how it wishes to proceed.

4. Appointment of Chief Officers (Statutory or Non-Statutory) and Deputy Chief Officers

4.1 Where the Council proposes to appoint a Chief Officer (statutory or non-statutory) or a Deputy Chief Officer, then:

- (a) the Senior Appointments Committee shall oversee the arrangements for filling the vacancy of a Chief Officer;
- (b) the appropriate Chief Officer (statutory or non-statutory) shall be responsible for the appointment of a Deputy Chief Officer.

4.2 The Senior Appointments Committee or the Chief Officer shall:

- (a) draw up a statement specifying the duties and salary of the officer concerned and any qualifications or qualities to be sought in the person to be appointed;
- (b) make arrangements for the post to be advertised in such a way as is likely to bring it to the attention of persons who are qualified to apply for it;

- (c) make arrangements for a copy of the statement mentioned in (a) above to be sent to any person on request;
 - (d) select from the applications a short list of qualified candidates and interview those included in the short list.
- 4.3 Following the interview of candidates, the Senior Appointments Committee or the Chief Officer will come to a view as to the most suitable person for the position.
- 4.4 The Senior Appointments Committee or the Chief Officer must advise the Assistant Director HR of:
 - (a) the name of the person in question;
 - (b) any other particulars that the committee or Chief Officer consider are relevant to the appointment.
- 4.5 Within five clear working days of receiving notification in 4.4 above, the Assistant Director HR will notify each member of the Cabinet of:
 - (a) the information notified under paragraph 4.4 above;
 - (b) the period in which any objection to the making of the offer is to be made by the Leader on behalf of the Cabinet to the Assistant Director HR; such period not to exceed five clear working days.
- 4.6 An offer of appointment must wait until:
 - (a) the Leader has within the period of notice under paragraph 4.5 above, notified the Senior Appointments Committee or the Chief Officer through the Assistant Director HR that neither they nor any member of the Cabinet has any objection to the making of the offer; or
 - (b) the Assistant Director HR has notified the Senior Appointments Committee or the Chief Officer that no objections have been received by them within the period of notice set out in 4.5 above; or
 - (c) the Senior Appointments Committee or the Chief Officer is satisfied that any objection received from the Leader within the notice period is not material or not well founded. In this regard, where necessary, the advice of the Director of Legal and Democratic (or if appropriate an alternative legal adviser) should be sought; or
 - (d) In respect of the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer, until Full Council has approved the statutory designation.
- 4.7 Once the conditions in 4.6 above have been satisfied, a formal offer of appointment may be made to the successful candidate.
- 4.8 Where following interviews the Senior Appointments Committee or the Chief Officer is of the view that there is no suitable candidate the post must be re-advertised.

5. Dismissal of the Head of Paid Service, Chief Finance Officer or Monitoring Officer

5.1 The Senior Appointments Committee is designated as the committee discharging, on behalf of the Council, the function of dismissal of the Head of Paid Service, Chief Finance Officer or Monitoring Officer. Full Council must, however, approve that dismissal before notice of dismissal is given to them.

5.2 Notice of dismissal of the Head of Paid Service, Chief Finance Officer or Monitoring Officer must not be given until:

(a) the Senior Appointments Committee has notified the Assistant Director HR that it wishes to dismiss the officer and any other particulars that the Senior Appointments Committee considers are relevant to the dismissal;

(b) the Assistant Director HR has notified every member of the Cabinet of:

(i) the fact that it wishes to dismiss the officer;

(ii) any other particulars relevant to the dismissal which the Senior Appointments Committee has notified to the Assistant Director HR;

(iii) the period within which any objection to the dismissal is to be made by the Leader on behalf of the Cabinet to the Assistant Director HR; and

(c) either:

(i) the Leader has within the period specified in the notice under subparagraph (b)(iii), notified the Assistant Director HR that neither they nor any member of the Cabinet has any objection to the dismissal;

(ii) the Assistant Director HR has notified the Senior Appointments Committee that no objection was received by them within that period from the Leader on behalf of the Cabinet;

(iii) the Senior Appointments Committee is satisfied that any objection received from the Leader within that period is not well founded or material. In this regard, where necessary, the advice of the Director of Legal and Democratic (or if appropriate an alternative legal adviser) should be sought.

5.3 Where following the above procedure there are no objections to the proposed dismissal or the objections are not upheld, the Senior Appointments Committee will:

(a) follow the procedure set out in paragraph 5.5; and

(b) recommend the dismissal to a meeting of Full Council

5.4 (a) This procedure applies if the Senior Appointments Committee proposes disciplinary action involving the dismissal of the Head of Paid Service, Chief Finance Officer or Monitoring Officer.

(b) Where this procedure applies, the Senior Appointments Committee will provide the Independent Persons Panel with the matters provided to members of the Cabinet and any other particulars relevant to the dismissal that the Senior Appointments Committee considers appropriate or that the Panel may reasonably require.

(c) The Independent Persons Panel will meet to consider what, if any, advice, views or recommendations to give to Full Council.

(d) The Council may pay such remuneration, allowances or fees to an Independent Person appointed to the Panel as it thinks appropriate but the payment must not exceed the level of remuneration, allowances or fees payable to that Independent Person in respect of their role as an independent person under the Localism Act 2011.

(e) Full Council will not meet to consider whether or not to approve the proposal of the Senior Appointments Committee to dismiss the officer until a period of at least 20 working days has elapsed from the appointment of the Independent Persons Panel.

(f) Before Full Council takes a vote at a meeting on whether or not to approve such a dismissal, they must take into account, in particular:

- (i) any advice, views or recommendations of the Independent Persons Panel;
- (ii) the conclusions of any investigation into the proposed dismissal; and
- (iii) any representations from the officer.

5.5 If Full Council approves the recommendation of the Senior Appointments Committee, then notice of dismissal can be issued. Where Full Council does not approve the recommendation, it shall indicate how it wishes to proceed.

6. Dismissal of Chief Officers (Statutory and Non-Statutory) and Deputy Chief Officers

6.1 Subject to the rules relating to the dismissal of the Head of Paid Service, Chief Finance Officer or Monitoring Officer, the Senior Appointments Committee is designated as the committee discharging, on behalf of the Council, the function of dismissal of Chief Officers (statutory and non-statutory) and the appropriate Chief Officer (statutory and non-statutory) is responsible for the dismissal of a Deputy Chief Officer.

6.2 Notice of dismissal of any such Chief Officer or Deputy Chief Officer must not be given until:

- (a) the Senior Appointments Committee or Chief Officer has notified the Assistant Director HR of the name of the person they wish to dismiss;
- (b) any other particulars which the Senior Appointments Committee or Chief Officer considers are relevant to the dismissal;
- (c) The Assistant Director HR has notified every member of the Cabinet of:

- (i) the name of the person the Senior Appointments Committee or Chief Officer wishes to dismiss;
 - (ii) any other particulars relevant to the dismissal which the Senior Appointments Committee or Chief Officer has notified to the Assistant Director HR;
 - (iii) the period within which any objection to the dismissal is to be made by the Leader on behalf of the Cabinet to the Assistant Director HR; and
- (d) either:
- (i) the Leader has within the period specified in the notice under subparagraph (b)(iii), notified the Assistant Director HR that neither they nor any member of the Cabinet has any objection to the dismissal;
 - (ii) the Assistant Director HR has notified the Senior Appointments Committee or Chief Officer that no objection was received by them within that period from the Leader on behalf of the Cabinet;
 - (iii) the Senior Appointments Committee or Chief Officer is satisfied that any objection received from the Leader within that period is not well founded or material. In this regard, where necessary, the advice of the Director of Legal and Democratic (or if appropriate an alternative legal adviser) should be sought.

6.3 Where following the above procedure there are no objections to the proposed dismissal or the objections are not upheld, the Senior Appointments Committee or Chief Officer may issue the notice of dismissal.

7. Saving Regarding the Hearing of Appeals

- 7.1 Nothing in these rules shall prevent a person from serving as a member of any committee or sub-committee established by the Council to consider an appeal by:
- (a) another person against any decision relating to the appointment of that other person as a member of staff of the authority; or
 - (b) a member of staff of the authority against any decision relating to the dismissal of, or taking disciplinary action against, that member of staff.

8. Director of Public Health

- 8.1 The appointment of the Director of Public Health who is appointed in pursuance of section 73A(7) of the National Health Service Act 2006 (inserted by section 30 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012) is the responsibility of the Senior Appointments Committee, subject to the approval of the appointment by the Secretary of State for Health.

8.2 The Senior Appointments Committee may terminate the appointment of the Director of Public Health having followed the relevant procedures and following prior consultation with the Secretary of State for Health.

9. Policies and Procedures

9.1 The Council's suite of HR procedures (as updated from time to time) set out in more detail the procedures for managing Disciplinary; Capability; Health and Attendance; Redundancy and the expiry of Fixed Term Contract matters in compliance with the 2001 & 2015 Regulations, which set out some particular matters with relation to employment processes for Chief Officers.

9.6 Contract Procedure Rules

Part 1 – Introduction, Scope and Responsibilities

1. Introduction

- 1.1. These Rules are part of the Council's Constitution and apply to all procurement activities (the purchase of goods, services and works) undertaken by the Council. They must be read in conjunction with any other relevant laws, regulations, policies and/or procedures.
- 1.2. Anyone making procurement decisions on behalf of the Council must be familiar with these Rules.
- 1.3. These Rules are required by law and failure to comply with them could lead to disciplinary action. Officers have a duty to report breaches of these Rules to their line manager and/or the Monitoring Officer.
- 1.4. If there is any conflict between these Rules and relevant law, the legislation shall take precedence. The Council also reserves the right to consider the application of intervening government guidance when making decisions about the application of these Rules.

2. Basic Principles

- 2.1. Whether or not a procurement is subject to the UK Procurement Regulations, it must be conducted in accordance with the Agreement on Government Procurement (GPA). This means all procurements must be carried out in a fair, open and transparent way.
- 2.2. These Rules are designed to ensure that procurements:
 - (a) Achieve Value for Money for public money spent;
 - (b) Are consistent with the highest standards of integrity;
 - (c) Ensure fairness and transparency;
 - (d) Ensure that the Council complies with all legal requirements and established government and commercial codes of conduct;
 - (e) Comply with the Council's associated policies;
 - (f) Manage the Council's risk effectively;
 - (g) Are proportionate in regard to value and risk; and
 - (h) Ensure that Non-Commercial Considerations e.g. prior knowledge of contractors do not influence any contracting decision.

3. Advice and Guidance

- 3.1. Advice and guidance on all procurement activities equal to and above £100,000 must be sought in the first instance from the Purchasing Gateway Group (PGG).
- 3.2. Notwithstanding 3.1 above, advice and guidance can be obtained from the PGG by any officer who wishes to participate in a procurement activity of any value.
- 3.3. Advice on compliance with legislative requirements may be obtained from Legal Services, who will liaise with the Head of Procurement as necessary.

4. Responsibilities

4.1. Chief Officers

- (a) Chief Officers are responsible for all procurement activity in their Directorates. They must ensure sufficient oversight and governance is in place to satisfy themselves of compliance with these Rules;
- (b) Chief Officers must ensure that procurement activities are undertaken by authorised Officers who can demonstrate knowledge and understanding of these Rules and have the skills appropriate to the task.
- (c) Chief Officers must ensure that:
 - (i) Staff within their Directorates are adequately trained and that their procurements are in compliance with these Rules;
 - (ii) They have in place and keep up to date a scheme of delegation that records in writing what action officers in their Directorates are authorised to take under these Rules;
 - (iii) There is full budgetary provision for the contract and that the sources of funding are fully detailed before starting the procurement process;
 - (iv) Value for Money is achieved in all procurements within their Directorates;
 - (v) They keep a register of contracts completed by signature (rather than by the Council's Seal) within their Directorate and arrange for their safe keeping; and
 - (vi) They maintain records of all waivers or exemptions of these Rules.

4.2. Officers

- (a) The officer responsible for the procurement must comply with these Rules, the Financial Regulations and relevant legislation (including any treaties incorporated into UK law);

- (b) The officer is responsible for ensuring that agents acting on behalf of the Council must comply with these Rules;
- (c) Officers must keep records of all quotations, tender documentation and contracts, including those documents relating to unsuccessful bids and quotes in accordance with the relevant legislation and the Council's policy on the retention of documents;
- (d) Officers must ensure that the contracts for which they are responsible are effectively managed and monitored to ensure that they deliver the requirement as intended;
- (e) When any employee of the Council or of an external service provider may be affected by a transfer arrangement, the officer must ensure that TUPE issues are considered and obtain advice from Legal Services before proceeding with any procurement;
- (f) Where an officer has a potential conflict of interest with a supplier from whom a quotation/tender is being sought, the officer must declare this immediately to the Monitoring Officer. The officer may be required to withdraw from the procurement process;
- (g) Any officer who fails to declare a conflict of interest may be subject to disciplinary proceedings and sanctions and risks being prosecuted under the Bribery Act 2010;
- (h) Officers must ensure that no contract commences without a purchase order being raised for the goods, services and/or works in accordance with the provisions detailed in the Financial Procedure Rules.

5. Amendments to these Rules

- 5.1. The Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Head of Procurement shall have the power to make incidental amendments from time to time to these Rules, to ensure that they remain consistent with legislation, the Council's organisational structure and generally with best practice.

6. Exemptions to the Rules

- 6.1. These Rules do not apply to the following transactions:

- (a) Any contracts entered through collaboration with another contracting authority and/or public body, where the person awarding the contract (the lead authority) can demonstrate the arrangements comply with the requirements for Value for Money and applicable legislation, including where relevant UK Procurement Regulations;

- (b) Employment contracts;
- (c) Land transactions to acquire or dispose of some interest in land, even if these also contain provisions relating to works, goods or services;
- (d) Lending or borrowing of money;
- (e) For existing goods, services or works where there is no genuine satisfactory alternative available such as public utility infrastructure providers, e.g. gas mains, sewerage and water supply.

7. Exceptions for Care Placements

7.1. Exceptions are granted for Adult Social Care and Children Care Placements when underpinned by the following tiered placing of contractual arrangements. This must be approved by the Chief Officer of the relevant Directorate:

- (a) Tier 1: Placements from Block Contracts – when a supplier is procured with guaranteed service levels and pre-agreed prices;
- (b) Tier 2: Placements made from a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) or Framework Agreement – must contain fixed or average rates. Tier 2 is utilised only when Tier 1 is unable to meet the required needs; or
- (c) Tier 3: Spot Placements – may be awarded when the required needs cannot be met by Tier 1 or Tier 2 and if the placement is urgent, complex and unique to the receiver of the care. Tier 3 Placements must be reviewed by the Chief Officer and will form part of a quarterly report to the relevant Member detailing the following:
 - (i) The nature, extent and value of spot contracts entered into in the previous quarter;
 - (ii) The specific rationale for utilising Rule 7.1; and
 - (iii) Append a summary of the previous instances where this Rule is used in the current financial year.

8. Requesting A Waiver from these Rules

8.1. Subject to the UK Procurement Regulations and any other relevant legislation, an officer may seek a waiver where they are unable to comply with these Rules.

8.2. Officers must follow the procedure for obtaining a waiver detailed in Appendix 3.

- 8.3. A waiver will only be granted in exceptional or unavoidable circumstances. Lack of appropriate planning will not be considered as sufficient justification to be granted a waiver.
- 8.4. In cases of emergency and where there is a significant risk of danger to life, or damage to property or a major impact on the Council or its service users, the Monitoring Officer or their nominee may choose to waive these Rules.
- 8.5. Where a waiver is to be used, the waiver must be formally completed and signed prior to entering into any contract for goods, services and/or works.

9. Prevention of Corruption and Conflicts of Interest

- 9.1. The officer responsible for the procurement must comply with the Council's Code of Conduct and must not invite or accept any gift or reward in respect of the award or performance of any contract.
- 9.2. Officers must have regard to and comply with the Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy when undertaking a procurement exercise.
- 9.3. Officers are advised that any inappropriate behaviour that is deemed contrary to the Bribery Act 2010 could result in dismissal and the matter may be reported to the police.

10. Grants

- 10.1. Where a grant is received or issued please refer to the Council's policy on Grants.

11. Recommended Reading

- 11.1. It is strongly recommended that Officers and Chief Officers read the following documents in conjunction with these Rules:
- (a) Financial Procedure Rules;
 - (b) Procurement Best Practice Guide;
 - (c) The Council's policies and processes relevant to the procurement;
 - (d) Contract Register guidance, system instructions and protocol.

Part 2 – Pre-Procurement

1. Competition Requirements

- 1.1. Officers must establish the Total Value of the procurement for the life of the contract, including any potential extension periods which may be awarded.
- 1.2. Officers shall not sub-divide goods, services and/or works that could reasonably be treated as a single contract to avoid these Rules, thresholds, or any legal requirements.
- 1.3. Based on the Total Value, Quotations or Tenders must then be invited in line with the financial thresholds detailed in Appendix 2.

2. Steps Prior to Procurement

- 2.1. Where a procurement is required, the officer must establish:
 - (a) The contract term: this must not exceed four years in total (including any optional extension period(s)) unless otherwise agreed by the PGG.
 - (b) The size, scope, term and specification of the goods, services and/or works required;
 - (c) The duration of the contract that will provide the most economically advantageous outcome for the Council. This decision must be made in advance of the procurement process and done in accordance with these Rules;
 - (d) That they have the appropriate authority to start the procurement activity under the scheme of delegation;
 - (e) That they have the relevant budget approval to cover the Total Value of the contract; and
 - (f) A project plan to allow sufficient time for Bidders to prepare and submit Tenders or Quotations to maximise the opportunity for Value for Money to be achieved.
- 2.2. The officer must consult the PGG where the procurement is of an innovative or specialist nature or poses a new potential material risk to the Council, to discuss the potential risks to ensure they are adequately mitigated.

3. Pre-Tender Market Research and Consultation

- 3.1. The officer responsible for the procurement may consult potential Suppliers in general terms about the nature, level and standard of the contract packaging and other relevant matters, provided this does not prejudice any potential Bidder.
- 3.2. The officer must not adopt any technical advice in the preparation of an Invitation to Tender or Quotations from anyone where this may prejudice the equal treatment of all potential Bidders or otherwise distort competition.

- 3.3. Pre-tender consultation with service users on what is being procured is encouraged and is considered good practice to ensure the Specification correctly addresses what is required.
- 3.4. When considering undertaking any of these activities, the officer must seek advice from the Procurement Team.

4. Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012

- 4.1. The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires the Council to consider at the pre-procurement stage:
 - (a) How the proposed procurement might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the area;
 - (b) How the Council may act with a view to securing that improvement in conducting the process of the procurement; and
 - (c) Whether it should undertake any community consultation on the above.
- 4.3 Officers must consult the Procurement Team for advice on specifying requirements under Social Value and how to evaluate this as a part of any bids received.

5. Corporate Contracts and Corporate Frameworks

- 5.1. The Council has a selection of Corporate Contracts, Frameworks and DPSs created by the Procurement Team for goods, services and works where the prices and terms have been negotiated to achieve Value for Money for the Council as a whole.
- 5.2. Before undertaking a procurement exercise, officers must check if a Corporate Contract, Framework or DPS exists and, where they do, the officer must use the relevant Corporate Contract, Framework or DPS.
- 5.3. Where the officer is conducting a collaborative procurement, the Council's financial value alone will be the amount the officer must use to determine the Key Decision threshold.

6. Framework Agreements and Dynamic Purchasing Systems (DPS)

- 6.1. Any officer intending to use an externally-let Framework Agreement or DPS must ensure that they have approval from the Procurement Team before they call-off any goods, services and/or works from the Framework or DPS.

7. Contracts Reserved for Social Enterprises and Mutuals

- 7.1. Officers must contact the Procurement Team and Legal Services for advice where they are considering using this procedure.

8. Consultants, Temporary Agency and/or External Subject Matter Experts

8.1. Officers must follow the Council's Consultants Policy and Agency Worker Policy published on the Council's intranet when considering the appointment of consultants or external subject matter experts to assist in the preparation of procurement documents and/or providing advice throughout the procurement process. The procurement of consultants and/or external subject matter experts must be conducted in accordance with the appropriate procurement rules, as determined by cost threshold.

9. Setting up a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS)

9.1. Officers must contact the Procurement Team and Legal Services for support and advice if they intend to create a DPS.

10. Electronic Auctions

10.1. Officers must contact the Procurement Team and Legal Services for support and advice if they intend to enter into an Electronic Auction.

11. Concession Contracts

11.1. The Council may wish to enter into contracts where the Supplier receives payment from a third party, or where the Supplier receives non-monetary benefits. Such contracts must be let in accordance with these Rules and where relevant the Concession Contracts Regulations 2016.

11.2. Officers must contact Legal Services for advice if they intend to enter into such contracts.

Part 3 – Procurement Thresholds

1. General Requirements

1.1. Please see Appendix 2 for the procurement thresholds and the process to be followed.

2. Purchases over the Regulation Threshold

2.1. All goods, services and/or works over the Regulation Threshold are covered by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. These Regulations govern the processes for advertising, timetabling and Supplier selection.

2.2. The latest thresholds and regulations can be found at the following site:
<https://www.ojec.com/Thresholds.aspx>.

- 2.3. Officers must consult with the Procurement Team and Legal Services before commencing the procurement or any soft market testing over the Regulation Threshold.
- 2.4. The officer, in collaboration with the Procurement Team, shall decide the procurement process which is most appropriate (e.g. quotation or another compliant competitive model) where the procurement is identified as falling in the scope of the Light Touch Regime in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and is under the Light Touch Regime threshold.

Part 4 – Procurement Documents

1. Invitations to Tender and Quotations

1.1. All Invitations to Tender or Quote must:

- (a) Clearly specify the goods, services or works that are required. The specification must describe the requirements in sufficient detail to ensure the submission of competitive bids which may easily be compared;
- (b) Include evaluation methodology, such as the selection and award criteria which details the cost and quality split;
- (c) Clearly and unambiguously specify the award procedure on which Tenders or Quotations will be evaluated, such as on the most economically advantageous tender;
- (d) Attach a copy of the contract terms and conditions that will apply;
- (e) Ensure that the same information is issued or made available to Bidders at the same time and on the same terms;
- (f) Any additional information or amendments must be provided to the Bidders on the same basis; and
- (g) Quotations sought over £25,000 must follow the Council's formal Request For Quotation (RFQ) quotation process as per guidance in the Procurement Best Practice Guide or the procurement pages of the intranet for quotations.

2. Local Providers

- 2.1. For requirements up to £100,000, the officer must obtain at least one quote from a local provider.

3. Advertising Requirements

- 3.1. Under these Rules it is not mandatory for procurements valued below £100,000 to be advertised unless the officer decides that the procurement would benefit from this. If the opportunity is advertised anywhere, it must also be advertised on Contracts Finder.
- 3.2. Procurements over £100,000 must be advertised on Contracts Finder and any other relevant media portal.
- 3.3. Procurements above the Regulation Threshold must be advertised in accordance with the UK Procurement Regulations.
- 3.4. Contracts valued over £5,000 must be recorded on the Contract Register.

4. Submission of Tenders or Quotations

- 4.1. Bidders must be given sufficient time to prepare and submit a proper Tender or Quotation, consistent with the urgency and complexity of the contract requirements.

5. Late Tenders

- 5.1. Late Tenders or Tenders that are not submitted in accordance with these Rules will be disqualified unless approved by the Monitoring Officer.

6. Evaluation

- 6.1. Tenders and Quotations must be evaluated in accordance with the pre-determined evaluation criteria set out in the procurement documents.
- 6.2. The evaluation must be carried out by a panel consisting of the officer and at least one other officer of appropriate seniority, supported and moderated by the Procurement Team.
- 6.3. If, despite all reasonable efforts having been made to obtain the required minimum number of responses, fewer respond to the Council's requirement, then the procurement may progress with the Bidders who have provided a valid response.
- 6.4. The officer must keep a record of the efforts made to obtain the minimum number of responses.
- 6.5. The officer must retain the results of the Tender evaluation.
- 6.6. Officers shall ensure the successful Bidder has any required insurance cover in place before performance of the contract begins and shall further ensure, at appropriate intervals, that such cover is maintained by the Supplier throughout the contract period.

7. Clarification Procedures

- 7.1. Officers may ask Bidders for clarifications to any of the details submitted as part of their bid. However, such clarifications must not result in a significant change to the bid or related documentation.
- 7.2. Prior to making any request for clarifications from a Bidder, the officer must discuss this with the Procurement Team, where the requirement is over £100,000.
- 7.3. Full written records of all clarification decisions must be made and retained by the officer. These records must be provided to the Procurement Team, where the Procurement Team have led the procurement.

8. Notification of Award

- 8.1. Following contract award the officer must inform successful and unsuccessful Bidders simultaneously in writing whether or not their bid was successful.
- 8.2. Where the value of the contract is over £25,000, the officer must also publish an award notice on Contracts Finder.
- 8.3. Where a Tender is subject to the UK Procurement Regulations, the Procurement Team will adhere to the relevant Standstill Period.
- 8.4. If a Bidder requests in writing a further debrief in relation to the award, the lead officer is responsible for providing the appropriate response.
- 8.5. Any complaints from unsuccessful Bidders must be provided in writing. Officers must submit these to the Procurement Team for review, in order that appropriate action may be taken.

9. Legal Challenge

- 9.1. If there is a formal legal challenge to the award of a contract, then the officer must immediately notify their Chief Officer, the Monitoring Officer and the Head of Procurement.

Part 5 – Contract Formalities

1. Principles Relevant to Contracts at all Values

- 1.1. Every contract must be in writing and must clearly state:
 - (a) The goods, services and/or works to be provided;
 - (b) The start and end date or the means by which these are to be ascertained;
 - (c) The agreed programme of delivery;

- (d) The price and terms of payment;
- (e) All other terms that are agreed, e.g. insurance;
- (f) Exit procedures, for when the contract comes to its natural end; and
- (g) Termination procedures for early termination of the contract, including when the Supplier has not fulfilled its contractual obligations.

2. Execution of Contracts

- 2.1. Contracts let under the UK Procurement Regulations may only be signed/sealed after the mandatory standstill period has elapsed without any challenge being received.
- 2.2. Contracts may only be executed by officers with delegated powers, as detailed below:
 - (a) Up to £250,000 shall be in writing signed by the Chief Officer;
 - (b) Over £250,000 but less than £1,000,000 shall be in writing and signed by the appropriate Chief Officer and the s.151 Officer or their nominee;
 - (c) £1,000,000 or over shall be in writing sealed by affixing the Common Seal of the Council and attested by the Director of Legal and Democratic or their nominee.
- 2.3. If, after acceptance of its Tender or Quotation, a Supplier fails within a reasonable period of time and without reasonable justification to sign or otherwise enter into a formal written contract, the Council shall reserve the right to withdraw the contract from the Supplier. This decision shall be made by the relevant Chief Officer in consultation with Legal Services.

3. Commencement of Contracts

- 3.1. No supply of goods, services or works shall commence until all contract documents have been completed.

4. Social Impact Bonds

- 4.1. Details of Social Impact Bonds (SIBs) are available in the Financial Regulations.

5. Contract Register

- 5.1. The Procurement Team will provide access to the Contract Register of current contracts and framework agreements. The Contract Register will be published on the Council's website in accordance with Local Government Transparency Code 2015.
- 5.2. The Procurement Team will enter any contracts they have led the procurement process for on the Contract Register. However, it is the officer's responsibility to ensure these details are correct and updated with any changes and/or extensions.

6. Letters of Intent

- 6.1. Letters of Intent shall only be used in exceptional circumstances and where approved by the Chief Officer in consultation with Legal Services.

7. Bonds and Parent Company Guarantees

- 7.1. Performance bonds or parent company guarantees may be required:
- (a) Where the Total Value of the contract exceeds £500,000; and
 - (b) Where it is proposed to make stage or other payments in advance of receiving the whole of the subject matter of the Contract; and
 - (c) Where there is concern about the stability of the Supplier, regardless of value.
- 7.2. Where a performance bond or parent company guarantee is required, this must be clearly stated in the Invitation to Tender or Quotation and must be in place before the contract is completed by the Council.
- 7.3. Where a bidder or bidders appeal the Councils request for a performance bond or parent company guarantee, an exception can be made if agreed in writing with the Chief Officer and s.151 Officer.

8. General Requirements

- 8.1. During the contract period, the officer must monitor the overall performance of the contract closely to ensure any issues of under-performance are addressed as soon as possible and that the contract remains in-budget.

9. Contract Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

- 9.1. The Procurement Team will provide a high-level contract governance function that can offer a helicopter view of the Councils' contract management to ensure better strategic procurement delivery across the organisation. This is not a substitute for sound contract management and governance by the relevant officer, but seeks to nurture, support and enhance that function.
- 9.2. The Procurement Team must have sight of the final contract and everything that has been agreed between the officer and the Supplier, including:
- (a) Service Level Agreements; and
 - (b) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and/or Key Milestones.
- 9.3. Where the Supplier defaults on the Contract it shall be the duty of the officer to take appropriate action and, in the case of a significant default, to report any such action to the Chief Officer and Legal Services.

9.4. Officers shall ensure that Suppliers maintain adequate insurance for the duration of the contract period and shall verify this at appropriate intervals throughout the term.

10. Variations

10.1. Where a variation means that the value of a contract would exceed the relevant Regulation Threshold, or where there is any material change to the contract, the contract must be treated as a new procurement under these Rules.

10.2. A change will not be deemed material if the value of the modification is both below the Regulation Threshold and below 10% of the original contract value (15% for works) after any contract indexation.

10.3. Officers must consult with and gain the approval of Legal Services if they intend to make variations to their contracts.

10.4. All variations must be kept with the officer's signed copy of the contract and, once agreed, all variations on contracts with a Total Value of £5,000 or more must be noted on the Contract Register.

10.5. Officers must be satisfied that they have sufficient budget to cover any variation and that the variation will achieve Value for Money and be reasonable in all the relevant circumstances.

11. Assignments and Novations

11.1. Officers must contact Legal Services where it is proposed that an assignment or novation should take place.

12. Termination of Contract

12.1. Officers must consult with Legal Services if they are considering the early termination of their contracts.

Appendix 1 – Definitions, Abbreviations and Glossary

Term	Definition
Bidder	A potential Supplier, vendor or organisation who responds to an invitation to Tender or Quote or any person who asks or is invited to submit a Quotation or Tender.
Chief Officer	An officer(s) as defined in the Constitution.
Contract Register	A register managed by the Procurement Team that stores details of the Council's Contracts such as duration and expiry dates. The register is published on the Council's intranet.

Corporate Contract and/or Corporate Framework	Contract let by a central team in the Council (such as Procurement).
Financial Regulations	The financial regulations outlining officer responsibilities for financial matters issued by the Chief Finance Officer in accordance with the Constitution.
Framework Agreement	A formal tendered arrangement which sets out terms and conditions under which specific purchases can be made from the successful Bidders in unpredicted quantities at different times during the term of the Framework Agreement.
Invitation	Invitation to Tender or Quote in the form required by these Rules.
Light Touch Regime	Refers to social and other specific services covered by Part 2 Chapter 3, Section 7 of the Public Contract Regulations 2015.
Local	Areas within the West Northamptonshire boundary.
Non-Commercial Considerations	Those that are listed in section 17(5) of the Local Government Act 1988.
Officer	An officer of the Council designated by the Chief Officer to be responsible for undertaking the procurement exercise and for the administration of the contract to include ensuring compliance with its terms and conditions and implementation of any required variations.
Parent Company Guarantee	A Contract which binds the parent of a subsidiary company as follows: If the subsidiary company fails to do what it has promised under a Contract with the Council, they can require the parent company to do so instead.
Performance Bond	An agreement that if the Supplier does not do what it has promised under a contract with the Council, the Council can claim from the Bondsman the sum of money specified in the Bond (usually 10% of the contract sum). It is intended to protect the Council against a level of cost arising from the Suppliers failure to comply with the terms of the contract.
Procurement Best Practice Guidance	The relevant procurement guidance document issued by the Procurement Team.
UK Procurement Regulations	The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and any successor public regulations which specify in detail the procedures by which public authorities shall undertake their procurements.
Purchasing Gateway Group (PGG)	An identified group of officers, comprising the Head of Procurement, the Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer or their duly appointed representatives, that is responsible for reviewing, approving and advising on proposed procurements and procurement issues.
Quotation	A quotation of price and any other relevant matter (without the formal issue of an Invitation to Tender).
Regulation Threshold	The Total Value threshold at which PCR2015 public procurement directives must be applied. The current procurement thresholds and regulations can be found at the following site https://www.ojec.com/Thresholds.aspx

Request for Quotation	A formal quotation of price and any other relevant matter (without the formal issue of an Invitation to Tender).
Rules	These Contract Procedure Rules
Supplier	Any person or organisation, including companies or other bodies of persons providing, or seeking to provide, goods, services or works to the Council,
Tender	A Bidder's proposal submitted in response to an Invitation to Tender.
Total Value	<p>The whole of the value or estimated value (in terms of money or equivalent value) for a single purchase, whether or not the purchase comprises several lots or stages across the Council as a whole and whether or not it is to be paid or received by the Council or a discrete operational unit within the Council.</p> <p>The Total Value shall be calculated as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where the contract is for a fixed period, by taking the total price to be paid or which might be paid during the whole of the proposed contract period; 2. Where the contract is for an uncertain duration, by multiplying the monthly payment by forty-eight or the maximum permitted duration in months if less; 3. For nominated Suppliers and sub-contractors, the Total Value shall be the value of that part of the main contract to be fulfilled by the nominated Supplier or sub-contractor; 4. Where an in-house service provider is involved, by taking into account redundancy and similar/associated costs; and/or 5. In the case of a Framework Agreement, the estimated call off during the period of the contract.
TUPE	The Transfer of Undertaking (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006.
Value for Money (VfM)	The most advantageous combination of cost, quality and sustainability to meet customer requirements, in accordance with the principles of the National Audit Office; Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness.

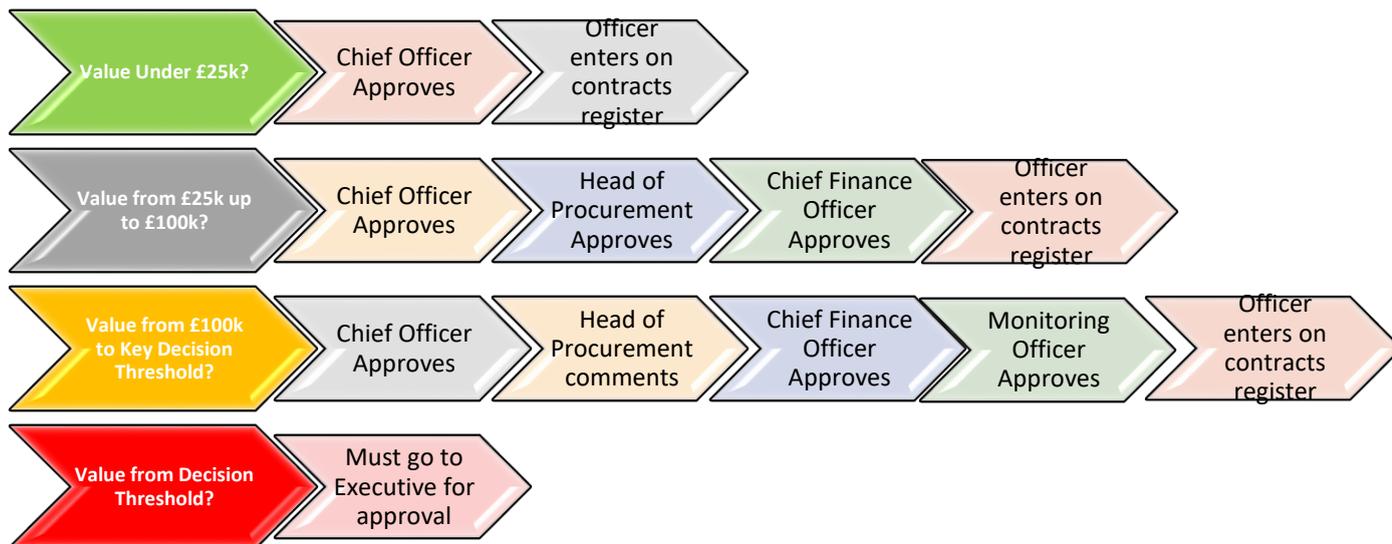
Appendix 2 – Summary of Procurement Thresholds

Value of Contract	Pre-Procurement Authorisation	Advertising	Procurement Process	Contract Execution
Under £5,000	Officer. If Key Decision, relevant Officer and Cabinet/Committee approval.	No requirement to advertise.	At least one written quotation required. Officers should ensure they achieve value for money	Contract terms issued via purchase order.

£5,000 to £25,000	Officer. If Key Decision, relevant Officer and Cabinet/Committee approval.	No requirement to advertise.	Seek to obtain at least three written Quotations (at least one from a Local provider).	Contract terms issued via purchase order. Contract must be published on the Contract Register.
£25,000 to £100,000	Officer. If Key Decision, relevant Officer and Cabinet/Committee approval.	No requirement to advertise.	Seek to obtain at least three formal quotations from the Council's RFQ process (at least one from a Local provider).	Written contract signed by one Chief Officer or Officer with appropriate authority to enter into a Contract. Standard terms approved by Legal Services. Contract must be published on the Contract Register and Contracts Finder
£100,000 to Threshold	Officer and the Procurement Team. If Key Decision, relevant Officer and Cabinet/Committee approval. Requirement to present requirement to PGG.	Advertising on Contracts Finder is mandatory.	Seek to obtain at least three formal quotations from the Council's RFQ process.	Written contract signed/sealed. Standard terms approved and contract prepared by Legal Services.
Above Threshold	Officer and Procurement Team. If Key Decision, relevant Officer and Cabinet/Committee approval. Requirement to present requirement to PGG.		Procurement must be run in accordance with the Regulations.	Written contract signed/sealed.
Framework Agreements	Officer (and Council's	Not applicable	Follow call-off procedure	Written Contract

	Procurement Team if over £100,000). If Key Decision, relevant Officer and Cabinet/Committee approval.		within Framework Agreement. The number of Tenders will be determined by the Framework.	created from Framework Agreement. Sign-off as per above thresholds. Contract must be published on the Contract Register and Contracts Finder.
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Appendix 3 – Procurement Waiver Process Flowchart



9.7 Financial Procedure Rules

1 Introduction

- 1.1 In order to conduct its business efficiently, this council recognises the need to ensure that it has sound financial management policies in place and that they are strictly adhered to.
- 1.2 The Financial Procedure Rules provide the framework for managing the Council's financial affairs, in order to ensure that they are conducted in a sound and proper manner, constitute value for money and minimise the risk of legal challenge to the Council. They are an integral part of the Council's Constitution and must be used in conjunction with those sections of the Constitution that apply generally to the management of the Council's business and affairs
- 1.3 Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 states that "every local authority shall make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and shall secure that one of their officers has responsibility for the administration of those affairs". The officer designated by the Council as having the statutory responsibility set out in Section 151 of the 1972 Act is the Chief Financial Officer (CFO).
- 1.4 The Financial Procedure Rules apply to every councillor, officer, person acting on the Council's behalf in undertaking Council business, and any employee of a commissioned service within any organisation partly or wholly owned by the Council.
- 1.5 The term 'officer' in this document refers to Council employees and employees within a commissioned organisation partly or wholly owned by the Council. The term 'Council' in this document refers to the Council and all commissioned organisations partly or wholly owned by the Council.
- 1.6 Chief Officers are responsible for ensuring that all staff in their Service are aware of the existence, location and content of the Council's Financial Procedure Rules and other internal regulatory documents and that they comply with them.
- 1.7 All financial decisions and decisions with financial implications must have regard to proper financial control. Any doubt as to the appropriateness of a financial proposal or correctness of a financial action must be clarified in advance of the decision or action with the CFO.
- 1.8 The CFO is responsible for reporting, where appropriate, breaches of the Financial Procedure Rules to the Chief Executive and to the Cabinet.
- 1.9 The Financial Procedure Rules shall only be suspended on the resolution of the full Council, or as varied by any part of the Scheme of Delegation approved by the Council or Executive as appropriate. A written record shall be kept if this was to occur.
- 1.10 The CFO is responsible for maintaining a continuous review of the Financial Procedure Rules and submitting any additions or changes necessary to the full Council for approval.

2 Financial Management

- 2.1 Financial management covers all financial accountabilities in relation to the running of the council, including the Budget and Policy Framework. The process of financial management involves:
 - 2.1.1 Complying with statutory requirements
 - 2.1.2 Development and approval of policy and management frameworks, the Constitution and financial plans including the revenue and capital budgets
 - 2.1.3 Establishing protocols and standards
 - 2.1.4 Implementing policies, protocols and standards
 - 2.1.5 Monitoring compliance
 - 2.1.6 Maintaining records
 - 2.1.7 Reporting and providing advice
 - 2.1.8 Specific financial techniques and functions e.g. virements, year end balances, statements of account.

3 Responsibilities

- 3.1 This section of the Financial Procedure Rules provides an overview of the responsibility and accountability of officers and councillors in respect of financial management, governance and the use of Council resources.
- 3.2 All officers and councillors are responsible for ensuring that they use Council resources and assets entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner. Consideration of value for money needs to be embedded in every financial decision made. These responsibilities apply equally to councillors and officers when representing the Council on outside bodies.
- 3.3 Failure to comply with these Regulations and associated policies, instructions and processes may constitute misconduct or gross misconduct, depending on the circumstances of the case in question and may well result in disciplinary action being taken in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary Procedures.
- 3.4 Any person charged with the use or care of the Council's resources and assets is responsible for reading the requirements within the Financial Procedure Rules. If anyone is unsure as to their obligations, they should seek advice from the CFO.
- 3.5 The financial instructions and processes that support these Regulations, as approved by the Chief Financial Officer, must be followed and carry the same weight as the Financial Regulations.
- 3.6 Any employee must report immediately to their manager, supervisor or other responsible officer any illegality, impropriety, serious breach of procedure or serious deficiency in the provision of service they suspect or become aware of. Employees are able to do this without fear or recrimination providing they act in good faith via

the Council's Whistle Blowing Policy. In such circumstances managers must record and investigate such reports and take appropriate action.

- 3.7 Compliance with any Anti-Fraud and Corruption policy, Code of Conduct for councillors or Employees which the council has in place is mandatory.

4 Head of Paid Service

- 4.1 The Head of Paid Service is the Chief Executive. They have responsibilities set out s.4 Local Government and Housing Act 1989. These include providing members with a report about the staffing resources that are required for the delivery of the Council's plans. The Chief Executive is also responsible for the corporate and overall strategic management of the Council as a whole. They must report to and provide information for the Cabinet, the full Council, Scrutiny committees and other committees.
- 4.2 They are responsible for establishing a framework for management direction, style and standards and for monitoring the performance of the organisation.

5 Monitoring Officer

- 5.1 The Monitoring Officer is responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of financial conduct. They are also responsible for reporting any actual or potential breaches of the law or maladministration to the full Council and/or to the Cabinet.
- 5.2 They are also responsible for ensuring that procedures for recording and reporting key decisions are operating effectively. They must also ensure that Council Members are aware of decisions made by the Cabinet
- 5.3 The Monitoring Officer must ensure that executive decisions and the reasons for them are made public. They must also ensure that Council Members are aware of decisions made by Officers who have delegated executive responsibility.
- 5.4 The Monitoring Officer is responsible for advising all officers and councillors regarding where the authority to take a particular decision resides.
- 5.5 The Monitoring Officer is responsible for advising the Cabinet or full Council about whether a decision is likely to be considered contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the Policy Framework.

6 Chief Finance Officer (CFO) (Section 151 Officer)

- 6.1 The responsibilities of this post are described in Part 9.2 of the Constitution. It has specific statutory duties in relation to the financial administration and stewardship of the council. This statutory responsibility cannot be overridden.
- 6.2 The CFO is responsible for the proper administration of the council's financial affairs and reports to Council and committees on the discharge of this responsibility. This includes:
- 6.2.1 Maintaining strong financial management underpinned by effective financial controls

- 6.2.2 Contribute to corporate management and leadership
 - 6.2.3 Providing financial information and advice
 - 6.2.4 Setting and monitoring compliance with financial management standards
 - 6.2.5 Advising on the corporate financial position
 - 6.2.6 Advising on the key financial controls necessary to secure sound financial management
 - 6.2.7 Preparing the revenue budget and capital programme
 - 6.2.8 Treasury management
 - 6.2.9 Leading and managing an effective and responsive financial service.
- 6.3 The CFO has a statutory responsibility for ensuring that adequate systems and procedures exist to account for all income due and expenditure made on behalf of the council and that controls operate to protect the council's assets from loss, waste, fraud or other impropriety. The CFO shall discharge that responsibility in part by the issue and maintenance of Financial Procedures and Operational Procedures with which all councillors and staff of the council shall comply.
- 6.4 The CFO is the 'responsible financial officer' for the purposes of Sections 114 and 114A of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003.
- 6.5 Section 114 requires the CFO to make a report and inform the External Auditor if it appears that (full) Council, a committee or officers:
- 6.5.1 Has made, or is about to make, a decision which involves incurring unlawful expenditure;
 - 6.5.2 Has taken, or is about to take, an unlawful action which has resulted or would result in a loss or deficiency to the council; or
 - 6.5.3 Is about to make an unlawful entry in the council's accounts
- 6.6 Section 114A makes equivalent provision in respect of actions taken by or on behalf of the council. Under both sections the report must be sent to every Councillor as well as the External Auditor.
- 6.7 Section 114 also requires:
- 6.7.1 The CFO to nominate a properly qualified member of staff to deputise should they be unable to perform the duties under Section 114 personally.
 - 6.7.2 The council provide the CFO with sufficient staff, accommodation and other resources, including legal advice where necessary, to carry out the duties under Section 114 and make similar arrangements for the purposes of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2006

- 6.8 The CFO will have overall responsibility for the operation of internal audit throughout the authority. Internal Auditors will operate as a management control by examining, evaluating and reporting upon the effective of internal financial and operational controls and the efficient use of the Authority's resources.
- 6.9 The CFO and Internal Audit shall have full and unrestricted access to all council assets, systems, accounts, contracts, documents, information, officers, and councillors.
- 6.10 The CFO is responsible for providing appropriate financial information to enable budgets to be monitored effectively. They must monitor and control the net expenditure of the council against budget allocations and report to the Cabinet on the overall position as appropriate.
- 6.11 The CFO is responsible for monitoring compliance with the virement scheme to ensure the scheme operates effectively and in accordance with the agreed budgetary and Policy Framework.
- 6.12 The CFO will consider and approve reports requesting virements between £10,000 and £500,000, in accordance with the scheme of virement (see section 9). Decisions on virements over £50,000 will be made in consultation with the relevant portfolio holder.
- 6.13 Reference to the CFO within the Finance Procedure Rules includes those authorised by them to undertake the various functions concerned.

