



Cabinet

A meeting of the Cabinet will be held at The Forum, Towcester, NN12 6AF on Tuesday 12 April 2022 at 6.00 pm

Agenda

Public Session	
1.	Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members
2.	Declarations of Interest Members are asked to declare any interest and the nature of that interest which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.
3.	Minutes (Pages 5 - 14) To confirm the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 28 th February 2022 and 8 th March 2022.
4.	Chair's Announcements To receive communications from the Chair.
5.	Urgent Business The Chairman to advise whether they have agreed to any items of urgent business being admitted to the agenda.
6.	West Northamptonshire Enhanced Partnership (Pages 15 - 94)
7.	West Northamptonshire Anti-Poverty Strategy 2022-2025 (Pages 95 - 122)
8.	Appointment of an Operator for the Vulcan Works Creative Hub (Pages 123 - 168)

9.	Homes for Ukraine Scheme (Pages 169 - 194)
10.	Towns Fund: 35-45 Abington Street Project- Business Case and Delivery Strategy (Pages 195 - 226)

Catherine Whitehead
Proper Officer
4 April 2022

Cabinet Members:

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

Information about this Agenda

Apologies for Absence

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

Declarations of Interest

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

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

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

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Queries Regarding this Agenda

If you have any queries about this agenda please contact 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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Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at The Forum, Towcester, NN12 6AF on Tuesday 8 March 2022 at 6.00 pm.

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

Substitute
Members: None

Also
Present: Councillor Sally Beardsworth
Councillor Phil Bignell
Councillor Nigel Hinch
Councillor Rosie Humphreys
Councillor Ian McCord
Councillor Ken Pritchard
Councillor Bob Purser

Apologies
for
Absence: None

Officers Anna Earnshaw, Chief Executive
Rebecca Peck, Assistant Chief Executive
Martin Henry, Executive Director - Finance (Section 151 Officer)
Catherine Whitehead, Director of Legal and Democratic (Monitoring
Officer)
Paul Hanson, Democratic Services Manager
Sofia Neal-Gonzalez - Democratic Services Officer (minutes)
Sarah Reed, Executive Director - Corporate Services
Stuart Timmiss, Executive Director - Place and Economy

118. **Apologies**

None

119. **Declarations of Interest**

None

120. **Minutes**

That the minutes from the Cabinet meeting of the 15th of February 2022 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record

121. **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair reflected on events occurring in Ukraine and advised there was information on the WNC website with details on how to help.
Members were also reminded that it was International Women's Day.

122. **Urgent Business**

None

123. **Transformation Update Quarter 3 2021/22**

The Chair presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. It was noted that transformation projects would deliver the aggregation of services across West Northants.

Councillors made the following comments.

- It was noted that the importance of technology had been discussed at the Members' Day event.
- It was queried whether there would be budgetary implications.
- How long would it take to achieve the goals set out in the report?
- It was important to remember that not every member of the public owns a computer or smart phone.
- The growth in the number of apprenticeships was very pleasing.

Councillor Mike Hallam advised that the council was recruiting various IT roles.

RESOLVED: Cabinet noted the report.

124. **Corporate Plan Performance Report – 2021-22 Q3**

The Chair presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. It was noted that the council had taken advice from outside agencies with regards the calculation of CO 2 emissions, this will soon be presented to Cabinet. Some of the new trees due to be planted for the Queen's green canopy would be on WNC land.

Councillors made the following comments.

- It was noted that key things mentioned in the plan needed to be related to the outcome measures.
- It was important to measure how the changes would make a difference.

- The annual staff turnover had not changed since the last time the report had come to Cabinet.
- It was queried whether long covid had been considered when sickness absence was discussed.
- It was noted that there was a 28 week time frame for highways defects, such as potholes.
- Would there be electric car charging points for rural areas, specifically Long Buckby as there had been funding for it.
- It was queried where WNC stood in comparison to other authorities when it came to staff sickness and the promotion of staff wellness. Could these figures be shared more frequently?

Councillor Fiona Baker noted that a lot of work had been done in conjunction with the police on the Child Protection Plan.

Councillor Mike Hallam advised, with regards staff turnover, that a level of stability was needed but that it was also important to recruit new staff and for people to progress further in the careers. It was noted that Covid had created an enforced absence.

