

**Summary of the decisions taken at the meeting of the
Cabinet held on Tuesday 15 February 2022**

1. Date of publication of this summary: 15th February 2022
2. Deadline for requests for call-in (detailing reasons for doing so): 22nd February 2022
3. Earliest date for implementation of decisions: 22nd February 2022
4. Urgent decisions taken and not subject to the call-in procedure: 15th February 2022

Agenda Item and Recommendations	Decision
<p>Agenda Item 6 Revenue Monitoring - Period 9 - Financial Year 2021-22</p>	<p>RESOLVED: Cabinet; a) Noted the forecast outturn position for 2021-22 and associated risks; b) Noted the deliverability assessment of West Northamptonshire Council savings requirement for 2021-22 and 2022-23 in Appendix B. c) Approved the virements set out in section 5.81</p> <p>REASONS RESOLVED: To ensure that the Authority complied with its financial regulations.</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS: None</p>
<p>Agenda Item 7 Period 9 - General Fund Capital Monitoring Report 2021-22</p>	<p>RESOLVED: Cabinet; a) Noted the latest capital monitoring position for the General Fund. b) Noted new schemes and changes since Period 7 report that was considered by Cabinet in December 2021.</p> <p>REASONS RESOLVED: Ensured sound management of the council's finances.</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS: None</p>

	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST Councillor Mike Hallam – daughter is a pupil at Northampton School for Girls (non-pecuniary)</p>
<p>Agenda Item 8 Final Budget 2022-23 and Medium Term Financial Plan</p>	<p>RESOLVED: That Cabinet:</p> <p>a) Approved the 2022-23 Budget for West Northamptonshire set out in this report, and recommended the Budget to the Full Council meeting on 24 February 2022, including</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. An estimated net revenue budget of £753.375m (£342.203m excluding Dedicated Schools Grant) as set out in Appendix A. II. An average Band D Council tax of £1,613.23 for West Northamptonshire Council, which represents an increase of 2.99%. (1.99% increase in ‘core’ Council Tax and 1% Adult Social Care Precept). III. Noted the Council Tax rebate of £150.00 for all Band A-D Council Tax payers and a further discretionary amount of funding for properties in Bands E-H. The details of this scheme were yet to emerge and more information would be provided once it is available. IV. Noted the balance of the WNC Council Tax hardship fund and encouraging residents to apply for such funding if they are facing financial hardship. V. Fees and Charges schedule as detailed in Appendix D VI. Dedicated schools grant budget of £411.2m as detailed in Appendix E VII. The Capital Strategy as set out at paragraphs 6.116-6.134 and Appendix F1, and Capital Programme as set out in Appendix F2. VIII. Adoption of the changes to the 2021-22 capital strategy and MRP policy as outlined in paragraph 6.125 IX. The Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy set out in Appendix G

- X. The Treasury Management Strategy set out in Appendix J
- XI. Set the authorised limits for borrowing as set out in the table at paragraph 6.141

b) Would recommend the following to Full Council on 24 February 2022, to ensure that the revenue and capital budget and all associated financial policies can be delivered in a safe and legal manner from 1 April 2022 and also to ensure there is flexibility to manage the overall budget in the year:

- I. Delegated authority to the Executive Director - Finance to manage any variation in budget prior to the start of 2022-23 as a result of final confirmation of the local government finance settlement, or as a result of unforeseen commitments; in consultation with the Finance Portfolio Holder.
- II. Delegated authority to the Executive Director - Finance in consultation with the portfolio holder for Finance to amend the capital programme for 2022-23 going forward so that it accurately reflects issues such as slippage on current year projects that will need to be added to the programme, any amendments made to existing capital programmes, adjustments to accommodate any future use of capital receipts policy and for any other reason where the capital programme needs to be adjusted.
- III. Approved the review of reserves as summarised in the table contained at paragraph 6.103
- IV. Delegated authority to the Executive Director - Finance to employ earmarked reserves for the purposes they were set up for including the release of the risk reserve if required.
- V. Delegate authority to the Executive Director – Finance in consultation with the portfolio holder for finance to release the general contingency fund of £9.7m if required in the year.