7.0 Chief Officers

- 7.1 Chief Officers are individually responsible to ensure that all staff in their Service are aware of the existence of the Council's Constitution and Financial Procedure Rules, and have systems of control in place to monitor compliance, with any non-compliance by either officers, or partners reported to the CFO.
- 7.2 They are accountable for the overall financial stewardship of all Council resources allocated to them, and must seek approval from the Cabinet for any actions likely to materially affect the Council's finances by virtue of being a key decision. In such instances, consultation with the CFO will also be necessary.
- 7.3 They must ensure that the CFO is supplied with all information they feel is necessary to meet their statutory obligations.
- 7.4 Chief Officers must ensure that the relevant Cabinet members are advised of the financial implications of all significant budget proposals and service changes, which have been previously agreed by the CFO and Chief Executive.
- 7.5 They are responsible for ensuring the accuracy and deliverability of all budget estimates, which should be congruent with the strategic priorities set out in their annual Business Plans submitted as part of the annual budget. These estimates are to be prepared in line with guidance and timelines issued by the CFO.
- 7.6 With regard to the in-year financial monitoring against budget, it is the Chief Officer's responsibility to ensure that there are suitably competent Budget Managers in place

within their Service who are aware of their budget allocation, including any savings requirement, as defined in the annual budget. These budget managers are also required to operate a robust system of control in order to monitor and report commitments and actuals throughout the year. This process will also ensure value for money decisions are made and that risk is minimised. Any non-compliance must be escalated to the CFO in a timely manner.

- 7.7 Each Chief Officer is responsible for ensuring that the CFO is consulted about any information provided to councillors, external partners or members of the public which concerns the finances of the Council and that they are to be given adequate time to comment in advance of the agenda / deadline date.
- 7.8 Committee reports shall only be submitted once the CFO has validated and agreed the financial aspects of the report. The onus is on the report sponsor to obtain the agreement of the CFO.
- 7.9 If a Chief Officer, having regard to the CFO's views, does not wish to amend a committee report, the CFO may require inclusion of their comments within the report before it is finalised.
- 7.10 Chief Officers may delegate decision making powers relating to financial management to their Deputy Chief Officer or below. A record of all such delegations must be kept by the officers concerned.
- 7.11 All Chief Officer Functions are described in the Scheme of Delegation, Part 9 of the Constitution.

8 Councillors and Officers

- 8.1 All officers and councillors will contribute to the general stewardship, honesty and integrity in the council's financial affairs and comply with these regulations and any system, financial procedure or policy relating to the financial management of the council.
- 8.2 Before making any decision or voting on any decision the person responsible shall consider the financial implications and the effect on the council's financial position.
- 8.3 councillors or officers shall bring to the attention of the CFO any act or omission that is contrary to the financial regulations and/or the financial procedures.
- 8.4 councillors and officers should maintain the highest standards of financial probity and provide information or explanations on matters within their responsibility to the Monitoring Officer, the Governance and Audit Committee, the CFO, and the council's internal and external auditors.
- 8.5 Any Chief Officer, Head of Service or councillor who is involved in, or who has an interest in, a transaction between the council and a third party shall declare the nature and extent of this interest to the CFO. These will be reported in the council's accounts in accordance with the Accountancy Standards Board (ASB) Reporting Standards and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Accounting Practice.

- 8.6 A Budget Manager is an officer with the overall responsibility of managing the commissioning of direct service or externalised service(s) for an area. This responsibility is specifically delegated to this Officer, using any document required by the Section 151 Officer or under the Part 9 Scheme of Delegation to Officers. A Budget Manager cannot delegate the overall responsibility for managing budgets under their jurisdiction. A Budget Manager must be an employee of the Authority.
- 8.7 A Project Manager, in relation to capital, is the Budget manager responsible for delivering a capital project.

9 The Full Council

- 9.1 Full Council is responsible for adopting and approving the principles of financial governance and approving the council's budgetary and Policy Framework within which committees and the Executive operate
- 9.2 The full Council is also responsible for monitoring compliance with related executive decisions and is responsible for approving procedures for recording and reporting decisions taken. This includes those key decisions delegated and decisions taken by the Council and its committees.

10 The Cabinet

- 10.1 West Northamptonshire Council operates a Leader and Cabinet model of Executive arrangements. The majority of financial decisions are taken by the Executive. In accordance with the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended) the Leader can take all Executive decisions alone or with Cabinet in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules set out in part 5 of the Constitution. The Executive can take all decisions not specifically identified as non-executive within the Budget and Policy Framework as described in Part 3 of the Constitution.
- 10.2 The Cabinet also:
- (a) monitors revenue and capital spending against agreed limits
 - (b) agrees externally funded initiatives
 - (c) approves the commencement of tender processes where the value of the proposed contract is in excess of £500,000 or is otherwise a key decision
 - (d) approves the termination of contracts where the value is in excess of £500,000
 - (e) approves the introduction of charges, or changes to charges for services
 - (f) approves the acquisition, retention or disposal of assets with a value in excess of £500,000
 - (g) approves the write-off of individual debts deemed to be uncollectable over £25,000
 - (h) approves virements in excess of £500,000
- 10.3 Executive decisions can be exercised by the Leader, by the Leader and Cabinet, delegated to a committee of the Cabinet, an individual Cabinet Portfolio Holder, an officer or joint committee.

11 The Audit and Governance Committee

- 11.1 The Audit and Governance Committee is charged with ensuring correct governance of the council.
- 11.2 The Committee will contribute to the development of and review of the effectiveness of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, the annual budget and capital programme.
- 11.3 The Committee will consider reports from the internal and external auditors in respect of performance issues in relation to the Medium Term Financial Strategy or financial processes, where considered appropriate by the CFO.
- 11.4 The Committee is also responsible for approving the council's risk management policy statement and strategy and for reviewing the effectiveness of risk management.
- 11.5 The Audit and Governance Committee is responsible for approving the Annual Statement of Accounts in accordance with the Account and Audit Regulations.

12 Regulatory committees

- 12.1 Regulatory committees include:

- 12.1.1 Licensing Committee

- 12.1.2 Planning Management Committee

- 12.2 Regulatory committees do not have delegated to them specific financial management responsibilities but due consideration must be given to the general stewardship, integrity and confidence in the council's financial affairs.

- 12.3 Decisions made by these committees could materially affect the council's financial position and/or expose the council to financial risk. The committees, and individual councillors, should ensure that proper consideration has been given to any exposure to risk in determining matters delegated to the committee.

13 Other committees

- 13.1 The Overview and Scrutiny committees has responsibility for the oversight of financial matters for the Council and for holding the Cabinet to account.
- 13.2 The Pension Committee sets the Pension Funds objectives and determines the appropriate strategies, policies and procedures for funding, investment, administration, communication, discretions, governance and risk management. This committee also has the power to manage any key matter pertaining to the Pension Fund.
- 13.3 Pensions Investment sub-committee implements the Pension Funds investment strategy and monitors fund performance against target.
- 13.4 West/North Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Board has the responsibility for preparing the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

- 13.5 All Council, Cabinet and Committee functions and powers are described in the relevant section of the Constitution for the decision maker or in Scheme of Delegation to officers in Part 9 of the Constitution. All delegated functions within the Scheme of Delegation must be exercised within approved budgetary provision and abide by the Council's Financial Procedure Rules and Contract Procedure Rules.
- 13.6 The CFO is responsible for reviewing and monitoring all financial aspects of the Council's decision making.

14 Urgency Procedure

- 14.1 The Urgency Procedure is designed to deal with unexpected events which cannot be dealt with under the other clauses contained within Constitution, including these Financial Regulations and which require such urgent attention that they do not allow for referral to the next available committee meeting. Examples include significant financial expense following an accident or disaster, protecting the council against any legal challenge and the ability seek advantage from an opportunity which would otherwise disappear if immediate action is not taken.
- 14.2 The urgency procedure is only designed to deal with items costing in excess of £100,000, which are within our existing Policy Framework but which are not covered by the approved budget.
- 14.3 Items greater than £100,000 but less than £500,000 can be approved by the CFO (or Deputy CFO in their absence) after consultation with the Portfolio Member for Finance.
- 14.4 For sums over £500,000, the Chief Executive who has wider responsibilities for Emergencies as set out in the scheme of delegation in Part 9 of the Constitution will be responsible for deciding on applying the Urgency Procedure and will do so only on the advice of the CFO and in consultation with the Leader of Council and Portfolio Member for Finance (or in their absence their deputies). Expenditure over £500,000 outside the Budget should be reported to the next available ordinary Council meeting.
- 14.5 Under the above provisions, authorisation to approve such items will require a written report from the Chief Executive, countersigned by the CFO.
- 14.6 Reports approved under this scheme shall include not only the details under consideration but also the reasons why they need to be dealt with under the urgency procedure.
- 14.7 The introduction of new systems could fundamentally change the systems of control in some areas. The Council recognises that this may require a variation to the Regulations that cannot be achieved with Cabinet approval, due to time constraints. Therefore, the Chief Finance Officer may, in consultation with the Council's Monitoring Officer approve temporary dispensation / amendment.
- 14.8 This scheme shall not be used for expenditure on items outside the council's existing Policy Framework or where, in the opinion of the CFO, the decision will result in significant ongoing expenditure.

15 Financial Strategies and Guidance

- 15.1 The CFO is responsible for developing/approving the Council's financial strategies, issuing advice, guidance and policies to underpin the Financial Procedure Rules that councillors, officers and others acting on behalf of the Council are required to follow.
- 15.2 The Council will have a number of key financial strategies and policies some of which are listed below, but this is not an exhaustive list;
 - 15.2.1 Contract Procedure Rules
 - 15.2.2 Medium Term Financial Plan
 - 15.2.3 Medium Term Capital Plan
 - 15.2.4 Risk Management Policy and Strategy
 - 15.2.5 Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy
 - 15.2.6 Whistleblowing Policy
 - 15.2.7 Anti Money Laundering Policy
 - 15.2.8 Treasury Management Strategy (including the Investment Strategy, Prudential Indicators and MRP Policy)
 - 15.2.9 Financial procedures for schools (note: this is a collection of documents).
 - 15.2.10 Security and control of assets.

16 Medium Term Financial Planning and the Annual Budget

- 16.1 The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) provides a four year overview of the Council's anticipated resources, expenditure commitments, and resulting savings requirement. The MTFP allows resources to be prioritised to achieve the vision set out in the Council Plan, which is underpinned by the Council's priority objectives included within individual Service Business Plans.
- 16.2 The MTFP, therefore, is the financial framework that informs the annual Budget setting process and is integral within the Council's business planning.
- 16.3 Various internal and external factors will influence the planning assumptions underpinning the MTFP and these include the following variables:
 - 16.3.1 corporate priorities
 - 16.3.2 levels of Council Tax
 - 16.3.3 likely impact on inflation in the current and future economic climate
 - 16.3.4 future Spending Reviews and funding allocations to councils
- 16.4 The Medium Term Financial Plan considers the following key underlying principles;

- 16.4.1 spending is aligned to the priority objectives set out in the Council Plan and each Service Business Plan
- 16.4.2 emerging pressures are managed within existing approved resources in the first instance
- 16.4.3 future liabilities are anticipated
- 16.4.4 savings proposals are supported by project plans and the impact on service delivery is clear
- 16.4.5 funding forecasts are prudent
- 16.4.6 exit plans are formulated for specific grant funded areas to ensure that funding withdrawal does not lead to revenue budget pressures
- 16.4.7 capital and revenue planning is integrated to ensure implications are fully anticipated
- 16.4.8 earmarked reserves are sufficient to address risks identified in future years
- 16.5 The CFO will set an annual timetable to enable the development of the MTFP, Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for the consideration of Cabinet and approval by the full Council.
- 16.6 The integrated process of business planning and the development of budget proposals shall be prepared by Chief Officers in the form required by the CFO, in accordance within the agreed timetable, so information can be examined and challenged before submission to the Cabinet.
- 16.7 Chief Officers are responsible for ensuring;
 - 16.7.1 the completion of integrated business and financial plans
 - 16.7.2 the development of sufficient budget proposals as instructed by the CFO, to ensure the Council can set a balanced Budget
 - 16.7.3 that all budget proposals are lawful and that the necessary consultation has taken place, subject to approval with the relevant Portfolio Holder
 - 16.7.4 that all existing services and all new budget proposals demonstrate value for money
 - 16.7.5 external funding opportunities are fully explored
 - 16.7.6 the availability of an annually updated list of fees and charges
- 16.8 The MTFP will cover the annual budget year, plus at least three future years. These documents will be developed and approved in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework set out at Part 4 (c) of the constitution.

17 Medium Term Capital Strategy

- 17.1 Investment in capital assets shapes future service delivery and creates future financial commitments. The Medium Term Capital Programme is laid out within the Council's Capital Strategy and is at least a four-year programme of estimated capital expenditure and associated funding.
- 17.2 The Cabinet will receive proposals for inclusion in the Council's Capital Programme and will submit a proposed programme (including block provisions where appropriate) to the full Council for approval. The programme will include all capital schemes including those proposed to be financed from revenue resources or external funding sources.
- 17.3 In year, the CFO may approve new schemes estimated to cost less than £100,000, and the Cabinet may approve new schemes estimated to cost less than £500,000, which have not previously been included in the Capital Programme. New schemes estimated to cost more than £500,000 must be approved by full Council.
- 17.4 Before a scheme in the Medium Term Capital Programme receives final approval from the Cabinet to proceed, Chief Officers must put forward to Cabinet their recommendation based on a Capital Programme Board project appraisal covering the following elements as a minimum requirement:
- 16.13.1 Description
 - 16.13.2 Justification
 - 16.13.3 Deliverable outcomes
 - 16.13.4 Feasibility study/options appraisal
 - 16.13.5 Financial analysis including revenue implications and appropriate measures of investment appraisal
 - 16.13.6 Budget including life cycle cost
 - 16.13.7 Project plan
 - 16.13.8 Risk evaluation
 - 16.13.9 Source of funding
- 17.5 Capital Programme Board approval must include sign off by the CFO, the Chief Officer for Capital and Proper, or delegated officers as directed.
- 17.6 Any officer proposing to award or vary a contract for works, goods or services in connection with a scheme must refer to the Contract Procedure Rules.

18 Forecasting and Monitoring

18.1 Revenue

- 18.1.1 The financial management and budgetary control of each Service budget is the overall responsibility of the appropriate Chief Officer.

18.1.2 Each Chief Officer must ensure that there is a designated Budget Manager who is accountable to the Assistant Director for the detailed management and financial monitoring of all budgets. The CFO should be notified of any changes to Budget Managers, so that all budgets continue to have a named manager at all times.

18.1.3 Chief Officers need to ensure that expenditure is contained within approved budget allocations, there is a robust control environment and that accurate financial forecasting is completed on a monthly basis within the Council's financial system.

18.1.4 The CFO will take budget monitoring reports to Cabinet and the relevant Scrutiny Committee on a regular basis. These reports will contain updates on both revenue and capital budgets as well as any management actions being taken where variances have been identified from these reports.

18.2 Capital

18.2.1 The financial management and budgetary control of each Capital Scheme is the overall responsibility of the appropriate Chief Officer.

18.2.2 Each Chief Officer must ensure that there is a designated Budget Manager who is accountable to their Assistant Director for the detailed management and financial monitoring of all Capital Schemes. The CFO should be notified of any changes to Budget Managers, so that all capital budgets continue to have a named manager at all times.

18.2.3 Budget Managers must submit regular monitoring returns in line with their Budget Management responsibilities and make the CFO aware of slippage in scheme costs between financial years at the earliest point possible, in order to support the Council's Treasury Management.

18.2.4 There is no authority for any officer to overspend their allocated budget and if there are variations in contract costs when compared with the provision in the Medium Term Capital Programme, the relevant Officer must alert the CFO.

18.2.5 Chief Officers must seek cabinet approval, following consultation with the CFO, for any proposed amendment to an approved capital scheme.

18.2.6 The CFO will report to the Cabinet on the monitoring of the Council's approved Capital schemes, including projected expenditure and income.

18.2.7 Officers must ensure that no contracts or commitments are entered into without project approval or scheme of delegation's authority provided.

18.2.8 Where the replacement of capital assets is financed by insurance monies, Chief Officers may authorise additional capital expenditure subject to subsequent report to the Cabinet and amendment to the Medium Term Capital Programme.

19 Virements (Revenue & Capital)

19.1 A virement is the balanced transfer of spending power [or budget] from one place to another, i.e. the overall budget does not change. Virements should support the Council's policies and not result in enhanced service levels or budget commitments beyond the base budget. A virement should not be used for cosmetic purposes within the same budget code. Virements can be revenue or capital in nature.

19.2 Virements will only apply to a current year's revenue or capital budget, and should not involve:

- a. a new policy or policy change
- b. an increasing commitment in future years that cannot be contained within existing approved budget allocations.

19.3 Virements will not be permitted from:

- a. Capital to revenue, capital charges and financing costs
- b. Interest earnings and income generated from investments
- c. Government grants and grant related expenditure to other payments
- d. Inter-authority payments
- e. Ring fenced grants

19.4 Transfers from a capital project should not materially limit the approach or scope of the capital project, but should arise from cost reductions in progressing the scheme e.g. arising through the tendering process, also a capital virement may only apply to a scheme which has been admitted to the approved capital programme.

19.5 Where it is intended that the virement will affect future years then this must be built into the base budget through the Medium Term Financial Planning process.

19.6 Virements up to £100,000 cumulative require CFO approval.

19.7 Virements between £100,000 to £500,000 require agreement with the CFO in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holder.

19.8 Virements in excess of £500,000 require Cabinet approval.

20 Carry Forward of Budget between Financial Years

20.1 Revenue budget not utilised by the end of the financial year will not normally be transferred to the following year, except in exceptional circumstances approved by the CFO.

21 Maintenance of Reserves

21.1 The Council must determine the level of general reserves it wishes to maintain when setting the Budget. Reserves must be sufficient to meet unexpected events and protect the Council from over spends should they occur. Earmarked reserves may also be established for specific purposes.

21.2 The CFO will advise the Council on the levels of reserves that it is prudent to maintain, and will account for the Council's reserves in accordance with the Reserves Policy and relevant Codes of Practice, ensuring the purpose and usage of reserves is clearly identified.

22 Closure of Accounts

22.1 The CFO is responsible for the timely production and publication of the Council's final accounts in accordance with the relevant accounting policies, standards and statute.

22.2 The CFO shall produce and circulate to all relevant officers of the Council a set of guidance notes for the production of final accounts. These notes shall detail the timetable for the final accounts production, the information and action required from Services and any other details necessary to ensure that the responsibilities under this paragraph are properly discharged. Chief Officers must comply with accounting guidance provided, and supply information when required.

22.3 The CFO is responsible for establishing a good professional working relationships with the Council's external auditors and must satisfy any reasonable requests for information with regard to the Councils financial affairs.

22.4 The Local Audit and Accountability Act grants the Council's external auditors the right to inspect any document that they deem necessary for the purpose of performing their duties.

22.5 The CFO shall present the Statement of Accounts for the year to the Council's external auditor and Audit and Governance Committee within the agreed timescales.

22.6 The CFO and the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee are responsible for signing the annual accounts to confirm that they present a true and fair view of the Council's financial position.

22.7 The CFO will hold copies of the Council's audited Statement of Accounts, including the external auditors signed certificate and opinion.

23 Banking

23.1 The CFO will be responsible for the opening of all bank accounts in the name of, and on behalf of, the Council. No employee of the Council shall open any bank (or equivalent) account on the Council's behalf or in its name without the express agreement of the CFO.

23.2 The CFO will ensure that sound, adequate arrangements are in place for the safe and efficient operation of all its bank accounts, and will effect, or cause to be effected, proper and timely reconciliations.

23.3 All investments of money under its control shall be made in the name of the Authority unless otherwise approved by the CFO.

23.4 All securities, being the property of, or in the name, of the Authority, or its nominees, and the title deeds of all property in its ownership, shall be held in the custody of the CFO or under arrangements agreed by them.

23.5 All borrowings shall be effected in the name of the Authority.

24 Financial Accounting and Systems

24.1 The Council's financial accounting systems is required to provide data that is accurate and adequate for the published final accounts and for the provision of management information for the Council to conduct its business affairs in an efficient and effective manner; as such all officers are responsible for ensuring that financial information is accurate, consistent and delivered in a timely manner.

24.2 The CFO is responsible for keeping the principal accounting records for all services of the Council.

24.3 The CFO will;

24.3.1 determine accounting policies, systems and procedures and the form of financial records and statements in accordance with statute and best practice, informed by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRSs); and International Accounting Standards (IAS)

24.3.2 provide guidance and advice on all accounting matters

24.3.3 monitor accounting performance to ensure an adequate standard for all services

24.3.4 certify all financial returns, grant funding applications and claims and other periodic financial reports required of the Council

24.3.5 be required to approve the development, acquisition and implementation of all financial IT systems

24.4 Each Chief Officer is required to;

24.4.1 implement accounting procedures and adopt the form of financial records and statements as determined by the Chief Financial Officer

24.4.2 obtain the approval of the Chief Financial Officer prior to introducing or changing the form or method of existing accounting systems and procedures, financial records or statements.

24.4.3 complete and pass to the Chief Financial Officer financial returns and other financial reports requiring certification in good time

24.4.4 keep a proper segregation of duties for staff with financial responsibilities.

24.4.5 ensuring that their staff receive relevant financial training and guidance that has been approved by the CFO.

24.4.6 ensuring that systems which provide a feed into financial systems and reporting are maintained on an accurate and timely basis.

24.4.7 ensuring a complete management/audit trail is maintained, to ensure financial transactions can be traced from the accounting records to the original document, and vice versa.

25 Procurement Arrangements

25.1 All Council procurement activity and contract/supplier management must adhere to the Contract Procedure Rules set out in Part 9.6 of the Constitution and any associated guidance to officers which set out the rules and procurement thresholds for buying, renting, and leasing of goods, services and works for the Council.

26 Orders for Goods and Services

26.1 Each Chief Officer shall be responsible for all orders issued from their Service for goods or for services rendered. Official orders must be issued for all work, goods or services to be supplied to the Council, except periodical payments, petty cash purchases, acceptable purchases under the Corporate Credit Card (GPC) policy or such other exceptions as may be approved. Before orders are made the authorised officer must ensure:

26.1.1 that there is adequate budget provision before committing expenditure;

26.1.2 any necessary Chief Officer or Cabinet approvals have been obtained as set out in the Council's Contract Procedure Rules or these financial procedure rules

26.2 If goods are to be ordered on behalf of another Service then a written requisition must be received from the Chief Officer of that Directorate, authorised by them or one of their nominated officers.

26.3 Official orders shall be in a form approved by the CFO and are to be approved only by nominated officers authorised by the Chief Officer.

26.4 Each order shall conform to the policies of the Council with respect to procurement and any standardisation of supplies and materials.

27 Payment of Account

27.1 The Chief Officers are responsible to ensure that all payments made by the Council are:

27.1.1 lawful;

27.1.2 properly authorised by an appropriate officer

27.1.3 within the amount provided in the Council's budget

27.2 All invoices shall be retained for at least 6 years. In the case of invoices relating to grant claims these must be kept until after the grant claim has been audited even if this exceeds 6 years.

- 27.3 Each designated Officer shall as soon as possible after 31st March in each year notify the CFO of all outstanding expenditure relating to the previous financial year which has not been accrued for within the financial ledger.
- 27.4 Where grants can be claimed on expenditure incurred, Chief Officers must be aware of the appropriate grant conditions and ensure that payments meet these conditions with regard to types of expenditure, payment date, etc.
- 27.5 The CFO is responsible for approving and reviewing the allocation of individual employee's financial limits for GPC usage, Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable transactions.
- 27.6 Each Chief Officer is responsible for ensuring that the list of GPC holders and purchase approvers is updated in a timely manner and that all users and approvers are aware of the GPC User Guide, which sets out the rules of usage. The GPC holders, their individual approval limits and the GPC approvers should be subject to an annual review by each Chief Officer and the CFO.
- 27.7 The Accounts Payable and Receivable transactional approval limits are administered by the Council's financial system (ERP Gold) which assigns a financial approval limit to an individual employee based on the seniority of their job role.
- 27.8 Any change to these limits requires the agreement of the Chief Officer and CFO.
- 27.9 The table below sets out the Council's Accounts Payable and Receivable approval limits. These are distinct from the limits of financial delegation set out in Part 9 of the constitution and the key decision threshold set out in Part 5 of the constitution.

Transaction Type	Budget Support TIER4	Budget Manager (Proj Mger for Capital) TIER4	Head of Service TIER3	Assistant Director TIER2	Corporate Director TIER1	Chief Executive TIER0	Section 151 Officer
Official order for procurement of goods, services, grants, benefits	Up to £5k	Up to £200k	Up to £500k	Up to £1m	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
Sales order invoices	Up to £5k	Up to £200k	Up to £500k	Up to £1m	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
Credit Note Approval	Up to £5k	Up to £200k	Up to £500k	Up to £1m	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
Write Off Authority - Non Adult Social Care Debt	n/a	Up to £2k	Up to £5k	Up to £5k	Up to £5k	Up to £5k	Up to £25k

Write Off Authority - Adult Social Care Debt Only	n/a	Up to £2k	Up to £2k	Up to £2k	Up to £5k	Up to £5k	Up to £25k
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27.10 Where operational approval to manage the establishment and associated reimbursement of staff travel and subsistence is required at a potentially lower level than a Budget Manager, this will be approved using the HR position approval hierarchy within ERP Gold.

27.11 All approvers are responsible to ensure they have undertaken the necessary financial due diligence required, before approving any transactions with a financial consideration.

28 Payments to Employees and councillors

28.1 All staff must be appointed in accordance with the Council's recruitment policies.

28.2 The CFO is responsible for the arrangements for salary and pension payments to all current, former staff and for payment of allowances to councillors. The key areas of responsibility are:

28.2.1 arranging and controlling the secure and reliable payment of salaries, compensation, other emoluments and allowances to existing and former employees.

28.2.2 recording and making arrangements for the accurate and timely payment of tax, pension contributions and other deductions.

28.2.3 ensuring there are adequate arrangements for administering pensions matters on a day-to-day basis.

28.2.4 advising Chief Officers, in the light of guidance issued by appropriate bodies and relevant legislation, on all taxation issues that affect the Council.

28.3 Chief Officers are responsible for:

28.3.1 ensuring appointments are made in accordance with the Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy

28.3.2 notifying the CFO of all appointments, terminations or variations which may affect the pay or pension of an employee or former employee, in the form and to the timescale required by the CFO

28.3.3 ensuring that adequate and effective systems and procedures are operated to ensure that payments to staff are made accurately, timely and to bona fide employees

28.3.4 ensuring that payroll transactions are processed only through the payroll system. Chief Officers should give careful consideration to the employment status of individuals employed on a self-employed consultant or subcontract basis.

29 Income

- 29.1 All budget managers are responsible for raising and collecting income in a timely and accurate manner.
- 29.2 Wherever possible services should be billed and paid for in advance and no service delivered until payment has been received.
- 29.3 There are two types of income, income and un-invoiced income, the requirements of these income streams are set out below:

30 Cash/Uninvoiced income

- 30.1 Where monies are received for a service at the point of delivery this income should be treated as un-invoiced income.
- 30.2 A record should be maintained of all individual payments, including the amount, time and date of the receipt. This should be compared to the income held, with appropriate segregation of duties, to ensure all income is banked and verified. Verification of records should be by an appropriate second officer.
- 30.3 Cash handling should be kept to a minimum. Officers should only collect income as cash when other payment routes are not available, and must put in place additional controls if any income is to be collected as cash, to ensure that;
 - 30.3.1 officers are appropriately trained in income collection, accounting and cash handling arrangements
 - 30.3.2 sufficient separation of duties is in place, in particular between billing income, processing payments and banking payments
 - 30.3.3 official receipts are available on request for payments made in person
 - 30.3.4 proper records are kept
 - 30.3.5 all money received is banked as soon as practicable. All insurance limits on safes shall be adhered to and all cash/cheques shall be banked no later than one week after receipt
 - 30.3.6 VAT is properly accounted for
 - 30.3.7 where it is necessary for cash to be held prior to it being paid into the Council's bank account, it should be recorded and kept in an appropriate secure environment
 - 30.3.8 security of staff shall be maintained when cash collections are involved
- 30.4 Personal cheques must not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the Council.

31 Invoiced Income

- 31.1 Invoiced income falls into two categories, payments in advance and payments in arrears. Wherever possible, users of services should be billed in advance of the provision of the service.
- 31.2 For all billed income it is the responsibility of the Budget Manager to ensure that any debts raised are accurate, appropriate and due to the authority.
- 31.3 Chief Officers have responsibility for ensuring their Service has suitable controls in place with regards to its income generation, and their officers are compliant with these rules.

32 Bad Debts/ Write- Offs/ Loss of Income

- 32.1 The Authority has a duty to maximise revenue collection. However, circumstances may arise in which amounts due must, for all practical purposes, be deemed uncollectable.
- 32.2 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require that, in such circumstances, a decision to write-off an amount must be taken with the authority of the CFO, whether exercised personally or properly delegated by them to a member of their staff. The amounts involved, and approval granted, should be recorded in the accounting records.
- 32.3 No such provisions apply where debts are “cancelled” i.e. because they were incorrectly raised (e.g. wrong amount, wrong debtor) or “waived” i.e. because an authorised policy decision was taken not to charge or to reduce the charge of an amount otherwise properly payable by a debtor.
- 32.4 The Cabinet is responsible for approving write-offs over £25,000. The delegated write-off limits to officers is set out in the table within paragraph 27 of these rules.

33 Taxation

- 33.1 The CFO is responsible for maintaining the Council’s Tax records, ensuring all tax payments are made, the receipt of all tax credits and the submission of tax returns by their due date as appropriate.
- 33.2 The CFO, or their delegated representative will issue mandatory guidance on Value Added Tax (VAT) matters.

34 Treasury Management:

- 34.1 The Council has adopted CIPFA’s Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Local Authorities.
- 34.2 The CFO is responsible for making all decisions on borrowing, investment or financing (including finance leasing) in accordance with the approved Treasury Management Strategy and CIPFA’s Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Local Authorities
- 34.3 The Council will approve the Treasury Management Policy Statement which sets out the matters detailed in CIPFA’s Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Local

Authorities. The Policy Statement is proposed annually. The CFO has delegated responsibility for implementing and monitoring the statement.

- 34.4 This policy will be reviewed whenever legislative, regulatory or best practice changes materially affect the effectiveness of the current policy. The Council will approve on an annual basis an Annual Treasury Management Strategy, which includes a statement on Prudential Indicators, the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy and Investment Strategy.
- 34.5 The CFO is responsible for reporting to the Cabinet a proposed treasury management strategy for the coming financial year at or before the start of each financial year and will report to the Cabinet at least quarterly on the activities of treasury management and the exercise of their delegated powers. One such report will comprise an annual report on treasury management for presentation by 30 September of the succeeding financial year.
- 34.6 All money in the hands of the authority is controlled by the CFO as the officer designated for the purposes of Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972. They are responsible for authorising and operating the Council's banking arrangements including determining arrangements for the signing and security of cheques. All Chief Officers will comply with the detailed rules set for the banking of income and operation of bank accounts.

35 Internal Audit

- 35.1 The Council is required to maintain an adequate and effective Internal Audit Service in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and in line with the CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government and Professional Auditing Standards. Consequently, it is the responsibility of Internal Audit to review, arrange and report upon:
- 35.1.1 whether operations are being carried out as planned and objectives and goals are being met.
- 35.1.2 the adequacy of systems established to ensure compliance with policies, plans, procedures, laws and regulations, i.e. rules established by the management of the organisation, or externally
- 35.1.3 the completeness, reliability and integrity of information, both financial and operational
- 35.1.4 the extent to which the Council's assets, data and interests are properly accounted for and safeguarded from losses of all kinds, including fraud and corruption, waste, extravagance, abuse, ineffective management and poor value for money
- 35.1.5 the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which resources are employed
- 35.1.6 the effectiveness of its system of internal control, and prepare an Annual Governance Statement

- 35.2 Internal Audit has an unrestricted range of coverage of the Council's operations and, therefore, has authority to:
- 35.2.1 enter council premises or land at any time, subject to any statutory or contractual restrictions that may apply, e.g. health and safety
 - 35.2.2 access all records, documents, correspondence, information and data relating to all areas of the Council regardless of how the information is held and to remove any such records as is necessary for the purposes of their work (including that of the Council's agents and contractors)
 - 35.2.3 require and receive such explanations as are necessary concerning any matter under examination
 - 35.2.4 require any employee or agent of the Council to produce cash, stores or any other Council property under their control
- 35.3 This access also applies to:
- 35.3.1 organisations which are wholly or partly owned by the Council
 - 35.3.2 organisations to whom the Council has given grants;
 - 35.3.3 organisations with whom the Council contracts and
 - 35.3.4 partner organisations in any scheme for which the Council has responsibility as lead body.
- 35.4 Internal Audit has direct access and the right of report to the Chief Executive, Chief Officers, Heads of Service, the Monitoring Officer, the Council's External Auditors, the Cabinet, the Leader, the Cabinet member with responsibility for Audit and the Chair of the Audit Committee.

36 Annual Governance Statement

- 36.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 established requirements related to the systems of internal control and the review and reporting of those systems. CIPFA has issued guidance to assist authorities to establish proper practices and procedures to satisfy these requirements.
- 36.2 The council's objectives, its internal organisation and the environment in which it operates are continually evolving and, as a result, the risks faced are continually changing. A sound system of internal control, therefore, depends on a thorough and regular evaluation of the nature and extent of the risks to which the council is exposed.
- 36.3 The CFO is responsible for ensuring that the financial management of the council is adequate and effective and that the council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the council's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

- 36.4 The CFO will conduct a review, at least annually, of the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal control and include a statement that outlines the outcome of that review within the Annual Governance Statement.
- 36.5 The Council's Annual Governance Statement will be signed by the Chief Executive and the Executive Leader. The Audit Committee shall oversee its production and recommend its adoption as part of the Annual Accounts.

37 Risk Management

- 37.1 The CFO is responsible for the development, monitoring and review of the Council's risk management policy, which will be approved by Cabinet, and is the Council's principal risk management adviser and co-ordinator.
- 37.2 Each Chief Officer is responsible for identifying, assessing, controlling and recording risks on a quarterly basis within their Service.
- 37.3 The Head of Internal Audit, working with each Chief Officer, will review Service risks on an annual basis.

38 Preventing Fraud and Corruption

- 38.1 All Council officers, councillors, agents, contractors and strategic partners have responsibilities to protect the funds they administer on behalf of the Council. Council resources must be administered to the benefit of the taxpayer and not for the inappropriate personal benefit of any of the above.
- 38.2 The CFO will be consulted by the chief internal auditor on the development and review of any Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy.
- 38.3 Officers, councillors, agents or contractors of the Council have a responsibility to bring any suspected fraud, corruption or to the attention of the chief internal auditor, the CFO or any Chief Officer as set out in any Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy which the Council has in place.
- 38.4 Chief Officers will notify the Chief Executive, the Monitoring Officer, and the CFO of any suspected fraud, theft, irregularity, improper use or misappropriation of council property or resources. Any suspected fraud, bribery, corruption or loss will be investigated in accordance with the Council's Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy.

39 Insurance

- 39.1 The Council arranges and manages insurance cover for specific risks and determines what is the most appropriate package of internal (self-funded) and external insurance. This statement must be qualified by noting that School Governing Bodies are able to exercise choice over how they purchase insurance (subject to meeting minimum standards and limits of indemnity laid down by the Council) and are not bound to remain within the centrally arranged insurance policies or self-funded provisions if they wish to effect separate arrangements. The Council's rights and interests must be named on all insurance policies held, irrespective of who has made the original arrangements.

- 39.2 The Council purchases insurance for the following classes of insurable risk;
- 39.2.1 fire and associated risks for all buildings which the Council owns, or for which it has accepted legal responsibility by way of a lease or licence
 - 39.2.2 all public and employers' liabilities, including libel and slander, professional indemnity, officials' indemnity and land charges
 - 39.2.3 personal accident cover for risk of assault on employees of the Council and for injury to Council Members and authorised volunteers
 - 39.2.4 motor vehicles – comprehensive cover on all Council vehicles, together with contingent liability cover for use of privately owned vehicles used on official business
 - 39.2.5 pecuniary loss (money, fidelity guarantee and cheques indemnity)
 - 39.2.6 costs of reinstatement and recovery of ICT infrastructure and systems
- 39.3 Under the direction of the Chief Financial Officer, the Insurance Section is responsible for preparing specifications, obtaining quotations, procuring cover, negotiating claims and maintaining the necessary records in line with the insurance strategy and for ensuring that the contracting process is conducted in accordance with the prescribed requirements. A register of all insurance policies held and a full record of what property and risks are covered is held within the insurance service.
- 39.4 Chief Officers must ensure that prompt notification is provided to the Insurance Manager of all new risks, property, vehicles and other assets or contractual obligations which require to be insured and alterations that may affect existing insured risks (including closure of buildings, sale of vehicles or disposals of other insured assets).
- 39.5 Chief Officers are responsible for reporting any event, loss, liability or damage that may result in an insurance claim and give full and timely assistance with the conduct of any investigation that may follow.
- 39.6 Advice must be sought immediately from Insurance Team if there is a suspicion that a civil legal action is in prospect. Civil procedure rules and protocols must be strictly adhered to in order to avoid cost penalties or unnecessary litigation expenses. Employees and other persons must not attempt to negotiate a settlement, give interviews, make statements or offer to pay compensation in any way that may prejudice any subsequent civil legal action that may be brought against the Council.

40 Asset Management

- 40.1 The responsible Chief Officer will produce a five-year Corporate Asset Management Plan for the purpose of the overall strategic management of the Council's assets. This will be updated on an annual basis.
- 40.2 The responsible Chief Officer will ensure that procedures are put in place for the safeguarding and security of the Council's assets, including the keeping of asset

registers; a terrier of land and property; inventories of furniture, fittings and equipment; and stores records.

- 40.3 Chief Officers are responsible for ensuring the proper use and safeguarding of assets owned by the Council or for which the Council has responsibility. This requirement applies to all assets, including stocks, stores, furniture, equipment, vehicles, cash, land and buildings, software and information that are owned by, or are in the possession of the Council and for which the Council is responsible.
- 40.4 The responsible Chief Officer will ensure that detailed arrangements are put in place for the disposal of assets. All sales or purchases of land and buildings will be undertaken in accordance with the scheme of delegation.
- 40.5 Valuation of Assets will be in line with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom. Sale of Assets will be at market value unless special circumstances have been agreed.
- 40.6 The relevant Chief Officer must consult with the CFO before the purchase of land and buildings, which is then subject to relevant member approval.
- 40.7 Officers with access to the Councils Assets will undertake the following:
 - 40.7.1 ensure no assets are subject to personal use without proper authority
 - 40.7.2 ensure cash holdings or valuable items on premises is kept to a minimum and held securely
 - 40.7.3 where safes or similar are in place keys should be kept on the responsible person and any loss reported as soon as possible

41 Disposal of Land, Property and Surplus Assets

- 41.1 All land and property except for former Council houses sold to tenants, or other property likely to exceed £5,000 in value, which have been declared surplus to requirements must be sold either by auction with a reserve price, or by competitive tender, unless the Council specifically determines otherwise.
- 41.2 Before inviting tenders or instructing an auctioneer for the sale of land or property, a valuation shall be obtained from the Estates function or an independent qualified Valuer, and in the case of a sale by auction, this valuation shall be the reserve price.
- 41.3 Competitive tender shall normally dispose of all other surplus assets unless the CFO determines otherwise in a particular case.

42 External Arrangements

- 42.1 Local authorities provide an important leadership role for the community and bring together the contributions of the various stakeholders. They must also act to promote and improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of their respective areas.

- 42.2 The Cabinet is the focus for forming partnerships with other local public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations to address local needs.
- 42.3 Cabinet functions including those related to partnerships can be delegated to officers. These are set out in the scheme of delegation that forms part of the Constitution. Where functions are delegated, the Cabinet remains accountable for them to full council.

43 Work for Third Parties

- 43.1 The CFO or their nominee must be advised of all work for third parties opportunities available to the Council and of the lead officer in each circumstance.
- 43.2 The lead officer must provide such information as requested by the CFO, including copies of proposed agreements and conditions and any financial implications (including match funding requirements or ongoing revenue costs).
- 43.3 All work for third parties must be authorised by the CFO, or their nominee prior to agreement to undertake this work by the Council. Approvals for this work must be in accordance with the Contract Procedure Rules in Part 9.6 Constitution.
- 43.4 The CFO or their nominee must be notified of the outcome of any bids to work for third parties at the earliest opportunity and successful bids to work for third parties will be reported to Cabinet as part of the normal monitoring reports.
- 43.5 The CFO is responsible for ensuring that all income receivable from third parties is received and properly recorded in the Council's accounts.
- 43.6 The Chief Officer responsible for the lead officer must ensure that all contractual conditions are met.

44 Significant Partnerships

- 44.1 A significant partnership is one that is material in terms of the amount of money involved and/or the level or nature of service delivery concerned and/or the level of control exercised.
- 44.2 The purpose of this protocol is to enable the council, with its Partners, to ensure that the partnerships it works in are appropriate and have good governance.
- 44.3 This protocol identifies:
- 44.3.1 how the Council defines a partnership
 - 44.3.2 why the Council enters and engages in partnerships
 - 44.3.3 definition of a partnership and what constitutes a significant partnership
 - 44.3.4 tools for identifying, managing and supporting partnerships arrangements including good governance

44.4 Where the Council is the lead authority for a partnership the Council's Financial Procedure Rules and Contract Procedure Rules will apply to operation of the business of that partnership.

44.5 The CFO will ensure that:

42.5.1 the accounting arrangements for partnerships and joint ventures are satisfactory, that the governance and legal issues have been satisfactorily addressed, and that the risks have been fully appraised

42.5.2 the Partnership Agreements contain details of how resources will be pooled and what controls will be operated in respect of partnership spending to avoid waste

42.5.3 that the Council's budgets contain sufficient provision for its match funding obligations and that all external funding due to the Council is received and properly recorded

44.6 Chief Officers are responsible and accountable for the governance arrangements, performance and financial monitoring of each partnership and will ensure that:

44.6.1 a record of the partnership arrangement is produced

44.6.2 all necessary approvals have been secured before concluding any negotiations with external parties

44.6.3 Any financial relationship must be documented and approved along with a risk assessment

44.6.4 that conditions attached to any external funding are properly complied with, that such conditions have been agreed with the CFO or Cabinet as appropriate, and that claims are processed by the due date

44.6.5 the CFO has access to the accounts and records, and has the right to seek explanations in order to monitor deployment of the Council's funding

44.6.6 Internal Audit has access rights to all officers, buildings, information in order to fulfil its role

44.6.7 a register is maintained of all contracts entered into

44.7 Prior to any appointments being made to any third party organisation (whether as a member, trustee, shareholder, director or similar position), advice should be sought from the Monitoring Officer and the CFO.

45 Stores & Inventories

45.1 Each Chief Officer or Head of Service of each department shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores in their department and shall have all such stores checked independently of the storekeeper at least on one occasion in each financial year.

- 45.2 Stores shall not be held in excess of reasonable requirements.
- 45.3 Adjustments to write-off deficiencies over £1,000 in value shall be subject to the approval of the CFO. Cabinet will be required to write-off sums over £25,000.
- 45.4 Competitive tender shall dispose of surplus or obsolete stores unless the Chief Executive decides otherwise in a particular case.
- 45.5 Inventories of the Council's furniture, fittings, equipment and machinery shall be kept and checked on at least one occasion in each financial year by the member of the Corporate Management Team responsible for the service concerned. (Individual items with a value of £1,000 or less need not be included therein).

46 External Funding

- 46.1 Before committing the Council to any externally funded projects, Chief Officers must consult with the CFO on the anticipated financial, risk and probity implications of the projects and ensure adherence to any subsequent terms laid down by the CFO.
- 46.2 The Chief Officer is responsible for ensuring that all necessary approvals are obtained before external funding agreements are concluded, and that subsequent grant claims submitted to external funders are lawful, accurate, in accordance with the funders eligibility criteria and submitted with due regard to the Council's continuing commitment to the project.
- 46.3 Where the use of external funding for projects requires a financial commitment from the Council and budget provision is not available, or where the acceptance of external funding would lead to a financial commitment beyond the current year, the Chief Officer, in conjunction with the CFO, will provide a written report to the Cabinet giving a full appraisal of the financial implications for the Council of the scheme both in the current year and beyond. This report should also set out the ways that the external funding sought supports the Council's service priorities.
- 46.4 Once agreed, written approval must be obtained from the funder which clearly shows the approved allocation, the purpose of the grant and the financial period to which it relates.
- 46.5 Each Chief Officer will nominate a named responsible officer to be accountable for the performance and financial monitoring of each project. The named responsible officer will ensure that, prior to submission of a grant claim, all expenditure declared is eligible in accordance with the relevant funder's criteria, including purposes and deadlines and there is sufficient time for the CFO to certify the grant claim.
- 46.6 Where funding is used to support additional service provision or contributes to existing service provision then the Chief Officer responsible should have an exit strategy in place to deal with the expiry of the grant.
- 46.7 Grant claim working papers should be maintained in a form agreed by the CFO.

47 Organisations Partly or Wholly Owned by the Council (trusts, not-for-profit organisations, charities)

- 47.1 This requirement applies to the development and ongoing business undertakings of an organisation which is to be partly or wholly owned by the Council, and includes company structures such as a Limited Liability Partnership, Private Company limited by Guarantee, Community Interest Company, Not-for-profit Entity and Charity.
- 47.2 When developing any organisation which is partly or wholly owned by the Council, the relevant Chief Officer, Monitoring Officer and the Chief Financial Officer will need to satisfy themselves that the constitution of the relevant body is adequate to safeguard the interests of the Council, and that councillors and officers are constrained in their decision making powers while participating in such bodies by Part 9 of the Constitution, or any other formal delegation.
- 47.3 The relevant Chief Officer must ensure a full business case is prepared in the development any new organisation partly or wholly owned by the Council, which must consider all short term and medium term financial aspects of operation.
- 47.4 Before the Business Case is submitted for approval by Cabinet, the CFO must be satisfied that the new organisation will be affordable, offers value for money, has suitable tax planning arrangements, and manages risk appropriately.
- 47.5 Prior to any appointments being made to any third party organisation (whether as a member, trustee, shareholder, director or similar position), advice should be sought from the Monitoring Officer and the CFO.
- 47.6 Once operational, these organisations are required to follow these key financial principles:
- 47.6.1 compliance with the Councils Constitution and Finance Procedure Rules
 - 47.6.2 compliance with the Council's MTFP, Capital Strategy and Budget setting process as instructed by the form and timetable set out from the Council's CFO
 - 47.6.3 the appointment of a Finance Director reporting to the Council's CFO.
 - 47.6.4 an annual agreement with the Council's CFO on any matters relating to risk share, earmarked reserve policy and distribution of dividends
 - 47.6.5 supporting the Council through its commissioning arrangements when necessary to identify ways to reduce costs and become more efficient
 - 47.6.6 to be both aware and compliant with the Council's statutory and financial duties where relevant and applicable to their various service functions and obligations.
- 47.7 Where these organisations are separate legal entities and the Council is required to purchase services from these entities. Transactions should therefore be undertaken in the same way as with an external provider.
- 47.8 The contract value and ongoing services relating to these organisations will be set out in service level agreements. Any services to be purchased from the Council will be delivered in accordance with the service level agreements.