Councillor Phil Larratt advised that the figures mentioned in the report as related to Highways were accurate. Some defects would not qualify for urgent repair, such as smaller potholes. It was noted that this could change as the council moved forward, should finance change. There would be 18 electric car charging points added as part of the pilot programme, the council would investigate also adding them to rural areas. The council had been approached by a company with a view to installing electric car charging points, but they did not wish to go outside of Northampton.

The Chair advised that he would come back to members about sharing the data more frequently.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet noted the content of the appendix covering the third quarter of 2021-22

125. **Organisation Structure Change**

The Chair presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated.

It was noted that Transformation teams would be embedded within various departments to present new ideas and opportunities. It was advised that the Assistant Director of Customer Service role would also now encompass Emergency Planning.

Councillors made the following comments.

- It was noted that transformation was the key to making the new council work.
- It was queried how the council would drive the changes so that residents see the results.
- It was agreed that transformation would work better from within departments.
- It was queried where sustainability would sit within the structure, would the climate change goals move?

The Chief Executive advised that there would be a Transformation Board which would ensure that Directors were held to account within their departments. It was noted that in the future it was hoped that the transformation team would be self-funded.

The Chair advised that there would need to be changes across every department to work on carbon reduction.

RESOLVED: It was resolved that the Cabinet:

- a) Noted the changes to the Council's approach and changes to the Directorate structures and key roles as follows.
 - Creation of a new Directorate of Communities and Opportunities
 - The creation of a new Directorate of People encompassing Adult Services and Children and Education Services
- b) Noted the changes included in the Pay Policy including:
 - Removal of the Chief Officer post of Director of Transformation
 - Creation of the new Director of Communities and Opportunities post
- c) Noted the delegated responsibility to the Senior Appointments Committee for the permanent appointment of a Director of Communities and Opportunities once staff and union consultation has completed and interviews undertaken.

126. **Proposal to fund a Football Association standard, 3G sports pitch at the new free school to be delivered at Wantage Farm, Moulton**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Fiona Baker presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. It was advised that there would be no further involvement required from the council and no extra funding. The project would be of benefit to the school and go towards the promotion of the healthy living agenda. It was advised that there would be a residue of money, how best to use it was being investigated.

Councillors made the following comments.

- It was queried whether the surfaces that would be used were safe and whether there had been research carried out, particularly regarding carcinogenic surfaces.
- It was queried whether NSB would allow their facilities to be used by the public.

Councillor Fiona Baker made the following comments in response.

- The issue of carcinogenic surfacing would be investigated.
- The school was a trust school and as such the council would have very little say on how they allow their facilities to be used.
- Members were informed that Councillor Baker would speak to schools regarding allowing the public to use their facilities at a price that is affordable.

Councillor Lizzy Bowen noted that NSB have an outstanding reputation for sports and have fed into well-known teams.

Councillor Phil Larratt requested that accessibility and costs be kept in mind. As some section 106 money would be used, the facilities should therefore be at the benefit of the public.

Councillor Matt Golby noted that this could be a piece of work for the council to undertake to encourage a better level of accessibility and affordability.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- a) Approved the expenditure required to deliver the 3G sports pitch at the proposed new school at Wantage Farm, Moulton at a cost of £641,046.
- b) Delegated responsibility to the Director of Children's Services in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education to make and authorise all necessary legal and financial agreements to ensure effective delivery of the proposed scheme.

127. **Disposal of Land at Sixfields, Northampton**

With the agreement of the Cabinet, the Chair proposed that this item be discussed first. At the Chair's invitation Councillor Malcolm Longley presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated.

Councillor Longley made the following comments:

- He acknowledged a considerable amount of time and effort had been spent considering this issue, which was complicated by the various leases involved.
- He referenced the extraordinary council meeting that had taken place on 21st March, which had resulted in many good ideas and questions raised by members.
- The Council had sought to use its best judgement to maximise the returns for the Council and for residents.
- The site was subject to several leases and legal issues.
- Bids had been received from two interested parties, involving cash, overages, and other factors. One offer included the building of a stand. He referenced the fact that the value of bids had continued to increase as we moved towards a decision.
- He advised Cabinet that all items under consideration had been considered and advised that the Council had secured the best professional advice that it could.
- In coming to a recommendation, the Council had sought to balance the cash offers against the benefits that each offer provided and the certainty of a successful conclusion.
- He recommended that Cabinet accepted the bid from CDNL, which offered £2,050,000, an overage if the land was sold un-remediated, a buy-back on part of the land if the stand is not built, fewer legal complications and personal guarantees from the owners.
- He proposed an amendment recommendation C, so that it included consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance.
- He advised Cabinet that he would approve the deal only if he were satisfied with the terms and conditions of the proposed deal.