- VI. Delegated authority to the Executive Director – Finance in consultation with the portfolio holder for Finance to amend Fees and Charges if required in 2022-23
 - VII. Delegated authority to the Executive Director – Finance to finalise and agreed all outstanding financial policies and strategies in order to ensure that the Council has the policies in place by 1 April 2022
- c) For the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG):
- I. Noted the allocations and planned usage of the DSG for 2022-23, and
 - II. Followed consultation with the Schools Forum, delegated authority to the Executive Director for Children’s Services to determine the DSG 2022-23 schools funding formula, high needs funding arrangements and the Early Years Funding Formula in line with Department for Education guidance.
- d) Considered the Section 25 statement of the Chief Finance Officer detailed at paragraphs 7.1- 7.42 of the report.
- e) Noted the consultation feedback on the budget in Appendix H
- f) Noted the feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in Appendix I
- g) Cabinet appreciated the amount of time and effort the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee put into analysing the budget proposals for 2022-23 and welcomed their report on the subject. After due consideration Cabinet recommended that full council include provision in the budget for the minimum hourly rate to be increased above the Foundation Living Wage of £9.90 to £10.00 per hour for all Council staff recognising that the final award is subject to the collective bargaining with the recognised trade union representatives. It is recommended that the additional costs are funded through the base budget contingency contained within the final budget proposals.

	<p>REASONS RESOLVED: To ensure that the Council complied with its Constitution and all other relevant requirements in setting the budget for West Northamptonshire Council.</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS: None</p>
<p>Agenda Item 9 Housing Revenue Account Final Budget 2022-23 and Medium Term Financial Plan</p>	<p>RESOLVED: That Cabinet recommended Council to approve:</p> <p>a) An average maximum rent increase of 4.1% per dwelling, in line with the legislation and the government’s national rent standard, to take effect from 4th April 2022.</p> <p>b) The HRA budget for 2022-23 of £56m expenditure detailed in Appendix 1.</p> <p>c) The HRA capital programme for 2022-23, including future year estimated commitments, and proposed sources of finance, as set out in Appendix 2.</p> <p>d) The proposed service charges listed in Appendix 3.</p> <p>e) The Total Fees proposed for NPH to deliver the services in scope for 2022-23 detailed in Appendix 4.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reserves strategy of protecting balances wherever possible to allow the option of supporting future years’ budgets, aiming for a minimum level of unallocated HRA balances of at least £5m for 2022/23 having regard to the outcome of the financial risk assessment. • That authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Finance in consultation with the portfolio holder for Finance to amend the capital programme for 2022-23 going forward so that it accurately reflects issues such as slippage on current year projects that will need to be added to the programme, any amendments made to existing capital programmes, adjustments to accommodate any future use of capital receipts policy and for any other reason where the capital programme needs to be adjusted.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Finance to make any technical changes necessary to the papers for the Council meeting of 24 February 2022. • That authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Finance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, and where appropriate the relevant Director and Portfolio Holder to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Transfer monies to/from earmarked reserves should that become necessary during the financial year. b. Transfer monies to / from HRA working balances between the Council and NPH for cash flow purposes should that become necessary during the financial year. c. Updated the budget tables and appendices, prior to Council should any further changes be necessary. d. Updated prudential indicators in both the Prudential Indicators report and Treasury Strategy report, for Council for any budget changes that on these. <p>REASONS RESOLVED: Ensured that the Council complied with its Constitution and all other relevant requirements in setting the budget for West Northamptonshire Council.</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS: None</p>
<p>Agenda Item 10 Determination of admission arrangements for local authority maintained (community and voluntary controlled) schools in West Northamptonshire for the 2023 intakes</p>	<p>RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Approved the admission arrangements as detailed in Appendix A b) Agreed the two co-ordinated schemes for the 2023 intake as detailed in Appendix B and Appendix C c) Agreed the “Relevant Area” for all West Northamptonshire schools. <p>REASONS RESOLVED: All the above are statutory requirements.</p>

	<p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS: None</p>
<p>Agenda Item 11 Abington Street Public Realm Works</p>	<p>RESOLVED: That Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Approved the business case for the Abington Street Public Realm project to draw down on £4,610,625 of Towns Funding. b) Delegated authority to the Executive Director of Place, Economy and Environment in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Town Centre Regeneration and Growth to appoint a principal contractor following a competitive procurement process to undertake the works. <p>REASONS RESOLVED: The recommendations are necessary to allow the Abington Street Public Realm project to proceed and to ensure the grant award is spent within the award timescales.</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS: None</p>
<p>Agenda Item 12 People Strategy 2022 - 2025</p>	<p>RESOLVED: It is recommended that Cabinet approves the People Strategy 2022-2025 and supports its implementation across the Council.</p> <p>REASONS RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strategy allowed us to align HR activity with the wider Council vision and priorities • Putting this in place would enable the Head of Paid Service to have a robust strategy to retain, manage, develop and recruit staff. Our people are our key asset and we need to ensure we support all our employees in their development in West Northants Council to help maximise their productivity, create a high performing culture and drive service improvement. <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS: We could continue to operate in a reactive</p>

manner in relation to our workforce, but this would not build on best practice or employee feedback and would not contribute to the creation of high performing teams.