- 47.9 Additional services may be requested either by the Council or the organisation outside of these service agreements. Additional services will require payments to be made between the Council and the organisation, and work should always reflect value for money and be approved by the Chief Officer and CFO and be approved by the relevant Chief Officer and the Chief Financial Officer of the Council.
- 47.10 The CFO and Monitoring Officer will have unfettered access to all financial information requested required to fulfil their statutory obligations.

48 Voluntary Funds and Trustees

- 48.1 The CFO is responsible for trust funds and ensures that funds are only drawn down for the purposes intended by the Trustees and that accounts are prepared and audited each year.
- 48.2 All trust funds, funds held for third parties and other voluntary (unofficial) funds must be approved by the CFO. A voluntary fund is defined as any fund, other than an official fund for the Council, which is controlled wholly or in part by an officer by reason of their employment by the Council. Such funds should be separately identified but held, where possible, in the name of the Council.

49 Schools

- 49.1 The Financial Procedure Rules for Schools applies to maintained schools within West Northamptonshire and these schools should conduct their financial affairs in accordance with the Financial Procedures for Schools.

50 Business Continuity & Emergency Planning

- 50.1 Chief Officers through their managers are responsible for ensuring the continuity of their services and providing guidance on the appropriate service priorities to aid planning and recovery of services, if a critical incident was to occur.
- 50.2 All officers should follow the council's requirements in relation to Emergency Planning which set out the minimum standards required to help deliver and maintain Emergency Planning and Business Continuity within the Council, with the objective to effectively and efficiently mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from any critical incident.
- 50.3 Nothing in these Rules or financial procedures shall prevent expenditure being incurred where an emergency or disaster involving destruction of, or danger to, life or property occurs or is imminent.
- 50.4 Where the relevant Chief Officer considers, where possible following consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, Chief Executive and the CFO, the urgency of the situation will not permit delay, necessary expenditure may be incurred. Action under this paragraph shall be reported at the next available meeting of the Chief Officers, Cabinet, and Audit Committee.

GLOSSARY

This glossary explains key terms used in the Council's Constitution but is not part of the Constitution.

Adjourned

To suspend (i.e. a meeting) with the intention to resume it later.

Annual Governance Statement

A public statement which reviews how well the Council has kept to its governance rules.

Annual Statement of Accounts

See Statement of Accounts.

Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy

The Council's strategy for protecting its valuable resources which describes the expectations and practices to avoid their loss.

Asset Management Strategy

The Council's approach to getting the best possible value and revenue from things it owns (assets), such as buildings, land, roads and technology.

Approved Supplier List

A list of suppliers which have met specific criteria to enable them to provide particular goods or services to the Council.

Balance Sheet

A statement of the Council's assets, liabilities and capital at a particular point in time which details the balance of the Council's income and expenditure over the preceding period.

Budget

Every year the Council puts a financial plan in place which describes how and where the Council will spend money to provide services and deliver the aims which it set out in its Corporate Plan. It also sets the level of council tax which it will charge in the next financial year. The Budget sets out the money which the Council intends to spend during the year against the money available which has been received in council tax, income and grants.

Cabinet

Also known as the Executive, the Cabinet is the Council's decision-making body responsible for making the majority of decisions. The Cabinet makes decisions within a Policy Framework and budget set by the whole Council. The Cabinet is made up of the Leader and up to nine other Members, including a Deputy Leader.

Cabinet Member

An elected Member appointed to the Cabinet by the Leader. Some Cabinet Members are assigned responsibility for a specific portfolio and are sometimes referred to as Portfolio

Holders. Cabinet Members can also make decisions when powers to do so are delegated to them by the Cabinet or Leader.

Capital and Investment Strategy

The Council's medium to long term plan for investing in its asset base.

Capital Programme

Part of the Medium Term Financial Plan which sets out capital projects approved by full Council over a medium term, multi-year period.

Chair of the Council

The Chair of the Council is an elected Member who chairs meetings of the Council and carries out a variety of civic and ceremonial duties. The Chair is elected to be the Chair by the other Members, usually at the Council's Annual Meeting. The Chair cannot be a Cabinet Member and is assisted in their work by the Vice Chair.

Chief Executive

The Council's most senior Officer who is responsible for the management and direction of the Council's staff. The Chief Executive is accountable to the Executive Leader, the Cabinet and the Council as a whole. The Chief Executive is also generally designated as the Council's Head of Paid Service - a statutory role. The postholder has powers set out in law as well as the powers given to them by this Constitution.

Chief Finance Officer

The Chief Finance Officer (CFO) is a Statutory Officer and the powers held by the CFO are set out in statute. The CFO is also referred to as the Section 151 Officer – this is because the role is given powers by section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972. Every Council must appoint a CFO. The CFO is responsible for managing the Council's finances and providing expert financial advice to the Council. The CFO must be a qualified accountant and must ensure that the Council does not intend to spend more money than it has to carry out its plans (this is called a balanced budget).

Clear Days

Does not include the starting or finishing day. Example: for 5 clear days' notice: do not include the day when notice was given. If this was on a Tuesday, time starts to run on Wednesday. Notice would not be completed until 12.01am the following Wednesday. Saturday, Sunday or bank holidays are not counted.

Code of Conduct (Councillor Code of Conduct / Officer Code of Conduct)

A set of rules which elected and co-opted councillors and officers must follow.

Commercial Agreement

A type of contract for goods or services in exchange for something in return, usually money.

Commissioning

Within the Council, the process of buying services from outside the Council and monitoring and managing the purchase and carrying out of those services.

Committee

A Committee is a formal group of elected Members whose remit, terms of reference and operating rules are set out in the Council's Constitution. There are many different committees. Each one makes decisions about a specific area of responsibility – for example planning or licensing.

Confidential Information

In relation to meetings and reports this is information which the Council has received from a Government department on terms which cannot be disclosed publicly.

It can also be information which (i) the Council cannot disclose due to a court order or legislation or (ii) is not public, or (iii) is information which was given to the Council in such a way that made it clear it was meant to be kept confidential.

Constitution

This governance document, or 'rule book', which sets out how the Council will make decisions and who will make those decisions. It also sets out how residents and others can participate.

Contract

An agreement which: may be oral, written, partly oral and partly written or implied from conduct between the Council and another person; gives rise to obligations which are enforceable or recognised by law (i.e. legally binding) and commits the Council to paying or doing something.

A reference to a contract may also include a contract to which the Contract Procedure Rules apply and a "call off contract" means an order made or call off contract entered into under a Framework Agreement.

Contractors

See suppliers.

Contract Management

The process of ensuring the contract results in the benefits and outcomes envisaged and that the advantages secured during the tendering phase are realised and improved through further proactive performance management during its term.

Contract Management System

The IT system and associated processes used to support supplier and contract management, providing visibility and a single view of all Council contracts. It is also the Council's contract register.

Contract Procedure Rules

The part of the Constitution that sets out the procedures to be followed when seeking to establish a contract with an external supplier.

Council

The term often used to refer to the whole organisation (i.e. councillors and officers); but see full Council below. West Northamptonshire Council is led by councillors who are elected by the public. They set the priorities and the Budget for the organisation. Staff working for the Council (officers) deliver the day to day operations. The word Council is used to refer both to the organisation as a whole and specifically to the decision-making body.

Council Body

May include any Committee, Board, Panel or informal working group.

Council Tax

The income collected from residents based on banded property values and which funds a significant proportion of council services.

Councillor

A councillor is elected and is a member of the Council. Councillors stand for election normally every four years and are accountable to the residents of a specific area (their electoral ward) but are responsible for making decisions for the entire council area. Councillors do not have to be a member of a political party, but most are. Those who are not, are known as 'un-grouped' or 'independent' councillors.

Councillor Call for Action

The councillor Call for Action allows councillors to refer matters of concern within the community to the relevant Board or Committee. The aim is to provide councillors with additional powers that enable them to respond to local community concerns which have proved difficult to resolve.

Debt Management Strategy

The Council's strategy to manage and recover the sums of money it is owed.

Decisions

The choices and agreements made on a particular issue. The Council's Constitution sets out the rules on how formal decisions are to be taken in compliance with the law (see also Key Decisions). The Constitution also sets out how decisions are to be recorded and published.

Development Plan

Means the Council's local plans and other documents that set out the policies and proposals for the development and use of land within the administrative area of West Northamptonshire Council.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

A disclosable interest means something which an elected Member must declare in a meeting relating to their role outside the Council which could impact on their decisions for the Council. A pecuniary interest is a financial interest as defined in 'The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.

Elected Member

See Councillor.

Executive

See Cabinet.

Executive Director

The Council's most senior officers report directly to the Chief Executive and are accountable to Members and the Cabinet. These posts include the statutory Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) and the Director of Children's Services (DCS).

Exempt Information

In relation to meetings and reports this means information which can be withheld from the public. It must pass one of seven tests in order for it to be exempt and it must also be in the public interest to do so. If an item is deemed to be exempt during a public meeting, then members of the public and any press have to leave the meeting while exempt information is being discussed. We set out the rules in the Access to Information Procedure Rules at Part 5 Section 4 of this Constitution.

EU Procurement Regulations

The Agreement on Government Procurement (GPA) entered into under the auspices of the World Trade Organisation, the European Community Treaty (EU Treaty)* and any relevant regulations, directives or decisions of the European Community*; any Acts of Parliament or statutory instruments implementing the above for the time being in force in the United Kingdom; and any relevant judgments of the European Court of Justice* or UK courts.

**These will continue to be followed at the present time even though the United Kingdom has left the European Union.*

External Auditors

An independent auditor appointed to review the Council's financial and management arrangements.

Financial Year

The financial year for the Council is not the same as the calendar year. Our financial year starts on 1 April and ends on 31 March.

Financial Procedure Rules

The rules which set out how the Council will manage its financial affairs (in Part 9 Section 7 of this Constitution).

Financial Scheme of Delegation

The financial limits on spend set up by service area. More details are in Part 9 Section 7.

Follow On Decisions

Means a decision on consequential matters following a decision to approve a Planning Application. These include, but are not limited to: approval or discharge of planning conditions, legal agreements and non-material amendments.

Forward Plan

A list of the 'key decisions' the Council will make over the next one to four months. The Forward Plan also includes a summary of any reports which will be presented to the Cabinet. You can view the Forward Plan for West Northamptonshire Council on its website.

Framework

A term used in different ways which refers to the way that the Council operates - for example, Policy Framework, commissioning framework, governance framework.

Full Council

The full Council is all the Members who make up West Northamptonshire Council. Full Council meets throughout the year with the meeting being chaired by the Chair. Full Council takes specific decisions, including setting the Budget. It also appoints committees to make decisions about specific issues such as planning and licensing.

Function

Within the Council, a function is a service which the Council provides or an activity which it undertakes; or which it has a duty to deliver - for example housing and education.

Head of Paid Service

The Head of Paid Service is a Statutory Officer with overall responsibility for the employment of Council officers (generally the Chief Executive).

Independent Person

The Council has to have at least one designated independent person who is not a councillor or a member of staff. The independent person is consulted about complaints made against councillors and also about the dismissal of any of the Council's statutory officers.

Key Decision

Key decisions are executive decisions (not those made by committee) and are defined in the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) (Regulations) 2012 and are decisions which:-

- Result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or making savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- Are deemed significant in terms of their effect on communities living or working within the area of the Council.

The Council has decided that other significant decisions will be treated as key decisions. There are rules that set out how key decisions must be taken which are in Part 5. Key decisions are taken by the Cabinet or a Cabinet Member under delegated authority.

Leader (of the Council)

Members elect a person who will be the Executive Leader. Usually this is the leader of the largest political group on the whole Council. The Executive Leader is also the Leader of the Cabinet and will appoint up to nine other Members to form the Cabinet to take Executive decisions on behalf of the Council. The Leader can appoint up to two Deputy Leaders from the Members appointed to the Cabinet.

Legal Professional Privilege

Confidential communications between lawyers and their clients can be withheld from a court or from a third party using legal professional privilege.

Legislation

The Law which can be made by Parliament which takes the form of an Act of Parliament (a Statute) or Statutory Regulations or By-laws which can be made by the Council.

Light Touch Rules

A more relaxed set of rules for awarding contracts for certain services in relation to health and social care.

Local Provider

A provider from within the boundaries of West Northamptonshire.

Medium Term Financial Plan

Sets out the Council's budget (revenue and capital) over a period of more than one year and is linked to the Corporate Plan and Service Plans.

Member

See Councillor.

Minutes

The formal written record of a meeting. minutes of West Northamptonshire Council meetings are available on the Council's website.

Monitoring Officer

The Monitoring Officer is a Statutory Officer responsible for the lawful and good governance of the Council, in particular the Constitution, decision-making and the conduct of councillors (including Town and Parish councillors) and officers.

Motion

A proposal for a discussion or debate.

Municipal Year

The period between annual meetings of the Council. The municipal year is not the same as the Council's financial year, which starts on 1 April. The municipal year usually starts in May but is not a fixed date and as such the number of days in a municipal year varies slightly.

Natural Justice

The right of all parties in proceedings to a fair hearing before an impartial tribunal.

Officer

Someone employed by the Council.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Specialist committees which support and challenge the work of the Cabinet and help hold it to account. Overview and Scrutiny committees are made up of Members who are not part of the Cabinet.

Permission in Principle (PIP)

Means an application by a developer to the Council to determine whether a housing development is acceptable in principle only and does not include technical details. A Permission in Principle is not a grant of planning consent.

Planning Applications

Means planning applications for full and outline consent as well as applications for reserved matters approvals and, for the avoidance of doubt, excludes Permission in Principle (PIP) and Related Matters.

Planning Officer

Means an employee of the Council tasked with processing and evaluating planning applications.

Policy

A policy sets out a strategic objective for the Council and provides a framework of principles and guidelines which must be followed to achieve those objectives.

Policy Framework

Refers to the Council's strategies and policies as set out in Part 3 of this Constitution.

Point of Order

Where a Member considers that a breach of the Procedure Rules or legislation has occurred within a debate.

Portfolio

Within the Council, a portfolio is a specific area of responsibility - for example housing. You can view the portfolios and which Councillor is responsible for each area (the Portfolio Holders) in Part 5 of the Constitution and on the website.

Procedure

The means by which a strategy or policy will be implemented or a process which must be followed.

Procurement

How the Council identifies, sources, selects and manages the resources it needs to buy in to deliver services or meet its strategic objectives.

Proper Officer

A term used to refer to the Council's lead Officer for a particular function. The list of Proper Officers is in Part 9 of this Constitution.

Quorum

The minimum number of attendees who have to be present at a meeting of the Council, a committee or sub-committee etc to conduct its business.

Regulation Threshold

The Total Value threshold at which public procurement directives must be applied. The current procurement thresholds and regulations are the EU thresholds available from the OJEC website.

Related matters

Means applications for permitted development, prior approvals, advertisement consent, tree preservation orders, high hedges and listed building consent.

Representations

Members of the public can give their views on any Cabinet or Cabinet Member reports or on any proposed decision by informing Democratic Services by the deadline outlined on the meeting agenda.

Reserves

Sums of money set aside on the Council's balance sheet. The Council has 'general reserves', and 'earmarked reserves' which are set aside for a specific purpose.

Scheme of Delegation

The Scheme of Delegation sets out how the Council and the Cabinet have delegated authority to a committee or another body, or to an individual Member or officer to exercise their powers or perform their functions. The officer Scheme of Delegation concerns those powers and functions delegated to officers. The Scheme of Delegation will also specify any limits on the delegated authority.

Section 151 Officer (s.151 Officer)

See Chief Finance Officer.

Standards Complaint

Refers to a complaint made against an elected or co-opted councillor, or Town or Parish councillor, that the councillor concerned has failed to comply with the relevant Councillor Code of Conduct.

Statement of Accounts

A document required by law which sets out the Council's financial position at 31 March each year and includes the Council's income and expenditure for a given financial year.

Statute

An Act of Parliament – the law.

Statutory

Required by law. Councils have statutory duties including preventing homelessness, managing community safety and determining planning applications.

Statutory Officers

The Council is required by law to appoint officers in certain key roles. The Statutory Officers are the Head of Paid Service; the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer. The Council must also appoint other officers including a Director for Children's Services, a Director for Adult Social Services, a Director of Public Health and a Scrutiny Officer.

Sub-committee

A group of elected Members from the committee in question convened to undertake a particular task or perform a particular function. The sub-committee then reports back and is accountable to the committee.

Suppliers

Also known as contractors, suppliers are those parties which enter into a contract with the Council to provide goods or services.

Trading Account

Services which are funded by generating income from internal and external sources.

Treasury Management Strategy

The way in which the Council manages its cash, borrowing, lending and investments, and associated risks.

Virement

The movement of money from one budget heading to another.

Vires (intra vires/ultra vires)

A Latin phrase which means 'powers'. Within the Council, vires concerns the power or lawful authority to make a decision, perform a function or undertake an action. A decision made, function performed or action undertaken will be 'intra vires' if the Council has the power and lawful authority to do it and 'ultra vires' if it does not.

Ward

A ward is an electoral area. West Northamptonshire Council has 31 wards.

Ward Councillor

One of the councillors representing a specific ward.

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

2 December 2021

Councillor Malcolm Longley, Cabinet Member for Finance

Report Title	Pension Committee Annual Report 2020-21
Report Author	Mark Whitby, Head of Pensions Mark.Whitby@westnorthants.gov.uk

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

West MO	Catherine Whitehead	4 November 2021
West S151	Martin Henry	4 November 2021
Communications Lead/Head of Communications	Claire Hughes	11 November 2021

List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To report on the work of the Pension Fund Committee over the previous year.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The report sets out the Governance, Oversight and Investment activities undertaken by the Committee during 2020-21, including the approval of various policies and strategies.
- 2.2 This report also covers the Northamptonshire Pension Fund approach to the pandemic.
- 2.3 As the Administering Authority to the Fund changed from Northamptonshire County Council to West Northamptonshire Council on 1 April 2021, this report therefore recaps the activities of the former Administering Authority.

3. Recommendations

3.1 Council is recommended to note the content of the report.

4. Reason for Recommendations

4.1 To update Council on the work of the Committee during 2020-21 promoting good governance and oversight.

5. Report Background

5.1 Part 3B of the Constitution states that the Northamptonshire Pension Committee has delegated responsibility, with regards to the Northamptonshire Local Government Pension Fund, for:

- Funding Strategy;
- Investment Strategy;
- Administration Strategy;
- Communication Strategy;
- Discretions;
- Governance; and
- Risk Management.

5.2 It is the responsibility of the Pension Committee to develop and maintain strategies, policies and procedures, thus ensuring effective governance, oversight and accountability is upheld on behalf of the Fund's stakeholders.

5.3 The information contained in section 5 of this report demonstrates the key decisions and approvals that have been made by the Pension Committee during 2020/21, supported by the Investment Sub-Committee.

6. Issues and Choices

Key Governance Activities of the Pension Committee

6.1 Approval of the Pension Fund Annual Business Plan and Medium Term Strategy

6.1.1 Each year the Pension Committee agrees a Pension Fund Business Plan and Medium Term Strategy that sets out how the Fund's objectives will be met and other key priorities for the year and following two years. The Strategy also details performance indicators for both the Fund and its employers and an estimate of the Fund account.

6.1.2 The purpose of the business plan is to:

- Explain the background and objectives of West Northamptonshire Council (formerly Northamptonshire County Council) in respect of the management of the Northamptonshire Pension Fund;
- Document the priorities and improvements to be implemented by the Pensions Service during the next three years to help achieve those objectives;
- Enable progress and performance to be monitored in relation to established priorities; and
- Provide a clear vision for the next three years.

- 6.1.3 The business plan also details performance indicators for both the Fund and its employers and an estimate of the Fund account.
- 6.1.4 The Pension Committee receives regular updates on how the Fund is meeting its objectives via Business Plan Update reports presented at every meeting.
- 6.1.5 The Pension Committee approved the Annual Business Plan and Medium Term Strategy in June 2020.

6.2 Approval of the Northamptonshire Pension Fund Communication Strategy and Plan

- 6.2.1 The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 require the Pension Fund to prepare, maintain and publish a written statement setting out its policy concerning communications with members and scheme employers.
- 6.2.2 At the October 2020 meeting of the Pension Committee the updates to the Communications Strategy was approved following some minor changes and inclusion of the Digital Communications Strategy that was previously approved by the Pension Committee in December 2019
- 6.2.3 Included as an appendix to the report was the Communication Plan for 2020/21 which outlined the core communication activities for the year and also provided some scheduled communication on the coronavirus pandemic.

6.3 Approval of the Northamptonshire Pension Fund Data Improvement Policy

- 6.3.1 The primary purpose of the Northamptonshire Pension Fund is to pay the correct pension benefits to its members when they become due. It is therefore essential that the Fund achieves and maintains the highest possible data quality standards. The Data Policy and Plan were first put into place in October 2018 and due to a number of process improvements it was necessary to update the policy.
- 6.3.2 Revisions to the policy were made in the following areas:
 - Data Audit
 - LGPS National Insurance Database
 - Member tracing and mortality screening
 - Overseas proof of continued existence checks
- 6.3.3 The Pension Committee approved the amendments to the policy in December 2020.

6.4 Update to the Funding Strategy Statement

- 6.4.1 The Funding Strategy Statement was previously approved by the Pension Committee as part of the 2019 valuation process. Following publication, there were amendments to the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 affecting cessations from the Fund, requiring further revision to the strategy statement.
- 6.4.2 The amendments gave administering authorities some discretion when determining whether or not an exit credit is payable and, if so, the value of that exit credit. These amendments required changes to both the Funding Strategy Statement and Administering Authority Discretions Policy. The amendments to the Funding Strategy Statement and Administering Authority Discretions Policy were approved by the Pension Committee in October 2020.

6.5 Review of the Administration Strategy

- 6.5.1 The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 provide that administering authorities may prepare, maintain and publish a written Statement setting out their policy concerning administration matters, and that the administering authority and its employees

authorities must then have regard to that strategy when carrying out their functions.

6.5.2 The Strategy was updated to reflect administration changes and in addition was made a standalone document as this was previously a joint Strategy with the Cambridgeshire Pension Fund.

6.5.3 The Pension Committee approved the amendments to the Strategy in December 2020 in preparation for consultation with relevant stakeholders.

5.5.4 Following the consultation, the Strategy was adopted and published.

6.6 Multiple Investment Strategies

6.6.1 The Pension Committee had previously approved activity within the Fund's business plan to investigate and consider a framework for the implementation of multiple employer investment strategies.

6.6.2 Officers proposed to engage the Actuary to carry out asset-liability modelling against different investment strategies to determine if better outcomes can be achieved for different groups of employers.

6.6.3 Following a presentation from the Actuary, the Pension Committee approved to the asset-liability modelling in December 2020 and the conclusions are due to be presented to the Pension Committee in October 2021.

6.7 Approval of the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts

6.7.1 The Pension Fund's Statement of Accounts form part of the (then) County Council's Statement of Accounts and is covered by the external auditor's opinion on those accounts.

6.7.2 The Annual Report and Statement of Accounts have been subject to audit fieldwork by the County Council's external auditor. Whilst the external auditor performs a full audit of the Statement of Accounts, their work on the Annual Report is limited to a review to ensure compliance with guidance and consistency with the Statement of Accounts.

6.7.3 The Statement of Accounts is the financial representation of every activity that the Fund has been directly or indirectly involved with over the course of the financial year.

6.7.4 They are based on actual transactions accounted for within the Fund's financial ledger, information received from Fund Managers and the Fund's Custodian, and assumptions and estimations utilising the professional judgement of officers in order to give a true and fair statement of the Fund's financial position.

6.7.5 At 31st March 2021, the Fund was valued at £3.10bn, an increase of £699.2m from 31st March 2020. This was primarily as a result of strong financial growth during the year mainly due to the outperformance of global equities.

6.7.6 The Annual Report in respect of 2020-21 was approved by the Pension Committee in July 2021.

Key Investment Activities of the Pension Fund Committee

6.8 Decisions surrounding Asset Pooling

6.8.1 The Northamptonshire Pension Fund has continued to work with 10 other Local Government pension funds in the ACCESS Pool to meet the Government's asset pooling agenda, delivering scale, strong governance, reduced costs and improved capacity to invest in infrastructure.

6.8.2 The Chairman of each ACCESS fund sits on a Joint Committee, which meets quarterly and has oversight of the work of the Pool and delegated authority with regards to specific asset pooling functions. Listed assets held within the ACCESS Pool are run by Link Fund Solutions, a FCA

regulated “Operator”. The ACCESS investment platform and governance structure is illustrated below.



- 6.8.3 ACCESS has strong effective governance and operational structures as demonstrated in the chart above, with collective total assets of £56bn (as at 31 March 2021), of which over £31bn (57%) has been pooled or is under pool governance, serving 3,400 employers with 1.1 million members including 300,000 pensioners, delivering net savings since inception in excess of £25m.
- 6.8.4 In January 2021, the Joint Committee agreed the approach ACCESS will take to implement pooled arrangements for alternative / non-listed assets. This will cover the four areas set out below:
- Private Equity
 - Private Debt
 - Infrastructure
 - Property
- 6.8.5 In January 2021, Minerva was appointed to conduct a review of the pool’s Responsible Investment guidelines and advise on future reporting requirements.
- 6.8.6 A review of the size and scope of the ACCESS Support Unit was undertaken resulting in the establishment of two additional FTE positions to further support both the development and ongoing work of the Pool.
- 6.8.7 The Northamptonshire Pension Fund transferred its first active fund to the Pool in 2018-19. As at 31st March 2021 the Fund has pooled over 73% of the Fund’s assets, generating annualised fee savings for the 2020/21 financial year resulting from the asset pooling agenda in excess of £1.7m. The Fund’s pooled assets at 31 March 2021 are: -

	£m	% of Fund
UK Equities:		
Majedie – UK Equity	£278.0	(9.1%)
Global Equities:		
Newton – Global Equity	£283.1	(9.2%)
Baillie Gifford – Global Equity	£259.2	(8.5%)
Longview – Global Equity	£250.1	(8.2%)
UBS – Passive Global Equity	£658.1	(21.5%)
Fixed Income:		
UBS Gilts – Passive Fixed Income	£312.0	(10.2%)
Alternatives:		

Baillie Gifford – DGF*	£214.3	(7.0%)
Total pooled assets	£2,254.8	(73.7%)

*Diversified Growth Fund

6.9 Strategic Changes to the Funds Asset Allocation and portfolios.

- 6.9.1 There were no changes to the Fund’s strategic asset allocation in the year, which remained: -
- | | |
|---------------|-----|
| Equities | 55% |
| Fixed Income | 20% |
| Alternatives. | 25% |
- 6.9.2 The 2020/21 financial year continued the Fund’s review of the fixed income allocation which resulted in the appointment of two new multi asset credit mandates with an allocation of 5% each, selected to provide more growth potential. The total allocation to fixed income of 20% was unchanged.
- 6.9.3 There have been no structural changes to the Fund’s actively managed equity mandates. The Fund’s existing managers reflect different investment approaches as below:-
- | | |
|--------|------------------------------------|
| UK | Majedie – No persistent style bias |
| Global | Baillie Gifford – Growth style |
| | Longview – Style neutral |
| | Newton – Thematic/Defensive |
- 6.9.4 All the above actively managed listed equity mandates are managed within the ACCESS asset pool.
- 6.9.5 The Funds passive allocation is split between traditional market capitalisations and “Factor” Funds. The former allocates to geographic indices such as North America, Europe, UK Japan, Asia Pacific and emerging markets and accounts for just over one half of the passive allocation (11% of the Fund as at 31st March 2021) with the remainder focussing on passive style biases such as low volatility, value and quality stocks (10.5%).
- 6.9.6 The Fund’s Alternative allocation is 25% spread across a wide range of asset types. This segment of the mandate covers less liquid investments with long-term commitments in return for expected enhanced returns over more liquid asset classes, commonly referred to as an illiquidity premium. For example, Private Equity is expected to yield 6% above listed equities over time. The allocation within alternatives is further divided as shown: -
- | | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| ▪ Property | 10% |
| ▪ Baillie Gifford - DGF | 5% |
| ▪ Private Equity | 5% |
| ▪ Infrastructure | 5% |
- 6.9.7 The main developments in 2020/21 within the alternatives allocation included maintaining commitments to private equity and a new commitment to a residential property shared ownership fund. The most significant cash flow in the year was the drawdown of £45m for the JP Morgan infrastructure fund to which the fund made a commitment in the prior financial year.

6.10 Review of Investment Strategy Statement

- 6.10.1 The Local Government Pension Scheme (Management and Investment of Funds) Regulations 2016 (“the Regulations”) set out the requirement for the preparation and publication of the Fund’s Investment Strategy Statement (ISS). The ISS sets out the Fund’s investment beliefs, strategic asset allocation, key investment risks and its approach to Responsible Investment (RI) and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) issues.

- 6.10.2 During 2020, the Investment Sub Committee reviewed the Fund's approach to RI, which encompasses both financial and non-financial factors, bringing together ESG factors and broader systemic issues, e.g. climate change and sustainable development, along with active ownership (stewardship) as these can have a material impact on financial performance.
- 6.10.3 The draft ISS was published on the Fund's website for consultation and feedback from interested parties with the final draft to be presented to the Pension Committee in December 2021.

Service Activities of the Pension Committee

6.11 Cyber Resilience

- 6.11.1 Cyber-crime is posing increasingly sophisticated threats to the administration of the Fund. Officers carried out a cyber-security self-assessment using the Aon (the Fund's governance consultants) cyber-security score card. The results were submitted to Aon who have analysed the results and produced a report setting out the recommendations to improve the Fund's cyber resilience.
- 6.11.2 During 2021/22 work has started to map out the Fund's assets and data flows to identify areas of risk and to develop a cyber-strategy/action plan to implement changes that will increase the Fund's resilience to cyber-crime.

6.12 Age Discrimination Remedy

- 6.12.1 In October 2020, the Pension Committee were presented a report on the McCloud judgement following the ruling that the transitional protections offered within the 2013 LGPS regulations have been deemed as discriminatory to younger members of the scheme.
- 6.12.2 The initial transitional protections compared the benefits payable under the current rules compared with those payable from the scheme if the rules hadn't changed in 2014 through the use of an 'underpin'. However, the methodology used within the calculation were more beneficial to older members of the scheme and this was ultimately viewed as age discriminatory.
- 6.12.3 The remedy to address this discrimination as proposed by the then Ministry of Housing Local Government and Communities (now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) is due to be implemented with effect from 1 April 2022 once final amendment regulations have been produced. The remedy is intended to ensure the benefits of unprotected members would be raised rather than the benefits of protected members being reduced.
- 6.12.4 The report also contained details of the impact of the remedy on scheme administration and activities that needed to be undertaken, such as collecting all changes of contractual hours for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2022 from scheme employers to ensure that the proposed remedy is accurately calculated. An implementation plan continues to be worked through to carry out the remedial work required in time for 1 April 2022.

6.13 Reports noted by the Pension Committee

- 6.13.1 During the year the Pension Committee have been presented with various reports. The reports consist of a range of information in relation to the administration to the Fund. The Administration Report in particular, provides the Committee with the performance of the Fund and performance information regarding Scheme Employers. Reports such as Asset Pooling and Risk Monitoring, refer back to the Business Plan whereby progress is reported against a

designated activity. The Governance and Compliance Report is designed as a best practice report whereby compliance can be demonstrated and information provided to the Committee on current issues under discussion. The Employers Admissions and Cessations Report is a report which informs the Committee on employers who enter and exit the Fund and the rationale behind specific types of entry.

- 6.13.2 These reports demonstrate to the Committee that appropriate thought and consideration have been provided to the delegated areas under the Constitution and that the Committee can challenge information further and make recommendations where appropriate.
- 6.13.3 All Pension Committee reports highlight risks associated with the proposal and appropriate mitigations. Risks are monitored throughout the year to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

6.14 Northamptonshire Pension Fund's continued approach to the pandemic

- 6.14.1 During the latter part of the 2019/20 financial year, officers identified the risks facing the Fund as a result of the pandemic and produced a specific log to manage these risks.
- 6.14.2 During 2020/21, officers have continued to monitor and assess the risks with the Pension Committee and Pension Board receiving regular updates.
- 6.14.3 In addition, in July 2020, the Fund's Actuary, Hymans Robertson delivered a verbal briefing to members during the meeting. The briefing focused particularly on the impact of:
- recent market movements on the funding level since the 2019 valuation
 - economic lockdown on employer covenant
 - the impact of potentially higher death rates
- 6.14.4 The briefing aimed to highlight potential short, medium and long term impacts and also suggested actions the Fund could take to mitigate the impacts.
- 6.14.5 Due to officers working from home the biggest impact of the pandemic was to customer service as there was no telephony system in place to make and receive calls for a considerable time. An answer phone system was used to mitigate some of the impact whereby Officers could call members back from work mobiles. This issue has now been resolved with sufficient staff presence within Angel Square to take phone calls. Officers adapted to different working arrangements well with no significant performance issues. Financial impacts on the Fund reversed early on into the pandemic which alleviated initial concerns.

7 Implications (including financial implications)

7.5 Resources and Financial

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

7.6 Legal

- 7.6.1 There are no legal implications arising from the proposals.

7.7 Risk

7.7.1 The mitigated risks associated with this report has been captured in the Fund’s risk register as detailed below -

Risk	Residual risk rating
Information may not be provided to stakeholders as required.	Green
Those charged with governance are unable to fulfil their responsibilities effectively.	Green

7.8 Consultation

7.8.1 Not applicable.

7.9 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.9.1 Not applicable.

7.10 Climate Impact

7.10.1 This report is for information only and therefore has no climate impact. The Fund’s Responsible Investment Policy is contained within its Investment Strategy Statement and sets out how all environmental, social and governance factors, including climate risk, are incorporated into investment decision making.

7.11 Community Impact

7.11.1 Not applicable.

7.12 Communications

7.12.1 Not applicable

8 Background Papers

8.1 Business Plan and Medium Term Strategy 2020/21
 Communication Strategy and Plan
 Data Improvement Policy
 Funding Strategy Statement
 Administration Strategy
 Annual Report and Statement of Accounts
 Investment Strategy Statement

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

2 December 2021

Councillor Malcolm Longley: Cabinet Member for Finance

Report Title	Annual Report of the Local Pension Board
Report Author	Paul Hanson Democratic Services Manager paul.hanson@westnorthants.gov.uk

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

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Chief Finance Officer	Martin Henry	09/11/2021
Communications Lead/Head of Communications		Sent 09/11/2021

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Annual Report of the Local Pension Board

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The Local Government Scheme Advisory Board Guidance on the creation and operation of Local Pension Boards in England and Wales suggests that it is good practice for the Local Pension Board to consider publishing an annual report of the Board's activities for that year. It is consistent with good governance practices that the Board should submit this report to the Council in its capacity as the Administering Authority.

2. Executive Summary

- 1.2. A copy of the Local Pension Board Annual Report is attached at Appendix 1. The report provides a summary of the work of the Board over the past year. Council is asked to note the Annual

Report and raise any comments accordingly. The report has been published on the Council's website and the Pension Fund website.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Council notes the annual report of the Local Pension Board, set out at Section 6 below.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 As stated above, it is good practice for the Local Pension Board to publish an annual report and that this report be submitted to the Council in its capacity as the Administering Authority.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 The Public Services Pensions Act 2013 requires all Public Service Pension Schemes to establish a Local Pension Board. The role of the Board is to assist the Administering Authority (West Northamptonshire Council) to:
- Secure compliance with the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) regulations and other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the LGPS and also the requirements imposed by the Pensions Regulator in relation to the LGPS; and
 - Ensure the effective and efficient governance and administration of the LGPS.
- 5.2 The Local Pension Board is expected to complement and enhance the Council's existing arrangements for administering the pension scheme. It does not replace the existing arrangements and it is not a decision making body. Rather, it is designed to act as a critical friend to the existing Pension Committee and Investment Sub-Committee.
- 5.3 The Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment) (Governance) Regulations 2015 relating to the creation and ongoing operation of local pension boards were laid before Parliament on 28th January 2015 and came into force on 20th February 2015. These regulations required the Administering Authority (then Northamptonshire County Council) to agree the establishment of a Local Pension Board by 1st April 2015. The Northamptonshire Local Pension Board was established on 19 March 2015 and held its first meeting on 6 July 2015. The first meeting of the Board under West Northamptonshire Council was held on 1 July 2021.
- 5.4 The Board's annual report focuses on demonstrating to the Administering Authority that the Board is fulfilling its statutory role by helping the Administering Authority to:
- secure compliance with the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) regulations and other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the LGPS and also the requirements imposed by the Pensions Regulator in relation to the LGPS; and
 - ensure the effective and efficient governance and administration of the LGPS.
- 5.5 Over the course of the past year, the Board has reviewed a range of issues and policies relevant to the scheme, including:
- Pension Service Administration Performance Report;
 - Business Plan updates;
 - Governance and Compliance;

- Risk Monitoring;
- Administration Strategy Review;
- ACCESS pooling update; and
- Pension Fund Communication Plan.

5.6 The report provides a digest of this activity to the Administering Authority for information.

6. Board Membership

6.1 The Board is composed of three employer representatives and three employee representatives:

Employer representatives

- Councillor Ken Pritchard (WNC)
- Julie Petrie (Northampton Partnership Homes)
- Vacancy (NNC)

Employee representatives

- Alicia Bruce (active member, Moulton College)
- Katy Downes (deferred member)
- Kev Standishday (active member, Unison)

6.2 Members who are not appointed by their authorities are recruited via open advertisement to all employers or employees respectively. This ensures the widest possible range of employers or members have the opportunity to apply. Selection is conducted by officers from Finance and Democratic Services teams.

7. Issues and Choices

7.1 The Board's work programme for 2020-21 is set out below.

7.2 Pensions Administration Performance Report

One of the core functions of the Local Pension Board is to ensure the effective and efficient governance and administration of the Scheme. The Board received information on and discussed the following areas:

- Details of key performance indicators (KPIs), whether they had been met and the reasons if they were not met;
- Details of employee and employer contributions timescales and targets;
- Breaches of the law;
- Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure; and
- Employer Admissions and Cessations.

7.2.1 Through these reports, the Board were able to develop an understanding of the authority's performance and the plans in place to improve this performance further. The Board have had the opportunity to challenge the Administering Authority's performance and received information about issues such as breaches of the law. Throughout the period covered by this

report, the Board were satisfied that none of the breaches of the law (such as contribution payments paid outside of the statutory period) were considered to be material in nature.

7.2.2 The Board were pleased to note good progress against KPIs and were satisfied that any issues that had caused KPIs to be missed had been addressed. At their meeting in July 2021 the Board considered a single breach of the law in relation to the refund of pension contribution payments that were paid outside of the statutory period, which was considered to be non-material.

7.2.3 At their meeting in November 2021, the Board received an update on KPIs, receipt of contributions and breaches of the law. The Board noted the IT outage that occurred in mid-August, followed by changes to the WNC firewall, which caused intermittent responsiveness issues with the hosted pensions server until mid to late October. The Board heard that this impacted all casework teams to varying degrees. The Board requested that the Pensions Committee be advised of the issues when they next meet.

7.3 Business Plan updates

7.3.1 It is considered good practice for the Northamptonshire Pension Fund to adopt a Business Plan and Medium-Term Strategy that:

- Sets out the objectives of the Council with regards to the management of the Fund;
- Documents the priorities and improvements to be implemented during the next three years to help achieve those objectives;
- Enables progress and performance to be monitored in relation to those priorities; and
- Provides a clear vision for the next three years.

7.3.2 The Board received regular updates on the Business Plan and Medium Term Strategy including regular updates on staffing and recruitment.

7.3.3 At their meeting in March 2021, the Board were updated on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting action plans. The Board were also updated on work that had been undertaken on cyber-resilience, IT systems and investment strategies.

7.3.4 At their meeting in July 2021, the Board received a full update of the Annual Business Plan and Medium Term Strategy 2021-22 to 2023-24, including:

- Procurement of services;
- Core governance activities;
- Scheme member and data projects;
- Scheme employer projects; and
- Investment related activities

7.3.5 At their meeting in November 2021, the Board received a list of key fund activities for the 2021-22 financial year, as well as variances against forecast investments and administration expenses. The Board also received updates on the re-tendering of strategic investment advisory services, global custody services and pensions administration and pensioner payroll platform. The Board also discussed the development of the fund's cyber resilience strategy.

7.4 Governance and Compliance

7.4.1 It is a requirement for each Administering Authority to have in place a Governance Compliance Statement that sets out whether it delegates its functions, or part of its functions under the Regulations to a committee, a sub-committee or an officer of the authority. The Administering Authority must keep the policy and statement under review and, if revisions are made, it should be published and a copy must be sent to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

7.4.2 The Board received regular updates on Governance and Compliance including details of the following:

- Updates on the impact of the Government's decision to revoke the regulations that had introduced a public sector exit cap;
- Work by the Pensions Regulator to combat pension scams, including the intention of the Northamptonshire fund to sign up to this pledge;
- The Local Government Pension Scheme Advisory Board's Good Governance Review;
- The Pension Regulator's new Code of Practice;
- Skills and knowledge opportunities; and
- The Pension Schemes Act 2021.

7.5 Risk Monitoring

7.5.1 The Board receives regular updates on risk monitoring, including sight of the full risk register. The Board noted the intention to strengthen the management of risks around cyber security and pension scams. At their meeting in July 2021, the Board was advised of proposals to amend the risks in relation to climate change, cyber-crime, governance, conflicts of interest and the impact of data errors.

7.5.2 At their meeting in November 2021, the Board noted an update to the risk relating to the delivery of services due to inadequate recruitment and retention processes. The Board sought assurance about the change to gross and residual risks scores on the basis that the recruitment market was more challenging and there were fewer applications for vacancies. The Board heard that additional recruitment avenues were being utilised, including specialist recruitment agencies.

7.6 Administration Strategy Review

7.6.1 The Board received an update on the review of the Administration Strategy. The Board noted a number of updates that had been made, including:

- Updates to the wording of the objectives within the strategy to ensure these reflect the latest version of the Fund objectives;
- Updates to KPIs where changes have been previously agreed by the Pension Committee;
- Removal of reference to service level agreements; and
- Updates to key activities to reflect current processes.

7.7 Admission Bodies, Scheme Employers and Bulk Transfer Policy

7.7.1 The Board scrutinised the Admission Bodies, Scheme Employers and Bulk Transfer Policy at their meeting in November 2022. The document outlines the Fund's policies regarding the treatment of admitted bodies and scheme employers in a range of scenarios, particularly their entry and exit from the Fund, and the bulk transfer of pension rights into and out of the Fund.

7.8 Training Strategy

7.8.1 The Board reviewed the fund's Training Strategy, the purpose of which is to assist the Pension Committee, Local Pension Board and senior officers to ensure the Fund is managed and assisted by individuals who have the appropriate level of knowledge and skills as required by the Pensions Act 2004 and as enforced by the Pensions Regulator. The Board felt it would be helpful if engagement with online training modules could be monitored in order to ensure there was adequate take up. The board also underlined the importance of training to ensure all parties were equipped with the knowledge necessary to deal with risks related to cyber security.

7.9 Northamptonshire Pension Fund Communications Plan

7.9.1 The Communications Plan outlines the Fund's planned communication activities on a monthly basis for each stakeholder group. As well as setting out planned newsletters, surveys, employer training and web updates, the plan also highlights some of the Fund's key initiatives for the year. The Plan is prepared pursuant to Regulation 61 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013. The Board received an update at their meeting in July 2021.

7.10 ACCESS pooling update

7.10.1 The Board has received regular updates on the ACCESS asset pool, including reports and minutes of the ACCESS Joint Committee.

7.11 Work Programme

7.11.1 The Board's work programme for future meetings is flexible, but is planned to include the following:

Standing items:

- Update on progress in achieving key activities in the Fund's Annual Business Plan and Medium Term Strategy.
- Review of the Fund's administrative performance (KPIs on core activities and timeliness of receipt of employer contributions).
- Update on governance, compliance and legislative changes affecting the administration and management of the LGPS.
- Update on progress made in the government's LGPS asset pooling agenda.
- Review of the Fund's risk register and associated changes.

- Administration Report.
- Business Plan Update.
- Governance and Compliance Report.
- Risk Monitoring.
- Pension Fund Engagement.
- Business Continuity Plan.
- Responsible Investment Policy.
- Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy.

April 2022

- Administration Report.
- Business Plan Update.
- Governance and Compliance Report.
- Risk Monitoring.
- Code of Practice Action Plan.
- Effectiveness Review of the Pension Fund Board.
- Risk Strategy.

8. Implications (including financial implications)

8.1 Resources and Financial

8.1.1 The report is for information only. There are no resources or financial implications arising from the proposals.

8.2 Legal

8.2.1 The report is for information only. There are no legal implications arising from the proposals.

8.3 Risk

8.3.1 The report is for information only. There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

8.4 Consultation

8.4.1 Consultation on the content of the report is undertaken with the Local Pension Board prior to submission to full Council.

8.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

8.5.1 The administration of the Local Government Pension Scheme is a non-executive matter and therefore consideration by Overview and Scrutiny is not required.

8.6 Climate Impact

8.6.1 The report is for information only. There is no significant climate impact arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

8.7 **Community Impact**

8.7.1 The report is for information only. There is no significant community impact arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

8.8 **Communications**

8.8.1 The report is for information only. There are no communication impact arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

9. **Background Papers**

9.1 The agendas and reports of the Local Pension Board are published here: [Browse meetings - Local Pension Board - West Northamptonshire Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)



WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

2 December 2021

Councillor Fiona Baker:
Cabinet Member for Children Families, Education and Skills.

Report Title	Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2020-21
Report Author	Thomas Norford, Corporate Parenting Project Officer, Thomas.norford@nctrust.co.uk

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Communications Lead/Head of Communications	Gavin Moore	16/09/21

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Appendix A - Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2020-21

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This is the Annual Report of the Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board for 2020-21. The report is presented to the Council for information.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The report is structured as follows:

Foreword. From Cllrs Fiona Baker and Scott Edwards.

Executive Summary. Summarising the report as a whole.

Governance and Statutory Context. Sets out the legal underpinning of corporate parenting, and the structure and role of the Board, including in light of the creation of the Trust and creation of two unitary councils.

Life During Lockdown. Sets out actions taken to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children in care and care leavers during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Voice of Children and Young People. Celebrating the work of our participation groups for young people, and showcases some of their artwork.

Our Pledge and what we have achieved. Gives a narrative update in regards to progress against each section of the Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers. Some headline data is included.

The Fostering Service. Updates activity undertaken in the fostering service over the year. Includes some headline data.

The Adoption Service. Updates activity undertaken in the adoption service over the year. Includes some headline data.

NCC Children’s Homes. Brief overview of the purpose and activity of each of the NCC children’s homes, including the new ones.

Commissioning Services. Sets out the work of our commissioning services, such as monitoring accommodation providers and embedding new service developments.

Workforce development. Details some of the activity that is taking place to ensure the Trust has a stable and able workforce.

Demographics. The demographic makeup of our children in care, including ethnicity, legal status and placement types.

Northamptonshire Children’s Trust Improvement Plan. As updated in April 2021. staffing, lower staff turnover and caseloads and positive feedback from staff surveys.

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the Council notes the contents of the report.

4. Reason for Recommendations

4.1 The report is for information, but it is considered good practice for the Council to receive the report in line with the role of each councillors as a corporate parent. The report enables to

Council to take a view of the work being undertaken on its behalf by the Corporate Parenting Board.