Councillors made the following comments.

- It was queried whether a review of the process should be conducted after this is concluded, this would help ensure that lessons were learnt.
- It was suggested that a masterplan should have been developed for the site, with preferred options outlined.
- The amount of transparency was appreciated.
- The building of the stand had been promised some time ago and as such it needed to be delivered.

Councillor Malcolm Longley agreed that it was important that lessons were learned.

The Chair thanked speakers for their comments. He advised Cabinet that the process had been officer led until there had been something to deliver to members. He acknowledged the process had been complex and referenced mistakes that had been made by a predecessor authority. He referenced helpful comments that had been made at the Council meeting (on 21st February) and that significant improvements had been made to the deal since that time.

Councillor Phil Larratt thanked the officers for the hard work they had put into the issue. He felt the public would be pleased to see progress being made.

Councillor Mike Hallam said he hoped to see the club do more of the local community work that they were known for.

RESOLVED: The Cabinet agreed to the disposal of the site to County Developments (Northampton) Limited and Northampton Town Football Club Limited as outlined in Appendix A subject to:

- a. The expiration of the Assets of Community Value moratorium period.
- b. Agreement from Homes England as required.

The Assistant Director Assets and Environment in consultation with the Director of Legal and Democratic Services and the Portfolio Holder for Finance being satisfied that all necessary steps have been taken to proceed with the disposal

The meeting closed at 7.18 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____

West Northamptonshire Council

Cabinet Minutes

28th February 2022

Cabinet Members Present:

Jonathan Nunn (Chair)	Lizzy Bowen
Rebecca Breese	Adam Brown (Vice Chair)
Matt Golby	Mike Hallam
Phil Larratt	Malcolm Longley
Fiona Baker	David Smith

Other West Northamptonshire Council Members Present:

Sally Beardsworth	Jonathan Harris
Councillor Phil Bignell	Jamal Alwahabi
Dennis Meredith	Danielle Stone
John Shephard	

West Northamptonshire Council Officers Present:

Gillian Baldock	Political Assistant - Conservative Group
Anna Earnshaw	Chief Executive
Paul Hanson	Democratic Services Manager
Martin Henry	Executive Director of Finance
Sofia Neal-Gonzalez	Democracy Officer (minutes)
Rebecca Peck	Assistant Chief Executive
Jed Scoles	Political Assistant - Labour Group
Catherine Whitehead	Monitoring Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE:

None

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair explained that the thoughts of councillors and officers were with the people of Ukraine, with West Northants Council sending sympathy and support. The Ukrainian flag was being flown outside of the Council building in a show of solidarity.

ITEM 4. Disposal of Land at Sixfields, Northampton

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Malcolm Longley presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. It was noted that, when delivering this item to full Council the objective had been to listen to views and these had been taken on board.

Councillors made the following comments.

- Recommendation 8 within the KPMG report, 'pressures on sign off process' advised that a decision be paused should new information come to light.
- There were various reservations and worries from members regarding this item.
- It was noted that it had been a sensible idea for the council to go down the Red Book route as opposed to the open market.
- This item was a good example of a decision that should be looked over by the scrutiny committee.
- The football club was championed for its social value to the County.
- It was queried whether WNC could have used and regenerated the land itself.

The Chair made the following comments.

- WNC hold the freehold on the land but not the leasehold which is for 150 years, as such the council cannot develop on it without breaking the lease.
- The information from the KPMG report is very relevant and important.
- There had been big criticisms regarding some of decisions made by NBC in the past, specifically related to diligence and transparency.
- The comments at full council had been very helpful.

Councillor Adam Brown noted that the Scrutiny Committee were within their rights to request to view an item and did not have to wait for Cabinet to refer a matter to them.

Councillor Malcolm Longley noted that there had been many interesting comments made and that it was important for the process to be an ethical one as well as a competitive one. Members were advised that this item would be deferred to the March Cabinet meeting with the timescale being reset.

Councillor Longley presented the new recommendations to Cabinet.

RESOLVED: That.

- a) A new decision-making timetable is set to consider the disposal of land at Sixfields by the Leader in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Finance with a view to achieving a capital receipt before the end of 2022.
- b) The Council should trigger the process under Chapter 3 Part 5 Localism Act 2011 relating to a disposal of an asset of Community Value (the Running Track Site).

- c) The Assistant Director Assets & Environment conduct a best consideration assessment of the latest offers from Cillarda and CDNL and report to a future meeting of Cabinet.

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

12th APRIL 2022

**CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENVIRONMENT,
TRANSPORT, HIGHWAYS AND WASTE: COUNCILLOR PHIL LARRATT**

Report Title	West Northamptonshire Enhanced Partnership
Report Author	Chris Wragg, Transportation & Development Manager Chris.wragg@westnorthants.gov.uk

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

West MO	Sameera Khan	28 March 2022
West S151	Martin Henry	25 March 2022
Other Director/SME	Stuart Timmiss	Emailed 29 th March 2022
Communications Lead/Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	28 March 2022

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Enhanced Partnership Plan

Appendix B – Enhanced Partnership Scheme

Appendix C – Stakeholder consultation responses

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report provides an update on key developments affecting West Northamptonshire's bus services. It seeks agreement for the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme between the Council and local bus operators and the arrangements for reimbursing bus operators for concessionary travel in 2022-23. It notes the need to work with operators to design a financially sustainable and passenger-focused network that works for changing travel patterns

post-pandemic and proposes the allocation of some funding to encourage people to travel by bus.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Government's National Bus Strategy Bus Back Better required the Council to develop a Bus Service Improvement Plan and Enhanced Partnership in order to be able to access future funding for bus services. Following the publication of the Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan in October 2021, work has been undertaken to develop an Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme with local bus operators. These documents form a legally binding agreement between the Council and operators with actions ascribed to all parties. Following consultation with operators and wider stakeholders it is proposed that the Plan and Scheme be made without modification.
- 2.2 Having agreed a new budget for subsidised bus services, the Council needs to develop, consult on and publish a policy on how that budget should be used to meet the requirements of the Transport Act 1985.
- 2.3 While Government has extended Covid-related support for the bus industry until September 2022, the Council needs to work with local bus operators to develop a financially sustainable and passenger-focused public transport network, that works for changing travel patterns post-pandemic.
- 2.4 Having reimbursed bus operators for concessionary travel at pre-Covid levels since March 2020, the Council has options on how much reimbursement should be paid in 2022-23; but any reduction in funding will impact on the level of service which operators can provide.
- 2.5 As the best way to mitigate any reduction in bus services is to have more people travel, it is proposed that funding should be allocated to work with operators to market bus travel across West Northamptonshire.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:
 - a) Make the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Enhanced Partnership Scheme, which form Appendices A and B of this report, as proposed in accordance with Section 138G of the Transport Act 2000.
 - b) Note the requirement to develop, consult on and publish a policy for subsidising bus services.
 - c) Note the allocation of additional Government funding to support bus services and the requirement to work with bus operators to co-design a financially sustainable and passenger-focused public transport network, that works for changing travel patterns post-pandemic.

- d) Agree to reimburse bus operators for concessionary travel at 100% of pre-Covid levels until 30 September 2022 and then at 90% of pre-Covid levels until 31 March 2023.
- e) Agree to allocate £50,000 of the resultant projected saving in the concessionary travel budget for 2022/23 to work with operators on a marketing strategy for bus services.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 Meeting the Council's legal duties to consult on and publish a policy on subsidised bus services and to provide West Northamptonshire communities with the best possible level of bus service with post-pandemic travel patterns.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 The Government published Bus Back Better, the National Bus Strategy for England (outside London) in March 2021. Backed with transformational funding of £3bn during the current Parliament, the strategy sets out a vision to make buses more frequent, more reliable, easier to understand and use, better co-ordinated and cheaper so that increased passenger numbers lead to reduced congestion, carbon and pollution, and encourages motorists to use a bus rather than their cars.
- 5.2 In order to receive this funding, local authorities were required to commit by the end of June 2021 to forming either an Enhanced Partnership or introducing bus franchising across the whole of their area. Cabinet agreed, in June 2021, to form an Enhanced Partnership, which is a statutory arrangement under the Bus Services Act 2017. The Enhanced Partnership can specify, for example, timetables and multi-operating ticketing and allows the Council, as Local Transport Authority, to take over the role of registering bus services from the Traffic Commissioners, the government body responsible for licensing bus and heavy goods vehicle operators.
- 5.3 Having committed to forming an Enhanced Partnership, the Council had to publish a local Bus Service Improvement Plan, detailing how we propose to use our powers to improve services, by 31 October 2021. In order to meet the timescales set by Government, this was submitted under delegated authority agreed by Cabinet on 12 October 2021.
- 5.4 According to the requirements laid down by Government in the National Bus Strategy, the Council then had to form an Enhanced Partnership by 31 March 2022. This requires the preparation and publication of both an Enhanced Partnership Plan and an Enhanced Partnership Scheme. There are statutory requirements relating to consultation on these documents:
 - A 28-day consultation with local bus operators, with statutory objection thresholds; followed by
 - A consultation with stakeholders; followed by
 - A further 28-day consultation with local bus operators, with statutory objection thresholds, if any modifications to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Enhanced Partnership Scheme are proposed.
- 5.5 In January 2022, during the initial 28-day consultation period with local bus operators, the Government advised that they now only required a draft Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme.