5. Report Background

5.1 The report sets out the role, structure and activity of the Board, specifically in terms of our progress against the Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers. The report also details the work of the Children in Care and Care Leavers' Councils, the Fostering and Adoption Services, Commissioning Services and NCC children's homes. Demographic information about our population of children in care and care leavers is also provided, with comparative data for the previous year, along with details of the Children's Services Improvement Plan.

6. Issues and Choices

6.1 No decisions are required.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

7.1.1 There are no resources or financial implications arising from the proposals. The Strategic Finance Business Partner, West Northants has confirmed there are no financial implications contained within the report. The financial performance of the Children's Trust services in 2200-21 spanned both Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) for seven months and the new organisation being delivered via a contract for an agreed sum. The financial aspects of this have been reported to the Council through the Provisional Outturn report that was considered by Cabinet in September 2021 and previously through NCC cabinet

7.2 Legal

7.2.1 There are no legal implications arising from the proposal to note the report.

7.3 Risk

7.3.1 There are no significant risks arising from the proposal to note the report.

7.4 Consultation

7.4.1 The report was submitted to and agreed by the Corporate Parenting Board on the 30th of September. The Board includes the Trust CEO, Director of Children's Services for the Trust and two councils, and both cabinet members for Children and Families.

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.5.1 The Corporate Parenting Board is not a decision making body and does not report directly to a scrutiny committee.

7.6 **Climate Impact**

7.6.1 There is no climate impact arising from the proposal to note the report.

7.7 **Community Impact**

7.7.1 The report considers the safety and wellbeing of Northamptonshire children in care and care leavers, including those living out of county.

7.8 **Communications**

7.8.1 Minor amendments to wording have been made upon the recommendations of the Communications Team. The report has also been reviewed to ensure it is accessible.

8. Background Papers

8.1 None.



Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report

2020–2021

“What we do today affects your tomorrow, we promise to walk side by side with you.”

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Foreword



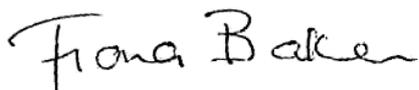
Welcome to the Annual Report of the Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board. This report covers the financial year from April 2020 to March 2021, but also discusses more recent developments as we continue to promote the very best outcomes for our children in care and those moving onto to independent adulthood. Bringing a child into the care system is one of the most serious decisions a local authority can make, so as corporate parents we must deliver the same level of care and support we would want for our own children. This responsibility is expressed through the Board's Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers and reflects the seven Principles of Corporate Parenting set out in legislation.

It has been a challenging year, with the pandemic continuing to bring massive changes to the way we work and the move to two unitary councils fundamentally changing our structure and governance. The formation of a Trust covering the whole county has however enabled continuity for children's social care, while bringing great opportunities and benefits. There is across the Trust the feeling of a fresh start and a renewed sense of purpose, promoted by our Chief Executive Officer Colin Foster's determination to engage directly with staff through regular staff briefings. Our response to the pandemic has been robust, with individual risk assessments and strong multi-agency collaboration ensuring the needs of every child are met. Lockdown accelerated our adoption of new ways of working with each other and our partners, and our staff deserve an enormous amount of the credit for the resilience and tenacity they have shown.

During their monitoring visit in February 2021, Ofsted recognised that our "stable and committed leadership" had made steady improvements for children in care, including disabled children, and our workforce development strategy had helped to achieve lower caseloads for frontline social workers. It was particularly pleasing that Ofsted recognised how we have used the voice of children and young people to develop our services, especially through our Children in Care and Care Leavers Councils.

Considerable challenges remain however, as some children still experience too many changes of social worker, and the Board itself needs further development. Since the local elections in May, the Board has a totally new retinue of elected members who were introduced to their new responsibilities through an engaging training session led by our Assistant Director of Corporate Parenting. Shortly after the elections, every councillor received a leaflet setting out their corporate parenting responsibilities. Board councillors will take a much more proactive role, engaging directly with our workforce and children and young people. We are also delighted that we will soon have a care-experienced young person acting as a full member of the Board, and we anticipate that they will bring a fresh and challenging perspective to our work.

Finally, as we look forward to building on the improvements we have already made, we would like to take this opportunity to extend a warm thanks to all of the former elected members of Board who have worked tirelessly to improve outcomes for our children and young people.



Fiona Baker,

West Northamptonshire Council's Executive Member for Children, Families, Education and Skills and Chair of the Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board.



Scott Edwards

Council's Executive Member for Children, Families, Education and Skills and Chair of the Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board.

Executive Summary

Northamptonshire's Corporate Parenting Board provides oversight and challenge to services for children in care and care leavers. It is made up of elected members from West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) and North Northamptonshire Council (NNC), Northamptonshire Children's Trust officers, and representatives from partner agencies. The Board is not a statutory body, but carries out a number of oversight duties that are required by legislation. Although the former eight councils within the county have been replaced by two new unitary councils, the Board remains a single entity covering the whole of Northamptonshire. Children's services also continue to be delivered across the county by a single entity, the Trust, which is owned by both councils but has independent leadership. The move to a Trust has brought many benefits, including a renewed sense of purpose among staff and continuity for our children and young people. Progress we have made on our improvement journey can be seen in detail in Appendix 2. The Trust also continues to embed and promote the Signs of Safety methodology. This whole-system approach to social work focusses on building strengths and relationships with children and families. Find out more at [Signs of Safety online](#).

The Covid-19 pandemic brought immense challenges to children's services in the county, but also a suite of benefits. A range of measures, including dynamic risk assessments and multi-agency leadership meetings, helped ensure every child and young person open to our services was safe and continued to receive the best possible service. Lockdown accelerated our adoption of technology, sickness levels decreased and staff reported their appreciation for strong communication and leadership from senior management. Successful measures introduced to stabilise accommodation placements during lockdown are now being assimilated into everyday practice. As the country recovers and moves to towards something like normality, face to face contact with all children and families is again our default way of working.

The Board continues to oversee services through the lens of the Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers. This is a set of promises we have made directly to our children and young people and it broadly covers the areas of health, accommodation, relationships, education, moving on to independence and participation. Health services have of course been under huge pressure due to Covid-19 and the timeliness of health assessments has been variable as a result. However, the quality of these

assessments remains very high, reasons for late assessments are well understood and colleagues are working hard to improve efficiency. Our multi-agency specialist health teams provide a wide range of services to children and young people, particularly in regards to emotional wellbeing and mental health. Much focus remains on meeting the health needs of particular cohorts of children, including those living out of county, children from overseas who are separated from their families and those at risk of exploitation.

Children and young people need a safe, stable home in order to thrive and in recent years we have tenaciously promoted permanence for all children at the earliest possible stage. Placement breakdowns have decreased and we have seen increasing numbers of children leaving care due to having a permanent arrangement, such as a special guardianship order. Most of our children in care live in a family environment, many of those with extended family members. Only around a quarter of children in care are living out of the county which compares well with our statistical neighbours. New Resilience Foster Carers are helping to provide high level care in-county for children with complex issues and we have increased the scrutiny upon placements that are not regulated by Ofsted.

Coming into care can have a profound impact on children's relationships with the people and places that are important to them, and we know that having a trusted adult to turn to can mitigate the effects of trauma in early life. Lockdown opened up new ways of facilitating contact for children with their workers and families but we have now returned to face to face contact as the default option. Our stable team of Independent Reviewing Officers and our increasing numbers of Independent Visitors provide children and young people with consistent adults who will listen to them, provide mentorship and act on their behalf to challenge the services they receive. Developments within our workforce have meant lower caseloads for social workers and personal advisers, meaning they can devote more time to doing what they do best: working with children and young people. *How* we do this is of course of paramount importance, and the Signs of Safety methodology helps us meet children's needs by building relationships with them and their families.

As with the Trust, Northamptonshire's Virtual School remains a single entity covering the whole county, promoting the educational attainment of children and young people. This means challenging education settings and the Trust where necessary, ensuring Personal Education Plans are aspirational, scrutinising

the use of government funding and providing a range of training and participation activities.

As children in care move on to independence, they receive a high level of support from our specialist leaving care teams. Personal advisers work with young people to develop an individual pathway plan which sets out their needs, future goals and how to achieve them. Complementing the Signs of Safety approach, we have adopted the New Belongings programme, which simply means utilising the experience and knowledge of young people themselves to help develop our services. Two care-experienced young people have joined the services as Apprentice Champions, one focussed on accommodation, the other on emotional wellbeing. A huge range of support is available for these young people, such as financial support for education equipment, help with preparing for job interviews, wellbeing sessions, the Independent Living Programme and support with finding a place to live. We have also secured agreement for care leavers to be exempt from council tax up to the age of 25. All such support is set out in the Local Offer to Care Leavers, available online. We continue to compare well with statistical neighbours and England as a whole in terms of the proportion of care leavers who are in suitable accommodation and in employment, education or training.

It is vital that we continue to centre the voices of children and young people in everything we do, both in terms of individual case-work and in developing our services. The Children in Care and Care Leavers Councils provide strong representation for children in care and it was pleasing that Ofsted recognised how the groups have helped shape our work. Our children and young people can communicate with us in a number of ways, including through their statutory reviews, online resources, through the fostering panel review process and of course through the relationship building of good social work practice. We are also pleased to soon be rolling out the Mind of My Own mobile app across the Trust which will help children and young people share their feelings in a way that is comfortable for them at a time of their choice.

Children and young people continue to help us develop our services through, for example: helping to interview potential new members of staff, assessing accommodation providers and developing the trust's Vision and business plan. We will soon have a care-experienced young person as a full member of Board and we continue to promote our participation schemes such as the Young Inspectors Programme.

Nationally foster carers and adopters are in all too short supply, and our adoption and fostering services work hard to make sure there are sufficient homes available for children. Through innovative recruitment, retention campaigns and service developments, we have increased the proportion of children placed with people already known to them and have more carers who are able to care for children with complex needs. More of our foster carers are now in-house compared to the previous year and children are matched with adopters in a timely way. While the number of newly approved adopters has decreased from the previous year, this is in the context of pressures on the courts brought by Covid-19 and a shift towards other means of permanence such as special guardianship orders. All carers have access to a suite of mandatory and optional training modules and we continue to access the Adoption Support Fund in order to provide therapeutic interventions to children with particularly acute needs.

Our children's homes continue to provide valuable support to young people, whether helping them achieve independence, manage their emotions, or return to the care of their families. Arnold House provides specialist care for children on the autistic spectrum and Thornton House provides short term

emergency provision with intensive support. Phoenix House, Welford House and Raven House provide a more mainstream function while still meeting the needs of young people with emotional and behavioural issues through individualised packages of support.

Our dynamic commissioning services continue to undertake a wide range of functions, including overseeing our participation groups, identifying needs, monitoring accommodation providers and implementing new services. Working with young people is central to these processes, and they have helped to create new commissioning frameworks and evaluate our providers. Lockdown has led to stronger working relationships with the organisations we commission, and we continue to hold training events and workshops to ensure that through them we provide the best possible care to children and young people.

All the activity outlined above has been dependent on a stable, skilled and motivated workforce. Through a range of initiatives, we have made the Trust a great place to work, where staff feel supported and able to share concerns and good practice. The positive benefits can be seen in our increased level of permanent staffing, lower staff turnover and caseloads and positive feedback from staff surveys.

Governance and Statutory Context

What is corporate parenting? Local authorities and their partners are responsible for ensuring that children in care are as safe and well cared for as any other child. This responsibility is called “corporate parenting” and applies equally to children who have entered the UK from overseas and are separated from their families. Corporate parenting duty rests not only with social workers and their managers, but also any other agency that provides services and support to children in care such as health services, housing departments, the police and schools. Corporate parents actively promote the same goals that any good parent wants for their child. Good parenting does not simply stop once a child turns 18, so corporate parents also have specific duties to those young people leaving care and making the journey to independence.

Legal background. The collective responsibility for local authorities was first laid out in the Children Act 1989 and the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000. The central role of the council as an effective corporate parent has been emphasised by government in the publications *Care Matters: Time for Change* (DCSF 2007), *Care Matters: Time to Deliver* (DCSF 2008), and consolidated in aspects of the Children and Young Persons Act (2008). Other legislation and statutory guidance that determine our duties include:

- Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010 Children and Adoption Act 2006
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 (as amended by the Adoption and Care Planning (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2014
- The Children’s Homes (England) Regulations 2015
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013
- Adoption and Care Planning (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2014
- The Care Planning and Fostering (Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) Regulations 2015
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2000

Principles of corporate parenting. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 provided a welcome distillation of corporate parenting responsibilities through seven principles of corporate parenting. Local authorities and their partners are required:

1. To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being of those children and young people;
2. To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;
3. To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;
4. 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;
5. To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people;
6. For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
7. To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

The principles do not represent new duties as such, but are designed to help local authorities and their partners fully comply with the existing duties. The Act did however introduce some new responsibilities relating to children in care and care leavers. These include a requirement to publish a 'Local Offer to Care Leavers,' setting out the services available to young people leaving care, extend the provision of personal adviser support to all care leavers up to the age of 25 and to provide education advice and guidance to young people formerly in care. The Act also introduces a number of requirements to ensure that court processes are focussed on long term plans for and specific needs of the child.

The Care Leavers Charter. The Care Leavers' Charter is a set of promises to care leavers, published by the Government in 2012. It is "Designed to raise expectation, aspiration and understanding of what care leavers need and what the government and local authorities should do to be good corporate parents." The Charter will "Remain constant through any changes in legislation, regulation and guidance."

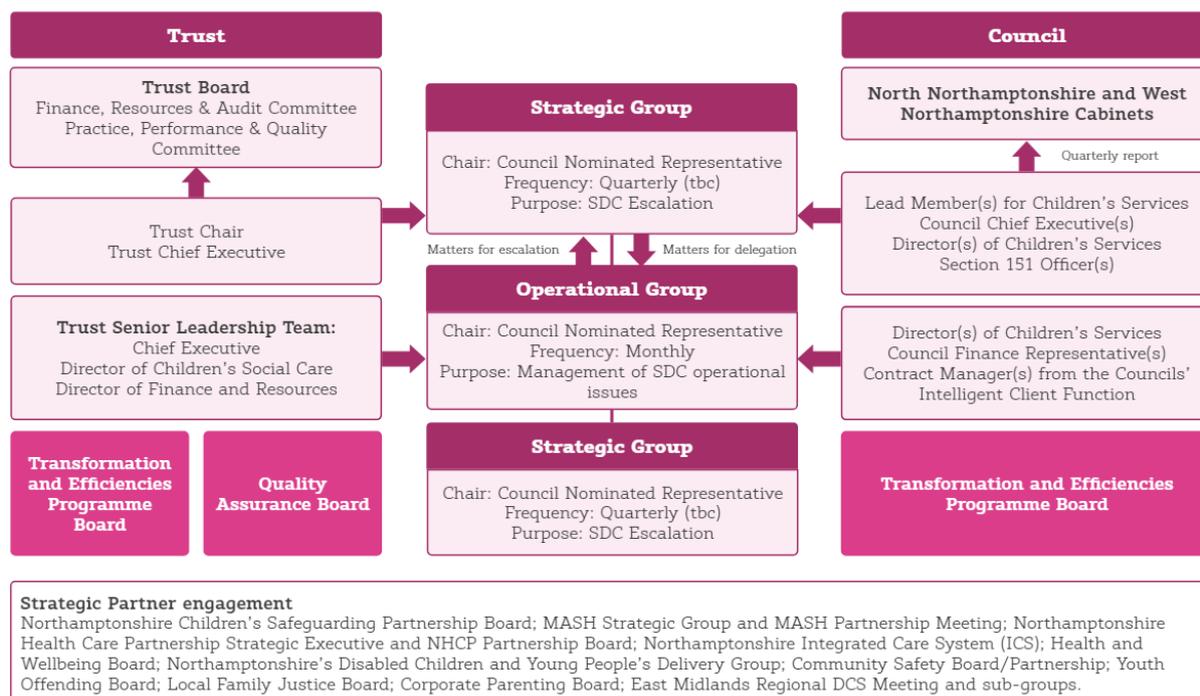
We promise:

- To respect and honour your identity
- To listen to you
- To believe in you
- To inform you
- To be a lifelong champion
- To support you
- To find you a home

The Trust and the move to unitary authorities. Government legislation passed in February 2020 determined that from April 2021, Northamptonshire County Council and the seven district and borough councils would be formally replaced by two new councils, NNC and WNC. The priority during this enormous undertaking was to ensuring that our vital services were safe and legal from day one. Some services which were delivered by different councils were brought together through the process (aggregated), whereas others which were delivered by the county council were split (disaggregated).

Northamptonshire Children's Trust was established on the 1st of November 2020 to deliver children's social care across the county. It is owned by West and North Northamptonshire councils but in order to achieve operational independence it has its own board of directors which sets strategic aims for the Trust, oversees its management and holds the executive team to account. Cathi Hadley fulfils the statutory role of Director of Children's Services for both councils and Colin Foster is the Chief Executive Officer for the Trust.

Northamptonshire Children's Trust governance arrangements



Our Corporate Parenting Board. The Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board is a non-statutory body which meets at least every two months to ensure that through the Trust, the councils and their partners are meeting their corporate parenting responsibilities. The Board is made up of a cross-party selection of councillors, Trust officers and external partners and is accountable to the full councils.

Updates from service leads are presented to the Board in the context of how we are fulfilling our Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers. A number of reports are presented to the Board such as annual reports from the Virtual School, health colleagues and our Independent Reviewing Officers. One-off reports based on discussions at Board are also presented, for example when a councillor seeks reassurance around a particular area of service. Although the Board itself is not a statutory body, statute requires that certain areas of children's services supply regular reports to an appropriate oversight body, so the Board fulfils this function. The Board links closely with the quarterly Health Network Meeting, the Virtual School Advisory Group and of course our young people's participation groups.

The Board holds “deep dive” thematic sessions around specific topics, such as youth offending services for our children and young people. Led by invited subject experts including young people, these serve an educative function as well as driving discussion and service development. An important function of the Board that should not be underestimated is also to celebrate the achievements of children and young people, as any good parent would.

Life During Lockdown

The Covid-19 pandemic has posed challenges to all of us. While children are mercifully at lower risk from the virus itself, lockdown may exacerbate the risks to the most vulnerable members of society. Young people leaving care for example all too often experience loneliness as they move into independent living, and lockdown may increase their sense of isolation. From the time of the first lockdown, our children's services were acutely aware of the need to ensure that services to our children and young people were maintained, while protecting our staff.

As lockdown descended, a multidisciplinary team of senior officers from a range of agencies formed a working group that focussed on the needs of our children and young people. The group initially met on a daily basis, later moving to weekly. All children and young people who were receiving a service from us were assigned a risk rating of high, medium or low which was used to determine the level and means of ongoing contact with them. Risk assessments were of course subject to ongoing assessment, rather than being static.

High risk cases were those:

- Who were subject to a child protection plan.
- Who were deemed to be children in need receiving support under Section

17 of the Children's Act.

- Who were living in placements unregulated by Ofsted or living in a placement with safeguarding concerns.

Face to face meetings, assessments and meetings were prioritised for this group.

Medium risk were those:

- Who required specific support, without which their health and development may be affected.
- Were part of a family which would fall into a category of greater need without support.
- Were children in care at risk of placement breakdown or where there were complicating factors and the child and carers needed social work support.
- With limited support networks or who had recently left care establishments.

For these children and young people, we used technology to facilitate virtual visits where appropriate.

Low risk children and young people were those:

- Who were children in care in settled and stable placements.
- With established support networks, income and safe homes.

Critical roles within children's services were established to determine which members of staff needed to remain centrally located, and a number of staff were redeployed temporarily to meet service need. Changes of placements for children in care were halted unless absolutely necessary to maintain continuity of care while foster carers were supported in their roles. Independent visitors were also supported to explore new ways of maintaining contact with their children and young people. Our commissioning services arranged weekly calls to key accommodation providers to ensure they were supported, particularly when they reported cases of Covid-19. Education represents, for many vulnerable children, a haven of safety and stability. Therefore, promoting school attendance where possible was a priority, along with ensuring children had the right equipment to work at home if necessary.

We continue to learn and implement the lessons from the pandemic as the country moves towards recovery. Since September 2020 we have returned to face to face contact as the default way of working with children and young people, with technology remaining an option. As at 20th of April 2020, 93per cent of education settings were open for

vulnerable children and children of key workers, which compared well with national figures. For September 2020, 89per cent of vulnerable learners were attending school. Practice Week during July 2020 included analysing the impact of the pandemic upon children in care and the young people involved provided great insights into the quality of our work and where we need to strengthen.

While bringing great pressures, lockdown presented an opportunity to test the strengths and limitations of new virtual ways of working and improve staff familiarity with new technologies. Workforce stability and performance in many areas improved during this period: caseloads were reduced for example through better use of resources, partnership working with other agencies improved, and sickness levels decreased. Through staff surveys, many workers have spoken of their appreciation for the strong communication and leadership from senior managers. Collaboration with our key accommodation providers is ongoing in order to understand and build upon the factors that allowed us to reduce changes of placement for children while maintaining safety and high quality care.

The Voice of Children and Young People

Children and young people are at the centre of everything we do, so we make sure they have a voice both in their own lives and more widely in how the services that affect them are shaped. The Children in Care Council, (known as Speak Out Together) and the Care Leavers' Councils (Shout Out Loud), are our two main participation groups for any children and young people with experience of being in care. We also have our brilliant Shooting Stars group for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities. During the year, the groups have been involved in all sorts of activities and produced a lot of brilliant work, some of which is set out below.

Artwork created by the Shooting Stars group



Artwork created by the Children in Care and Care Leavers Councils for the Family Justice Conference in January 2021, highlighting how it feels to be in care and what the courts need to know about what is important to them.



Artwork submitted for the 2020 children and young people's creative arts festival. A showcase event to celebrate our young people's work was held on YouTube in December, hosted by CEO Colin Foster.



Our Pledge and what we have achieved

The Board's Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers reflects our aspirations for them and what they have told us is important. Each section of the Pledge has a lead officer responsible for ensuring it is met and Board members are expected to consider how their work helps meet the Pledge and has a demonstrable impact in the real world. The sections below set out the work that has been undertaken to meet each section of the Pledge during the reporting period.

A note on statistical neighbours. Every local authority is designated a number of other authorities with similar demographics, known as statistical neighbours. Where available, authorities can compare their own data with the average of these similar authorities. For the reporting period Northamptonshire's statistical neighbours were Kent, Nottinghamshire, Swindon, Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Essex, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Lancashire and Medway.

We will help you be physically and emotionally healthy

We will have achieved this when:

- You have the right support for your physical, mental and emotional wellbeing and you do not have to wait too long for it.
- The adults close to you understand your needs.
- You have a good understanding of your health needs and history, when you are in care and when you leave care.

Sadly, children in care nationally are more likely to experience poor physical and emotional health outcomes. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), such as abuse and neglect, can have a profoundly deleterious effect upon physical development, emotional wellbeing and even life expectancy. However, protective factors, particularly consistent, trusted adults can mitigate this, and as corporate parents we must ensure the health needs of our children are understood

and addressed through tailored, high quality health assessments and plans. Our specialist health team includes a Designated Nurse for Looked After Children who links closely with the Board and the Safeguarding Partnership and supplies an annual report to the Board. All emotional wellbeing and mental health referrals are discussed at the weekly ATLAS meeting, a multiagency forum which includes representatives from the fostering service, senior Trust managers and psychologists. The quarterly Health Network Meeting is another

multiagency forum, in which health performance is reviewed and strategies are implemented to improve health outcomes for children.

Young people consistently tell us that their mental health and emotional wellbeing are hugely important to them.

Northamptonshire's specialist Looked After Child Mental Health Team provides specialist support to our children and young people. It is a multi-agency team incorporating Trust colleagues, paediatricians, specialist nurses and professionals from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). The service has no specific referral criteria and carries out a range of interventions tailored to the individual. At the time of writing the service has around 300 cases. Complementing this service is a range of other provision in the county such as wellbeing cafes, youth counselling services and the Ask Normen website for advice and signposting to services. A chat health service is also available and more recently a new service, Mental Health in Schools, has been rolled out to address lower level emotional wellbeing concerns. Young people leaving care receive a written Health Summary which provides them with details of their health history and ongoing needs, as well as contact details of their health professionals and how to access help. The summary is accompanied by the new Useful Tips for a Healthy You guide which features

advice written specifically for young people to help them stay well.

Northamptonshire children in care continue to receive high quality initial and annual health assessments which are used to inform an individual health plan, which in turn feeds in to the overall care plan. Perhaps unsurprisingly the timeliness of health assessments has been highly variable during the pandemic due to the enormous pressures faced by NHS staff. While the majority of late assessments were due to staff availability, some were due to children or their carers having to self-isolate. All exceptions are well understood on a case by case basis and we continue to work with health colleagues to overcome barriers to timeliness, not least through increased staffing and improved data-sharing so needs are anticipated. Improved processes now in place mean that children in care who arrive from out of the county are flagged by specialist nurses or health visitors to our specialist team. Health visitor champions have also helped promote a greater understanding of the needs of children in care, improving the quality of information from that service. Similarly, NHS England has written to all NHS dentists to urge them to prioritise the needs of children in care, for example by accommodating short notice requests for appointments by foster carers.

As a demographic, the health profile of Northamptonshire children in care shows that:

- 8.3 per cent live with asthma, the biggest single health condition,
- 4 per cent have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder,
- just under 3 per cent have an autistic spectrum disorder, and
- 0.7 per cent have special educational needs or a disability.

The health needs of children from overseas who are separated from their families remain an acute concern. These young people, who are often among those most aspirational in our population, have sometimes suffered the most profound trauma and are more likely to suffer physical ailments such as blood borne diseases. Support for these children includes counselling from NHS Service Six, community

based support and sleep packs to help them feel settled. During the reporting period, a new health pathway was developed to ensure that children from overseas in the north of the county are screened for blood borne diseases.

Current health priorities include improving our capacity to meet the needs of children living out of the county, improving follow-up care for children referred to the Reducing Instances of Sexual Exploitation (RISE) team and developing a more detailed understanding of the health needs of the local population. The fortnightly multidisciplinary meeting of senior managers, instigated in response to the pandemic, has continued to work well in identifying cases of concern.

We will make sure you are living in the right place

We will have achieved this when:

- You are living with people who understand you, care for you well and build a positive relationship with you.
- You have a safe and stable home life.
- Where you are living does not affect how well you are looked after.

Every child has the right to a safe, stable and loving home. Preferably, this means living with their family. If this is not possible, then exploring the caring potential of the wider

family is thoroughly assessed before a placement in foster or residential care is arranged. When a child comes into care every effort is made to keep them close to the

people and places that matter to them. To avoid drift and delay for children, different accommodation options are planned in parallel.

At the end of March 2021:

- 72 per cent of our children in care were living in foster placements,
- nearly 20 per cent of those with family or people already connected to them.

During the reporting period:

- 29 per cent of children leaving care left due to having a permanent arrangement, such as adoption or a special guardianship order. This is a rise from 24.4 per cent the previous year.

The percentage of children who have in been in care for more than 2.5 years who have lived in the same placement for over two years dipped slightly, from 63 per cent to 62.4 per cent. Moving children back to their birth families has been more difficult due to the pandemic, however this period has helped to improve the stability of our placements, with breakdowns having reduced. Analysis of this trend is being used to turn actions taken during the pandemic into improved business-as-usual practice.

We continue to compare well with our statistical neighbours in terms of how many children live out of the local authority area. This figure has remained stable at around 25 per cent compared with 32 per cent for our statistical neighbours. However, when our children live out of the county they are more likely than those looked after by our statistical neighbours to be living over 20 miles from their original home. This is in part a consequence of the different local authority sizes in question.

Finding the right place to live for the increasing numbers of children with complex needs is a major challenge, however Northamptonshire has recruited specialised Resilience Foster Carers trained to meet the needs of children aged 10 to 18 who need extra support. So they can provide the best level of care, all Trust foster carers undergo a high level of training, including around child sexual exploitation, child development and safeguarding. All foster carers also receive close support from a named supervising social worker. 35 per cent of our foster places are in-house as opposed to supplied by an agency, compared to 30 per cent the previous year.

Increased scrutiny upon unregulated placements with fortnightly meetings of senior management is helping to minimise such placements and oversee risk

management plans. Any emergency placements at unregulated venues must be authorised at director level. For more details around how we ensure children have a safe

and stable home, see the fostering and adoption sections of this report.

We will make sure you have great relationships in your life

We will have achieved this when:

- You have regular contact with those who are important to you, as long as it's safe.
- You understand why you are in care and are involved with the plans that affect your life.
- We are warm and courteous towards you, do what we say we will, and respect your culture and identity.
- You have enough quality time with the adults (social worker, personal adviser, teacher, doctor, nurse) who are there to support you, at a time that is convenient to you.
- Changes of social worker or personal adviser are avoided wherever possible. Any changes are explained to you and you are introduced to the new person properly.

Many of our children and young people have been badly let down by the adults in their lives, so it is vital that as corporate parents we ensure they have trusted adults they can turn to. Research demonstrates that this is a major protective factor for children who have undergone adverse childhood experiences. In practice this means developing new relationships between children and their social workers and independent visitors for example, as well as strengthening or repairing pre-existing relationships with family members.

affect children's valued relationships with siblings, pets and school. To reflect the views of children and young people, our dedicated contact service has been renamed the Family Time Service. Lockdown meant that interactions between children and young people in care and their family took place via technology in many cases, based on risk assessment. The impact of this virtual contact was closely monitored in cooperation with CAFCASS, the judiciary and parents. As of September 2021, face to face contact is now the default position.

Every effort must also be made to make sure that coming into care does not adversely

Young people have told us that their relationships with their workers are really important to them. They want adults they can

trust and they do not want to have to tell their story to multiple workers over and over again. This is why having a stable, capable workforce is so important and why every interaction with children and young people must count. Social care recruitment is a national issue, however our specialist recruitment team and campaigns have seen ongoing increases in the proportion of our social care staff who are permanently employed (see Workforce Development section for more details). A stable workforce has meant that within the specialist children in care teams, caseloads have consistently remained below the target maximum of 22 and there have been no unallocated cases across the Trust since December 2019. Our highly experienced Independent Reviewing Officers continue to work as part of a stable team, providing a valuable source of consistency to children and young people. We continue to develop the next generation of talent through our Social Work Academy.

Our social workers work hard to build trusting, positive relationships with their children and young people. Understandably however, many children are wary of the adults in their lives and feel their worker is only taking an interest in them because they are paid to do so. This is why voluntary independent visitors (IVs) are so valuable, as they act as an independent person who is

simply there to be a friend. Our IV team matches young people with an IV based on hobbies, needs and personality. IVs commit to linking with a young person for at least two years but the relationship usually lasts much longer. Currently 47 young people are matched with an IV and we are about to launch a recruitment campaign via social media.

While harder to quantify, the way we interact with children and young people is just as important as meeting targets. Our Signs of Safety approach was launched across children's services in 2017 and since then we have continued working hard to embed and develop the methodology, led by our Principal Social Worker and Signs of Safety Ambassadors. Signs of Safety is a whole-system approach which seeks to build relationships with children and families. This means adapting existing processes and forms (for example addressing children directly in statutory review reports) and developing new tools and ways of working. Helping children to understand their situation and providing reassurance is central to the methodology, and a large suite of tools is used for this purpose, such as the three houses model in which children express how they feel through their House of Worries, House of Good Things and House of Dreams.

We will make sure you get a good education

We will have achieved this when:

- You are achieving the best you can.
- You have a stable school where you feel safe.
- You feel part of your school community and are able to take part in clubs and activities.
- You have adults who understand your needs and put the right things in place to support them.

Nationally, children in care have poorer educational outcomes than their peers although research shows that coming into care generally has a positive impact on their attainment. Regardless, corporate parents are obliged to do all they can to narrow the attainment gap between children in care and the general population. As well as their usual education setting, all children in care are enrolled in a Virtual School. This is a local authority team with a remit to promote the education of children in care and care leavers. In practice this means ensuring best use is made of government funding allocated to the education of children in care, promoting high quality Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and providing training to education settings, carers and others. The Virtual School Advisory Panel meets termly and includes members of the Corporate Parenting Board and professionals from Northamptonshire education settings and services. This offers high level scrutiny and support as a 'critical friend' to the Virtual School.

The timeliness and quality of PEPs remains a central focus of the Virtual School. These important documents set out how the educational needs of children in care will be met, and provide a way for progress to be tracked. The PEP is a statutory element of the child's overall care plan and is created collaboratively by the Designated Teacher, social services and the child. As of the 2021 spring term:

- 96 per cent of children in care of statutory school age had a PEP, down slightly from 98 per cent the previous term.
- 67 per cent of these PEPs were rated as good by the Virtual School, up from 58 per cent, with
- 31 per cent requiring improvement and
- 2 per cent rated inadequate.

New tools are now in place which allow the Virtual School to monitor and respond to issues experienced by children and young people, such as low attendance and potential

exclusions. The Virtual School responds robustly to such issues, challenging school settings where necessary and helping to implement alternative measures. There were 69.5 days of education lost to fixed term exclusions for children in care during the 2021 spring term, compared to 436.5 for the whole of the 2019-20 academic year. Given the importance of stability for children coming into care, the Virtual School takes an active role in minimising changes of school when decisions around children's living arrangements are being made. The Virtual School also oversees the Bridging Programme which helps children from overseas who are separated from their families to learn English and integrate into education.

The Virtual School continues to offer a substantial training programme to carers and educational professionals, including courses around the effect of attachment issues on educational attainment. 58 people including 28 Designated Teachers attended courses in the 2021 spring term. Other courses include Promoting the Education of Previously Looked After Children for parents and guardians, and courses around effective Personal Education Plans. The Virtual School now also has a dedicated Inclusion Officer for Mental Health, who works with schools to help them support

mental health issues including for children who display challenging behaviour.

The 2021 Easter break saw the reintroduction of face to face participation events, including a multi-sport programme. A range of online events also continued. These participation events are highly popular, with over 100 young people participating during the spring term and many providing positive feedback. "I really enjoyed the activity and the staff were amazing thank you." (young person).

Among the primary school-aged cohort, where data was available:

- 72 per cent were at or above the expected level for maths compared to 68 per cent the previous term,
- 69 per cent for reading, up from 68 per cent, and
- 66 per cent for writing, up from 62 per cent

For secondary school-aged children:

- 71 per cent were at or above the expected level for English compared to 72 per cent the previous term, and
- 63 per cent for maths down from 65 per cent.

We will help you prepare for the future

We will have achieved this when:

- As you become independent, you have a suitable place to live which feels like a proper home.
- You are in education, employment or training, helping you reach your potential.
- You are helped to manage your money effectively and get the right benefits.
- You have access to leisure services and can get around easily.
-

For all young people, making the transition to independent adulthood represents a significant change. In light of their lived experience, evidence suggests that care leavers may have extra needs during this time. Nationally, leavers are more likely than the general population to turn to drug use or criminality, suffer mental health issues and experience homelessness. Our dedicated leaving care service is staffed with a retinue of personal advisors, who focus on working with young people to create pathway plans that meet their immediate needs as well as setting out their longer term goals and how to achieve them. Two Independent Reviewing Officers now have a lead responsibility towards young people approaching adulthood.

Particular areas of focus for care leavers include giving them the skills they need to prepare for adulthood and live independently, ensuring adequate housing options are available, promoting education, employment and training opportunities and achieving financial stability. Services available to care

leavers are set out in the Local Offer to Care Leavers, which is regularly updated as new services go live and is available through the Young Northants website.

At the end of March 2021, 93.8% of our care leavers aged 17 to 21 were living in accommodation deemed suitable, compared to 89% the previous year. While this is positive, it is important that beyond a base level of suitability, young people live in a place which feels like a home, within a community they feel part of. Any young people at risk of homelessness and rough sleeping are monitored closely through regular management oversight meetings and daily tracking, and these have thankfully been few in number. The move to two unitary councils has created an opportunity for closer working with housing services. At the time of writing a new joint social care housing protocol for the prevention of homelessness for care leavers is being developed. A new service framework for Independent Support Accommodation was launched early in 2021, and this will be

summarised in a short guide for young people so they know what support they can expect.

Lockdown accelerated our move towards communicating more effectively with our care leavers and communication channels through Facebook and WhatsApp groups are now in place. Many young people wish to access their social services records and we have a dedicated Subject Access Records Service (SARS) which, along with their personal adviser, helps them do so with tact and in line with data protection regulations.

Lockdown has impacted care leavers in terms of education, employment and training (EET) opportunities, however at the end of March 2020 59% of care leavers aged 17 to 21 were in EET, continuing an overall improvement over the last two years and slightly above the latest England average of 55%. Prospects remain our contracted service to promote EET for care leavers and they collaborate with our dedicated working group, as does the Virtual School. The Board regularly enjoys hearing about the achievements of individual young people who have left care, from securing high-flying university places to charity work and promising new careers.

A suite of support is available to care leavers to help them access EET opportunities, such as help preparing for interviews, links to

mentors who have studied similar university degrees and financial support for transport, clothes and equipment. Northampton University also now offers our young people free accommodation in their halls of residence. The Trust employs two care-experienced young people as Apprentice Champions, one focussing on housing, the other on emotional wellbeing and mental health. For care leavers with disabilities or other specific needs, closer working relationships are being developed with adult services, and other stakeholders such as the police and housing services.

Our ASDAN-accredited Independent Living Programme continues to help young people to gain the skills they need to live independently, such as cooking and budgeting, and is now accompanied by a guide available through the Young Northants website. Individual pathway plans set out the specific needs of young people and how these are to be addressed. Our working protocol with Jobcentre Plus aims to ensure that access to benefits is as seamless as possible, while encouraging young people to seek fulfilling, stable work and training. More widely, a range of financial support is available to young people, including statutory grants and allowances, as well as help with things like driving lessons, leisure activities and birthdays gifts. We also support all care leavers to open a bank account, acquire a national insurance

number, enrol to vote and we are delighted that a policy of council tax exemption for care leavers has been agreed and is currently being embedded via a pilot in the north of the county.

We are aspirational for our young people and want them to achieve great things. In late 2020 we held a competition on the theme of aspiration, challenging young people to impress us in whatever way they chose. The response was fantastic, with musical performances, cooking demonstrations and all sorts of artwork. The competition concluded with an online showcase event led by the Trust Chief Executive. In November 2020, a young person spoke movingly to the Board about how the service had helped her and her aspirations:

“At 14 I went into care and I thought it was the end of any aspiration I had. I thought it meant I couldn't do things other people could do and accepted that my fate was going to be very dull. I was a troubled child and always rebelled but had a heart of gold and still had some hope I could one day overcome being in care. After being in care for some time I realised I was heavily supported and I still had the opportunities I was convinced I wouldn't have. I am 19 now and I've come a long way. I've achieved things I would only dream of.”

We will involve you in developing our services and holding us to account

We will have achieved this when:

- We celebrate your successes.
- We actively seek and take account of your views, wishes and feelings to improve our services to you.
- You can access useful and accurate information about services available and the people who can support you.
- You feel able to share complaints compliments and comments about our services.
- There is a range of opportunities for you to get involved to with helping to improve all services to children and young people.

Good social work means listening to children and young people and involving them in decisions, both individually and in terms of identifying trends and setting strategic direction. We are making great strides to achieve this and as Ofsted noted after their monitoring visit in February 2021:

“The inspirational Children in Care Council works relentlessly to participate in designing service improvements, with support from senior leaders. Children were very proud to show inspectors their work and gave many powerful examples of the positive impact that they are having on developing and improving services.”

As discussed earlier, continuing to embed Signs of Safety helps ensure that children’s voices are heard and acted upon through positive working relationships. This methodology brings with it a suite of useful tools through which children can express their feelings in a way that is comfortable to them. In collaboration with the Children in Care and Care Leaver Councils, further tools have also been developed to help young people communicate with us, such as posters about the complaint process and new one-page profiles to facilitate children being matched with a placement that is right for them. The

Young Northants website remains a valuable source of information for all children in the county, with dedicated sections for children in care and care leavers and ways of getting in touch. The Board continues to celebrate the successes of our young people through a regular report, and by rewarding young people with shopping vouchers and certificates signed by the chairs and the Trust CEO.

As well as their primary worker, children are encouraged to share their views through other points of contact with the Trust. Independent Reviewing Officers now include a letter directly addressed to the child as part of their review report for example, and fostering panels actively seek feedback from children for foster carer household reviews. Research demonstrates that children, particularly teenagers, often prefer to communicate through electronic means, and we are excited to be rolling out the Mind of My Own mobile phone app. This allows children and young people to record at any time their feelings in a friendly age-appropriate interface and share them with the adults of their choice. As well as valuable on a case by case basis, this will increase our ability to identify wider trends. More widely, children and young people are helping us shape our services through a range of participation activity. During Practice Week in July 2020 our Young Inspectors worked

with the Assistant Director for Corporate Parenting to explore a number of issues including how we deal with conflict and how we get to know our children. This meant interviewing social workers and team managers over two days and the results were fed back to the service. The process found positives such as the impression that social workers know their children very well, as well as areas of challenge such as the need for more consistent management oversight and further embedding of Signs of Safety. Young people also made a presentation for the Families Justice Service for a conference in January. They used art and writing to powerfully set out what is important to them and how to help them through the court process.

Other ways children and young people shape our services include taking part in interview panels for recruiting new members of staff, and working with our commissioning team to evaluate accommodation providers and draw up commissioning frameworks. Through extensive consultation, young people in the Children in Care Council were also closely involved with the genesis of the Trust's very first business plan, including designing the overall vision and the logo. Young people asked the Trust to make the following commitment:

“What we do today affects your tomorrow, we promise to walk side by side with you.”

The Fostering Service

The Trust's fostering service is made up of two Post-Approval Fostering Teams, the Connected Persons Team, the Recruitment and Training Team and two fostering panels. The Post-Approval Teams manage and support our mainstream fostering placements as well as post-approval connected persons carers, with every carer allocated a supervising social worker. Foster carers undertake a diverse range of roles, from providing long and short term care, emergency accommodation, short breaks for those with special educational needs or disabilities and resilience foster carers for hard to place young people who would otherwise be placed in out of county expensive residential placements. The Connected Persons Team's primary role is to assess the suitability of children to be cared for by people they already know. This type of arrangement is particularly beneficial to children in providing continuity in terms of their identity and culture and these carers are provided the same level of support and remuneration as mainstream carers. 20 per cent of our children in care were in such placements at the end of the March 2021, compared to 18 per cent the previous year. The Recruitment Team is responsible for recruiting and training carers as well as retaining existing carers.

Children and young people with complex needs have often had to be placed out of the county, due to a lack of specialist support available in Northamptonshire to meet their needs. However, our new Resilience Foster Carer programme has helped carers develop specialist skills to care for these children and young people, who are therefore more likely to be able to maintain their existing relationships and school setting. All carers receive a substantial package of training and support, including work around child development, managing behaviour and first aid. Covid-19 has of course meant that many training sessions are now online which has proved successful, with many non-mandatory sessions, such as Internet Safety, seeing improved attendance.

Recruitment and retention of foster carers is a national issue so our dedicated recruitment team works hard to ensure we have the carers we need. Social media is a fruitful forum for recruitment and every single enquiry we receive is followed up. Our Digital Marketing Specialist sits within the Recruitment Team and has developed specific strategies tailored to different social media. For example, our Facebook page features an appointment booking system for call backs for members of the public interested in fostering, whereas LinkedIn is used more to target professional groups.

During 2020 we reinstated our retention surgeries to proactively address issues that carers may be experiencing, and have taken on board feedback from the Northamptonshire Foster Carers Association (NFCA) for this purpose. This has helped to prevent placement breakdown and maintain permanence for our children and young people. At the end of March 2021, there were 228 approved mainstream fostering households compared to 219 at the same time in 2020. In addition to this as of March 2021 there were 144 approved Connected Persons/Kinship fostering households. 35 per cent of our carers were 'in-house' at the end of March 2021, compared to 30 per cent the previous year.

As well as maintaining our high level of recruitment activity, priorities for the fostering service include expanding our retinue of Resilience Foster Carers, developing our training offer and expanding our use of the Fostering Support Fund to access therapeutic interventions for children. The service works very closely with the NFCA, who provide invaluable informal support to our foster carers and help us develop our services. With the move from the old county council to a Trust, the fostering service has been an Independent Fostering Agency since November 2020. Our Fostering Panel continues to approve new carers, review approvals for existing carers and provide important feedback to the service.

The Adoption Service

One of our main goals as a Trust is for children to have a permanent home at the earliest opportunity, and wherever possible this should be with members of their family. When this is not possible, Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) and Adoption represent two of the most stable routes to permanence. Adoption orders are only issued by the courts using a very high threshold, given that it severs the legal connection between child and birth parents. Our Adoption Service is made up of two Adoption Teams, and a Special Guardianship Order / Post-Adoption Support Team.

The Adoption Teams oversee the recruitment, assessment and training of adopters and manage the adoption process including matching and placement. The teams work particularly closely with our specialist permanence social workers and family finders, who work across the Trust to identify a stable home for children at the earliest stage of our involvement. During the reporting period there were 37 adopters approved, with 74 adoption orders being made. While this is a reduction from 44 approvals the previous year, this is in the context of the pandemic and a general shift away from adoption towards other permanence arrangements such as SGOs. Recruitment continues to be promoted through our campaigning, such as a radio promotion to coincide with Mothering Sunday.

The service continues to embed the Signs of Safety methodology, and a number of the team are trained in play therapy. We also outsource services to undertake therapeutic work with children around making the transition from fostering to adoption, and we work closely with the Coram charity, who host an adoption helpline and regional events to share good practice. As with many services within the Trust, much of the adoption service's training and support offer has moved online. Our regular support sessions for adopters now take place on Zoom and their frequency has been increased to include evenings and weekends.

All adopted children are entitled to a post-adoption assessment of their needs and this is undertaken by our SGO / Post Adoption Support Team. Self-referrals or from schools are most common, and the team also helps adults who were previously adopted. Support focusses on repairing the effects of past trauma, using a therapeutic approach. The Adoption Support Fund continues to be available in order to commission specialised therapeutic work. The team mediates contact with birth families for children subject to an SGO, and will supervise contact for adoption; such contact usually takes place

once a year. A dedicated member of staff manages 'letterbox contact' between adopted children and birth parents.

We continue to compare well with our statistical neighbours in terms of adoption timeliness, which is important in order for children to have a stable, permanent home as soon as possible. At the end of March 2021, there was an average of 106 days between an adoption order being made and the child being matched with an adoption placement. This compares to 152 for our statistical neighbours.

With the move to a Trust, the adoption service is currently a Voluntary Adoption Agency but plans are afoot to join a Regional Adoption Agency in the near future which will allow greater sharing of positive practice. A peer-review exercise in March 2021 with Essex local authority proved successful, with positive feedback in terms of adopters' views on the support they receive, management oversight and timely work for children.

NCC Children's Homes

Arnold House

Located in Northampton, Arnold House is a specialist provision for children aged 8 to 17 on the autistic spectrum, who often are referred to the home during a time of crisis. Through a package of tailored support and individual risk assessment, children are helped to transition to a more permanent home, such as foster care or a return to their birth family. Staff are trained in a range of specialist tools, such as Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped Children (TEACCH) and the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS). Working closely with special schools, social workers and previous care settings helps to ensure a coordinated and holistic approach to the child's wellbeing.

Phoenix House

Opening in February 2020, Phoenix House is one of our newer residential homes and provides care to up to four 12 to 17 year olds. The home specialises in meeting emotional and behavioural issues, and staff have benefitted from a behaviour management training from the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and online sessions around the impact of trauma. All children at the home are subject to an impact risk assessment before they arrive, which considers how to meet their needs and how

to mitigate any impact they could have on other young people. This forms part of a transition plan which is created with the child's social worker and the child themselves. A token-based economy and a robust behavioural policy help to provide boundaries for the children and young people in the home.

Individualised support plans are geared around the needs of the child which in some cases means moving on to independence, in others, a return to foster care or their birth family. Developing close links with the police, youth offending and CAMHS among others has helped in many cases to break down barriers between young people and professionals, enabling them to get the most out of the support that these agencies offer. In the relatively short time the home has been operating, a number of young have shown enormous progress. One young person came to the home in the summer of 2020 on an emergency basis after several placements were unsuccessful. Utilising specialist behaviour management techniques, staff helped him back into education and to relate more positively with his family who he had only been seeing occasionally. Overnight contacts gradually progressed to him returning full time to the family home. This process involved not only working with the

young person himself but also his parents, giving them skills to meet their son's needs. He is now doing very well.

Raven House

Raven House is a well-established five bed home for young people aged 11 to 17 with emotional and behaviour issues, specialising in those who have suffered early childhood trauma. Staff utilise a range of techniques to help children depending on their individual care plan, including skill sessions on topics such as emotional regulation, sexual health and independent living. Covid-19 has proved a challenge to the home, with various young people testing positive at different times and staff members having to isolate. However, the commitment of the stable staff group and leadership have helped to maintain a safe, nurturing environment. In October 2020, the county council, High Sherriff's Office and the Lord Lieutenancy awarded the home a Rose of the Shires award for its response to the pandemic.

By the time they enter care our children may not have had the opportunity to experience some of the positive childhood experiences that many of us remember fondly. Our homes make sure young people do not have to miss out. Young people at Raven House recently enjoyed a trip to Weston Super Mare and a future trip to Skegness is planned. Staff also

promote community and leisure activities; one young person is excelling with the army cadets; another is enjoying horse riding. One young person who came to the home in December 2019 had exhibited considerable emotional dysregulation, suffered issues with her mental health and had missed a lot of education. Through a tailored package of support in conjunction with other professionals, she has now progressed to maintaining good attendance and completing her GCSEs in a mainstream school and has completed National Citizenship Service. She is doing well, working on the Seeds of Change scheme at an equine therapy centre where she received an award in recognition of her teamwork.

Thornton House

Another of our newer homes, Thornton House is an emergency provision for up to two young people at a time. Young people may come to the home at a time of considerable risk, and might arrive from a secure provision, hospital or an unregulated placement at a time of crisis. They can stay at the home for a maximum of 16 weeks, during which time they receive intensive support. Staff work very closely with the police, youth offending services, CAMHS and others, helping the young person back into education and regular routines and giving them the tools they need to regulate their emotions and behaviour. The

overall aim is to help young people step down into a permanent home, such as foster care or with their birth family, and to help them achieve more positive outcomes. All of the young people who have resided at the home have gone on to stable, permanent homes which have been successfully maintained.

Welford House

Another well-established home, Welford House provides a nurturing environment for up to 5 children and young people aged 12 to 18, with a full, stable staff and highly experienced manager. Young people at the home receive bespoke packages of support which meet their needs and goals. Linking with a local PCSO who visits the home regularly has helped to break down barriers between young people and the police. Nationally, children in care who go missing from their placement are very often those who live in residential homes. This has been an issue for Welford House historically however only one such episode took place during the reporting period and was resolved positively. There were no incidents requiring physical intervention from members of staff.

Thankfully the home experienced no positive Covid-19 tests, however two young children were required to self-isolate. As well as delays to medical and dental appointments, the pandemic meant that much of staff training had to move online, which includes courses around protective behaviours, gangs, substance misuse and child development, and continuing to embed Signs of Safety. Despite the pandemic, children were able to go on a short break during 2020, and are looking forward to another holiday in summer 2021.

Children living at the home are settled and making good progress, some having arrived from their parents' care, others from out of county. One young person at the home had struggled in education, but having engaged with support is now doing well in a painting and decorating apprenticeship, another is soon to commence a level 3 course in health and social care. Others are showing significant progress by simply maintaining their attendance in education. Because living at the home can be such a positive experience, many young people maintain contact with the home after they have left. For example, staff recently wrote a reference for a former resident and did grocery shopping for another who was in self-isolation.

Commissioning Services

Our commissioning service oversees a wide range of functions, based around the changing needs of children and the Trust's overall strategic direction. The needs of children and young people are at the heart of the service's strategy, and they play an active role in carrying out its functions through a programme of consultation and participation. The service can be categorised into a cycle of four broad areas, with specialist leads carrying out key functions within. Firstly, the service seeks to understand what is needed to carry out the Trust's ambitions. This involves activities such as identifying gaps in support for young people and assessing available assets. Secondly the service plans how to achieve the Trust's ambitions by, for example, considering how external partners can meet the needs of children and young people, and planning the implementation of commissioned services. Delivery is the third area of activity, which may involve working with our partners, children and young people and the workforce to embed new services into the Trust. Finally, a review process involves regularly monitoring performance, evaluating value for money and taking corrective action where required.

Specialist functions within the service include a procurement specialist who advises on the best approach to adopting new assets, and a quality assurance team which works with accommodation providers to ensure that young people's living arrangements are of the best possible quality. Under lockdown, these visits were of necessity largely made in response to raised concerns. A planned programme of monitoring visits is now being reinstated. All unregulated accommodation (i.e., not subject to Ofsted inspection) are visited at least annually. For regulated provisions, such as children's homes, visits are made to any provision rated less than 'good' by Ofsted.

Through an extensive process of market shaping, new commissioning frameworks were introduced in February 2020. Frameworks not only ensure a standardised and fair commissioning process, but help us promote measurable and high expectations upon the services we commission, ultimately meaning that children and young people have improved outcomes and experiences at every stage of care. Our team of Young Inspectors remain instrumental in developing service specifications and evaluating tender applications. We plan to introduce a more formalised young commissioner role in the near future and to develop a service framework specifically written to be accessible to young people. From September 2021, new legislation will tighten the regulations around unregulated

provision and we plan to carry out further market shaping to explore for example whether some ISAs could become regulated children's homes.

Current projects include a two-year programme working with public health services to improve health outcomes for care leavers and children in care. For care leavers this includes looking at housing provision and increasing independence skills. Whereas for children in care there is a need to increase access to therapeutic interventions. The projects have provided funding for our two care-experienced Apprentice Champions, one of whom is focussed on housing issues, the other on mental and emotional wellbeing. We are working with Northampton University to assess the success of these projects and develop further avenues to explore.

Successful outcomes for children and young people depend on working in partnership with commissioned services. Homes 2 Inspire remain a valued partner, allowing us to block purchase a number of training flats for our care leavers, where they can learn independence skills for adult life in a supportive environment. We continue to hold workshops and training sessions with our providers, such as an event with the police around knife crime and exploitation. These sessions are well attended and moving them largely online has enabled more senior representatives of providers to attend. Sharing data with providers allows a faster response to issues for individual young people, and the ability to act proactively to mitigate wider risk factors.

Workforce development

Meeting our Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers depends on having a highly skilled, motivated and stable workforce. A detailed workforce development programme is helping us achieve this through a wide range of initiatives, such as:

- driving recruitment,
- making sure the physical working environment is accessible and welcoming,
- fostering a culture of openness and respect, and
- ensuring policies are clear and up to date.

One of our strategic priorities as set out in the Trust Business Plan for 2021-22 is to “Recruit, retain and develop an awesome workforce.” We measure this in a number of ways such as looking at the proportion of staff who are permanent employees as opposed to agency workers, the size of primary worker caseloads, assessing the quality of practice and management oversight and using the feedback from staff surveys. Regular “58 minutes” webinar sessions led by Chief Executive Colin Foster are providing a forum for communication between senior leadership and staff and for all our team to make their voice heard. Staff are also able to participate in the improvement journey through the Practitioners’ Improvement Board and Microsoft Teams virtual groups such as the Disability, BAME and LGBTQ networks. Updates from our quality assurance activity, feedback from children and young people and new opportunities to share good practice are disseminated through regular staff updates from the CEO, senior leadership team and Principal Social Worker.

Across the Trust, turnover of permanent staff has steadily decreased from 14.08 per cent in December 2019 to 11.25 per cent in October 2020, with 17 per cent of social care posts filled by agency staff in January 2021. Vacancies within children in care specialist teams have decreased in the same timeframe. In January 2021, only a single social worker had a caseload over the maximum target of 22, compared with 26 such workers at the end of March 2019.

A number of new social care posts were created in response to the pandemic and a recruitment campaign was launched by the Chief Executive in December 2020. Qualified social workers joining the Trust are eligible for a £4,000 bonus and help with relocation costs. Salaries are more competitive and now align with that of other local authorities, which historically, has not been the case in the county. Our highly regarded Social Work Academy not only provides newly qualified workers a structured and supportive learning framework in which to develop their practice, but also

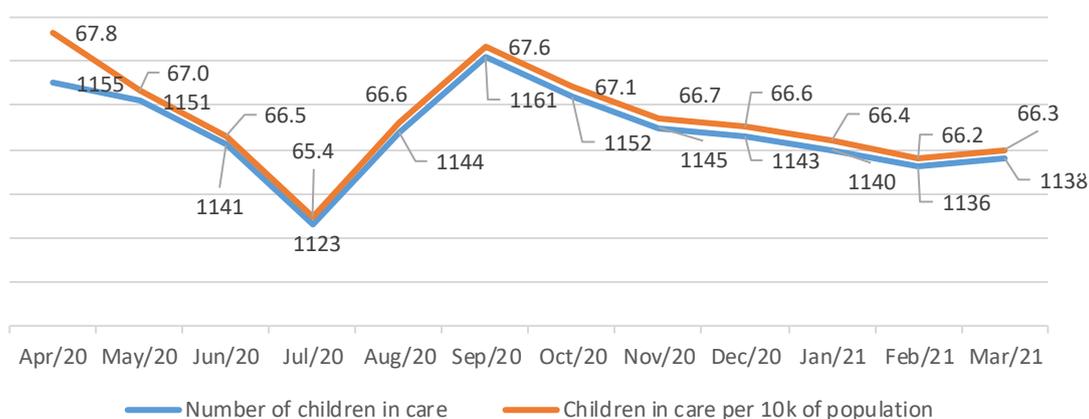
shapes support and training for existing staff in conjunction with our Learning and Development Team. Learning takes place through face to face sessions and quick and accessible online resources. Topics include Voice of the Child, Applying Professional Judgement and Effective Multiagency Working. All staff are trained in the methodology of Signs of Safety. We also have access to training offered by the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Partnership and Research in Practice. While presenting some challenges, increased flexible and homeworking due the pandemic has led to a number of benefits, such as decreased sickness levels and the adoption of new technology.

Appendix 1: Demographics

Population

The population of children in care fell slightly between April 2020 and March 2021, although the population varied during that time and at the time of writing stands at over 1160. The March figure of 66.3 children in care per 10,000 is lower than the latest England average of 67, but slightly higher than the statistical neighbour average of 61.2. "Statistical Neighbour" refers to the group of local authorities with similar characteristics for the purposes of data collection. This is determined by central government.

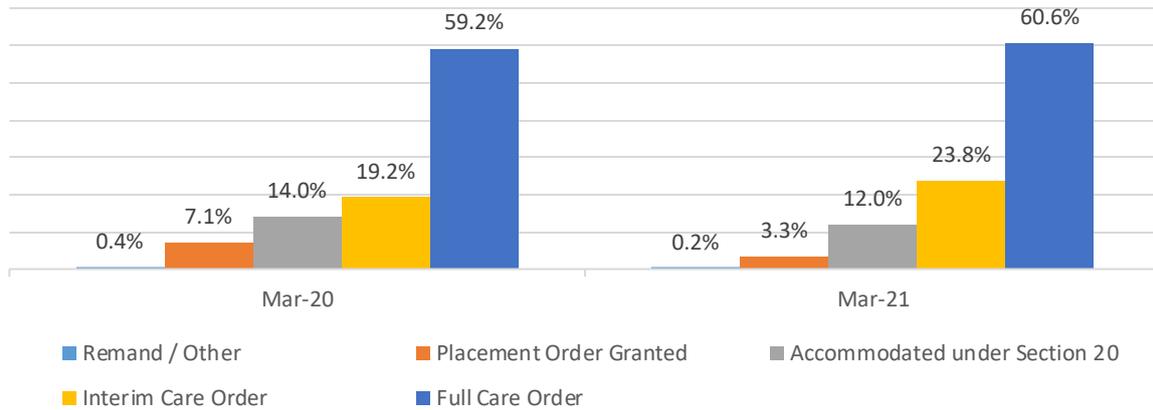
Northamptonshire looked after children population, April 2020 to March 2021



Legal status

The proportion of children voluntarily accommodated under Section 20 of the Children's Act (as opposed to being subject to a court order) has continued to reduce year on year. Section 20 arrangements are intended as temporary measures, so this is a positive development, indicating that more children are in permanent homes. Children arriving from overseas who are separated from their families are made subject to Section 20 arrangements.

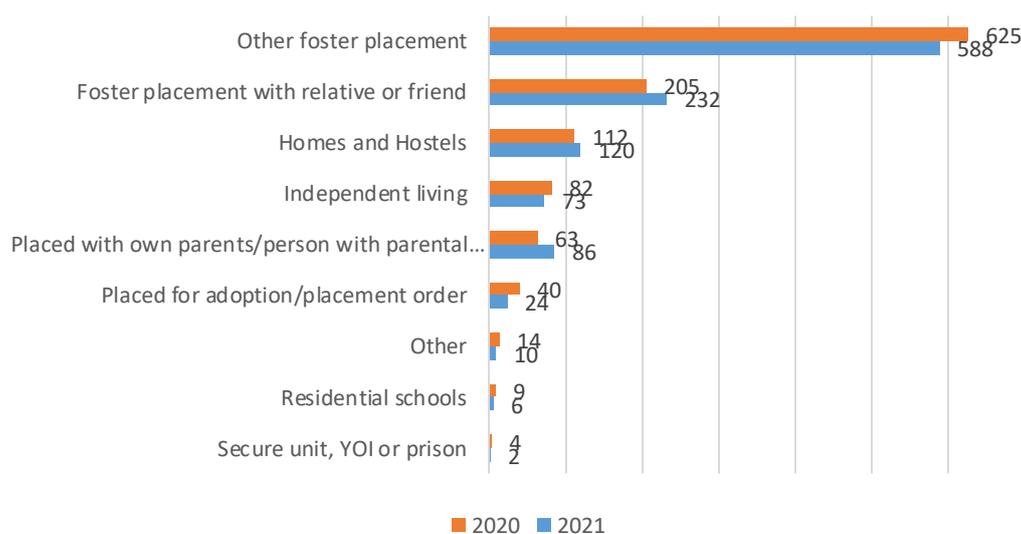
Legal status, percentage at end of March 2020, 2021



Placement type

The proportion of our children living in foster care fell only very slightly during the reporting period from 71.9 per cent to 71.8 per cent, whereas the proportion placed with relatives or friends (including parents) rose from 23 per cent to 28 per cent. This needs to be understood in the context of a fluctuating population of children entering and leaving care, rather than a static population. Over the year, on average 32 children entered care each month and the same number left. Reflecting the actions of our commissioning team, the proportion of children living in in-house placements as opposed to those supplied by an agency, rose from 30 per cent to 35 per cent.

Placement type at end of March 2020, 2021



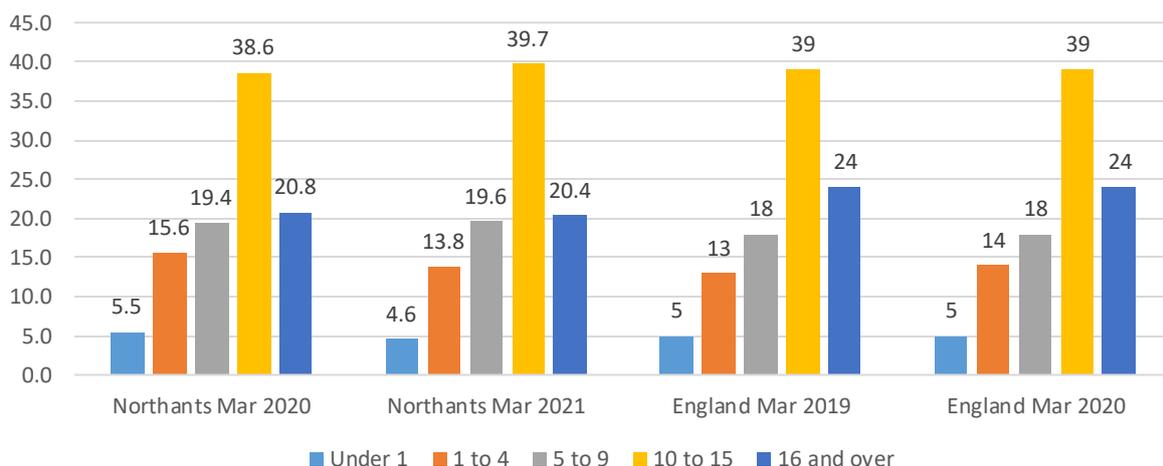
Geography

The proportion of our children living out of the county has remained stable at around 25 per cent, which compares well with the latest statistical neighbour average of 32 per cent and reflects efforts to increase sufficiency in our area, particularly for children with complex needs. However, for those children living out of their local authority, Northamptonshire children are slightly more likely to be living over 20 miles from their original home than those from our statistical neighbours (18.6 per cent compared to 16 per cent). So, Northamptonshire children are less likely than average to be placed out of their local authority area, but if they are, they are more likely to be over 20 miles from home. This is likely a consequence of Northamptonshire being one of the larger local authority areas. Comparisons with England as a whole are not particularly useful due to the great variation in local authority size and population density. Our children who live out of county are more likely to be subject to a full care order, and more likely to be in residential children’s homes than the looked after population as a whole. After Northamptonshire, our children are most likely to be living in Leicestershire, followed by Milton Keynes and Warwickshire.

Age

As an end of March snapshot, the age ranges of our children in care have remained fairly stable and largely in-line with national averages, although our proportion of those aged 16+ is slightly lower and reflects our average age of children on admission to care (next item).

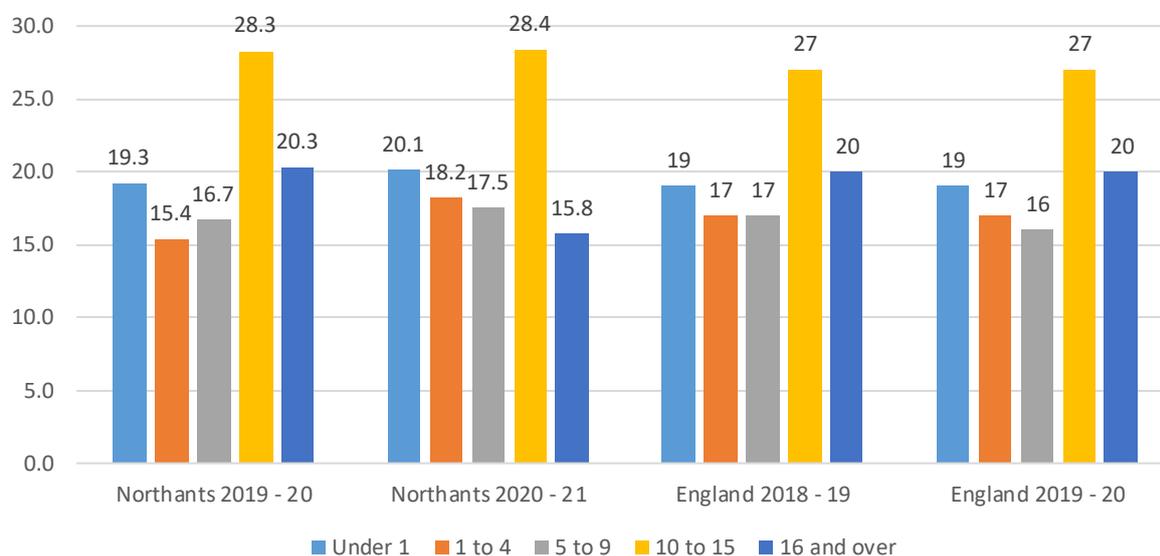
Children in care age, percentage per age group at end of March 2020, 2021



Age on admission

Historically, Northamptonshire had a high proportion of older children entering care, but this has steadily fallen into line with national averages. The proportion of children aged 16 and over fell substantially from 20.3 per cent to 15.8 per cent, with increases in those in the lower age ranges. Research from the Children’s Commissioner demonstrates that older children are more likely than younger children to enter care due to external risks, such as gang involvement, than family issues. The Trust now has a specialist Adolescent Team to provide tailored support to this group of young people.

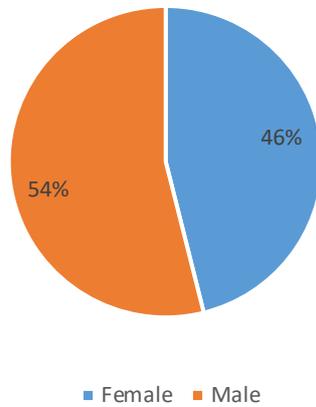
Admission to care by age group, percentage April 2020 to March 2021



Sex

As in previous years, males are in the majority for Northamptonshire’s children in care population. This is largely explained by the county’s population of children from overseas who are separated from their families, over three quarters of whom are male.

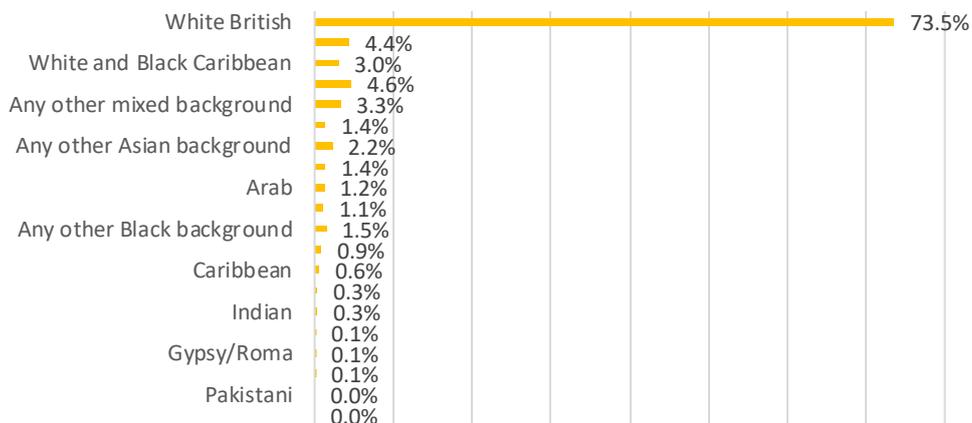
Children in care sex, percentage at end of March 2021



Ethnicity

Reflecting the wider populous of Northamptonshire, almost three quarters of our children and young people are white British, though with significant numbers with African and Caribbean backgrounds. Nationally, 79 per cent of children in care were white British at the end of March 2019. Nationally, black children are more likely to be in care (8 per cent) and less likely to be adopted (2 per cent) compared with their share of the child population (5 per cent). Asian children were less likely to be in care (4 per cent) and less likely to be adopted (1 per cent) compared with their share of the child population (10 per cent).

Children in care ethnicity end of March 2021



Separated children

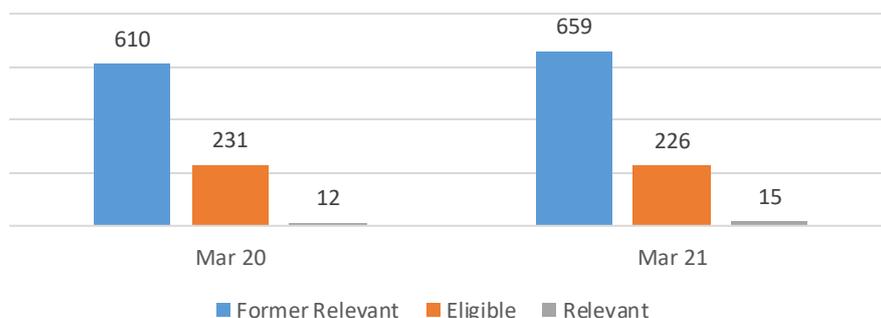
As of March 2019, Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) made up 6 per cent of the national looked after child population, with great variance between local authorities. For example, Kent and Croydon have much larger numbers of UASC than other local authorities. The National Transfer Scheme Protocol for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children is a voluntary protocol which aims to ensure a more even distribution of UASC across the country so that local authorities are not disproportionately burdened and that these often very vulnerable young people get the support they need. In Northamptonshire during the reporting period there were 246 such young people including those over 18 receiving leaving care support. Over the course of 2020-21 our separated children were most likely to come from Afghanistan, followed by Eritrea, Sudan, Iran and Iraq.

Care leavers

The qualifying characteristics of care leavers are set out in the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and can be defined as follows:

- a) **Eligible children** are those in care aged 16 and 17 who have been in care for at 13 weeks since the age of 14 and are still in care.
- b) **Relevant children** are those aged 16 and 17 who meet the criteria for eligible children but who leave care. This also includes young people who were detained (e.g. in a youth offending institution or hospital) when they turned 16, but who were looked after immediately before being detained.
- c) **Former relevant children** are those who before reaching the age of 18 were either eligible or relevant children and are now aged 18 to 25.

Northamptonshire care leaver population, end of
March 2020, 2021



Appendix 2: Northamptonshire Children’s Trust Improvement Plan

Updated April 2021

RAG Delivery Criteria: **Red:** Not on track to meet delivery date, mitigation or escalation required. **Amber:** Work in progress, some risk to delivery and/ or delivery date and mitigation applied. **Green:** On track to meet delivery date or completed

RAG Outcome Criteria: **Red:** Outcomes at risk/ not achieved, mitigation or escalation required. **Amber:** Progress towards the agreed outcomes being made. **Green:** Satisfactory outcomes achieved (in line or above comparators)

1. Excellent Leadership

Our improvement will be driven by a stable senior leadership team that provides strategic leadership and direction, clarity of the vision for the service and sets clear priorities and expectations. The senior leadership team will be visible to and engage with all staff.

Ofsted 2019 2a: The quality of management decision-making, oversight and challenge.

Ref	Actions	Lead and Support	Additional funding to support delivery	Timescale	Measure of Progress	Direction of Travel since last update	RAG delivery	RAG outcome	Progress Update
1.1	<p>1.1a Deliver our Vision and Values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review progress of 21/22 Business Plan - Complete 3 year Business Plan for 2022/23 	SLT		Mar-22	<p>Staff at all levels know the Vision and Values for the Children's Trust and we see them being lived out-</p> <p>Feedback from staff surveys</p> <p>Feedback from parents, carers, children and young people</p> <p>Themes from QA activity</p>	↑	Green	Amber	<p>21/22 Business Plan launched with contributions from staff, children and young people.</p> <p>Strategies that sit below the business plan are in progress for publication in by Summer</p> <p>Planning for formal Trust launch 26 May</p> <p>Trust Board governance and formal contract monitoring governance in place</p> <p>Ofsted Feb 21 MV found: <i>Senior leadership team is stable and committed, ambitious, child focused and committed to improving the lives of children</i> <i>Senior leaders and managers have a thorough understanding of the strengths of the service and what needs to improve</i> <i>Continuing to build on positive changes already in place</i></p>

Ref	Actions	Lead and Support	Additional funding to support delivery	Timescale	Measure of Progress	Direction of Travel since last update	RAG delivery	RAG outcome	Progress Update
	<p>1.1b Visible, Effective, Stable & Engaged Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff encouraged to contact Chief Exec directly - Regular Internal comms (all staff and managers) - Regular 58 min Chief Exec briefings - Regular Practice Weeks throughout year - Consistent and regular management meetings structure in place - You Said, We Did included in comms 	SLT		Completed	<p>Feedback from staff surveys regarding quality of leadership and communication</p> <p>No. and per cent Managers who are permanent by service</p>	Completed	Green	Green	<p>Leadership Development Programme to commence in June</p> <p>Trust Comms plan in place and delivering regular comms</p> <p>58 min briefing sessions held with over 600 of the workforce attending each round</p> <p>Practice weeks being held regularly with SLT on practice week teams</p> <p>All SLT and Strategic Managers are permanent as are vast majority of Service Managers</p> <p>LGA Social Work Health Check survey completed Dec, with positive response about access and support from senior managers</p> <p>Ofsted Feb 21 MV found: <i>Leaders have a clear line of sight to frontline practice and knows what needs to change to improve outcomes for children</i> <i>Senior leadership team is ambitious, child focused and committed to improving the lives of children</i></p>
1.2	1.2 Development of the Corporate Parenting Board responsibilities in order for them to champion	Chief Exec, AD Corporate Parenting, DCS		Sep-21	Clear understanding from all Corporate Parenting Board members of their responsibilities as evidenced through Corporate Parenting Board meetings	↔	Green	Amber	<p>Council tax exemption for care leavers in place from April 21</p> <p>Developmental and training activity to re-start following Unitary elections in May 21</p> <p>Corporate Parenting training for all Members of NNC and WNC to be completed by June</p>

Ref	Actions	Lead and Support	Additional funding to support delivery	Timescale	Measure of Progress	Direction of Travel since last update	RAG delivery	RAG outcome	Progress Update
	improvements				Positive impact on experiences of children in care, including children with disabilities, evidenced by Corporate Parenting Board and Member activity - as evidenced through you said we did				Refresh and rejuvenation of Corporate Parenting Board planned once new Councillors are embedded. Care leavers Apprenticeship Programme agreed with NCT/NCC/WNC. Interview carousel scheduled for September 21
1.3	1.3a Clarity of standards and expectations for all managers	SLT		Apr-21	Peer thematic audit findings – management oversight Supervision audit findings Feedback from staff survey regarding supervision Quality assurance shows increase in quality of practice and outcomes for children Improved quality management oversight and supervision evident on cases Improved per cent	↑	Green	Amber	Leadership Development Programme to commence in June Trust business plan live - golden thread to service plans and appraisals in development Practice Standards and Supervision guidance being reviewed for re-launch by July Revised scheme of delegation for 21/22 Thematic 'Brilliant Basics' CPD sessions with Operational Managers follow up, Brilliant Basics & Awesome Practice intranet page to go live Apr/May (dependent on Microsoft 365 go live) PIP improvement support for services in place and mentoring for managers, SWA managers and L&D providing coaching for managers Research in Practice Practice supervisors programme: 2 team managers Research in Practice Practice Leaders Development Programme: 3 service / strategic managers SW health check survey (Dec 20) provided some positive feedback re supervision and areas for

Ref	Actions	Lead and Support	Additional funding to support delivery	Timescale	Measure of Progress	Direction of Travel since last update	RAG delivery	RAG outcome	Progress Update
					supervision Staff survey feedback - quality of supervision				improvements Ofsted Feb 21 MV findings: <i>Overall quality of service remains inconsistent and management oversight is not sufficiently robust Frontline management oversight, challenge and formal supervision inconsistent</i>
	1.3b Develop the skills and confidence of Managers and support for them to lead good practice and effective services - Leadership development programme for all managers in the Trust -Co-ordinated CPD programme for managers	Assistant Directors Partners in Practice Lincs		Mar-22	Feedback from quality assurance activity showing staff receiving positive support and challenge from their managers Feedback on CPD from managers	↑	Green	Amber	Leadership Development Programme to commence in June. PIP are providing mentoring offer for social care managers, SWA managers and L&D providing coaching for managers Team and Service Manager development programme phase 2 offered mentoring / coaching 2 managers in Social Work Academy offering coaching - MASH TM receiving Research in Practice Practice Supervisors: 2 Team Managers Research in Practice: Supervising the Supervisor: 3 Service/ Strategic Managers Thematic 'Brilliant Basics' CPD sessions with Operational Managers completed- positive feedback Brilliant Basics and Awesome Practice internet page to go live in June (dependent on Microsoft 365 go live date) Ofsted Feb 21 MV <i>Workforce reported that they felt supported. However consistency in practice and robust management oversight remains and issue</i>

Improvement for children and families will be delivered by our workforce, who are therefore our most valuable resource.

Ofsted 2019 3b: Social worker caseloads that enable all children to have an allocated social worker and workers to have manageable workloads.

Ofsted 2019 3d: Stability and sustainability of the social care workforce.

Ref	Actions	Lead	Additional funding to support delivery	Timescale	Measure of Progress	Direction of Travel since last update	RAG delivery	RAG outcome	Progress Update
2.1	<p>2.1ab Refreshed Continuous Professional Development Offer</p> <p>-Signs of Safety CPD plan in place and implemented</p> <p>-Refresh routes in practice offer</p> <p>-Develop Social Work Academy to support Practitioners at different levels of the organisation</p> <p>-Develop CPD offer for the Trust</p>	<p>AD Quality Assurance & Commissioning</p> <p>Head of HR & OD</p> <p>Partners in Practice</p>	DfE Signs of Safety	Sep-21	<p>per cent Practitioners SoS trained – by service</p> <p>Social Worker Apprenticeship and Step Up places offered and completion rates</p> <p>ASYE retention measure (Year 2 and beyond)</p> <p>Decreased workforce turnover</p>	↑	Amber	Amber	<p>Workforce Strategy refreshed. SLA in place for L&D support service.</p> <p>Developing plan to co-ordinate CPD for managers and all workforce</p> <p>Induction under review</p> <p>Signs of Safety trajectory plan in place, delivery supported by SofS project manager. Additional Practice Champions trained and Signs of Safety training available for all workforce</p> <p>PSW attending team meetings and providing drop in sessions</p> <p>Social worker pipeline plan in place. Apprenticeships training provider to be re-commissioned by L&D. Recruiting for next Step Cohort. 8 Step up Graduates starting as NQSWs in May. 10 additional Practice Educators to be trained to support social work students</p> <p>Turnover has been declining since Dec 2019 however increased to 15.6per cent in March 21 due to externally funded posts and organisational changes in NCT Central and increase in turnover in Safeguarding</p>

Ref	Actions	Lead	Additional funding to support delivery	Timescale	Measure of Progress	Direction of Travel since last update	RAG delivery	RAG outcome	Progress Update
	<p>2.1b Improved Working Conditions</p> <p>-Review HR Policies and Procedures</p> <p>-Deliver conditions for success - including improved finance and business processes</p> <p>-Deliver Equalities Strategy</p>	Director of Finance & Resources		Mar-22	<p>Decreased workforce turnover</p> <p>Reduced vacancies and agency rate</p>	↑	Green	Amber	<p>Conditions for success launched in business plan</p> <p>Some positive impact of flexible and home working arrangements during COVID: reduced sickness rates, positive feedback from workforce - lessons learnt to inform future policy. workforce survey to go out May</p> <p>Transport challenge unit pilot live to improve co-ordination and challenge of use of travel policy and procedure</p> <p>Equalities steering group and Forum in place. Equalities Survey completed. Equalities Strategy & Anti-Racism Statement finalised, to be published in June</p> <p>Financial approval processes to be reviewed. Changes requested to ERP to reduce burden on managers</p> <p>Recruitment processes being reviewed to further improve (agency, perm and international) - dedicated fixed term recruitment lead in place</p> <p>Vacancies have reduced since Dec 19 but have been increasing in last few months due to increased turnover in some teams</p>

Ref	Actions	Lead	Additional funding to support delivery	Timescale	Measure of Progress	Direction of Travel since last update	RAG delivery	RAG outcome	Progress Update
2.2	<p>2.2a Recruitment</p> <p>- Directorate and service level recruitment planning in place and implemented</p>	Head of HR & OD		Sep-21	Reduced proportion of Social Work vacancies by service.	↔	Green	Amber	<p>Recruitment campaign launched in Community Care following Ofsted letter publication. Weekly recruitment panels in place</p> <p>17per cent of the social worker workforce is filled by agency workforce this includes temp Covid response posts and is a reducing from 22per cent in December.</p> <p>NQSWs recruitment: 9 started Jan and 12 due to start in May - including 8 Step Up graduates</p> <p>Recruitment process being reviewed. Focus on improving agency, permanent, international recruitment</p> <p>Dedicated fixed term Recruitment lead now in place</p>

Ref	Actions	Lead	Additional funding to support delivery	Timescale	Measure of Progress	Direction of Travel since last update	RAG delivery	RAG outcome	Progress Update
	<p>2.2b Retention</p> <p>-Deliver workforce strategy</p>	Head of HR & OD	BRR Workforce	Mar-22	<p>Increased proportion of Social Work permanent workforce - by service</p> <p>Reduced Social Work turnover rate</p>	↔	Green	Amber	<p>Permanent workforce turnover had been steadily, slowly decreasing from 15per cent Dec 19 to 11per cent Dec 20. Has been a recent increase and changes in NCT Central has meant Mar turnover rate is now at 15.6per cent</p> <p>Recent increase in workforce leaving (Nov/Dec) following improvement in workforce turnover and vacancy rate. High proportions of agency remain in DAAT & some Safeguarding teams and recent addition of Covid posts in teams has increased vacancy rate</p> <p>Low sickness level during COVID response; some positive and some negative impacts of working from home</p> <p>Positive feedback in Social Work Health check - green RAG for SWs not intending to leave the organisation in next 12 months</p> <p>Re-introduction of increments from Apr 21 has been very positively received</p> <p>Equality steering group and Forum established following feedback from workforce, equality strategy and Anti-Racism statement completed</p> <p>Ofsted Feb 21 MV recognised: <i>Workforce stability is improving and caseloads are steadily reducing</i> <i>Improved working conditions and active senior management engagement has reduced workforce turnover and vacant posts</i></p>

Ref	Actions	Lead	Additional funding to support delivery	Timescale	Measure of Progress	Direction of Travel since last update	RAG delivery	RAG outcome	Progress Update
	<p>2.2c Improved Capacity</p> <p>-Improve efficiency of practice workflows and processes</p> <p>-Demand management activities (as in Leadership section above)</p>	<p>AD Safeguarding & AD Corporate Parenting</p> <p>Partners in Practice</p>		Sep-21	<p>Average caseloads in line with agreed level for service</p> <p>Reduction in number of cases in highest caseloads in services</p> <p>KPI timescale targets met</p>	↔	Green	Amber	<p>Additional capacity agreed for DAAT, MASH and EDT Adolescent service social work re-organisation increased capacity in Safeguarding North.</p> <p>Additional short term social work and support capacity agreed to manage expected surge in demand following impact of Covid</p> <p>Processes reviewed to improve sufficiency e.g. EH part of pods and support decision making about contacts to referrals.</p> <p>Ofsted focused visit highlighted high caseloads in DAAT - have been improvements since but remain challenge in Safeguarding, workforce from other services supporting</p> <p>Revised duty system has led to improved timeliness of single assessments at 98per cent (Mar); which is above comparators</p> <p>Timeliness relating to children in need and child protection above comparators.</p> <p>Additional Family Support Worker capacity recruited to support life story work</p> <p>16per cent SWs have caseloads above target - pressure is currently in Safeguarding (impacted by Covid)</p>

3. Strong Relationship Based Practice

We are focused upon evidence based practice that works with children, young people and families to help them achieve positive changes. Our practice model is child centred at its heart and evidenced through all we do.

Ofsted 2019 1a: The identification of and response to risk when contacts relating to safeguarding concerns for children are received into the MASH.

Ofsted 2019 1b: Timely and purposeful visits to children to ensure that their needs are understood.

Ofsted 2019 1c: The quality of social work assessments and plans so that they are consistently timely and are effective in improving children’s experiences.

Ofsted 2019 1d: The identification of and response to risk in relation to long-standing concerns of chronic neglect.

Ofsted 2019 1e: The response to children at risk of exploitation to ensure that their vulnerabilities are fully recognised and lead to intervention to keep them safe.

Ofsted 2019 1f: Clear reunification plans and support services for children returning home.

Ofsted 2019 1g: Timely transition planning for disabled children in care to reduce uncertainties and anxieties for them and their families .

Ofsted 2019 1h: Pathway plans that include clearly defined objectives for young people.

Ofsted 2019 1i: Proactive intervention and focus for older teenagers disengaged from support services.

Ref	Actions	Lead	Additional funding to support delivery	Timescale	Measure of Progress	Direction of Travel since last update	RAG delivery	RAG outcome	Progress Update
3.1	3.1a Implement a Practice Model - Develop and agree Practice Model with workforce that clarifies our principles, ways of working with and purpose of intervention and involvement with families - Equip and support workforce through CPD offer to implement the Practice Model	Director of Social Care	DfE Signs of Safety	Mar-22	Practice Model agreed and known by workforce Positive feedback from L&D participants regarding impact on practice Audit evidences compliance with practice standards and increased consistency in good practice Quality assurance activity shows improvement in consistency of use and quality of Signs	↑	Green	Amber	Practice Model relaunched Nov 20 and being promoted by PSW CIC Practice Week held end July 2020, Safeguarding Practice Week held in Dec 2020. Fostering Practice Week held in April 2021 Some improvement in collaborative reflective practice discussions (CRPD) identified - further improvement required Good practice shared with workforce. Service plans including the Learning from Audit and Learning from Practice week Signs of Safety trajectory plan in place Additional DfE funding secured Signs of Safety Project Manager new in post and additional Advanced Practitioners being recruited Key deliverables are in place and programme plan in development Signs of Safety bite size sessions have been delivered since Oct Further 5 day intensive training is in place for 2021 to develop additional Practice Champions

Ref	Actions	Lead	Additional funding to support delivery	Timescale	Measure of Progress	Direction of Travel since last update	RAG delivery	RAG outcome	Progress Update
	- Deliver Signs of Safety Trajectory Plan and Key deliverables				of Safety SoS used across interventions with positive impact on practice and culture				PIP supporting MASH/DAAT/Safeguarding and CIC to embed Signs of Safety Ofsted focused visits found better quality child in need and child protection assessments, using Signs of Safety, capturing lived experience of children and most visits demonstrating a child focus. Ofsted Feb 21 MV found: <i>Embedding the Trust's strengths based model of social work practice is showing signs of progress e.g. recording of reviews</i>
3.2	3.2a Evidence of Voice of the Child and of engaging parents in meaningful relationships with practitioners - Consistent and appropriate use of Three Houses and other direct work tools to inform assessments and plans - Evidence of relationship based practice with families -Safety Planning	AD Early Help AD Safeguarding AD Corporate Parenting AD Quality Assurance & Commissioning	DfE Digital	Sep-21	Quality assurance activity shows improvement in voice of child and relationship based engagement of parents in informing assessments and plans . Evidence of children and young people's involvement in planning Purpose of visit to be recorded in visit case note Children and young people participating in reviews	↔	Green	Amber	Clear expectation that voice of the child is considered/recorded by all Social Workers. Voice of the child more evidenced through work completed - recognised by Ofsted Focused Visit Child's voice is integrated into the QA audit tool. Young Inspectors participation in Practice Weeks, with focus on voice of child The quality of assessment and plans depend largely on caseloads and do vary. Practice Model includes emphasis on whole family and relationship based practice. Launched November Ofsted Focused Visit found better quality child in need and child protection assessments, using Signs of Safety, capturing lived experience of children and most visits demonstrating a child focus Ofsted focused visit found increasing examples of direct child centred work that informs plans and planning Ofsted Feb 21 MV found: <i>Children in Care Council and Young Inspectors have a</i>

Ref	Actions	Lead	Additional funding to support delivery	Timescale	Measure of Progress	Direction of Travel since last update	RAG delivery	RAG outcome	Progress Update
	and Family Network meetings to be undertaken with all families - All direct work to be evidenced on child file - IROs consistently seek views of children and promote attendance at reviews								<i>strong voice and has had a significant impact in shaping services. They were described as inspirational by the Inspectors</i> QA Board in place from Mar 21 includes Voice of Child standing agenda item.
3.3	3.3a Improvement in the consistency of quality in: - Assessments - Plans - Pathway Plans - Reviews - Management Oversight - including rationale for recommendations and appropriate challenge	AD Safeguarding AD Corporate Parenting		Sep-21	Improvement in performance of KPIs – Assessments, Plans and Reviews, Supervision Quality assurance activity shows improvement in consistency of quality per cent Re-referrals	↑	Green	Amber	Quality Assurance activity and Ofsted identifying improvements although inconsistency remains IRO / CP Chair oversight & escalation processes in place to capture early identification of concerns for management review & actions to address. Practice in safeguarding is improving evidenced by performance; feedback from service users/judiciary/gateway panels. PIP are implementing support plan from March 21. Brilliant Basics CPD being delivered to managers and intranet page developed (go live Apr/ May dependent on Microsoft 365) Action plans from QA activity and Practice Weeks are being implemented Ofsted focused visit found Quality and impact of decision making for disabled children are satisfactory Ofsted focused visit found tangible improvements in quality of social work practice . Impact not yet seen on per cent of re-referrals (34per cent above comparators)

Ref	Actions	Lead	Additional funding to support delivery	Timescale	Measure of Progress	Direction of Travel since last update	RAG delivery	RAG outcome	Progress Update
							Green	Amber	<p>Ofsted Feb 21 MV found:</p> <p>Most social workers know their children well and have a clear understanding of their needs</p> <p>Majority of children are visited within statutory timescales</p> <p>The vast majority of children have an up to date assessments that identifies their needs</p> <p>Further improvement needed on:</p> <p>Some assessments are not comprehensive and are limited in analysis and do not consider the children's wider needs</p> <p>Some care plans are not actioned in a timely way leading to delays in meeting needs and achieving permanence</p> <p>Quality of recording care plans inconsistent with some not indicating what success looks like for a child</p> <p>Risk assessment and safety plans for children at risk of exploitation are inconsistent and safety plans are not always updated</p> <p>Supervision records do not reflect on children's circumstances and miss opportunities to drive forward plans with actions not being specific or given a timescale</p>
	<p>3.3b</p> <p>Improvement in the consistency of quality in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SoS supporting tools and approaches - Chronologies - Genograms - Consideration of fathers / male carers - purpose of visits to children - Assessments: lived life of child - views of all involved to 	<p>AD Early Help</p> <p>AD Safeguarding</p> <p>AD Corporate Parenting</p>	DfE Early Help	Sep-21	<p>Quality assurance activity shows improvement in consistency of use and quality of Signs of Safety tools, genograms, chronologies -</p> <p>Performance meeting address deficits in areas of compliance</p>	↑	Green	Amber	<p>Quality Assurance activity and Ofsted focused visit identified inconsistency. QA development in EH in progress</p> <p>PIP supporting quality of contacts in mash and assessments DAAT. PIP implementing support plan in safeguarding to improve quality of work including supervision.</p> <p>Brilliant Basics and Signs of Safety bite size sessions to operational managers on L&D programme</p> <p>Use of family network meetings increasing</p> <p>QA activity finding improvements in use of genograms and chronologies</p>

Ref	Actions	Lead	Additional funding to support delivery	Timescale	Measure of Progress	Direction of Travel since last update	RAG delivery	RAG outcome	Progress Update
	be explicitly recoded -plans to be focused and measure & progressed all above need to be child not adult focused								
3.4	3.4a Strengthened offer for adolescents Service restructure to enable increase in capacity to help young people at risk of all forms of exploitation and strengthening approaches to respond to extra-familial risk	AD Early Help		Sep-21	Reduced rate of adolescents entering care Contextual safeguarding approach In Northamptonshire reflected in strategy and practice	Completed	Completed	Amber	<p>Targeted Support Adolescent Service has been implemented 1st Sept which incorporates Adolescent Service.</p> <p>Adolescent social work team re-organisation implemented 1st October, creating additional team in Safeguarding ensuring social work oversight and decision making for social workers previously in Targeted Support - Completed</p> <p>Adolescent Strategy agreed (December 2020)</p> <p>Vulnerable Adolescents Panel implemented (December 2020)</p> <p>NSCP Practice Guidance for Missing agreed (November 2020)</p> <p>Contextual Safeguarding Toolkit developed through NSCP sub-group</p> <p>Contextual Safeguarding training now live Contextual Safeguarding Strategy drafted and funding bid for support in implementation to be submitted March</p> <p>Perm AD Early Help and YOS now in post and undertaking review of offer</p>

Ref	Actions	Lead	Additional funding to support delivery	Timescale	Measure of Progress	Direction of Travel since last update	RAG delivery	RAG outcome	Progress Update
3.5	3.5a Child Protection Demand - Improved confidence in managing risk - Strengthened CIN practice	AD Early Help & AD Safeguarding		Mar-22	Maintain rate of assessments in line with comparators Reduce rate of assessments ending with No Further Action Increased rate of CIN in line with comparators Reduced rate of CP in line with comparators	↔	Amber	Amber	<p>Potential risk of surge mitigated with preventative approach of utilising Early Help Coordinators to be more visible in schools and support the management risk. This was in place from September 2020 and again from 8 March 21. Early Help co-coordinators have implemented schools locality based plan</p> <p>Early Help based in DAAT and Safeguarding facilitating step downs. This is having an impact in the smooth transition from Social Care to Early Help Process reviewed and implemented in November 2020.</p> <p>Single assessments closing with NFA reducing in Feb at lowest since July 20 i.e. 34.8 per cent. Slight increase to 37 per cent in Mar. Remains below target and comparators</p> <p>Rate of CIN below comparator authorities Rate of assessments below comparator authorities - may be Covid related although referrals have been decreasing in lockdown. Rate of CP Plans in line with comparator authorities</p> <p>Signs of Safety bite size sessions for Team Managers, Advanced Practitioners and Senior Social Workers for all relevant services being delivered</p> <p>Covid has seen an increase in complexity of cases associated with CP conferences and Emergency intake.</p> <p>Robust application of thresholds and risk management continue to be priority areas.</p> <p>CP Chairs providing consultation regarding ICPCs with positive response from teams</p>
3.6	3.6a Deliver FGCPilot	AD Safeguarding		Mar-22	KPIs identified and monitored for pilot -	↑	Green	Amber	FGC pilot is underway and progressing well.