to be submitted to them by the end of April 2022. In common with many other councils who had reached a similar stage, it was decided to continue to progress the Enhanced Partnership, but to delay the report to Cabinet to 'make' the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme from March to April 2022.

6. Funding for bus services

- 6.1 The majority of bus services in Britain (outside London) are operated commercially. This means that like any commercial business, the bus operator decides when and where to run their services and the fares to be charged.
- 6.2 Local transport authorities, such as the Council, have a duty under Section 63 of the Transport Act 1985 “to secure the provision of such public passenger transport services as the council consider it appropriate to secure to meet any public transport requirements ... which would not in their view be met apart from any action taken by them for that purpose”. Section 64 of the Act requires consultation and publication of the Council’s policies in that regard.
- 6.3 Since the former County Council withdrew its bus subsidy budget in 2018/19, the only services which have been subsidised by the local transport authority in West Northamptonshire have been through Section 106 developer funding, funding through parish or town councils and through Government grants.
- 6.4 The Council’s budget for 2022/23 includes a new ongoing budget of £100,000 to support implementation of the Bus Service Improvement Plan and subsidy of bus services, together with a further £215,000 for 2022/23 only. In accordance with the Transport Act 1985 the Council will need to develop, consult on and publish policies for how it wishes to spend money subsidising bus services.
- 6.5 The Council bid, through its Bus Service Improvement Plan, for additional funding to improve bus services in West Northamptonshire. At the time of writing the outcome of that bid is still awaited, and should it be received before the date of Cabinet a verbal update will be provided.
- 6.6 The onset of the Covid pandemic from March 2020 led to a significant reduction in the number of people travelling by bus and a consequent drop in farebox revenue. Operators have been able to sustain services levels through Government funding, initially the Covid-19 Bus Service Support Grant, and since September 2021 the Bus Recovery Grant. The majority of this funding has been paid to commercial operators, but a small proportion has been paid to local transport authorities.
- 6.7 With bus patronage still only having recovered to 70-75% of pre-Covid levels, the Government has agreed a final allocation of £150m to support local bus services across England, to be known as the Local Transport Fund. Details of the allocation of this funding have not yet been determined. This funding is dependent on local areas and operators co-designing a financially sustainable and passenger-focused public transport network, that works for changing travel patterns post-pandemic.
- 6.8 Alongside this support from Government, and at their request, the Council has been maintaining the reimbursement of bus operators for those carried free of charge with concessionary bus passes at 100% of pre-Covid levels. This required a temporary change in

secondary legislation (The Mandatory Travel Concession (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 (SI 2021/205)).

6.9 Government had advised in October 2021 that 100% reimbursement would no longer be allowed after 5th April 2022, and that operators should then reimburse operators at 90% of pre-Covid levels from 6th April 2022, and then gradually decrease their reimbursement payments to bus operators by 5% every other month until these payments meet with actual patronage levels.

6.10 However, Government advised in February 2022 that while the above remains their default approach, local authorities will be able to continue to reimburse operators at 100% of pre-Covid levels, or at some alternative level, should local circumstances require it. Further secondary legislation is due to be laid before Parliament to permit this.

7. Issues and Choices

7.1 The Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme together form a legally binding agreement between the Council and local bus operators over actions they will take to improve bus services in West Northamptonshire over the three-year period to 31 March 2025.

7.2 The Enhanced Partnership Plan is essentially a condensed version of the Bus Service Improvement Plan which was agreed by Cabinet in October 2021, containing relevant proposals. The key actions described in the Enhanced Partnership Plan are grouped around the themes of:

- Bus priority
- More modern buses and decarbonisation and making passengers feel safer
- Fares and integrated ticketing
- Service network improvement
- Integrated services and information
- Giving passengers a say

7.3 The Enhanced Partnership Scheme describes existing and new facilities and measures for both the Council and bus operators. The Council will continue to:

- Maintain the bus lanes and the bus-only street in Northampton
- Maintain the bus stations in Northampton and Daventry
- Maintain real-time information displays
- Maintain street lighting at current levels in the vicinity of bus stops
- Reimburse operators for concessionary travel
- Use its parking and traffic enforcement powers to make bus journey times more reliable
- Provide bus timescale and mapping information on its website
- Provide systems for reporting highway defects and information about planned roadworks

7.4 New actions to be taken by the Council are, in consultation with bus operators, to:

- Reduce the effect of road works on bus services
- Develop and implement a three-year marketing plan for local bus services

- Develop a passenger charter (also with bus user representatives)
- Work with operators to develop a strategy for replacing diesel buses with electric (or alternative) buses.

And subject to available funding:

- Introduce bus priority measures on the Bedford, Harborough, Kettering, London and Towcester Road corridors
- Improve facilities at bus stops
- Undertake a review of bus stop safety
- Improve and extend the coverage of real-time information displays

7.5 Actions for bus operators contained in the Enhanced Partnership Scheme are:

- To maintain normal daytime frequencies between 0730 and 1830 Monday to Friday on Urban Tier 1 and 2 routes (defined in the Scheme).
- Enhance the bus network to better service visitor attractions
- Undertake a joint network review by April 2023
- Fleet to have Automatic Vehicle Location equipment by April 2023
- 80% of fleet to have digital recording CCTV by April 2025
- Work with Council to phase out Euro III and IV engine buses
- Operators with over 20 buses operating in West Northants to develop investment plans to move to a non-fossil fuel fleet
- Make contactless payment available by April 2023
- Explore common fare stage boundaries by April 2023
- Develop a multi-operator ticket across West Northants
- Work to put in place fare capping for Smart Card or contactless payments
- Improve information provided to the public
- Develop a customer charter

7.6 The Enhanced Partnership Scheme also contains the governance structure for the partnership. This consists of a Management Forum (with 50% voting rights to the Council and 50% to the operators) and a Wider Stakeholder Group. It also provides details of a Bespoke Variation Arrangement to make future changes to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme in accordance with Section 138E of the Transport Act 2000.

7.7 As described in more detail in section 8.4 of this report, there have been no statutory objections from bus operators to the proposed Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme; and there are no modifications proposed to either the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme which would require a second operator consultation. The Council is therefore in a position to be able to make the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme as proposed in accordance with Section 138G of the Transport Act 2000 (as amended by the Bus Services Act 2017).

7.8 As a result of the change in Government requirements described in section 4.5 above, the Council does have a choice of not 'making' the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme and only submitting draft documents to Government. This is not recommended because the Enhanced Partnership would form a useful forum to tackle the challenges which the bus industry will face over the coming years, and provide the basis to spend any funding secured from Government through the Bus Service Improvement Plan.

7.9 Having made the decision to reinstate a bus subsidy budget, the Council now has a statutory duty to consult on and publish policies for how this funding will be spent. It is a condition of the new Local Transport Fund that the Council works with bus operators to co-design a financially sustainable and passenger-focused public transport network, that works for changing travel patterns post-pandemic. The Council could choose not to receive any funding via the Local Transport Fund, and therefore not oblige itself to work with operators in this way, but that is not recommended as it would either lead to reduced levels of bus service or increase the call on the Council's own financial resources.

7.10 The need to work with operators to co-design a future network and develop a policy for subsidised services aligns well with the requirement for a Bus Network Review in the Enhanced Partnership Scheme, which would consequently be advanced. Although the April 2023 date for such a review in the Enhanced Partnership Scheme cannot be changed without a further round of statutory consultation, there is no reason to believe that bus operators will not cooperate with bringing such a review forward.

7.11 As outlined in Sections 6.9 and 6.10 above, the Council has a choice with regards to the rate at which it reimburses bus operators for concessionary travel after 6th April 2022. Broadly the choices are to:

- Continue to maintain payments at 100% of pre-Covid levels for the duration of the 2022/23 financial year.
- Reduce payments on the basis outlined in section 6.9;
- Adopt an alternative approach.