Ref	Actions	Lead	Additional funding to support delivery	Timescale	Measure of Progress	Direction of Travel since last update	RAG delivery	RAG outcome	Progress Update
	- deliver pilot and contribute to evaluation				including children able to remain cared for within their family network				
3.7	<p>3.7a Children in Care Demand</p> <p>- Development of Edge of Care Offer</p> <p>- Improved approach to reunification at edge of care and for children in care</p> <p>- Refresh and deliver Sufficiency Strategy - children in the right placement to meet their needs</p>	AD Corporate Parenting & AD for Early Help	DfE Edge of Care	Sep-21	<p>Edge of care service delivery is established</p> <p>Step down programme evidences activity and savings</p> <p>Reduced rate of children in care in line with comparators</p> <p>Increased per cent of children in care placed with in-house foster carers</p> <p>Reduced per cent of children in care placed in residential care</p> <p>Reduction in kinship carers and increase in SGOs</p> <p>Reduction in rate of children on interim care order or care order placed at home</p> <p>Quality assurance</p>	↑	Green	Amber	<p>Sufficiency Assessment and Strategy plan being implemented - positive feedback from Ofsted inspector regarding the quality of the strategy. Dedicated fixed term Service Manager in post to move this forward</p> <p>Development of Edge of Care Service - New permanent AD Early Help and YOS leading on development of offer</p> <p>Dedicated social workers within Court Teams to focus on revocation of care orders for children living with parents under placement with parent regulations</p> <p>Safeguarding Practice Week focused on effectiveness of keeping children within families - service delivering action plan</p> <p>Rate of children in care has reduced and is below England average, although above stat neighbours</p> <p>Above statistical neighbour average for per cent children in care leaving for permanence (35 per cent Mar)</p> <p>70+ of our children have been placed for adoption or have had an adoption order granted in 2020/21</p> <p>Ofsted Feb 21 MV found: <i>Tangible improvements in placements sufficiency</i> <i>Majority of children live in well-matched placements that meet their needs</i> <i>Adoption is appropriately considered and promoted when appropriate to do so. CAFCASS and the Judiciary reported that achieving permanence through adoption was a particular strength</i></p>

Ref	Actions	Lead	Additional funding to support delivery	Timescale	Measure of Progress	Direction of Travel since last update	RAG delivery	RAG outcome	Progress Update
					shows the right children are in care and in the right placements to meet their needs				
3.8	<p>3.8a Continue to achieve effective planning and increase engagement with care leavers</p> <p>-improve quality and effectiveness of early pathway planning</p> <p>-Up to date risk assessments and pathway plans</p>	AD Corporate Parenting		Sep-21	<p>Achieve target of 95per cent of Care Leavers with an up to date Pathway Plan</p> <p>Increase per cent of Care Leavers with a PA</p> <p>Maintain per cent of Care Leavers in EET and Suitable accommodation in line with or above comparators</p> <p>Quality assurance activity show consistent good quality and timely pathway planning</p>	↔	Green	Amber	<p>Ofsted focused visit identified some concerns re two homeless young people who had not accepted support.</p> <p>Recent reduction in up to date Pathway Plans from 92 per cent to 88per cent (Mar 21) 92 per cent in suitable accommodation (Mar 21) above England average</p> <p>Pathway plan for young people aged 18+ developed with young people and completed by them has facilitated greater focus on goals and aspirations</p> <p>Regional Improvement alliance peer review completed for Leaving Care - provided confirmation of service strengths and areas for improvement</p>

4. Insightful Quality Assurance and Learning.

We know ourselves and our practice well through rigorous quality assurance.

Ofsted 2019 2b: The use of quality assurance activity such as case auditing and escalations to inform and improve practice.

Ofsted 2019 2c: Action planning in response to the findings of serious case reviews.

Ref	Actions	Lead	Additional funding to support delivery	Timescale	Measure of Progress	Direction of Travel since last update	RAG delivery	RAG outcome	Progress Update
4.1	<p>4.1 Delivery of QA Framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Auditing -Practice weeks -Performance clinics -Training and coaching for audit consistency -Escalations -Quarterly QA reports shared with workforce -Review of QAF in light of new Trust Strategy -Regular Quality Board, chaired by Chief Exec to be established 	AD Quality Assurance & Commissioning	BRR Practice Improvement	Sep-21	<p>Increase in amount and range of QA activity across services that provides understanding of quality of practice</p> <p>Improvement in consistency of quality of QA activity (as confirmed by moderation)</p> <p>per cent Escalations resolved in timescale</p>	↑	Green	Amber	<p>CIC Practice week July and Safeguarding Practice Week completed. Fostering PW taking place Apr</p> <p>Increasing quality of audits and side by side audits</p> <p>QA training in place and management development session Jan - positive feedback- 1-2-1 support ongoing and training to be rolled out across service</p> <p>Performance clinics in place across social care services with standard terms of reference</p> <p>Ofsted focused visit identified that our QA activity identified same themes as inspection, and confirmed variability in quality of QA</p> <p>Ofsted focused visit identified QAF and findings from audit activity are underpinning improvements to practice</p> <p>QA Board, chaired by Chief Exec in place</p> <p>QA Strategy and Framework refreshed in line with new business plan, new audit tool (Collaborative Reflective Practice Discussions CRPDs) and cycle in place from April 21</p>

Ref	Actions	Lead	Additional funding to support delivery	Timescale	Measure of Progress	Direction of Travel since last update	RAG delivery	RAG outcome	Progress Update
4.2	<p>4.2 Learning Loops are in place and influence practice</p> <p>Learning and practice development opportunities are available to workforce in a range of mediums and through communication structures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management oversight and audit - Peer Thematic Audit - Practice week - SCR/Practice Review - PIP 	AD Quality Assurance & Commissioning	BRR Practice Improvement	Sep-21	<p>Evidence of casework actions to complete audit recommendations</p> <p>Evidence of actions to implement thematic/SCR recommendations</p> <p>Evidence of learning through practitioner forums</p>	↔	Green	Amber	<p>Learning from QA activity being shared in workforce and leaders' newsletters, service management team meetings. Action plans developed by services in response to QA activity and Practice Week</p> <p>Audit team completing learning reviews and appreciative inquiry sessions. QA, SoS and Social Work Academy delivering training sessions with managers in response to QA findings.</p> <p>6 step briefings to be produced to disseminate audit findings</p> <p>Principal Social Worker role merged into Social Work Academy Service Manager role to improve learning loop</p> <p>Ofsted focused visit identified QAF and findings from audit activity are underpinning improvements to practice</p> <p>Ofsted focused visit found increasing examples of direct child centred work that informs plans and planning</p> <p>QA Board, chaired by Chief Exec in place from Mar</p> <p>Ofsted Feb MV said: More for IROs to do in consistently seeking the view of children and promoting attendance at reviews</p>

5. Healthy Partnerships.

Effective partnership working is essential to good practice.

Ofsted 2019 3a: Strategic development of early help services to ensure that children's needs are identified and responded to at the earliest opportunity.

Ref	Actions	Lead	Additional funding to support delivery	Timescale	Measure of Progress	Direction of Travel since last update	RAG delivery	RAG outcome	Progress Update
5.1	5.1a Early Help is strengthened across the partnership and front door demand is reduced with right children being referred at right time - EH Strategy - EH Action Plan - EH Pathways - Partner training re thresholds and SoS - PAUSE - DFE funded support	NSCP Early Help sub group and AD Early Help	DfE Early Help	Sep-21	Increased Early Help Assessments and interventions Reduced per cent of contacts that lead to no further action Increased per cent of contacts that lead to referral Reduced per cent referrals with a previous referral in the last 12 months in line with comparators Reduced per cent of contacts that lead to no further action Increased per cent of contacts that lead to referral Reduced per cent referrals with a previous referral in the last 12 months in line with comparators	↑	Green	Amber	EH Strategy agreed by NSCP, action plan now being delivered. Refreshed in line with Trust Business Plan for launch in May/ June. This is expected to increase early support and reduce inappropriate contacts to social care Edge of Care service in implementation from January - Perm AD EH to lead development Pause went live in October - women being engaged Increasing number of initial contacts signposted to Early Help Early help workers facilitate the right support whether that is provided by our Targeted support or partners in the locality area EH inclusion in MASH Pods and matrix management implemented Feb 21 Contacts to referrals not yet seen impact Increase in referrals from MASH to EH from 20 per cent Oct to 29 per cent Mar 21 Impact of Covid has led to increased demand and complexity
5.2	5.2a Clear transition pathway	Adults Lead with AD Corporate Parenting		Sep-21	Timely CIN meetings for children in transition to adulthood	↔	Green	Amber	There are closer working relationships with Adult Social Care and processes and timescales for children referred to Adult Social care have been strengthened. The implementation of the Moving in to Adulthood Panel (MIAP) and referral process has led to improved

Ref	Actions	Lead	Additional funding to support delivery	Timescale	Measure of Progress	Direction of Travel since last update	RAG delivery	RAG outcome	Progress Update
									outcomes. Further improvements so that the system of transition as a whole is enabling earlier allocation and assessment, in particular for children and young people with Mental Health difficulties
5.3	5.3a Robust and effective identification of and response to risk in the MASH -Consistent application of thresholds - Effective Domestic abuse triage	Rich Tompkins with AD Safeguarding		Mar-21	Quality assurance activity shows increase in consistency of quality in identification and response to risk in the MASH Timely submission and screening of DA notifications Reduced rate of s47 in line with comparators Actions from strategy meetings to be clearly identified and actioned and outcome reported in s47 and risks identified and recorded in s47 Reduction in the use of PPO Reduced number of repeat CP plans in line with comparators	↔	Green	Amber	The process for Domestic Abuse notifications has been further refined in the MASH. All high and medium risk Domestic Abuse notifications where children are present or involved are progressed through the MADRA (Multi Agency Daily Risk Assessment) meeting, and in addition to this the standard risk Domestic Abuse notifications where there have been 3 incidents of Domestic Abuse within a 12-month period and those where professional judgement identifies risks to the child. Ofsted focused visit found this helps ensure risks are understood and sensitive child and victim centred safety plans are implemented quickly MASH service plan completed in partnership being delivered Perm Strategic Manager for MASH and DAAT now in post

Ref	Actions	Lead	Additional funding to support delivery	Timescale	Measure of Progress	Direction of Travel since last update	RAG delivery	RAG outcome	Progress Update
	5.3b Effective identification of and response to children at risk of exploitation - Development of county wide approach to all forms of exploitation - Development of youth strategy and offer - Improve management oversight of children who are missing education	Rich Tompkins with AD Early Help & AD Safeguarding with AD Education		Sep-21	risk assessments that are kept updated No of young people supported and outcomes Understanding of top 10 high risk YP across the partnership Data set that enables identification of risks/ trends	↔	Green	Amber	Vulnerable Adolescents Strategy completed Dec 2020 New adolescent service configuration, including Missing Children response, implemented 1st September 2020, that will enable a more responsive and preventative service for exploited and vulnerable teenagers and their families. Completed September 2020 Vulnerable Adolescents Panel operational from the 3rd December - 6 month review to take place Ofsted focused visit found effective collaborative work with partners helping to prevent or reduce harm to missing and exploited children, however targeted services for adolescents are currently fragmented <i>Ofsted Feb MV said: Prompt multi- agency response when children go missing from care and independent return interview provided to children in care</i> <i>Previous actions had been completed by Apr 21. This remains an action on the plan to review and develop as unitary Education Service now in place and perm AD Early Help has started and will review progress and further improvements to be made</i>
	5.3c Improvement in Practice - Assessments informed by partners' information - Regular multi-agency meetings	AD Safeguarding		Sep-21	Improvement in identification and response to risk identified in multi-agency audits	↑	Green	Amber	Locality multi-disciplinary meetings in place for children in care and children with disabilities Operational meetings for case discussions monthly with health i.e. focus on pre-births Operational meetings with police 6 weekly i.e. focus on risk management and strengthening relationships Vulnerable Adolescents Panel in place from Dec - impact will be reviewed after 6 months

Ref	Actions	Lead	Additional funding to support delivery	Timescale	Measure of Progress	Direction of Travel since last update	RAG delivery	RAG outcome	Progress Update
5.4	5.4a Improved Health Outcomes - Mental Health pathways for children in care and care leavers - Care Leavers health passports -develop Mental Health support teams in schools - children have up to date health reviews and dental checks	CAMHS Lead with AD Corporate Parenting	Public Health funding	Mar-22	Clear MH pathways for children in care, care leavers and vulnerable children Timely mental health assessments Reduction in per cent CAMHS referrals not accepted Reduction in number of children and young people presenting at A&E for self-harm and/or suicide ideation	↑	Green	Amber	Public Health funded projects for children's mental health now progressing (following some delay due to Covid) - Commissioning Manager in place from Dec and projects on track Additional MH funding for Northants announced Apr 21 via CCG All Children in Care are now able to access mental health consultation where next steps are agreed <i>Ofsted MV said: Not all children have up-to-date initial and review health assessment and dental checks but the inspectors acknowledge that this has been hindered by Covid and that there is a plan in place to remedy</i> <i>CAMHS for children in care offer a comprehensive range of services for children and carers and have appropriate oversight for children out of county</i>
	5.4b Strengthened corporate parenting -Increased range of apprenticeships and EET options	AD Corporate Parenting DCS		Mar-22	Maintain per cent care leavers in EET in line or above comparators Increased No. of apprenticeships for care leavers in Children's Trust and unitary councils	↔	Amber	Green	North and West Northants have agreed council tax exemption for care leavers Care Leavers in Suitable accommodation 92per cent Care Leavers in EET 59per cent close to stat neighbour - Covid impact <i>Ofsted Feb MV said: Leadership has taken prompt action to develop the partners understanding of corporate parenting responsibilities</i>
	.5.4c Housing needs are met	Unitary ADs for Housing &		Mar-22	Reduction in number of 16-17 year-olds	↔	Amber	Amber	As part of the Early Help Partnership, Housing have allocated single points of contact across the county to

Ref	Actions	Lead	Additional funding to support delivery	Timescale	Measure of Progress	Direction of Travel since last update	RAG delivery	RAG outcome	Progress Update
	- Access to emergency accommodation - Joint pathway for 16 and 17 year-olds	Communities With AD Corporate Parenting AD Safeguarding and AD Early Help			coming into care as s.20				support the Partnership approach. This has been shared with NCT workforce and Housing have been asked to join NSCP Early Help subgroup and Vulnerable Adolescent Panel Impact of Covid adding to numbers of family breakdowns particularly with 16/17 year-olds. Unitary ADs for Housing & Communities now in place
	5.4d Educational needs are met -Children in care are in appropriate educational placements to meet their need -Reduce number of children in care who are excluded -Safeguarding performance clinics to monitor PEPs	Head of Virtual School with AD Corporate Parenting		Sep-21	Reduction in proportion of children in care on part time timetables, home tuition or in alternative education for too long Reduction in proportion of children in care who are excluded from school	↔	Amber	Amber	Children in care at risk of being excluded or already excluded are discussed at the Vulnerable Pupils Panel held on a 3-weekly basis. Remedial activity planned and delivered. Multi-agency weekly meeting review all children who are excluded or at risk to ensure that they have oversight and multi-agency input that plans interventions and promotes an outcome focus for education placements to be achieved.

6. Robust and Effective Resource Management.

We understand the key drivers of the budget and budget managers understand the financial impact of their decisions. Budget managers will be equipped with support and systems to effectively monitor and forecast.

Ofsted 2019 3c: Sufficiency of placements that meet children's needs

Ref	Actions	Lead	Additional funding to support delivery	Timescale	Measure of Progress	Direction of Travel since last update	RAG delivery	RAG outcome	Progress Update
6.1	<p>6.1a Monthly robust oversight and monitoring in place</p> <p>-Performance clinics -Budget monitoring and forecasting -Establishment monitoring</p>	All ADs		Jul-21	<p>Performance issues identified and addressed</p> <p>Savings are achieved and services are delivered within budget. - Deficits are understood and mitigations are in place</p>	↔	Green	Amber	<p>Performance clinics in place with consistent TOR, successes celebrated at clinics.</p> <p>SLT monitoring of Covid specific management information in addition to business as usual information Revised model for establishment and workforce budget monitoring implemented August</p> <p>Tighter grip on recruitment and workforce spend by SLT, improved ownership of budgets and savings by ADs – further progress needed with managers’ ownership</p> <p>Budget Management and forecasting to be focus of new Support Structure to be in place from Apr 21</p>
6.2	<p>6.2a Deliver the Sufficiency Strategy</p> <p>-Placement Panel is effective and evidences activity Fostering Improvement Plan and IFA set up -Increase in in-house specialist foster carers -QA of fostering and residential framework -Options appraisal for bridging foster</p>	<p>AD Corporate Parenting</p> <p>AD Quality & Resources</p>	BRR Specialist Fostering	Mar-22	<p>Increase in no of in-house specialist foster carer placements</p> <p>Increase in no. of in-house standard foster carers</p> <p>Increase in in-house foster carer placement utilisation rate</p> <p>per cent CiC</p>	↑	Green	Amber	<p>Action plan refreshed Feb 21 and fixed term service manager in place to drive forward as Covid has had impact on moving ahead with some initiatives</p> <p>Reduction in children in residential homes achieved over period of last strategy - currently below comparators</p> <p>Placement Review Project achieved £1m savings to date and positive impact for children</p> <p>In house specialist Foster Carer recruitment will potentially provide 6 placements</p> <p>Utilisation of mainstream foster care placements remains steady at 86per cent Feb 2021 - net gain of 5 carers</p> <p>IFA step down fostering placements in place</p> <p>Public Health project for in-house fostering supporting children's mental health progressing</p> <p>Permanency tracking arrangements introduced in June - showing improvements.</p> <p>Just under 10per cent increase in number of available foster placements (excluding friends and family) which has led to 40 more children placed in in-house foster placements than were placed at 31st March 2020.</p>

Ref	Actions	Lead	Additional funding to support delivery	Timescale	Measure of Progress	Direction of Travel since last update	RAG delivery	RAG outcome	Progress Update
	care placements to support step down -Options appraisal for additional HMO for UASC				with in-house carers per cent CIC in residential care Savings are achieved				<i>Ofsted Feb MV said: Tangible improvements in placements sufficiency</i>

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL COUNCIL

2 December 2021

Councillor Mike Hallam, Cabinet Member for HR and Corporate Services

Report Title	Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee concerning the Horton General Hospital, Banbury
Report Author	James Edmunds, Democratic Services Assistant Manager james.edmunds@westnorthants.gov.uk

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

West MO	Catherine Whitehead	01/11/2021
West S151	Martin Henry	19/11/2021
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List of Appendices

Appendix A – Horton Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The report invites the Council to agree whether it will participate in a joint health overview and scrutiny committee concerning the Horton General Hospital in Banbury and, subject to that decision, to agree the terms of reference for the committee and to appoint a councillor as a member of it.

2. Executive Summary

- 1.2. The Horton Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee was established in 2018/19 by Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire county councils to scrutinise plans for the

provision of services at the Horton General Hospital, Banbury. The use of a joint approach reflects statutory requirements relating to scrutiny of proposed service changes that affect more than one local authority area.

- 1.3. There continues to be a task for the Horton Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the evolving masterplan for the Horton General Hospital. West Northamptonshire Council is now responsible for scrutinising health services in the area of Northamptonshire served by the Horton General Hospital, as the successor to Northamptonshire County Council.
- 1.4. It is necessary for the Council to agree whether it will participate in the Horton Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. If it does agree to participate, the Council must also approve the operating arrangements for the Committee and appoint a councillor as a member of it.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Council:
 - a) Agrees to participate in the Horton Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee with Oxfordshire and Warwickshire county councils.
- 3.2 In the event of a positive resolution on recommendation (a) above, it is further recommended that the Council:
 - b) Agrees the terms of reference for the Horton Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee set out at Appendix A to this report.
 - c) Agrees to delegate the Council's statutory health scrutiny functions to the Horton Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee solely in relation to scrutiny of those matters within the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee's terms of reference.
 - d) Appoints Councillor Rosie Herring as a member of the Horton Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2021/22.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 The recommendations are intended to enable West Northamptonshire Council to agree whether it will participate in scrutiny of plans for services used by residents in a part of the local authority area. The way in which this would be done reflects applicable statutory requirements and previous practice.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 Shire and unitary authorities have statutory responsibilities for scrutinising health services in their areas. These responsibilities are based on the National Health Service Act 2006, the Health & Social Care Act 2012 and the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013.

5.2 The Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 set out the following specific requirements:

- Regulation 21 Review and scrutiny

A local authority may review and scrutinise any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service in its area.

- Regulation 23 Consultation

Where a relevant NHS body or health service provider has under consideration any proposal for a substantial development of the health service in the area of a local authority, or for a substantial variation in the provision of such service, it must consult the local authority.

- Regulation 28 Discharge of health scrutiny functions by overview and scrutiny committees

A local authority may arrange for its health scrutiny functions to be discharged by an overview and scrutiny committee of the authority.

[West Northamptonshire Council has agreed that its health scrutiny functions will be carried out by the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee].

- Regulation 30 Joint committees

Where a relevant NHS body or health service provider consults more than one local authority pursuant to Regulation 23, those local authorities must appoint a joint overview and scrutiny committee for the purposes of the consultation and only that joint overview and scrutiny committee may—

(a) make comments on the proposal that is the subject of consultation

(b) require the provision of information about the proposal

(c) require a member or employee of a relevant NHS body or a relevant health service provider to attend before it to answer questions in connection with the consultation.

6. Issues and Choices

6.1 The Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG) carried out public consultation in 2017 on proposals to close consultant-led obstetric services at the Horton General Hospital, Banbury. OCCG's proposals were scrutinised by the Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (: the Oxfordshire JHOSC). The Oxfordshire JHOSC ultimately agreed to refer OCCG's proposals to the Secretary of State for Health, on the grounds that the Oxfordshire JHOSC considered that the proposals were not in the best interests of the residents of Oxfordshire and that consultation with the Oxfordshire JHOSC had been insufficient.

The Secretary of State passed the matter to the NHS Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP) for assessment.

6.2 The Secretary of State subsequently concluded that “further action is required locally before a final decision is made about the future of maternity services in Oxfordshire” and supported the following recommendations on the matter:

- Health scrutiny and OCCG should work together to invite stakeholders from surrounding areas that are impacted by these proposals to participate in this debate going forward. This should include the consideration of forming a joint overview and scrutiny committee covering a wider area (for example, all of the local authorities that took part in the consultation) which would help meet the concerns expressed in the IRP’s report of their review.
- Where OCCG consults more than one local authority about a proposal, they must appoint a joint overview and scrutiny committee for the purposes of the consultation.

6.3 In light of this conclusion in April 2018 the Oxfordshire JHOSC contacted Northamptonshire and Warwickshire county councils – as the authorities with health scrutiny responsibilities for the other areas served by the Horton General Hospital – to request that they formally agree to establish a joint health overview and scrutiny committee to scrutinise consultation proposals on consultant-led obstetric services (: the Horton Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, referred to as the Horton JHOSC in the remainder of this report).

6.4 This proposal required Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire county councils each to delegate health scrutiny powers relating to the service change proposals concerning the Horton General Hospital to the Horton JHOSC. The powers of the Horton JHOSC related only to the proposals and consultation on consultant-led obstetric services at the Horton General Hospital and meant that:

- Only the Horton JHOSC could respond to the consultation
- Only the Horton JHOSC could exercise the formal power to require the provision of information
- Only the Horton JHOSC could exercise the formal power to require attendance
- The Horton JHOSC would hold the formal power to make a referral to the Secretary of State on the consultation proposals concerning consultant-led obstetric services at the Horton General Hospital.

6.5 Northamptonshire County Council agreed to establish the Horton JHOSC and the proposed terms of reference for it at the Council meeting on 17th May 2018.

6.6 The Horton JHOSC held 7 formal meetings between September 2018 and September 2019 to scrutinise proposals for the future of consultant-led obstetric services at the Horton General Hospital under consideration by OCCG. The Horton JHOSC ultimately agreed to refer these proposals to the Secretary of State for Health on the grounds that it was not satisfied with the

content of consultation and that it considered that the proposals would not be in the best interests of local health services. The Secretary of State did not refer these proposals to the IRP.

- 6.7 In the process of reaching the conclusion referred to in paragraph 6.6 above the Horton JHOSC acknowledged that relevant health service bodies were working to improve the Horton General Hospital. The Horton JHOSC considered that it would be beneficial for it to continue to meet to hold to account these bodies for the development of a masterplan for the Horton General Hospital, intended to provide high quality, flexible clinical space that could be used for different services over time, including obstetric services if circumstances demanded. The Horton JHOSC's conclusion about the merits of further scrutiny was also endorsed by the Oxfordshire JHOSC.
- 6.8 This situation resulted in the development of updated terms of reference for the Horton JHOSC intended to revise its scope to permit scrutiny of the Horton General Hospital masterplan. The updated terms of reference were agreed by each of Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire county councils at meetings on 14th July 2020, 17th September 2020 and 13th October 2020 respectively. The Horton JHOSC held one formal meeting in 2020/21.
- 6.9 There continues to be a task for the Horton JHOSC to scrutinise the evolving masterplan for the Horton General Hospital, which will potentially be done at meetings during January – March 2022. However, since the last meeting of the Horton JHOSC West Northamptonshire Council has succeeded Northamptonshire County Council as the local authority with responsibility for scrutinising health services in the area of Northamptonshire served by the Horton General Hospital. This creates the need for West Northamptonshire Council now to confirm whether it will participate in the Horton JHOSC. If the Council agrees that it will participate it must then approve the terms of reference for the Horton JHOSC, which are set out at Appendix A to this report. The Council must also appoint one councillor to sit on the Horton JHOSC. The terms of reference specify that this appointment:
- will reflect the political balance of [the] authority
 - will be appointed from the membership of [the] overview and scrutiny committees that [has] responsibility for discharging health scrutiny functions.
- 6.10 It is proposed that the Council appoints Councillor Rosie Herring as its member of the Horton JHOSC for 2021/22. This appointment will meet the requirements of the terms of reference highlighted in paragraph 6.9 above and Councillor Herring also represents a ward in the part of West Northamptonshire served by the Horton General Hospital.
- 6.11 As noted in paragraph 5.2 above, regulations relating to health scrutiny require joint scrutiny of service change proposals that affect more than one local authority area. This effectively precludes West Northamptonshire Council from seeking to scrutinise this matter unilaterally. It would also be open to the Council to determine that it did not wish to participate in the work of the Horton JHOSC, for example, if it considered that this was fundamentally a matter that affected Oxfordshire. However, the Council should be aware of how such a decision might be perceived by relevant stakeholders. It could also involve a risk of hampering further work by the other two local authorities concerned.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

7.1.1 There are no specific resources or financial implications arising from the proposals. The terms of reference for the Horton JHOSC specify that Oxfordshire County Council will act as the host authority for the JHOSC and will support its operation. There should therefore be no financial implications to West Northamptonshire Council from a decision to participate in the JHOSC. Any costs arising from West Northamptonshire councillors attending meetings of the Horton JHOSC will be met from existing budgets that support councillors in carrying out their role.

7.2 Legal

7.2.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from the proposals in this report. The operating arrangements for the Horton JHOSC reflect statutory requirements relating to health scrutiny and have been in place since 2018/19.

7.3 Risk

7.3.1 There are no significant risks arising from the proposals in this report.

7.4 Consultation

7.4.1 No formal consultation was necessary prior to presenting the proposals in this report to Council. Information on the Horton JHOSC has been shared with the Leader of the Council and with Councillor Herring as the Chair of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.5.1 The report has not been considered by Overview and Scrutiny.

7.6 Climate Impact

7.6.1 The proposals have no specific climate impact.

7.7 Community Impact

7.7.1 Participation in the Horton JHOSC would enable West Northamptonshire Council to contribute to scrutiny of a matter that affects communities in the south of the local authority area.

7.8 Communications

7.8.1 The proposals have no specific communications implications.

8. Background Papers

Joint health overview and scrutiny committee concerning services at the Horton General Hospital, Banbury – report to Northamptonshire County Council (17th May 2018)

Proposed revision of the terms of reference for the joint health overview and scrutiny committee concerning the Horton General Hospital, Banbury – report to Northamptonshire County Council (17th September 2020)

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Horton Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Oxfordshire, Warwickshire and West Northamptonshire)

Terms of Reference

Rationale

1. Health Services are required to consult a local authority's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee about any proposals they have for a substantial development or variation in the provision of health services in their area. When these substantial developments or variations affect a geographical area that covers more than one local authority, the local authorities are required to appoint a Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) for the purposes of the consultation.
2. In response to the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group's proposals regarding consultant-led maternity services at the Horton General Hospital, the Secretary of State and Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP) advised a JHOSC be formed covering the area of patient flow for these services. This was formed in 2018, across the area of patient flow for obstetric services at the Horton General Hospital in Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire.
3. A decision was made by Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG) in September 2019 to:
 - a) Confirm an earlier decision made in August 2017 to create a single specialist obstetric unit for Oxfordshire (and its neighbouring areas) at the John Radcliffe Hospital and establish a Midwife Led Unit (MLU) at the Horton General Hospital, for the foreseeable future.
 - b) Work closely with Oxford University Hospitals (OUH) and local stakeholders to further develop the masterplan for the Horton General Hospital, ensuring it includes high quality, flexible clinical space that could be used for different services over time, including obstetric services if circumstances demand.
 - c) Actively pursue with OUH the need for significant capital investment in the Horton General Hospital, in clear recognition that this can improve recruitment and ensure the site is fit for its future as a thriving 21st century hospital for the whole of North Oxfordshire and beyond.
4. Following this decision, the Horton JHOSC Terms of Reference were amended to allow its further scrutiny of the development of a Horton General Hospital masterplan.
5. These terms of reference set out the arrangements for Oxfordshire County Council, Warwickshire County Council and West Northamptonshire Council to operate a JHOSC in line with the provisions set out in legislation and guidance to allow it to operate as a mandatory committee.

Terms of Reference

6. The Horton Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee will operate formally as a mandatory joint committee i.e. where the councils have been required under Regulation 30 (5) Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 to appoint a joint committee for the purposes of the specified health partner's consultation on:
 - i. Development of the masterplan for the Horton General Hospital, ensuring it includes high quality, flexible clinical space that could be used for different services over time, including obstetric services if circumstances demand.
 - ii. Active pursuit of significant capital investment in the Horton General Hospital.
7. The purpose of the mandatory Horton JHOSC across Oxfordshire, Warwickshire and West Northamptonshire is to:
 - a) Make comments on the proposal consulted on
 - b) Require the provision of information about the proposal
 - c) Require a member or employee of the relevant NHS body or relevant health service provider to attend before it to answer questions in connection with the consultation.
 - d) Refer to the Secretary of State only on the development of a masterplan for the Horton General Hospital where:
 - It is not satisfied that consultation on any proposal for a substantial change or development in health services has been adequate in relation to content or time allowed (Note: the referral power in this context only relates to the consultation with the local authorities and not consultation with other stakeholders).
 - It is not satisfied that the proposal would be in the interests of the health service in the area.
 - A decision has been taken without consultation and it is not satisfied that the reasons given for not carrying out consultation are adequate.
8. The response to the consulting health service will be agreed by the Horton JHOSC and signed by the Chair.
9. With the exception of proposals to develop a masterplan for the Horton General Hospital, responsibility for all other health scrutiny functions and activities remains with the respective local authority health overview and scrutiny committees.
10. No matter to be discussed by the Horton JHOSC shall be considered to be confidential or exempt without the agreement of all Councils and subject to the requirements of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Timescales and Governance

11. The Horton JHOSC will operate as a mandatory committee only while the proposed service changes that affect the relevant areas are considered. This period is from the point at which the relevant health body notifies the Horton JHOSC of the formal consultation timetable and the point at which a decision is taken.
12. Meetings of the Horton JHOSC will be conducted under the Standing Orders of Oxfordshire County Council (i.e. the local authority hosting and providing Democratic Services support).

Membership

13. Membership of the Horton JHOSC will be appointed by Oxfordshire County Council, Warwickshire County Council and West Northamptonshire Council from the membership of their overview and scrutiny committees that have responsibility for discharging health scrutiny functions.
14. Appointments to the Horton JHOSC have regard to the proportion of patient flow for the Horton General Hospital. The membership of the JHOSC will therefore be 10 councillors, consisting of 8 from Oxfordshire, 1 from Warwickshire and 1 from West Northamptonshire.
15. Appointments by each authority to the Horton JHOSC will reflect the political balance of that authority.
16. The quorum for meetings of the Horton JHOSC will be 5 members, comprising at least one member from either Warwickshire or West Northamptonshire.

Committee support

17. The work of the Horton JHOSC will require support in terms of overall co-ordination, setting up and clerking of meetings and underpinning policy support and administrative arrangements.
18. Meetings of the Horton JHOSC are to be held near to the Horton General Hospital (or virtually according to relevant regulations) and associated administrative support and costs to be borne by Oxfordshire County Council.
19. Should a press statement or press release need to be made by the Horton JHOSC this will be drafted by Oxfordshire County Council on behalf of the Horton JHOSC and will be agreed by the Chair.

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

2 December 2021

Councillor Malcolm Longley, Portfolio Holder for Finance

Report Title	Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022-2023
Report Author	Martin Henry, Executive Director, Finance

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Geoff Wild, Deputy Monitoring Officer	25/10/2021
Chief Finance/S151 Officer	Martin Henry	20/10/2021
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Communications Lead/Head of Communications	Claire Hughes	22/10/2021

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Report on results from consultation

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to (a) provide members with an update on the proposed Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) for West Northamptonshire Council for the financial year 2022-2023, including the results from the recent consultation process; and (b) to ask members to approve a LCTRS for 2022-2023.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The LCTRS must be approved and be in place by 31 January each year and prior to that the authority must consult with any precepting authority and any other person who may have an

interest on any proposed changes to the scheme. The scheme applies to working age claimants only, as the government prescribes the scheme for those of pension age which provides up to 100% support based on the circumstances of the individual.

- 2.2 At the Cabinet meeting of 14 September 2021, members received a report providing an update on the LCTRS for the year 2021-2022 and were asked to endorse no change to the minimum Council Tax contribution of 20% for working age claimants and to agree, for consultation purposes only, two proposals to the current scheme.
- 2.3 At their meeting on 9 November 2021, Cabinet members received a report on the results of the consultation and were asked to recommend to Council a LCTRS for the financial year 2022-2023.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the meeting:
 - 1) Notes the contents of the report.
 - 2) Approves a Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) for the financial year 2022-2023 as set out in the report including amending the LCTRS Regulations for pensioners in line with the uprating announced by DLUHC and uprating the working age Regulations in line with those announced by Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
 - 3) Give delegated authority to the Executive Director Finance to make any changes to the LCTRS up to and including 31 January 2022 in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance.

4. Reason for Recommendations (NOTE: this section is mandatory and must be completed)

To enable a Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for West Northamptonshire Council to be approved for the financial year 2022-2023 and for the final scheme to be in place by 31 January 2022.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 Members will be aware that since April 2013 each Local Authority has been required to determine a LCTRS, which replaced the national Council Tax Benefit scheme. The scheme applies to working age claimants only as the government prescribes the scheme (CTRS Prescribed Requirements Regulations 2012) for those of pension age, which provides up to 100% support based on the circumstances of the individual.
- 5.2 Each billing authority has discretion as to their local scheme, including the maximum level of support available to working age claimants (and therefore the minimum percentage of the bill they are required to pay) and the eligibility criteria for the scheme.
- 5.3 For the financial year 2021-22, following a full consultation process, members agreed a LCTRS based on a minimum Council Tax contribution for working age claimants of 20% and some changes to align the previous schemes, which were mostly around mirroring the changes made

to DWP Housing Benefit scheme since 2013. The scheme has been in place across West Northamptonshire area since April 2021.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 The LCTRS for the financial year 2022-23 must be approved and in place by 31 January 2022 and prior to that the authority must consult any precepting authority and any other interested parties on any changes to the scheme.
- 6.2 At the Cabinet meeting on 14 September 2021 members agreed, for consultation purposes only, two proposals to the current scheme and approved a consultation period commencing on 20 September 2021 and concluding on 16 October 2021. The consultation process included an online form open to all residents, stakeholders and those people representing organisations. A letter was sent to all those of working age who receive LCTRS, and a dedicated email address and telephone line were opened for any comments and questions to be submitted. The consultation was also widely promoted on the WNC website, social media channels and via partner organisations. Consultation has also taken place with the Police and Crime Commissioner and with town and parish councils. The proposals included in the consultation were as follows:

Proposal One

- 6.3 For the financial year 2021-2022, members agreed a Council Tax discount for care leavers and a local policy was agreed. Under this policy, care leavers are required to apply for LCTRS and can then apply for an exceptional hardship award to help with any Council Tax payment required. This additional support is funded from the exceptional hardship pot. The proposal is to include this additional support for care leavers up to the age of 25 as part of the LCTRS for 2022-2023.

Proposal Two

- 6.4 The current scheme allows for a 100% disregard of War Widows and War Disablement pensions when calculating entitlement to LCTRS. The proposal is to offer enhanced support to those of working age in receipt of War Widows and War Disablement pensions and who currently must pay a minimum Council Tax contribution of 20%. This proposal would remove the minimum contribution and allows LCTRS to be calculated on 100% of Council Tax liability therefore enabling these claimants to receive up to 100% support.

Summary of consultation results

- 6.5 A full report showing the results from the consultation process is shown at Appendix A. In summary, 306 respondents either partially or fully completed a questionnaire on the draft proposals. Respondents did not have to answer every question. Three responses were received via social media and one oral response via telephone.
- 6.6 284 responses were received to the proposal to remove the minimum contribution of 20% for those working age claimants receiving War Widows and War Disablement Pensions and to allow Council Tax reduction to be calculated on 100% of Council Tax liability. The majority of the respondents, 57.4% said they strongly agreed or tended to agree, while 14.8% said they strongly disagreed or tended to disagree.

- 6.7 Care leavers must currently pay a minimum contribution of 20% of their Council Tax liability. The proposal is to remove the 20% minimum contribution and allow Council Tax reduction to be determined on 100% of Council Tax liability. There were 274 responses to this proposal with 54% of respondents either strongly agreeing or tending to agree and 18.6% either strongly disagreeing or tending to disagree.
- 6.8 We collect specific demographic information from those people who took part in the consultation to build up an understanding of the communities we serve and to inform service delivery. Whilst not all the respondents answered the questions relating to demographics, we can confirm that 269 of the responses were received from individuals and 3 on behalf of organisations. 233 of the responses were received from people in 25-66 age group and 201 responses were from people receiving LCTRS. Many of the consultation responses were completed as a result of a letter from the Council promoting the survey (208).

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1 The cost of the scheme for 2022-23 is estimated to be £19.7m, including Police and Fire, of which West Northants's share is estimated to be £15.6m. These figures are before any increase in Council Tax for 2022-2023. It should be noted that this position may change due to several factors, including the LCTRS caseload numbers and possible changes in LCTRS entitlement for individuals, as well as the on-going impact of Covid-19. The West Northants budget for 2021-2022 includes provision for a cost of £16.2m as part of the tax base calculation and therefore the reduced caseload could lead to a saving of around £0.6m in 2022-2023.
- 7.1.2 The estimated costs of the proposals supported by the consultation responses is £40,000 but these are offset by the reduced LCTRS caseload and is therefore affordable within existing resources.

7.2 Legal

- 7.2.1 The adoption of a Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for West Northants is a legal requirement and is set out in Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended by the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021).
- 7.2.2 There is legal requirement to consult on any proposed LCTRS under paragraph 3 of Schedule 1A to the Local Government Finance Act 1991, therefore failure to do so would leave West Northants Council open to challenge on the scheme that is introduced.

7.3 Risk

- 7.3.1 No risks have been identified as a direct result of this report.

7.4 Consultation

7.4.1 As outlined in this report.

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.5.1 Not yet considered by committee.

7.6 Climate Impact

7.6.1 No impacts identified

7.7 Community Impact

7.7.1 No specific impacts have been identified. An equality impact assessment has been completed.

7.8 Communications

No specific requirements identified at this stage

8. Background Papers

8.1 None.

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**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

**Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme
2022 to 2023
Consultation Analysis Report
September to October 2021**

Author: Consultation and Engagement Team, West Northamptonshire Council

Owner: Executive Director, Finance, West Northamptonshire Council

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Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to set out the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) 2022 to 2023 consultation process, and key consultation findings (including an understanding of who participated in the consultation). The results will be used to help shape the final LCTRS, which is due to be considered by West Northamptonshire Council Cabinet at its meeting on the 9 November 2021. Full details of the new scheme will be published in early 2022 with the changes coming into effect from April 2022.
2. The Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (sometimes known as Council Tax Support) is to help people on low income to pay their Council Tax.
3. Local Council Tax Reduction Schemes (LCTRS) were introduced from April 2013 when Council Tax Benefit was abolished and replaced by locally agreed schemes. Those of pensioner age are protected by the prescribed regulations set out by central government.
4. By law, councils are required to have a scheme to help people on low incomes to pay their Council Tax. Each year councils needs to approve a LCTRS for the following 12 months. Where there are changes proposed, it is necessary for a public consultation to take place.
5. West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) set its first Council Tax Reduction Scheme as a new unitary council for the financial year 2021 to 2022. The scheme is aligned for West Northants area and the level of minimum Council Tax contribution that working age claimants must pay is 20% of their Council Tax liability.
6. The Council sought views on the following proposed changes to the LCTRS for 2022 to 2023:

War widows and war disablement:

7. Currently all working age claimants in receipt of a War Widows or War Disablement pension must pay a minimum contribution of 20% of their Council Tax liability.
8. The Council's proposal is to remove the minimum contribution of 20% and allow the Council Tax Reduction to be determined on 100% of their Council Tax liability whilst continuing to disregard 100% of War Pension income under our local scheme.

9. Rationale: This means that the Council can enhance the support offered to those residents receiving war pensions at relatively small cost to the taxpayer.

Care leavers:

10. The Council understands that the transition out of care for young people can be very challenging. It is keen to offer support for those young people who may be liable for Council Tax by giving additional financial support on top of the other Council Tax discounts that may be available.
11. For the financial year 2021 to 2022 funding was agreed to establish a discretionary scheme to offer this support. Care leavers aged 18 to 25 who are formerly a child in the care of WNC and who reside in the West Northants area are asked to apply for the discretionary awards after statutory discounts such as single person discount and LCTRS have been applied.
12. The proposal for 2022 to 2023 is to include this support within the LCTRS and to allow Council Tax Reduction for care leavers to be determined on 100% of their Council Tax liability.
13. Rational: This proposed change will reduce the complexity for care leavers by only having one application process whilst also reducing the administration of the scheme.

Other options considered, but discarded:

14. The Council considered setting the level of minimum Council Tax contribution for working age customers at a higher level, but this was discarded as it would mean a reduction in support to some of the most vulnerable residents at a time when the full impact of the Covid 19 pandemic may not yet be realised.

How was the consultation promoted?

15. The consultation was hosted on West Northamptonshire Council's [Consultation Hub](#) website. The consultation was widely promoted, and those informed include Councillors, local MPs, parish and town councils, and partner organisations. All customers in receipt of LCTRS were sent a letter informing them of the proposals and inviting them to take part in the consultation. Members of the West Northamptonshire Residents' Panel (circa 500 members) and West Northamptonshire's Consultation Register were also invited to give their views.

16. Opportunities to take part in the consultation was also promoted to the local media via a press release at the launch of the consultation and promoted several times via the Council's social media channels. The Facebook reach (i.e. the number of people who saw any content from or about the consultation web page) was 13,226, which resulted in 599 engagements (i.e. comments, link clicks, shares, and likes). The Twitter reach was 2,918, which resulted in 68 engagements (i.e. link clicks, retweets, and likes).

How did consultees have their say?

17. Consultees were able to have their say about the LCTRS 2022 to 2023 proposals in a range of ways, by:

- Visiting the [LCTRS 2022 to 2023 Consultation Hub webpage](#) and completing the online questionnaire, or requesting a paper questionnaire
- Emailing their feedback to the dedicated ctrsconsultation@westnorthants.gov.uk mailbox
- Contacting the Council by telephone to give verbal feedback, receive support to complete the questionnaire, or have any other related queries answered
- Using the Council's social media (i.e. Facebook and Twitter)

Number and type of responses received

18. The LCTRS 2022 to 2023 consultation ran from 20 September to 17 October 2021. During the consultation period, using the various means available to consultees, local people and organisations contributed to the consultation 310 times. Nearly all of the feedback received was via the questionnaire, with 306 respondents participating via this mechanism (40 respondents were supported by Council staff to complete the questionnaire, mostly due to them not having internet access or needing some support). There were also three responses received via social media, and one verbal response provided over the telephone.