7.12 The Council could not adopt a less favourable approach than that outlined in section 6.9 without giving operators at least four months' notice as, in accordance with Government guidance at the time, that approach was included in the draft West Northamptonshire Concessionary Travel Scheme published in December 2021, and Section 150 of the Transport Act 2000 requires that operators are given at least four months' notice of any changes. (It is assumed that operators would not object to being given less than the statutory notice should the change be more favourable).

7.13 With concessionary bus travel currently at around 60-65% of pre-Covid levels (lower than overall patronage recovery), it is important to recognise that any reduction in reimbursement to operators will inevitably lead to a reduction in service levels. Equally, it seems unlikely that concessionary travel will return to pre-Covid levels in the foreseeable future, and since reimbursement at pre-Covid levels is unlikely to be permitted in the longer term, an eventual reduction in reimbursement seems inevitable.

7.14 It is therefore recommended that concessionary reimbursement is maintained at 100% of pre-Covid levels until 30th September 2022 and then reduced to 90% of pre-Covid levels until 31st March 2023.

7.15 Although the new bus subsidy budget could allow bus services to be provided for some communities that do not currently have one, it is important to recognise that unless patronage returns to pre-Covid levels in the next few months, a reduction in bus service levels seems inevitable, as beyond September 2022 operators will need to balance their incomes and expenditure without the benefit of Government support.

7.16 The best way of maintaining service levels is therefore for more passengers to be travelling, and to support this it is recommended that £50,000 of the forecast saving in the concessionary travel budget for 2022/23 as a result of the reimbursement approach outlined in section 6.9 is allocated to a marketing strategy to be developed and implemented, working alongside bus operators, to support bus services.

7.17 The next steps to be followed will be:

- A Notice of the making of the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme will be published in accordance with section 138G of the Transport Act 2000.
- Work will commence on the co-design of a financially sustainable and passenger-focused bus network, including exploring options for subsidised services.
- Work will begin on developing plans for the marketing of bus services.
- Bus operators will be advised of the concessionary fare reimbursement for 2022/23.
- The Council will await the announcement of the funding announcement to determine which elements of the Bus Service Improvement Plan and Enhanced Partnership Scheme can be delivered.

8. Implications (including financial implications)

8.1 Resources and Financial

8.1.1 The proposals outlined in this report can be met from existing or new budgets, or grant incomes received from Government or section 106 developer contributions, or funding contributions from Town or Parish Councils.

8.1.2 It should be noted that the Enhanced Partnership Scheme will legally oblige the Council to continue maintaining certain facilities and measures for the three-year period to 31 March 2025, and that this will in consequence limit the freedom which would otherwise exist to reduce budgets in certain areas during this period.

8.1.3 The Bus Service Improvement Plan agreed by Cabinet in November 2021 included a bid for further Government funding, the results of which are currently awaited. Measures in the Enhanced Partnership Scheme which are dependent on this or other funding, are clearly indicated as being subject to funding, and do not represent firm obligations on the Council without such funding.

8.1.4 The 2022/23 budget agreed by Full Council on 24 February 2022 included a new ongoing budget of £100,000 to support implementation of the Bus Service Improvement Plan and subsidy of bus services, together with a further £215,000 for 2022/23 only.

8.1.5 The Council has a concessionary fares budget of £4.359m per annum. This covers both the reimbursement of operators for passengers carried free of charge, the issue of concessionary passes and the associated back-office systems. This report describes three alternative options for reimbursement of operators, all of which would achieve savings against the allocated budget, as described in the table below. These figures include an allowance for new operators who have either started or expanded their operations since before the pandemic, and for some new subsidised services being introduced which would require additional reimbursement.

Option	2022/23 cost	Saving
Budget available	£4.359m	-
Option A: Reimbursement at 100% of pre-Covid levels for full year	£4.348m	-£0.011m
Option B: Reimbursement at 100% of pre-Covid levels for six months, then 90%	£4.136m	-£0.223m
Option C: Reimbursement at 90% of pre-Covid levels from 6 April, then stepped down by 5% every other month until actual levels reached.	>£3.403m	<£0.956m

- 8.1.6 It should be noted that the full savings for Option C would not be realised, as the level of reimbursement based on actual loadings and fares foregone would be expected to be higher than this figure. However, owing to the uncertainty of what would happen, a value cannot be predicted. There is, however, confidence that the 90% figure would not be breached during 2022/23.
- 8.1.7 The savings in the Concessionary fares budget may not be sustained in the longer-term, even if patronage does not recover, as the reimbursement is reduced to account for extra patronage generated by availability of free travel. It is likely that Government will reduce the generation factor used in the reimbursement calculations in future years, increasing the reimbursement received by operators.
- 8.1.8 It is proposed that £50k of the forecast saving in concessionary fare reimbursement in 2022/23 (achievable under any of the options outlined above) is allocated to a marketing strategy for bus services in order to increase patronage and reduce the risk of West Northamptonshire communities having a lower level of bus service in future.