19. Within the questionnaire, respondents could choose which questions they responded to, and so there are lower response numbers to each question when compared with the overall number of participants, depending on whether participants had a particular interest in the subject matter.

20. Although the questionnaire focussed on the two proposals being put forward by the Council, respondents were able to provide comment on any aspect of the LCTRS.

Summary of feedback

21. This report is a summary of the feedback received. It is recommended that it is read in conjunction with the full consultation results, including the detail contained within the received comments. The appendix includes all responses received (with personal/ identifiable details redacted) to enable decision makers to see each response in full. The full consultation results are available on the consultation's dedicated page on the [Consultation Hub](#).
22. An [Equality Screening Assessment](#) was published and made available alongside the questionnaire, as was the [14 September 2021 Cabinet Report](#).

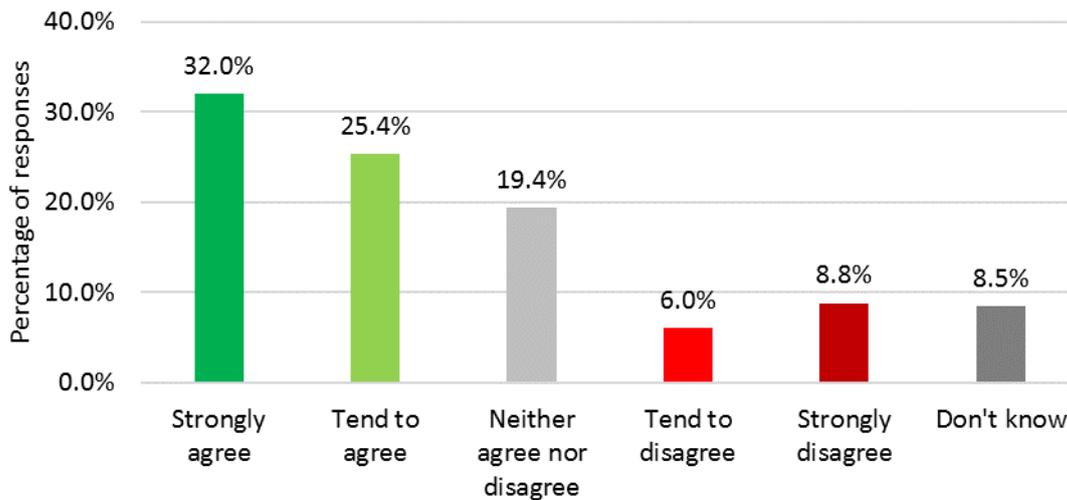
LCTRS 2022 to 2023 Consultation Questionnaire

23. In total, 306 respondents filled out a questionnaire on the draft LCTRS 2022 to 2023 proposals, either partially or fully. Respondents did not have to answer every question, so the total number of responses for each question differs and is shown in relation to each question. It is noted that some respondents exited the questionnaire before reaching the end.

War widows and war disablement

24. Currently all working age claimants in receipt of a War Widows or War Disablement pension must pay a minimum contribution of 20% of their Council Tax liability.
25. The Council's proposal is to remove the minimum contribution of 20% and allow their Council Tax Reduction to be determined on 100% of their Council Tax liability.
26. Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with this proposal. There were 284 responses to this question. The majority of respondents (57.4%) said they strongly agree or tend to agree with the proposal, while 14.8% said they strongly disagree or tend to disagree.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?



27. Respondents were then asked if they disagreed with the proposal, to tell us why along with any alternative suggestions they would like to make. There were 52 comments made in relation to this question.
28. There were 12 respondents who said they either 'Strongly agree' or 'Tend to agree', that made comment.
29. The most common responses were general comments around the way in which the benefits system is organised nationally and how this impacts on people's finances, and the different ways in which the system categorises people. A couple of the respondents felt means testing should be applied and their contribution be based on affordability. Some cited applying equity and fairness to the process and providing more support for those on low incomes/ government benefits. A few respondents explained their own personal circumstances and mentioned examples of financial hardship and / or quality of life impacts.
30. Those responses which fully agreed with the proposal felt it made sense, and said that this group of people had served the country and felt they deserved all the aid and help available to them.
31. One organisation response, that made a comment, said that most other councils provided this support to vulnerable groups.
32. There were five individual responses that said they 'Neither agreed nor disagreed', and made comment. The most common response was to have a fair system in operation where everyone made a contribution. Reductions they said, should also be offered fairly and based on income levels. Some felt that an increase would result in more financial hardship to those that were struggling to make ends meet.

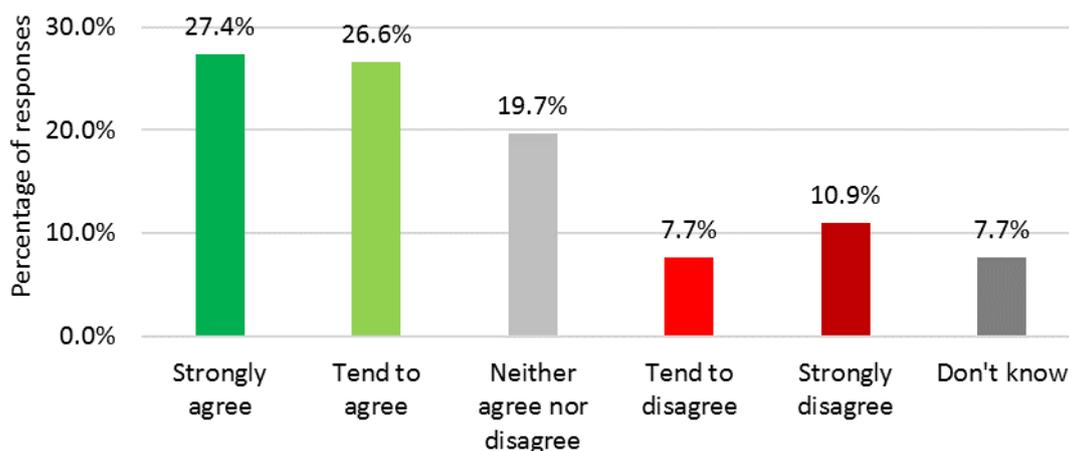
Another respondent found the information shared was unclear and it was difficult to understand its implication. One respondent doubted the consultation stating that they felt the Council had already made its intention and decision on the issue.

33. There were 30 respondents who said they either 'Strongly disagree' or 'Tend to disagree', who made comment. Just under a third of responses commented generally about the benefits system. They felt the system is confusing and unfair as it 'rewarded' some people more than others. Other respondents expressed that benefits were not increasing at the same a rate as cost of living expenses. A few respondents said they wanted to contribute more to the public purse but were in vulnerable situations where any increases in contributions would severely impact their everyday lives. They said any increases charged would be marginal income for the Council but for people already on tight budgets it would have a higher and detrimental impact.
34. Many respondents want a fair system which operated on means testing incomes for reduction that were being offered. Interwoven in these comments were references to hardship and affordability and how households were made up. Comments again expressed their feelings about the way in which welfare benefits were granted.
35. A couple of respondents wanted exemption to be applied to this group without question; one respondent wanted no one to pay any taxes; and a few respondents express their feelings about previous legacy councils use of public money.
36. The one organisational response received that said they either 'Strongly disagree' or 'Tend to disagree' felt that the claimants of war widows or war disablement pension benefited from preferential treatments in most authorities. They said difference between various council's LCTRS to this cohort of people creates problems when people moved between different local authority areas. They also said they thought government support for military veterans was limited compared to public support they receive.
37. There were four respondents who said 'Don't know' and made comment. A couple of respondents said that they did not want this group of people to face financial hardship or pay more than they were paying now. One respondent found the proposal unclear and confusing.
38. There was one respondent who did not answer the question as to whether they agreed or disagreed with the proposal but still provided a comment. They said that tax payments should be totally removed.

Care leavers

39. Currently care leavers, up to the age of 25, must pay a minimum contribution of 20% of their Council Tax liability.
40. The Council’s proposal is to remove the minimum contribution of 20% and allow their Council Tax Reduction to be determined on 100% of their Council Tax liability.
41. Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with this proposal. There were 274 responses to this question. The majority of respondents (54.0%) said they strongly agree or tend to agree with the proposal, while 18.6% said they strongly disagree or tend to disagree.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?



42. Respondents were then asked if they disagreed with the proposal, to tell us why along with any alternative suggestions they would like to make. There were 47 comments made in relation to this question.
43. There were two respondents who said they either ‘Strongly agree’ or ‘Tend to agree’, that made comment. One was from an individual who felt care leavers required the support and suggested a phased approach be taken. The other response was on behalf of an organisation, who said whilst they agree with supporting vulnerable people they felt this needed to be done in a constructive way, and that support needs to be provided to help people to learn how to manage their own finances.
44. A total of five respondents said they ‘Neither agree nor disagree’, made comment. A couple of these respondents felt everyone should be treated equally; one

respondent said they wanted to be consulted on a wider range of options; and the other respondents said that the proposal does not affect them, with one adding that they do not understand the question.

45. A total of 35 respondents said they either 'Strongly disagree or 'Tend to disagree', and made comment as to why. From analysing the comments received it would appear that a little under a third of the respondents who made comment did not fully understand the question, as they made references to how they felt care leavers required support and should not be financially worse off due to this proposal. Some of these respondents also felt that care leavers could not afford to pay 100% of their Council Tax bill or that they should be entitled to a reduction of 100% of their Council Tax liability. One respondent suggested that if there was to be an increase in payment, then the change should not be made until the individual has reached the age of 25 or earns the average UK income.
46. Those respondents who disagreed with the proposal put forward several comments as to why. The frequency of reasons given were in similar quantity. A few expressed their general disagreement to the proposal, expressing their opinion that everyone should make a contribution, and that the cost of the scheme should not be subsidised by other tax payers.
47. A similar number said they felt it was unfair for care leavers to be isolated out as receiving extra Council Tax support when there are also other cohorts of people who are also disadvantaged and need supporting. Examples given were some older people, other young people who are not care leavers, and those with mental and/or physical disabilities. It was felt that not providing an equal amount of support to everyone that needed it was 'not morally right', discriminatory, and would leave the Council exposed to legal challenge.
48. A few respondents said they felt the scheme should be means tested based on income, and that the elderly and people in receipt of benefits should not be excluded.
49. A handful of people felt a care leaver would have income/ benefits that would enable them to afford to make a contribution.
50. Other comments included that care leavers should be given exemption from Council Tax for a few years then assessed to see if they still needed the exemption; that any changes should not result in people 'dropping out of the safety net'; and that all recipients are informed of the changes so that they can easily access the reduction.

51. The one organisational respondent who disagreed said care leavers tend to find themselves managing a household budget younger than other young people, and also find themselves without the skills to know what to pay when, how to apply for benefits and where to seek help. They also said the minimum payment reduces pressure in their first few years.
52. There were three respondents who said 'Don't know', that made comment. These respondents appear to have found the question unclear, with a couple of them adding that they do not wish this cohort of customers to experience any undue financial hardship.
53. A couple of respondents did not answer the previous question as to whether they agreed or disagreed with the proposal but still made comment. One questioned the legality of tax on the whole, whilst the other said benefit should be distributed fairly and not just focused on care leavers, citing people living with a physical disability should be given similar support.

Any other comments

54. Respondents were then invited to make any other comments that they have not already told us. There were 71 comments made in relation to this question.
55. The most common responses were around Council Tax reductions for those not receiving a War Widows / War Disablement pension nor a care leaver. Respondents felt that more support from the LCTRS should be provided to those:
- With a disability
 - With a mental health condition
 - Terminally ill
 - Living in poverty
 - On low income
 - Living in single person households
 - Who are carers / family carers
 - Unemployed due to health / illness
 - Receiving benefits / financial support – including Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Universal Credit
 - Considered an 'older person'
56. Several respondents specifically commented that people with disabilities should be eligible for 100% reduction in Council Tax. Respondents also questioned how someone unable to work, due to disability or health etc., would be able to pay for increases in Council Tax.

57. Several respondents made comments about Universal Credit and the negative impact of the £20 increase ending. Respondents suggested that those on Universal Credit should receive Council Tax reduction support and highlighted the effects on increasing costs. A respondent raised that Council Tax was not factored into Universal Credit calculations.
58. A similar number of respondents felt that the minimum contribution of 20% should be removed for all claimants. Whilst a handful of respondents felt Council Tax should be reduced for everyone. A respondent suggested the proposed changes had been chosen because they would only effect a small number.
59. A handful of respondents made comments about how they had found LCTRS helpful and necessary. Another respondent strongly supported the proposed changes to the scheme.
60. A similar number of respondents felt that LCTRS should not be changed. A further two respondents made comments about the need to ensure that other services are not impacted by the proposed changes.
61. A couple of respondents raised their concerns about how care leaver access the LCTRS. A respondent was concerned that care leavers would not be able to access the required support to claim LCTRS and raised their own negative experiences with social workers. Another respondent felt that fluctuations in a care leaver's income would be penalised by the scheme and suggested the scheme was less rigid.
62. One respondent felt that the LCTRS was stressful to those on variable income and suggested that the process be improved for those whose income changes each month – calculate Tax payment over 12 months, raised waste of recalculating Tax each month and clarity over how income changes which affects LCTRS support.
63. Several responses offered other suggestions for the LCTRS and Council Tax in general:
- Reviewing Council Tax spending more often
 - How Council Tax is determined – suggestions for a means tested assessment or an assessment based on income and outgoings.
 - Council tax increases aimed at those able to afford it and not those that are vulnerable
 - Changing the welfare/ benefits system
 - Having a single 'assets tax' replace all other taxes
 - Council Tax be claimed directly from central government, rather than Council Tax from benefits/ financial support from central government

- Reducing the minimum contribution of Council Tax to 15% for those on low incomes
- More support available to help people understand the LCTRS process

64. Several respondents took the opportunity to make negative comments about the Council. One respondent felt that the Council should do more to support disabled people and said they found contact with the Council to be very negative. A couple of respondents made negative comments about previous council spending, including decisions made prior to 1 April 2021. A handful of respondents said the harmonisation of LCTRS across West Northamptonshire had led to an increase in their Council Tax and questioned the decision.

65. Some of the respondents made comments focused on the consultation and proposals. A couple of respondents said they had difficulties understanding the proposals; a respondent felt the consultation should have been promoted to all; and another respondent questioned the purpose of consulting on what they thought are decided proposals.

About you

66. Respondents were then asked if they were responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation. There were 272 responses to this question, with 269 saying they were responding as an individual and three on behalf of an organisation.

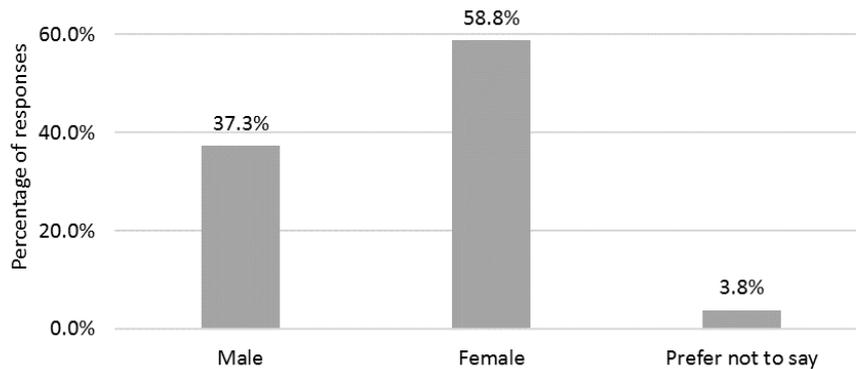
67. Organisational respondents were asked to provide more detail about their organisation by telling us if they were responding on behalf of either a Housing Association, Advice Agency, or Support Organisation. There was only one organisation respondent that provided this information and they identified themselves as responding on behalf of an Advice Agency.

68. Organisational respondents were then asked to provide their organisations name and their job title/role. We have not included details within this report in order to ensure respondents' anonymity is retained.

69. Respondents who were not responding on behalf of an organisation were asked a range of demographic questions about themselves to help us understand the characteristics of people who took part in the consultation.

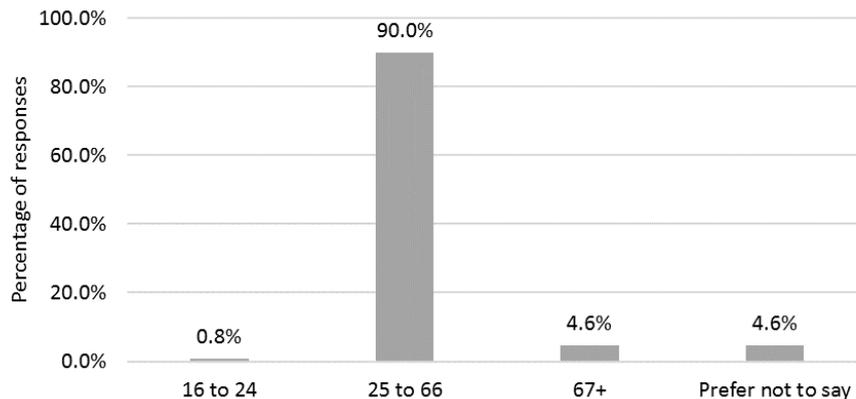
70. Respondents were asked if they identified themselves as either male, female or other. There were 272 responses to this question. The majority of respondents (58.8%) were female, 37.3% were male, 3.8% said prefer not to say, and none said 'Other'.

Are you:



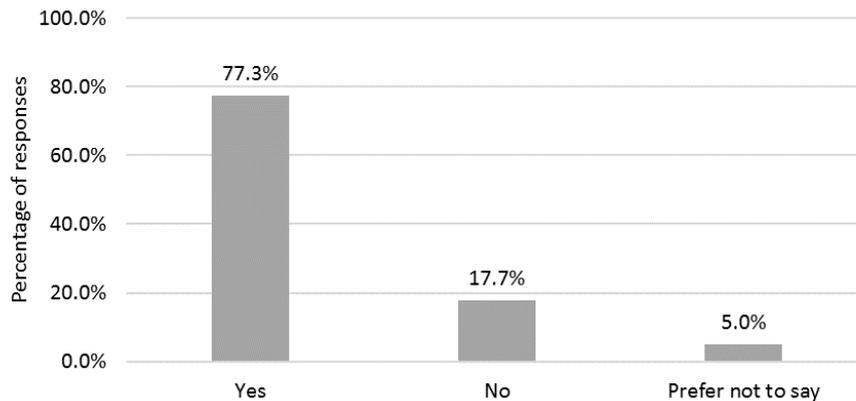
71. Respondents were then asked what age band they fall within. There were 259 responses to this question. Most of the respondents (90.0%) identified themselves as being aged between 25 to 66. Only 0.8% respondents said they were aged between and 16 to 24 and 4.6% said they were aged 67 or older.

What age band do you fall in?



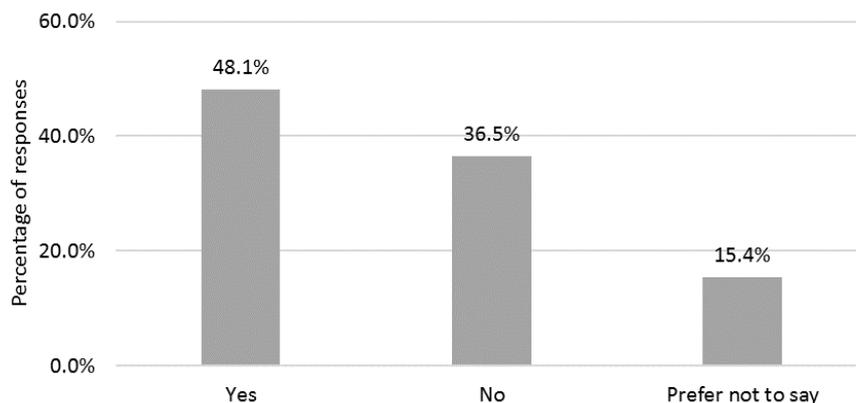
72. Respondents were asked if they are currently in receipt of Local Council Tax Reduction. There were 260 responses to this question. The majority of respondents (77.3%) said they were in receipt, 17.7% said they were not, and 5.0% said they prefer not to say.

Are you currently in receipt of Local Council Tax Reduction?



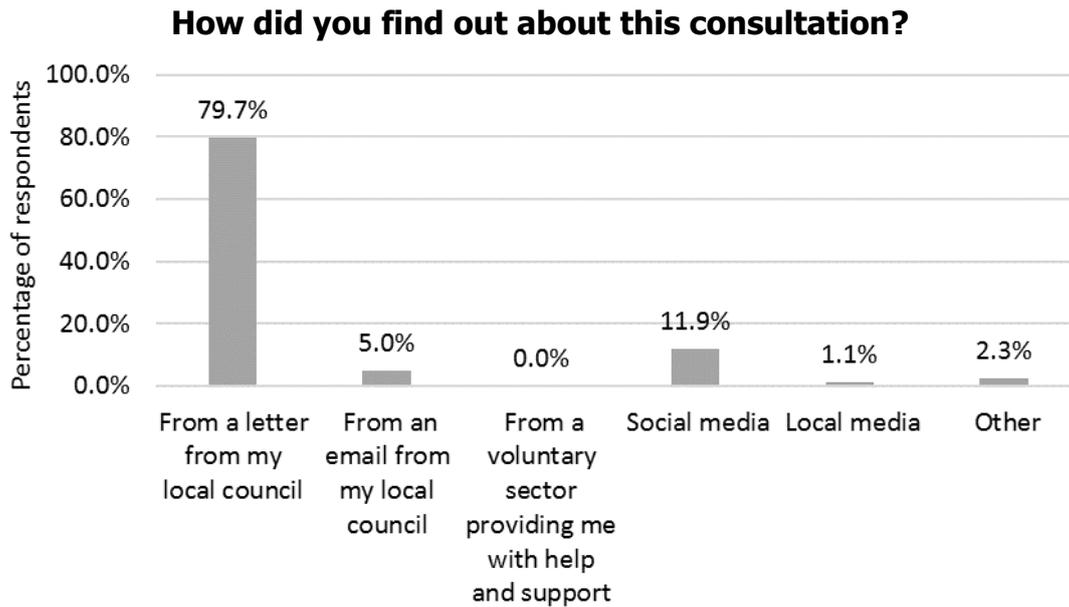
73. Respondents were then asked if they consider themselves to have a disability in line with the definition set out in Section 6 of Equality Act 2010. A little under half of the 260 respondents who answered this question said yes (48.1%), 36.5% said no, and 15.4% said they prefer not to say.

Do you consider yourself to have a disability in line with the definition set out in Section 6 of Equality Act 2010?



Finding out about this consultation

74. Respondents were then asked how they found out about the consultation. There were 261 responses to this question. The majority of respondents were notified from a letter sent to them from the Council (79.7%). This was followed by social media (11.9%), an email notification from the Council (5.0%), Other (2.3%), and via local media (1.1%). Nobody said they were made aware of the consultation from a voluntary sector organisation providing them with help and support.



Other responses

Feedback receive via letters/ emails

75. There were no written responses received in relation to this consultation.

Verbal feedback received

76. There was one direct feedback received from a customer via the telephone helpline. They felt if the Council did more to enforce payment from non-payers then it could reduce the 20% threshold for customers in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance (JSA).

Feedback received via social media

77. There were three direct responses received to the consultation via social media. Two of these were from the same individual who stated although they agreed that extra support was required for these customers, they questioned if these are small customer groups specifically chosen by the Council to allow it to lose out on the least amount of income. The other respondent said they felt the proposal and the consultation was a waste of time even though they qualified for the reduction.



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022 to 2023 Consultation

Appendix to Consultation Analysis Report

September to October 2021

Author: Consultation and Engagement Team, West Northamptonshire Council

Owner: Executive Director, Finance, West Northamptonshire Council

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Appendix 1: Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022 to 2023 consultation questionnaire full results

Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme consultation 2022 to 2023

Overview

The first draft budget for West Northamptonshire Council was approved for consultation by We are seeking your views on the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for West Northamptonshire Council for 2022 to 2023.

The Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (sometimes known as Council Tax Support) is to help people on low income to pay their Council Tax.

Local Council Tax Reduction Schemes (LCTRS) were introduced from April 2013 when Council Tax Benefit was abolished and replaced by locally agreed schemes. Those of pensioner age are protected by the prescribed regulations set out by central government.

By law, councils are required to have a scheme to help people on low incomes to pay their Council Tax. Each year councils needs to approve a LCTRS for the following 12 months. Where there are changes proposed, it is necessary for a public consultation to take place.

What is this consultation about?

West Northamptonshire Council set its first Council Tax Reduction Scheme as a new unitary council for the financial year 2021 to 2022. The scheme is aligned for West Northants area and the level of minimum Council Tax contribution that working age claimants must pay is 20% of their Council Tax liability.

It is important to us that we continue to support those who need financial help at the same time as offering an affordable scheme for all our Council Taxpayers.

The proposals contained in this consultation apply to people of working age who are on a low income and currently reside in West Northamptonshire Council area.

We are keen to ensure that all Council Taxpayers are aware of the changes being proposed and want the views of our residents and other stakeholders on the proposed changes to the scheme.

Our proposal for changes to the LCTRS for 2022 to 2023

War widows and war disablement:

Currently all working age claimants in receipt of a War Widows or War Disablement pension must pay a minimum contribution of 20% of their Council Tax liability.

Our proposal is to remove the minimum contribution of 20% and allow their Council Tax Reduction to be determined on 100% of their Council Tax liability whilst continuing to disregard 100% of War Pension income under our local scheme.

Rationale: This means that we can enhance the support offered to those residents receiving war pensions at relatively small cost to the taxpayer.

Care leavers:

West Northants Council understands that the transition out of care for young people can be very challenging. We are keen to offer support for those young people who may be liable for Council Tax by giving additional financial support on top of the other Council Tax discounts that may be available.

For the financial year 2021 to 2022 funding was agreed to establish a discretionary scheme to offer this support. Care leavers aged 18 to 25 who are formerly a child in the care of West Northamptonshire Council and who reside in the West Northants area are asked to apply for the discretionary awards after statutory discounts such as single person discount and LCTRS have been applied.

The proposal for 2022 to 2023 is to include this support within the LCTRS and to allow Council Tax Reduction for care leavers to be determined on 100% of their Council Tax liability.

Rational: This proposed change will reduce the complexity for care leavers by only having one application process whilst also reducing the administration of the scheme.

Other options considered, but discarded:

Setting the level of minimum Council Tax contribution for working age customers at a higher level. This option was considered but would mean a reduction in support to some of our most vulnerable residents at a time when we may not yet have realised the full impact of the pandemic.

Further information on the proposals above can be found at:

- [Cabinet Report 14 September 2021 \(PDF document 425KB\)](#)
- [Equality Screening Assessment \(PDF document 394KB\)](#)

Have your say

We would like your views on our proposals for the LCTRS for 2022 to 2023. The consultation is open to all those residents, stakeholders and people representing organisations impacted by this scheme.

This consultation will run from 20 September 2021 to midnight on 17 October 2021.

Please tell us your views by completing the online consultation survey using the link below. Alternatively, you can email your comments using the contact details below.

The information provided by you in this survey will be used for research purposes only and it will not be used in a manner that would allow identification of individual responses.

Please contact us if you have any queries about this consultation or if you require it in another format or language. Our contact details are as follows:

- Email address: ctrsconsultation@westnorthants.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01604 838640

What happens next

Once the consultation closes, we will collate all the feedback received and present this information to the West Northamptonshire Council Cabinet at their meeting on 9 November 2021 to consider when making their decision on the LCTRS 2022 to 2023 for West Northamptonshire.

We will then publish full details of the new scheme in early 2022 with the changes coming into effect from April 2022.

For information about how consultation and engagement responses are managed, please see the [consultation and engagement privacy notice](#).

Questions

War widows and war disablement

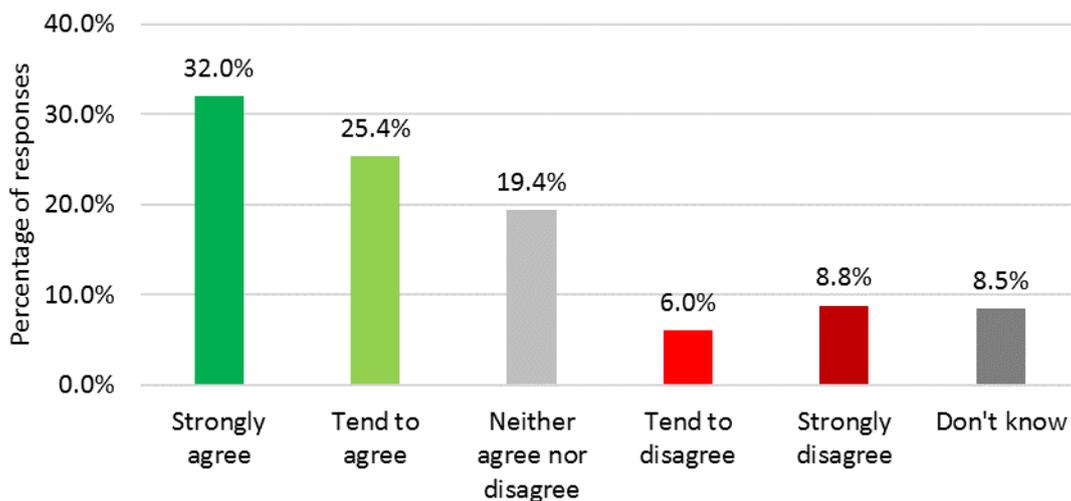
Currently all working age claimants in receipt of a War Widows or War Disablement pension must pay a minimum contribution of 20% of their Council Tax liability.

Our proposal: Remove the minimum contribution of 20% and allow their Council Tax Reduction to be determined on 100% of their Council Tax liability.

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal? Please tick (✓) relevant answer

There were 284 responses to this question.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?



	Response number	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	91	32.0%
Tend to agree	72	25.4%
Neither agree nor disagree	55	19.4%
Tend to disagree	17	6.0%
Strongly disagree	25	8.8%
Don't know	24	8.5%

Q. If you disagree with our proposal, please tell us why along with any alternative suggestions you would like to make:

There were 52 responses to this question.

Strongly agree/ Tend to agree

- REDUCE COUNCIL TAX AS A WHOLE IT IS TOO EXPENSIVE. OR INVEST THE MONEY TO HAVING A TRAIN STATION THAT GOES IN LONDON CONNECTING FORM BEDFORD & LUTON.
- Should this be means tested?
- I feel we have been overcharged over the years and am a victim of hate crime via the Council. I don't understand why my council tax changes so regularly and how the amounts are so different each month. I have disabled children and i am disabled. We also receive carers allowance. The benefit system is flawed as is the Council. I feel as though you are taking my benefits straight back off me and leave me with nothing else to live on.
- I feel this be contribution should be based on what they can realistically afford
- It makes perfect sense to me to put that proposal forward
- Those who earn less and the vulnerable are already under severe financial pressure so in my humble opinion they should not pay anything. My benefit increased this year by 75p yet all bills have increased by far more and for another year my income has decreased with costs increasing. National government fund less meaning local government have to charge more why not have a new forward thinking category for those like myself pay nothing that is means tested. I live in a tiny council bedsit use less than others but pay the same? How is this fair and equitable. seeing that energy costs are being hiked up I and lots like me can only cut their food bill as all others are fixed. I can only afford 1 low quality meal aday and the thought of paying more council tax is debilitating to say the least please do all you can to hep me and the others in similar circumstances please.
- tend to agree as long as it isnt effecting other disabled people
- I do not feel that the local councils do enough for people in need with council tax discounts. If a person is unemployed they are exempt, I do not feel a state pension is enough to pay the huge coubc'i'ntzx bills we heve to pay. Also when I was a, struggling single [...] 20 yrs, ago earning 750 a month it was the one bill I could not meet or afford there was nothing to help me as a working full time single [...] with one small income. It's the same for me now as I am. Now disabled and work part time due to my disability again nothing is Done to help disabled working people. Disgraceful really,
- i think it means they may get more than 20% reduction which i think is very fair as they have served their country and deserve all the help and aid available

- I'm at a loss as to why there are exemptions for diplomats, and member of international organisation's etc. If say, they are visiting here for several months, why are you or any local councils not taking/recovering Council tax for properties that they may be staying in; for the time they are resided in UK. If they are earning a good wage/salary for their jobs then why. Like most things, if people go abroad for the UK they have to pay their way for health systems and everything else. We have all been affected by this change (more so because of Brexit) to welfare and costs (on everything); considering everything has all gone up in price; we should not I feel, be exempting such groups.
- This is something that most councils already do and supports the vulnerable.

Neither agree nor disagree

- Not all people of working age can actually work. People who are disabled etc might not have the funds to pay 20% of their liability. There should be line drawn between people who are working age and actually in work and those of working age who cannot work and will struggle to pay the 20% contribution.
We are not saying we do not want to contribute, but the contribution for those not working should be less than for those in work.
- To be honest, the proposal as written makes no sense to me - in that I can't work out what it actually means in real life. (Though it should be noted that it also doesn't apply to me)
- I am sympathetic to the matter, however as somebody due to poor health and through no fault of my own had to give up a job i loved. Because of this and my continued poor health with a lifelong condition I am trying to survive on benefits which is not easy as it is and i would struggle even more if i had to pay out more on top of what i already pay to compensate others. I am in a position that i would rather not be and therefore i feel any reductions should be fairly distributed.
- whatever is agreed it needs to be fair, for those most in need.
- You are simply cherry picking groups who are small in number to limit the impact on your income. A consultation on the options you have already decided upon is not consultation. It is a request for confirmation of your intended action.

Strongly disagree/ Tend to disagree

- I'm only on ESA, I'm on a tight enough budget as it is...those on long term state benefits without enhancements are just above the waterline, anymore increases, you will drown us..,or is that the plan
- I do not believe the case has been made for an increase in support, which others will have to fund. I do agree with the support as it currently stands. I believe benefit provision is adequate.
- I think everyone should pay something, this would be fairer.

- I feel that reduction should be based on income and that the most needy are those on lower incomes.
- Other income should be considered not a blanket policy excluding all war widows irrespective of other income considerations.
- It should be means tested based on income.
- I'm struggling on benefits as things are why make matters worse.
- I don't think they should pay any council tax
- Unfair to this group
- To change the contributions for the two groups means the shortfall has to be found from other citizens.
- As a person on universal credit and receiving job seekers at £321.00 per month I am still liable for 20% of my council tax bill the individuals in question are receiving monies per month higher than I receive.
- Everyone should pay for services they receive
- The welfare system in this country is very unfair. A couple have two wages coming in so can share rents, electric bills, and council tax. A single person gets 20% reduction - this makes work very costly for single people. It should be 50% and we should be paid for rubbish we re-cycle. Also since libraries / swimming pools closed for covid we should get cash back. Council tax does not really pay for police or ambulance but pays off Government debt which goes to [...].
 The welfare system in this country rewards those who never work - they get free housing and more money than folk who have worked. For example my pension went into liquidation it had [sum of money] in it - never made a penny; claims company took [sum of money] So [sum of money] paid into my bank account. Luckily DHSS let me buy car 7K to help look for work but every month I now get just £600 - my rent is £400. So I paid tax on money working going into my pension and now lose money in welfare as above 6K. Yet I know some who never work who get £65K tax free a year in welfare, free 5 bedroom house, free car etc. Also some never worked since year 2000 but they are never forced to work but people like me who look for work are easy targets and we get pressure on us all the time, even though I am [health condition]. Migrants should get no free NHS, no free education or welfare. It should be a system where you can only get out what you put in - that puts workers first. At moment too many say homeless get free council flat then move in with TVs etc.
- I am a disabled resident of a local village on benefits and due to low income I will not be able to afford any extra as I'm paying most of my money on bills. I'm also struggling to buy food and personal hygiene products. Also our UC is also being cut and gas and electric are also rising. I am struggling with serious mental health issues and this will cause more suffering to myself and others. Please reconsider this and allow us on benefits and pensions a chance to live within our means and not be in constant debt.

- There are already benefits payable to war widows and War Disablement payments. It is unfair to allow one group of people to benefit more than other needy groups.
- Not all of us are workers, some of us, like ourselves are carers. Would love to pay more but simply do not have the money.
- A War Disabled is no different that a normal disabled. Just the circumstance that caused it.
- Because at the moment they have 20% to pay but making it higher of 100% can cause alsorts of issues making it harder to pay.
- I believe that War Widows and War Disablement should get Council Tax exemption, particularly being widowed due to their spouses dying or getting disabled while defending our nation.
- Money is tight enough for people receiving such benefits and increasing council tax further is just going to cause more poverty and hardship.
- I feel that everyone should contributed something
- I'm on benefits and I pay rent out off my benifit as well as some towards my council tax me and my family don't get alot off money have to go food banks life's a struggle everything going up money going down its not fair id love to work but due to bad health I can't work for rest of my life I find it so hard to cope on money we get from state also our council tax ain't spent well on what its ment to as my area is a right mess drug dealers outside my back gate scaring my kids when in garden police do nothing same with motorbike theft list goes on
- War Widows and War Disabled people have already sacrificed enough for us
- Past experience has shown that when the system is 'simplified' it produces very little of the promised savings and results in people dropping out of the safetynet of support.
Tinkering with a issue may look good and tick certain boxes but it rarely benefits those in need.
- They may end up paying more
- Again and again governments of all flavours look to shirk their responsabilites. Stop looking at ways to stop spending on those who need help and look more towards those who rob us blind. Locally we've seen vast sums lost on failed projects and redevelopments yet Council has shrugged and said all too hard. All that lost money could have paid for the services now lost forever.
- These questions are impossible to answer without some context. If your proposal makes even some of theses people worse off then I strongly disagree.
- Benefits should be means tested. Physical and mental impairments or difficulties should rank higher than purely age.
- War widows and those suffering disablement have lost and suffered enough. A minor relief is our way of paying them back.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am on benefit income only and cannot afford higher percentage council tax increase for 2022-2023 in the working age bracket because it can have a negative effect on me living means and inturn can affect my mental health. Claim the monies back from the ppl who robbed the council funds and made us bankrupt in the first place. • Claimants of War Widows or War Disablement pension benefit from preferential treatment in most authorities. It creates a lot of problems when people move into the area without realising that the rules are different here to elsewhere. Also there is not much government support for military veterans considering the level of public support for them, so I think this is a worthwhile expense.
<p>Don't know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • n/a as i don't know anyone who is in receipt of this • This is poorly worded. I don't know if the suggestion is them paying no council tax or them paying 100% • If this would cause this sector of people financial hardship then I would strongly disagree. • As long as this group does not pay more than they are currently paying.
<p>Comment made but respondent did not answer previous question</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think scrap tax as it's fraud using legalese against living men and women is a crime of high treason! Bedroom tax is a crime all the taxes fund criminal activities in government. Under the magna carter article 61 the queen had a oath to honour after the nice treaty involving Tony Blair back feb 2001. Therefore the queen holds no power over we the sovereign human beings

Care leavers

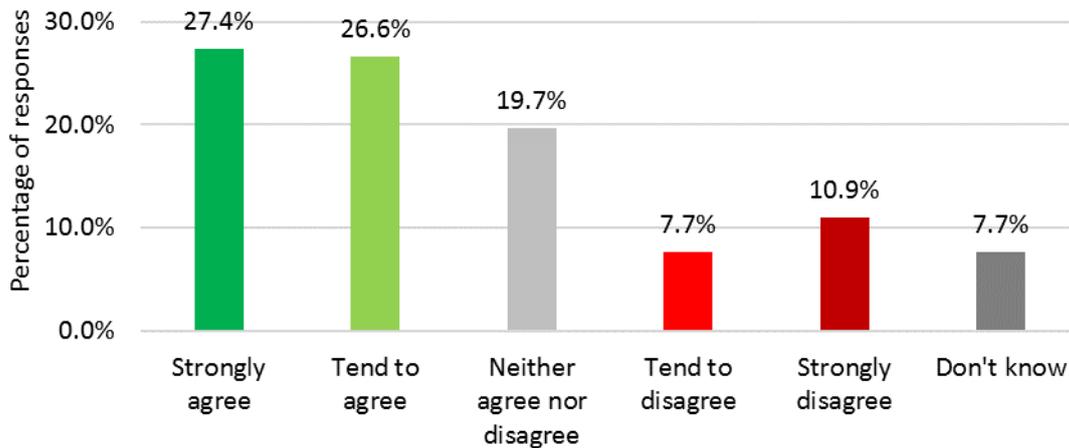
Currently care leavers, up to the age of 25, must pay a minimum contribution of 20% of their Council Tax liability.

Our proposal: Remove the minimum contribution of 20% and allow their Council Tax Reduction to be determined on 100% of their Council Tax liability.

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal? Please tick (√) relevant answer

There were 274 responses to this question.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?



	Response number	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	75	27.4%
Tend to agree	73	26.6%
Neither agree nor disagree	54	19.7%
Tend to disagree	21	7.7%
Strongly disagree	30	10.9%
Don't know	21	7.7%

Q. If you disagree with our proposal, please tell us why along with any alternative suggestions you would like to make:

There were 47 responses to this question.

Strongly agree/ Tend to agree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People coming out of care need all the additional help they can get and phase it out slowly from 20 onwards. • Whilst I agree we need to support the vulnerable, we need to do so in a constructive way. if paying everything for 7 years means that they do not learn how to manage their financial affairs, its not supportive
Neither agree nor disagree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think everyone should be treated the same. • To be honest, the proposal as written makes no sense to me - in that I can't work out what it actually means in real life. (Though it should be noted that it also doesn't apply to me) • Once again i have great empathy for other peoples circumstances but i still feel reductions should be shared equally. • I am not concerned by this

- You are simply cherry picking groups who are small in number to limit the impact on your income. A consultation on the options you have already decided upon is not consultation. It is a request for confirmation of your intended action

Strongly disagree/ Tend to disagree

- A care leaver is not necessarily on a low income
- I believe everyone should contribute something. Happy for a streamlined process, but not one that eliminates liability to contribute to cost of local services.
- I think this should apply to older people not young people and care leavers should be a factor when they are older
- We are all in the same boat on low income we all need help.
- Care leavers have a hard enough time standing on their own two feet with high rents/ housing costs and none of the usual support expected from a young persons family.
- It should be means tested based on income.
- This should be based on income
- Care leavers are more likely to have mental health issues, lower education, less or no family support and a higher rate of suicide than their peers. These issues are down to no fault of their own.
- I would propose to keep the reduction until they reach the age of 25 or reach the average uk income of £25,000 per annum.
- Shortfall has to be found from other citizens.
- Again care leavers obviously have some form of income/benefit so therefore should pay.
- Everyone should pay towards services they use
- I could just about manage to pay the 20% but if it goes up to 100% I will not be paying the difference as I cannot afford it.
- Do not feel that this is right. Should be based on income if working or benefits that they are currently receiving. There are many young people who are not care leavers who work hard trying to establish themselves / survive and whom may have had difficult upbringings. Again it is not morally right to benefit one group over other needy groups. It should all be income based.
- Stop giving money, that we don't seem to have, away.
- This is the same tack as the previous question, you upping the 100% will cause hardship to mostly everyone 20% is a lot but more manageable than the latter.
- Care leavers need a good time to readjust their lives to reality, while some never get their lives back to normal. Care leavers should be given a few years exemption and then assessed to know if they still need Council Tax exemption.

- I think that the pensioners who have worked hard all their lives should get some sort of reduction especially those who struggle on a pension.
- These people require support and are going to find going out into the big wide world difficult enough without worrying about how on earth they will pay full council tax charges.
- Again I feel that everyone should pay something and 20% is already low and it should stay the same
- Make it like it was back in the day so there no poverty anymore
- Even if young people can get work, it is often very low paid
- Past experience has shown that when the system is 'simplified' it produces very little of the promised savings and results in people dropping out of the safety net of support. Tinkering with a issues may look good and tick certain boxes but it rarely benefits those in need.
- Because some of them are unable to work and are only in receipt of carers payment
- They may end up paying more
- As a mentally and physically disabled person in my 50s, I've seen the help and support I receive from the NHS and Social Services disappear completely over the past 3 years to the point where I have to pay privately for all my care and treatment because all the focus of resources seems to be on the young. It seems that the more National Insurance people have paid in over their lifetime, the less they are able to access help and support; whilst those who've contributed nothing, or very little, are favoured with the limited provisions available. This scheme is yet another example of this wholly unfair favouring of the young. My real world income has diminished completely because I'm having to pay privately for all my care, equipment and home adaptations and yet I'm not seen as deserving any special assistance to help pay for the ever increasing cost of the Council Tax. In my opinion, this scheme is discrimination of the highest and most blatant order based on age and disability. If you are planning to offer enhanced reductions under the scheme, then this should be offered to all those who are disadvantaged and not just the young. I think any decision to approve this part of the scheme could well be the subject of Judicial Review because it is so blatantly discriminatory and is thus an unreasonable exercise of the council's discretionary powers.
- Look at earlier response
- If this change goes ahead the council should make it mandatory that those entitled to a reduction are correctly informed and automatically notified. Equally so for all the other eligible groups/criteria for rebate/reductions...Example Full time Carer's reduction. My past experience of the benefits system is that you have to really research and fight for what you are entitled to the information is not forthcoming unless you are aware of what is available and can easily miss out on much needed help.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same comment as before. If you are going to make even some of these vulnerable people worse off then I strongly disagree • In my opinion they should pay at least 20% . Everyone should pay at least something! • Care leavers are extremely vulnerable and placing additional stressors upon them will end up placing more stressors on them than they already have. • They need more reductions • The age brackets seems to me they would be of working age, so therefore able to pay a contribution. • Who will pick up the tab for this? Let me guess. • In my experience care leavers tend to find themselves managing a household budget younger than other young people, and also find themselves without the skills to know what to pay when, how to apply for benefits and where to seek help. The automatic minimum payment for them takes an awful lot of pressure off them in their first few difficult years in the community.
<p>Don't know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as the last question. So poorly worded that I don't actually understand what I'm being asked • Once again, if this was to cause this sector of people financial hardship I would strongly disagree. • As long as this group does not pay more than they are currently paying.
<p>Comment made but respondent did not answer previous question</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All tax is illegal so therefore no tax should be being questioned. • Any adults who live in residential care deserve a similar treatment as they need additional support. I believe its a hate crime to penalise people. I feel as though nothing is joined up and no one talks to each other. I think this is a hate crime against those with disabilities as we get forgotten about and have our benefits taken from us. We need more support and things like this shouldn't just be for those in care etc.

Any other comments

Q. If you have any other comments, that you have not already told us, please tell us here:

There were 71 responses to this question.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May all read the constitution of the magna carter article 61. When the common law is up and running in the U.K. theses who have being unlawful will be tried in a common law court. Treason is a serious crime • At current time I do not believe benefit provision should be extended, or amounts increased. Those who pay 100% struggle enough, and funds should be directed to cutting Council Tax for all.

- worried about UC and the uplift being removed. Ctax should be reviewed more often in general i.e what is it used to pay for and where the money goes a lot of things not being maintained etc. would like meetings from a council representative at the village so that they can listen to concerns.
- We all need the same help
- I believe that anyone on Universal Credit should receive a full discount. When Universal Credit was calculated as the minimum needed to live on, Council Tax was not included.
- I feel as though the Council are hateful towards disabled families and offer us no support. I feel as though all the contact I have with Council is hateful and nasty. I feel as though we have been kicked into a corner and have no where to turn.
- Feel that people mental health issues or physical disablement should be entitled to a greater discount on their Council Tax charge.
- Feel additional help should be given across the board and i feel as though I am being discriminated against as i am disability
- I think it should be across the board working age on low income so also not be liable for the 20 percent tax and receive 100 percent of the tax so not paying anything
- I am a carer for my disabled [spouse] and am unable to work so I can look after [them] yet I still have to pay 20% while being forced onto universal credit, making us worse off in the long run. What with the government removing another £20 a week from my universal credit I do not understand how I am expected to pay for my rent/council tax/gas/electric and food. People in our situation are always forgotten and just left to rot and expected to survive. More needs to be done for people like us.
- Remove the minimum 20% contribution for all claimants to ensure that those who cannot afford to pay council tax are not unnecessarily burdened with the same.
- People on disability this includes mobility and on benefits for mental health issues should be exempt from paying this tax as they are struggling as it is and it will also put pressure on there health
- anyone living in poverty should get a helping hand, if there is a genuine need we should help.
- Those in universal credit given help to pay their bill
- If things aren't broken, don't try to mend them! All these consultations and changes cost money. Save the money and use it for better purposes.
- What about people on benefits
- Paying council tax should be done on a means tested basis not on certain sectors.
- I am unsure but I believe everyone should be assessed on their income and outgoings I believe everyone deserves to live comfortably in this day and age and income versus essential outgoings surely is the only way to judge it

- basically the services the council provide in my area Abington is waste collection, the streets and pavements are always littered, dirty and full of pot holes, you never see a sweeper in this area and it really looks rundown to the point of i feel ashamed when i get visitors, NOT HAPPY
- I am unhappy that council tax liability for the disabled increased during to change from South northants to West northants. Disabled people on benefits who are unable to work like myself and my husband are unable to increase income to cover any corresponding increase in tax liability. Tax increases should be aimed at those best able to afford it and not the most vulnerable.
- Without everyone paying at least a percentage of their council tax it will end up with either service cuts or increases for people who don't qualify for a reduction.
- I think that the council reduction scheme should stay as it is times are hard for everyone at the moment due to the pandemic people have lost incomes,homes,jobs due to it all its unfair to increase any council tax for any family.
- We need a radical change to the welfare system, a re-cycling rubbish should be rewarded. Also many homes have multiple people living in them - you can tell by number of bin bags. Poll tax was a much fairer system than council tax as it hit the families who breed like mad. At moment they get rewarded with big council houses. Yet we see many in council homes with luxury cars outside - if they can afford to buy a luxury car they should not be in a council home. Many are drug dealers etc. The smell of cannabis comes from many council flat windows , in old days council visited properties they rented out. Council houses should go to working and married people first not those not working or those who get pregnant to get a free flat - this has caused so much problems in society with these kids joining street gangs. I don't think system works - we should just have ONE TAX to replace all taxes - this should be an assets tax - you should pay 1% a year on the value of all assets you own -so if you own a company the value of all machines would be added up and your luxury homes. People should only be allowed to own 3 properties maximum. Laws should apply to all including Royalty - at the moment they don't pay death taxes or need planning permission and we cant know who they own shares in etc. They made their money from death of [name of human race] by opium through their agents like the [name] family. [Organisation] should be banned from parliament etc
- I've personally helped and seen young people struggle with things like autism and asperges. They can barely do the forms necessary for things they need. Their anxiety and depression is real and I've witnessed a few youngsters (family related) ...transition from care home to new accommodation and not able to cope and been close to taking their own

life through despair. This would help in terms of less stress and more importantly the could get 'started in life by affording the little things they need.

- My family who all live in the West Northants area also have the same thoughts as I do as they are on benefits or pensions.
- I find the CTR scheme really helpful based on my circs , without it I would really struggle.
- I have been receiving this assistance since a change in circumstance. however, the link between variable income and council tax demands is very stressful.

you receive info from dwp, esa etc.

people on zero hour contracts get paid different monthly and the bill is recalculated and posted out every month. this is a waste of money for your office, bad for environment by increasing carbon footprint.

you need to email these things.

also for claimants that are having fluctuating income, the demand for tax should always be calculated over the 12 month period not 10.

it should be made clear the amount of extra income earned results in exactly how much council tax liability.

could be someone is financially worse off for working if you do not make it clear there is an income level thats reached which means no help is available. .eg... if someone earns £700 in one month which gets annualized, does this wipe off all discount until you get the next information from dwp? the following month they earn £100, get a new bill, reentitled to discount, its a very confusing way to portray to customers.

help should be offered not people to understand your process

- Re word your survey to actually make sense
- Consider larger reduction for single occupants
- still confused
- I believe disabled & EDLERY PEOPLE NEED MORE SUPPORT ALL ROUND
- I am currently in receipt of Council Tax Reduction due to low income on benefits. I would like to continue to receive this 20% reduction as I am a single parent and any substantial increase will cause financial issues due to my strict budget.
- People struggle hard to pay the council tax on low incomes. Please bear in mind that some people are receiving a pittance to live on particularly disabled persons who can't work. While council tax is important to keep the community going please don't squander this money. I see some very pointless money wasting from councils.
- Not quite sure if fill in right but this my views on it council tax reduction scheme should carry on people are only getting them self back together after pandemic to add more tax's it will be nightmare people are struggling now and I am one of them been going to food bank to help me struggling to

pay my bills every month I can't work because of my health believe me I would and is sure I am not only one [name] ☹

- To be honest, the proposals as written makes no sense to me - in that I can't work out what they actually means in real life. (Though it should be noted that they also don't apply to me).
- We feel strongly about these proposals. My wife and I have worked all of our lives. Provided employment for others and contributed to the state through taxes. My wife should have retired at 60 but is having to wait until she, like I reached 66. We are both now in need of assistance as now both have multiple serious health issues which are life limiting for each of us. We have almost exhausted our savings and made considerable cut backs. To us, people who can not work due to ill health are just as important as the groups mentioned in this survey especially as we have paid in to the state for nearly 50 years.
- People can afford to pay what they can afford to pay. I am still fuming at how money was wasted on Angel One and the Bus Stn. Two projects that were not needed, frittering away tax payers money. You've closed down libraries and sure start centres across the county. Incompetence doesnt cover it. Now like typical Tories the poor have to pay for your incompetence!
- What about disabled children who's home has been adapted? Also the single person household?
- I think everyone who claims council tax should be awarded in category benefit people who contribute out of there money should have low payments for this as there benefits have gone down not up so they will struggle the most, people old and on war pension etc need to pay low or the same 20% no more. those that work can take the bulk load of the council tax as some earn good money and those on low incomes should pay 15% towards it. but we all can have our views wether it's taken to account and actually acted on it is another matter but people struggle more so now covid payment has gone and there the ones who have children and older people who will suffer hard as they have increased gas/elect bills to deal with without food clothing etc they have to buy to live and then they worry about council tax rising and all this while benefit stays low. its not hard to sort out. think of the people.
- Thank goodness you have realised that not all self-employed people are able to pay as if they were on the National Minimum Wage. Shame that living in your ivory towers meant that you missed this point twelve months ago.
- I thought this was going to be about everyone who gets the discount on their council tax not just for 2 different sort of people so what's happening with people who are on a low income what will they get.

- Ideas for increasing liability for working age people on reduced income due to disability is unfair. My ability as a disabled person at 50 will be the same as when I am 70. The age of the person isn't key- it's the disability.
- What about people who are disabled . The tax has gone but our benefits havent .
- i cant understand why it is only these 2 groups involved as all disabled people need extra help, and should also be considered for the 100%
- This is an incredibly difficult time for us all, but especially to those of us on legacy benefits. We have not seen an increase in what we receive unlike universal credit claimants who have received an extra £80 plus per month throughout the pandemic. I can't make ends meet as it is, so to increase the council tax, will just mean we have even less to eat!
- I think people with disabilities stood us get 100 percent off there tax bill
- Just want everything else to stay the same and the extra costs taking into account so that other services are not compromised.
- Concerned that the care leavers may not be able to access the correct support in order to be able to claim the benefits they are entitled to, as has experience of social workers who are abusive.
- Please see previous comments regarding lack of help to disabled part time workers such as me and working single mum's such as I was 20 yrs ago on very low income and complete lack of care or help available. Its the one bill that put me in debt to being so high that I couldn't meet
- Care leavers currently need to complete a CTR, SPD to qualify for the 100%, so those that have fluctuations in their income are penalised in the scheme. Such as care leavers do not all qualify under this scheme. Maybe they need to be less rigid and see that they qualified for CTR part of the year to qualify for the exemption
- I feel that all households should pay something towards this service 20% is already a small percentage that all should be able to afford
- Just think government should think of family's on low income for a start stop worrying about things that don't need worrying about
- A reduction for people claiming PIP
- Do you consider yourself to have a disability in line with the definition set out in section 6 of Equality Act 2010? Yes..No..Prefer not to say The above question i cannot answer as i have not seen "section 6 of Equality Act 2010?"
- What about the people who are on benefits? Like I am on Job seekers allowance income based.
- I genuinely believe that council tax should be reduced entirely as especially after the economic hardship of Covid-19 years and now major price hikes in every type of fuel. Our heating bills will be extortionate. I personally have bought an electric blanket to replace most of my gas heating for this coming winter. I will also have to make cut backs on other things i normally have.

For instance, i have [3x health conditions]. I shall have to cut back on as much as possible due to the enormous hikes in everything this year. My home help will be someone who won't be paid. Mind, i suppose [...]. The lesser well off don't have the ability to balance their finances with such increases. Most lower income people will be begging as it is.

- I strongly support reducing from 20% (One Fifth of the Total) to 0% the contribution that War Widow and War Disablement Pension claimants and also Care Leavers have to pay towards their council tax bill. However, why is there not in the consultation a proposal to reduce the contribution those in receipt of ESA (Employment and Support Allowance) benefit from 20% (One Fifth of the Total) to 0% too?
- There are families who do not fall into these categories but who are already struggling with their finances. If these proposals go through with the result that they have to pay a higher council tax fee to cover the cost it simply transfers the problem from one section of society to another.
- An person who is of working age. With a terminal disability shouldn't pay . Also the carers who look after them and are unable to work due to the caring of them and only receives a payment of 270.05 a month should also be excluded
- What about disabled people? You have not mentioned us at all!!Do we not count. We are on ESA and PIP and have low incomes too!!We have had help in the past are we to have help in the future?
- People on employment and support allowance who cannot work because of long term sickness should also be eligible for 100% reduction from council tax. Their disability makes them unable to improve their financial situation.
- I am in receipt of ESA and have had to pay an 80% increase in my Council Tax for the period 2021/22 over the 2020/21 period which is disgusting. How are sick and vulnerable people supposed to finance the Tory South Northants debts? I sincerely hope on behalf of all others in my position you do not penalise us next year!
- Look ar earlier response
- This year you made the most vulnerable people in South Northants considerably worse off by bringing the rate of reduction in line with the other joining areas. Why on Earth could you not just level DOWN so that the most vulnerable got a bit of a break for once. It looks like the nature of your survey intends to do the same this year. I am disabled and my contribution went from £9 per month to £23 per month. A staggering 150% increase.
I pay this out of benefits, It doesn't make any sense. Why not just claim the funds directly from central govt and cut out the middle man and stop putting pressure on those who already are finding life tough.
- Pensioners over the age of 85 should have a 100% reduction in council tax
- Council Tax Reduction has been a great help to me.

- You are simply cherry picking groups who are small in number to limit the impact on your income. A consultation on the options you have already decided upon is not consultation. It is a request for confirmation of your intended action. Stop taking people for fools, either engage in proper consultation, or so eating money on pointless rubber stamp questionnaires
- Putting a minimum ceiling on what customers should contribute towards their liabilities can have a negative effect on customers mental health through raised anxiety and depression which then has a knock on effect with other services such as social service, Dr's, mental health services, police, ambulance etc. etc.
- These potential reductions should be made known to ALL; there are many who would not know to look or have the ability to do so.
- Just wondering if you [incomplete]

Demographics

Q. Are you responding to this consultation as an individual or on behalf of an organisation? Please tick (✓) relevant answer

There were 272 responses to this question.

	Response number	Percentage (%)
As an individual	269	98.9%
On behalf of an organisation	3	1.1%

Organisation/community group respondents

Q. Are you responding as or on behalf of: Please tick (✓) all that apply

There was one response to this question.

	Response number	Percentage (%)
Housing Association	0	0.0%
Advice Agency	1	100.0%
Support Organisation	0	0.0%
Other (please specify)	0	0.0%

Other:

- *No comments were made*

Q. Please tell us the name of your organisation and your role / job title:

There was one response to this question. We have not included details within this report in order to ensure respondents’ anonymity is retained.

Individual respondents

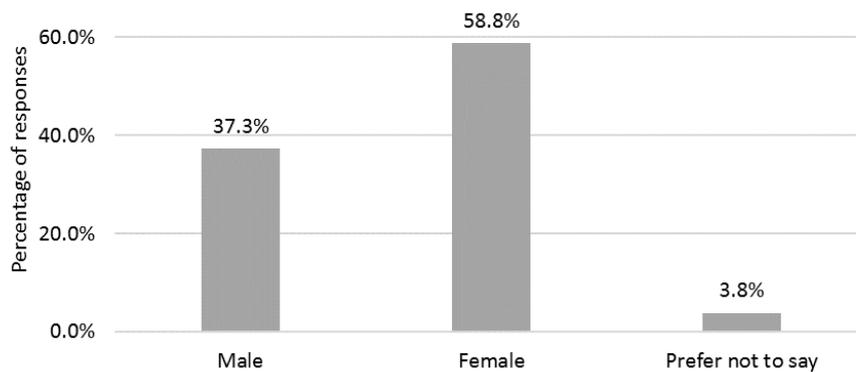
As an organisation, we collect specific demographic information from the people who take part in our consultations or complete surveys to build up an accurate understanding of the communities that we serve so that services and policies can be delivered to meet the needs of everybody, and ensure that everybody has an opportunity to have their voice heard. Please feel free to leave any questions which you do not wish to answer.

Any information you chose to provide will be treated confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation and regulations.

Q. Are you: Please tick (✓) the appropriate box

There were 260 responses to this question.

Are you:



	Response number	Percentage (%)
Male	97	37.3%
Female	153	58.8%
Other, please state below	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	10	3.8%

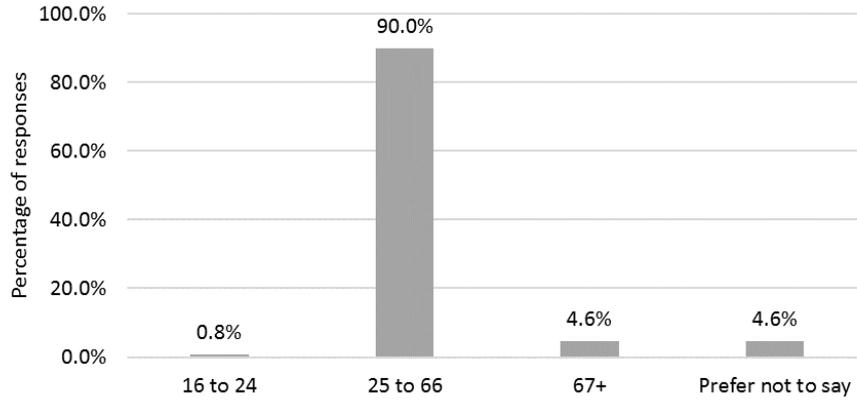
Other:

- *No comments were made*

Q. What age band do you fall in? Please tick (✓) the appropriate box

There were 259 responses to this question.

What age band do you fall in?

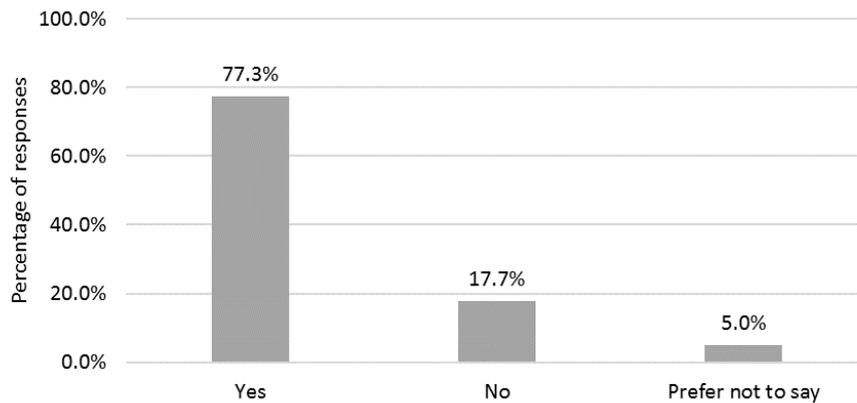


	Response number	Percentage (%)
16-24	2	0.8%
25-66	233	90.0%
67+	12	4.6%
Prefer not to say	12	4.6%

Q. Are you currently in receipt of Local Council Tax Reduction? Please tick (✓) the appropriate box

There were 260 responses to this question.

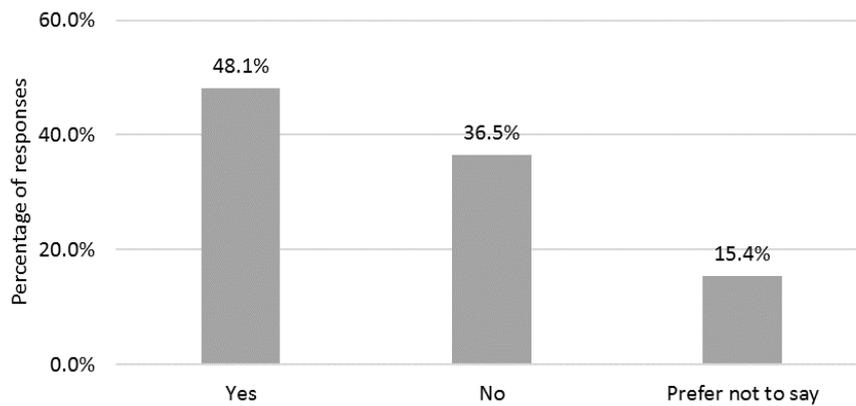
Are you currently in receipt of Local Council Tax Reduction?



	Response number	Percentage (%)
Yes	201	77.3%
No	46	17.7%
Prefer not to say	13	5.0%

Q. Do you consider yourself to have a disability in line with the definition set out in section 6 of Equality Act 2010? Please tick (✓) the appropriate box
There were 260 responses to this question.

Do you consider yourself to have a disability in line with the definition set out in Section 6 of Equality Act 2010?

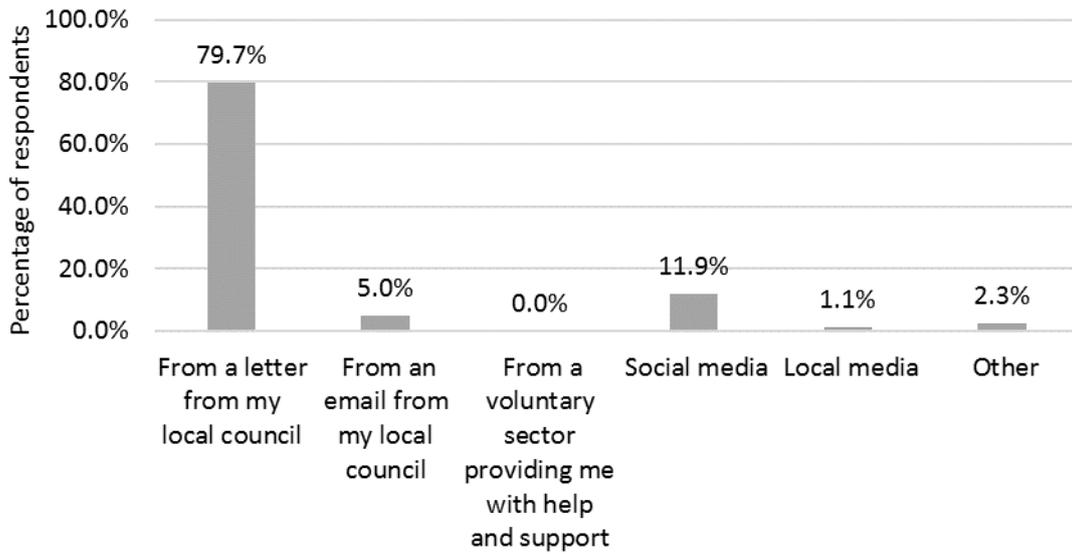


	Response number	Percentage (%)
Yes	125	48.1%
No	95	36.5%
Prefer not to say	40	15.4%

About this consultation

Q. How did you find out about this consultation? Please tick (✓) all that apply
There were 261 responses to this question.

How did you find out about this consultation?



	Response number	Percentage (%)
From a letter from my local council	208	79.7%
From an email from my local council	13	5.0%
From a voluntary sector providing me with help and support	0	0.0%
Social media	31	11.9%
Local media	3	1.1%
Other (please give details)	6	2.3%

Other:

- WNC employee
- From someone else who received a letter
- Link didn't work on letter
- Applied directly for reduction due to low income
- Staff briefing
- Our [family member] noted it on your website.
- Parish council minutes

Appendix 2: Other responses

Feedback receive via letters/ emails

- There were no written responses received in relation to this consultation

Verbal feedback received

- If the Council did more to enforce payment from non-payers then we could reduce the 20% threshold for customers in receipt of JSA.

Feedback received via social media

- So basically you are targeting those groups on low incomes who are the smallest in number, so that you don't lose out overall on income?
- Don't bother with this. I was sent a letter via Royal Mail as I qualify for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. It's just a few questions asking if the reduction should stay at 20% or be worked out on a percentage of 100%. Waste of time.
- Can you explain to us why you have only chosen groups that are low in number? I am sure they deserve support, but are you not simply cherry picking the smallest need groups so that you have to pay out the least discount?

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

2 December 2021

Councillor Mike Hallam: Cabinet Member for HR & Corporate Services

Report Title	Updated West Northamptonshire Council Pay Policy Statement
Report Author	Alison Golding, Assistant Director, Human Resources

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

MO	Catherine Whitehead	18/11/2021
S151	Martin Henry	16/11/2021
Other Director/SME	Sarah Reed	
Communications Lead/Head of Communications	Marie McCormack	

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Revised Pay Policy Statement

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The Pay Policy Statement, attached in Appendix 1, is produced in accordance with the requirements of Section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011. It must be updated annually and sets out pay for the directly employed workforce (excluding schools). The current policy covers the year 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.
- 1.2. The revised Pay Policy Statement has been produced in response to the resolution adopted by Council at its meeting on 15th July, which committed the Council to undertake the following actions:
 - Amend the pay policy statement for approval at the next full Council to ensure interim agency appointments are covered.

- Amend the pay policy statement for approval at the next full Council to ensure complete clarity that any appointment that proposes a remuneration package that could reach £100,000 must have approval of full Council
 - Review all positions to ensure no other ambiguity remains.
- 1.3. As per the Pay Policy Statement previously adopted (by the West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority), this is an interim Pay Policy Statement, setting out West Northamptonshire Council's approach to pay for the Chief Executive and Chief Officers. New pay, terms and conditions of employment and associated pay and employment policies for the wider workforce are still to be agreed and work on this is progressing.
- 1.4. This report does not seek agreement to the terms and conditions of senior officers; it is a statement about senior officer pay policy, which is a legislative requirement.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Each local authority is required to produce and publish an annual Pay Policy Statement. The statement will set out the Council's policies relating to the pay of its directly employed workforce. The Pay Policy Statement covers all employees, including those employees from District, Borough and County Councils who TUPE transferred to West Northamptonshire Council on 1 April 2021 on their existing terms and conditions of employment.
- 2.2 The Interim Pay Policy Statement sets out West Northamptonshire Council's approach to setting the pay of the directly employed workforce, in particular the remuneration of:
- a) The Chief Officers
 - b) The 'lowest paid employees
- and the relationship between:
- (i) The remuneration of its chief officers; and
 - (ii) The remuneration of its employees who are not chief officers.
- 2.3 Chief Officers are both statutory and non-statutory officers.
- 2.4 'Pay', includes, in addition to basic salary, any charges, fees, allowances, benefits in kind, increases in or enhancements to pension entitlements and termination payments.
- 2.5 Statutory Officers
- Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service)
 - Executive Director, Finance (Section 151 Officer)
 - Director of Legal & Democratic (Monitoring Officer)
 - Director of Children's Services (DCS)
 - Executive Director for Adult Social Services (DASS)
 - Director of Public Health (DPH)
- 2.6 Non-Statutory Officers
- Executive Director, Place and Economy
 - Executive Director, Corporate

- Director, Transformation

2.7 In addition, the Pay Policy Statement has been amended to ensure interim positions are now covered and that any appointment that proposes a remuneration package that could reach £100,000 must have approval of full Council.

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the Council approves the revised Pay Policy Statement.

4. Reason for Recommendations

4.1 It is a statutory requirement under the Localism Act 2011 for the Authority to approve and publish a Pay Policy Statement.

4.2 Due regard has been given to the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and associated guidance issued or approved by the Secretary of State, in setting out this interim Pay Policy Statement.

5. Report Background

5.1 The Localism Act aims to increase transparency in local government. This includes a requirement that local authority pay policy is openly approved by democratically elected councillors on an annual basis.

5.2 This extends to a requirement to publish the salaries of senior officials, to support the aim of helping local residents better understand how public money is spent in their area.

6. Issues and Choices

6.1.1 There are no direct additional resources or financial implications associated with the pay policy.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.2 Resources and Financial

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

7.3 Legal

7.3.1 The adoption of a Pay Policy Statement is required of all relevant authorities pursuant to the Localism Act 2011. The Statement must reflect the requirements of the Act and have regard to any guidance issued or approved by the Secretary of State.

7.3.2 The scope of information covered in this interim pay policy statement is limited until a final package of new pay terms and conditions of employment and associated pay and employment policies have been approved.

7.4 Risk

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

7.5 Consultation

7.5.1 No statutory or other consultation is required as a result of the recommendations in this report.

7.6 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.6.1 The report is for consideration by Full Council and so no scrutiny is required.

7.7 Climate Impact

7.7.1 There is no climate impact arising from the proposals.

7.8 Community Impact

7.8.1 There is no community impact arising from the proposals.

7.9 Communications

7.9.1 There is no communications impact arising from the proposals.

8 Background Papers

West Northamptonshire Council agenda: [Agenda for Council on Thursday 15th July 2021, 6.00 pm - West Northamptonshire Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)



West Northamptonshire Interim Pay Policy Statement 2021/22 - Revision 1

This is a revision of the first Pay Policy Statement for West Northamptonshire Council, in response to a resolution adopted by Council at its meeting on 15th July 2021. The resolution was passed to ensure that interim agency appointments are explicitly covered in the statement and clarifying that any appointment that proposes a remuneration package greater than £100,000 must have approval of full Council.

The interim statement (originally approved by the West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority at the start of February 2021) reflected the fact that pay terms and conditions of employment had not yet been determined for the new council. This position has not changed and therefore this revised statement remains an interim pay statement for 2021/22. A further interim Pay Policy Statement will go back to council in February 2022.

This Pay Policy Statement is effective from 1 April 2021. In addition to the aforementioned review during 2021/22, it will be subject to review annually for approval by 31 March, and in accordance with new or proposed legislation to ensure that it remains relevant and effective. It is published on the Council's website.

1. Introduction and purpose

West Northamptonshire Council is a new unitary authority created on 1 April 2021, replacing Northampton Borough Council, Daventry District Council, South Northamptonshire District Council and Northamptonshire County Council.

Under section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972, the council has the "power to appoint officers on such reasonable terms and conditions as authority thinks fit".

This interim Pay Policy Statement sets out the approach to pay policy at this point in time, in accordance with the requirements of Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011.

The purpose of the statement is to provide transparency with regard to the Council's approach to setting the pay of its directly employed workforce by identifying:

- The remuneration of its Chief Officers
- The remuneration of its 'lowest paid employees'

and the relationship between:

- The remuneration of its chief officers; and

- The remuneration of its employees who are not chief officers

The definition of chief officers (as set out in section 43(2)) is not limited to Heads of Paid Service or Statutory Chief Officers, it also includes Non-Statutory Chief Officers and those who report directly to Statutory or Non-Statutory Chief Officers (i.e., Deputy Chief Officers).

2. Scope

The council is directly responsible for a budget of £326m (excluding schools) and for the employment of approximately 3,000 staff.

This interim pay policy statement covers Chief Officer and Deputy Chief Officer roles.

It also covers, for the purpose of identifying the lowest paid, employees who TUPE transfer on their current terms and conditions from the district, borough, and county councils into West Northamptonshire Council on 1 April 2021.

3. Definitions

'Pay' - in addition to salary this includes charges, fees, allowances, benefits in kind, increases in or enhancements to pension entitlements and termination payments.

'Chief Officer' refers to the following roles within West Northamptonshire Council:

Definition under the Localism Act 2011	Post held at West Northamptonshire Council
Head of Paid Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Executive
Monitoring Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of Legal & Democratic
Section 151 Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director, Finance
Statutory Chief Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director, Adults, Communities and Wellbeing (DASS) • Director of Children's Services (DCS) * • Director of Public Health (DPH) *
Non-Statutory Chief Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director, Place and Economy • Executive Director, Corporate • Director of Transformation

* *Role currently shared with North Northamptonshire Council*

'Deputy Chief Officer' refers to Tier 3 roles within West Northamptonshire Council and includes Assistant Directors and Assistant Chief Executive.

'Lowest paid employees' refers to those staff employed from the population of employees who TUPE transferred into the Council who are on the lowest pay point of their pay scale.

For clarity, chief officer, and deputy chief officers' roles, whether filled on a permanent employment basis or interim agency basis, are within scope of this pay policy statement.

4. Accountability and decision making

Remuneration

The appointment and remuneration packages of the Head of Paid Service and other Statutory Chief Officers were approved by the Shadow Authority on 18 August 2020 and 15 September 2020 respectively; the appointment and remuneration package for non-statutory Chief Officers was approved by the Shadow Leader.

Chief Officer salaries were benchmarked to be competitive and cost effective against roles in comparable unitary councils, both in terms of the size and complexity of services delivered.

On appointment salaries were offered within the relevant benchmarked salary range for the role and commensurate with the candidates most recent salary and experience. The benchmarked salary ranges are set out in **Section 7**.

The Deputy Chief Executive designation attracts an additional allowance of £10,000 to reflect the responsibilities associated with deputising for the Chief Executive on occasions, in addition to their core responsibilities. The Director role to take on this designation is the Executive Director, Adults, Communities and Wellbeing (DASS).

The Chief Executive is the appointed Returning Officer and will receive a fee for running local and parliamentary elections and referendums. This role is separate to that of Chief Executive and carries with it personal accountabilities. The fee paid will vary but be in accordance with the relevant scales of fees agreed by the Shadow Executive Committee on 26 January 2021. For national elections and referendums, fees are met by the body responsible for funding the poll.

The West Northamptonshire Constitution confirmed delegated responsibility to the Senior Appointments Committee for the appointment and dismissal of Chief Officers with effect from 1 April 2021.

The constitution also confirms delegated responsibility to the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) or their nominee for the appointment and dismissal of officers below Chief Officer, including Deputy Chief Officer (Tier 3 Assistant Director).. Salaries have been benchmarked to be competitive and cost effective against roles in comparable unitary councils, both in terms of the size and complexity of services delivered.

The responsibility for determining pay, terms and conditions for West Northamptonshire Council is also delegated to the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive). Negotiations on these pay terms and conditions are ongoing with the

recognised trade unions at this time; the financial implications of the final package will be brought to the Shadow Executive/Cabinet for approval.

Where any appointment, including an interim agency appointment, proposes a remuneration package that could exceed £100,000, approval will be sought from Full Council.

Severance

Severance packages in excess of £100,000 will be taken to Full Council for approval.

5. Remuneration – pay multiples

Following a local pay award settlement reached in October 2021, the lowest paid full-time equivalent employee in the period 2021/22 will be paid at £18,328 per annum full time equivalent (FTE). The definition of lowest paid employee is a fully competent employee undertaking a defined role and excludes apprentices who are undertaking approved training. The highest paid employee is the Chief Executive who will be paid in the period a salary of £172,975.

The Hutton report on Fair Pay in the public sector was asked to explore the case for a fixed limit on pay dispersion in the public sector, through a requirement that no public sector manager can earn more than 20 times the lowest paid person in the organisation. There are advantages and disadvantages of using a maximum pay multiple. The Hutton Report concluded that the most appropriate metric is top to median earnings.

A median earnings figure cannot be provided at the time of writing; this figure will be drawn from the median earnings of those employees who will TUPE transfer into West Northamptonshire Council on 1 April 2021.

For this interim pay policy statement, the pay multiple between the anticipated lowest paid (full time equivalent) employee and Chief Executive is 1:9.4 and the lowest paid employee and average chief officer is 1:7.5

These ratios are within the expected multiples of 8.1 – 12.1 for the public sector as identified in the Hutton Review of Fair Pay in the Public Sector (March 2011) Report.

6. Pay strategy

In determining the pay and remuneration of its employees, the council will comply with all relevant employment legislation. This includes the Equality Act 2010, Part Time Employment (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000, The Agency Workers Regulations 2010 and where relevant, the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Earnings) Regulations.

With regard to the Equal Pay requirements contained within the Equality Act, the council ensures that all pay arrangements can be objectively justified through the use of job evaluation methods.

The council will take the following approach to assessing individual and overall pay levels:

- to recruit and retain staff in a way which is externally competitive and internally fair.
- the appropriate grade for a job is established through a process of job evaluation that takes into account the level of knowledge, skills and accountability required for the role.
- in determining the grading structure and setting overall pay levels for all posts, take account of the need to ensure value for money in respect of the use of public expenditure, balanced against the need to recruit and retain employees who are able to meet the requirements of providing high quality services to the community, delivered effectively and efficiently and at times at which those services are required.
- the principle of encouraging employees to develop in their role and to improve their performance will inform the design, with pay grades containing a number of pay steps and an annual opportunity to progress up pay steps within the relevant job grade
- any requirement for additional allowance or supplement will be objectively justified by reference to clear and transparent evidence and where market supplements are considered, that this is with reference to data available from within and outside the local government sector.
- where different pay arrangements apply to different groups of staff, the reasons will be clearly evidenced and documented.
- policies about **termination payments** and **employer discretions under the Local Government Pension Scheme** will be reviewed and published for all staff. These will be produced with the intention of only making additional payments when in the best interests of the Authority and maintaining consistency through all pay grades.

7. Benchmarked salary ranges – Chief Officers

Role	Salary range
Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service)	£170,000 - £180,000
* Director of Children’s Services and Statutory DCS	£145,000 - £155,000
Director of Finance and Statutory Section 151 Officer	£130,000 - £140,000
Director of Adult Social Service and Statutory DASS	£130,000 - £140,000
Director Place & Economy	£130,000 - £140,000
Director, Corporate	£130,000 - £140,000
Director of Legal and Democratic Services and Statutory Monitoring Officer	£110, 000 - £115,000
* Director of Public Health	£99,000 - £113,000
Director, Transformation	£99,000 - £113,000

* *Role shared with North Northamptonshire Council*



WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

2 December 2021

Councillor Hallam, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services

Report Title	Appointment of Parish Members to Middleton Cheney Parish Council
Report Author	Catherine Whitehead Catherine.whitehead@westnorthants.gov.uk

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

West MO	Catherine Whitehead	23/11/2021
West S151	Martin Henry	23/11/2021
Communications Lead/Head of Communications	Claire Hughes	

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Order under section 91(1) of the Local Government Act 1972

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To report on the decision by the Director of Legal and Democratic Services exercising delegated powers in relation to appointment of members to Middleton Cheney Parish Council.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Middleton Cheney Parish Council has a quorum of four members and a total number of twelve seats. The Monitoring Officer was notified that the parish had fallen below the number of members required for the parish to be quorate and it was therefore unable to act.
- 2.2 West Northamptonshire Council has powers under s 91 Local Government Act 1972 (LGA 1972) to appoint members to the parish to enable it to become operational. In June 2021 Council delegated the power to the Monitoring Officer to enable decisions to be made between Council

meetings. This power was exercised in consultation with the ward members and the Chairman of the Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils (NCALC).

3. Background

- 3.1 When a parish Council becomes inquorate, it is unable to conduct any parish business. The remaining Councillors are unable to make any decisions and may not, therefore, co-opt any Councillors, even on a temporary basis.
- 3.2 Accordingly it falls to West Northamptonshire Council to exercised its powers under Section 91 of the LGA 1972 to make temporary appointments to a Parish Council where there are so many vacancies in the office of parish or community councillor that the Parish or Community council are unable to act until other Councillors are elected and take up office.
- 3.3 In accordance with this power, an Order was made under s91 LGA 1972 on 4th November 2021 which appointed John Coatsworth, Peter Gliwitzki, Alan Youel and Richard Solesbury-Timms to the Middleton Cheney Parish Council.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 Council is recommended to note the exercise of the power delegated to the Director of Legal and Democratic Services.

5. Reason for Recommendations

- 5.1 To update Council on the exercise of the power delegated to the Director of Legal and Democratic Services in relation to the appointment of members to parish councils who are unable to act through inquoracy.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 The main choices available to the Council relate to the members to be appointed. The Council is developing a procedure for dealing with these requests which involve, in the first instance, consulting the ward members and seeking to reach agreement with NCALC so that the interests of the parish and the council are considered. The decision, however, rests with the Director of Legal and Democratic Services to balance the interests involved and ensure that the management of parish is the priority.
- 6.2 In this instance there were a number of individuals who expressed an interest in serving their local area. For the purposes of the temporary appointments and to get the Council operational it was decided to appoint members who had extensive experience of serving as a parish or district councillor. This was intended to ensure that the parish could move quickly to make the decisions necessary to secure the governance of the parish. Permanent appointments to the Parish Council will follow and will be made by the Parish itself now that it is quorate and able to do so.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

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

7.2 Legal

7.2.1 The legal issues are set out in the body of the report. In essence, the Council has exercised its powers under s91 of the Local Government Act 1972 to appointment members on a temporary basis to a parish council to enable that parish to act and make its own appointments as appropriate.

7.3 Risk

7.3.1 There is a risk in not exercising this delegated power that the parish will be unable to act and therefore will not be able to take decisions required for the parish.

7.4 Consultation

7.4.1 Consultation was undertaken with the ward members of the parish and with the Chairman of NCALC.

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.5.1 This decision relates to the needs of the particular parish and is a non-executive decision which does not require scrutiny through the Council.

7.6 Climate Impact

7.6.1 This report is for information only and therefore has no climate impact.

7.7 Community Impact

7.7.1 This report has a direct impact on the community in Middleton Cheney and the impact is set out in the body of the report.

7.8 Communications

7.8.1 The Order has been published and has also been notified to the Secretary of State as required.

8. Background Papers

8.1 None

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West Northampton Council

Order under section 91(1) of the Local Government Act 1972

THIS ORDER is made on the 3rd day of November 2021 by WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL ("the Council")

1. WHEREAS following the resignation of a number of members of the Middleton Cheney Parish Council, 4 councillors are required to give a minimum number required for a quorum.
2. Under section 91 of the Local Government Act 1972, where there are so many vacancies in the office of Parish Councillor that a Parish Council is unable to act, West Northamptonshire Council may, by order, appoint persons to fill all or any of the vacancies until other councillors are elected to take office.

Now in pursuance of the Power conferred upon it by Section 91 of the Local Government Act 1972 and delegated to the Monitoring Officer of the Council, the Council hereby appoints the following persons to act as Members of Middleton Cheney Parish Council until an election has been held or co-option agreed to fill such vacancies as shall constitute and establish a quorum in the respective Parish Council and not before the end of six months of the date of this Order whereupon such appointment shall cease.

MIDDLETON CHENEY PARISH COUNCIL

1. John Coatsworth Wychwood - 83 Wappenham Road, Helmdon, Brackley, NN13 5QA,
2. Peter Gliwitzki - 14 Thornhill, Chacombe, Banbury, Oxon, OX17 2JQ,
2. Alan Youel - 14 Ashlade, Middleton Cheney, OX17 2PU
3. Richard Solesbury-Timms - 10 The Avenue, Middleton Cheney, Banbury, Oxon, OX17 2PE

The COMMON SEAL of

West Northampton Council

Was hereunto affixed in the presence of:

An Authorised Officer

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

2 December 2021

Cllr Fiona Baker, Children, Families and Education

Report Title	Director Children's Services recruitment and interim arrangements.
Report Author	Anna Earnshaw, Chief Executive

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	24/11/2021
Chief Finance Officer	Martin Henry	24/11/2021
Communications Lead/Head of Communications	Rebecca Peck, Assistant Chief Executive	24/11/2021

List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To seek members' approval to change the structure to include a single DCS for West Northamptonshire and note that the selection and appointment process for the Statutory Director of Children's Services (DCS) role will be undertaken by the Senior Appointments Committee with the Chief Executive and to note interim arrangements for this role.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report asks Full Council to approve the recommendation for West Northamptonshire Council to undertake the selection and appointment process for the Statutory DCS through the Senior

Appointments Committee with the Chief Executive and note that the Head of Paid Service will seek to appoint an interim solution.

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the Council:

- a) Agree that the senior leadership structure of the Council is amended to include a Director of Children's Services (DCS) role for West Northamptonshire Council with effect from February 2022
- b) Delegates authority to the Executive Director – Finance in consultation with the Finance Portfolio holder to release one off funds to meet any costs over and above the provision included in the base budget to meet the costs associated with the proposal.
- c) Notes the intention to include a growth item within the draft budget proposals for 2022-23 to meet the ongoing increased costs associated with the proposals.
- d) Notes that in accordance with the Staff Employment Procedure Rules the Senior Appointments Committee and the Chief Executive will take all necessary actions to complete the permanent recruitment process.
- e) Notes that the Head of Paid Service will make an interim appointment in accordance with the Staff Employment Procedure Rules

4. Reason for Recommendations

4.1 The reason for the recommendations is to secure the specialist capacity and capability of an interim Director of Children's Services (DCS) to meet the statutory duties of West Northamptonshire Council and to develop a permanent solution to ensure the delivery of high-quality children's and education services.

5. Report Background

5.1 The role of the Director of Children's Services (DCS) is a critical one for the Council. The DCS is the senior statutory officer responsible for ensuring our children's and education services address the local needs of all children and young people, including their families and carers and providing high quality, value for money services in a joined-up way. The Director of Children's services is also responsible for the contract management and delivery of service outcomes of the Children's Trust.

5.2 Presently, the Director Children's services (DCS) is a shared role between North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council; hosted by North Northamptonshire Council.

- 5.3 The appointment of the current postholder, Cathi Hadley, was endorsed by each of the Shadow Authorities on the 15th and 18th of September 2020.
- 5.4 Cathi Hadley has now resigned from her position, as she has been successful in securing a new role with another Council and will be taking up her new appointment in February 2022.
- 5.5 The resignation of the current postholder has provided an opportunity to review the existing 'shared' statutory role between North and West Northamptonshire.
- 5.6 Appointment of an interim Director of Children's Services will ensure service continuity whilst permanent recruitment activity takes place.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 As part of the discussions and review, two alternatives have been considered:
- i. Maintaining the single shared Director of Children's Services (DCS)
 - ii. Creating separate Director of Children's Services (DCS roles in each Council)

Maintaining the single shared DCS

- 6.2 Both Councils want to develop strategies that focus on initiatives and early interventions that target the local needs of the children and young people and their families and carers who live there; and address any inequalities that may exist in service provision.
- 6.3 Whilst sharing a DCS provides joined up thinking and alignment across the county, there is a risk that there is less focus on unique characteristics and needs of each unitary boundary. Sharing the DCS also reduces the capacity to work closely with other statutory Council officers in each council.

Creating separate DCS role in each Council

- 6.4 Creating separate DCS roles in each Council is considered to be the preferred option due to the reasons outlined above. It should however be noted that an additional cost will result from this option.
- 6.5 The current permanent senior and statutory role appointments were made by the West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority and the recruitment and the selection process was delegated to the Shadow Senior Appointments Committee. It is therefore proposed that a similar approach is adopted through delegation of these tasks to the Employment Committee and the Chief Executive.
- 6.6 As the current postholder is due to leave in February 2022 and to ensure that the Council is still able to comply with its statutory responsibilities between their leaving date and the date of the permanent appointment to the role; it is proposed that an interim appointment is made. The Chief Executive has delegated authority to determine options on making an appointment on an interim basis in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Executive Member

Opposition Leader. She also has authority to make an appointment for a period of up to six months subject to legislative requirements to notify the Executive of the appointment.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1 The main implication for the recommendation is that each Council will need to fund the cost of a Director Children's Services (DCS) from current resources.
- 7.1.2 The current Shared Director of Children's Services role has an agreed salary band of £145,000 - £155,000, exclusive of on-costs (pension contributions and national insurance).
- 7.1.3 This will be an additional burden on the Council of approximately £100,000 which will be included in the draft budget proposals for 2022-23.
- 7.1.4 Any arrangements implemented which cost more than the amounts included in the base budget will need to be funded using one off funds to be released at the discretion of the Executive Director - Finance in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Finance.

7.2 Legal

- 7.2.1 Section 18 of the Children Act 2004 requires every upper tier local authority to appoint a Director of Children's Services. The DCS has professional responsibility for the leadership, strategy and effectiveness of local authority children's services.
- 7.2.2 The DCS is a politically restricted statutory chief officer post. This means the post holder is prevented from taking part in certain political activities. The DCS should report directly to the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service), who in turn is accountable to the Council for the performance of its chief officers.
- 7.2.3 The Department for Education's Statutory Guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the Director Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services strongly encourages the involvement of children and young people in the appointment of the DCS.
- 7.2.4 The authority's power to appoint staff and to determine their terms and conditions of employment is under Section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 7.2.5 There are mandatory Standing Orders governing the recruitment, appointment and dismissal of senior management staff in a local authority, as set out in the Council's Officer Employment Procedure Rules in the Council Constitution. These derive from the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001, as amended by the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015.
- 7.2.6 The Senior Appointments Committee has delegated powers to appoint Directors and will therefore undertake the appointment. In accordance with the Council's pay policy a package of

£100k will require approval by Council and therefore when the appointment is made the final package will be referred to council given the salary level for the role.

7.3 Risk

7.3.1 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report other than not having a statutory DCS in post.

7.4 Consultation

7.4.1 The options have been discussed with the Leader, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and North Northamptonshire Council who are all in agreement of sole DCS roles for each council.

7.4.2 This has also been discussed Children's Trust, Children's Commissioner and key liaison officers with the Department of Education who are also supportive of the way forward.

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.5.1 No scrutiny implications arising from this report.

7.6 Climate Impact

7.6.1 No Climate implications arising from this report.

7.7 Community Impact

7.7.1 The proposal is likely to result in greater focus on the needs of Children and young people in West Northamptonshire. This will be realised by having more dedicated resource and capability working alongside the other services and directors to deliver the Council's Corporate priorities; set out in our Corporate Plan.

7.8 Communications

7.8.1 A statement has been issued by communications on the future arrangements for the leadership of Northamptonshire children's services.

8. Background Papers

None

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