8.2 Legal

- 8.2.1 The arrangements for consulting on and making an Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme are set out in the Transport Act 2000 (as amended by the Bus Services Act 2017) and related secondary legislation. The legislation has been followed in drawing up and consulting on the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme, and this report proposes that the Plan and Scheme are 'made' in accordance with the Act.
- 8.2.2 The Transport Act 2000 is very prescriptive about the contents of the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme and the appendices to this report have been prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements.
- 8.2.3 Should Cabinet wish to make modifications to the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme which form Appendix A and B of this report, it will be necessary for them to undertake a further 28-day consultation with bus operators in accordance with section 138G of the Transport Act 2000.

- 8.2.4 It should be noted that once the Enhanced Partnership Scheme is made the Council will have a legal obligation to undertake the measures ascribed to it in the Scheme over the three-year period to 31 March 2025.
- 8.2.5 The Council's statutory duties in relation to subsidised bus services are set out in the Transport Act 1985 and related secondary legislation. The recommended approach for developing, consulting on and publishing a policy for bus subsidy is required to accord with this legislation. Subsidised local bus services must be procured in accordance with the Transport Act 1985 and other procurement legislation, and the Council's own procurement governance.
- 8.2.6 The Council's duties for the issuing of concessionary bus passes and the reimbursement of bus operators under the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme are set out in the Transport Act 2000 (as amended by the Concessionary Bus Travel Act 2007) and related secondary legislation. The recommended approach for reimbursing operators proposed in this report is in accordance with this legislation, and guidance issued by Government
- 8.3 Risk**
- 8.3.1 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report
- 8.4 Consultation**
- 8.4.1 Development of the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme has been guided by a cross-party Bus Improvement Working Group. This group will continue to meet quarterly to oversee the review and development of the Council's strategy and the implementation of the Bus Service Improvement Plan.
- 8.4.2 The Transport Act 2000 sets out the consultation process for an Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme, which is in three stages:
- i) A 28-day consultation with bus operators, with statutory objection thresholds;
 - ii) A consultation with wider stakeholders; and
 - iii) Should there be any changes proposed following the wider stakeholder consultation, a further 28-day consultation with bus operators, with statutory objection thresholds.
- 8.4.3 In advance of the first formal consultation with bus operators, they were informally consulted on the proposals in the plan. Operators raised concerns about a number of proposals which would have a potential adverse impact on their business or where they were not currently in a position to commit capital investment. Changes were made to the Enhanced Partnership Scheme to reflect these concerns, particularly regarding potential investment in lower-emission buses.
- 8.4.4 The formal 28-day consultation with bus operators then ran from 22 December 2021 to 19 January 2022. While a number of comments were received, which led to very minor changes to wording, no objections were received from operators.

8.4.5 The wider stakeholder consultation then ran from 26 January to 25 February 2022. Consultation responses were received from 15 individuals or organisations. The details are contained in Appendix C.

8.4.6 Many comments received were supportive of the proposals in the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme. Of the comments which could be read as unsupportive the majority related to two key areas.

- The lack of proposals to improve rural bus services or services more generally - While the objective of the Bus Service Improvement Plan is to increase patronage, in the short-term the reality is that the number of passengers is significantly reduced from pre-Covid levels, and commercial operators are not currently in a position to commit to improved services. As described in section 8.1.4 above, the Council has allocated a new budget for subsidised services, which may likely to lead to improved services for some rural areas, but this will be subject to a separate consideration in the coming months.
- The focus being on Northampton rather than the whole of West Northamptonshire – the legislation means that an Enhanced Partnership is focused primarily on commercial services, and the geography of West Northamptonshire means that these are inevitably focused in an around Northampton. However, commercial services which do not service Northampton, such as Brackley – Banbury are included; and there are proposals for real-time displays in other towns if funding is secured.

8.4.7 While a change has been made to the Competition Test as a result of a comment received from the Competition & Markets Authority, and some very minor changes have been made to wording of the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme which are considered inconsequential in requiring a further statutory consultation, it is not considered that there are any further modifications that could be made to which the Council and/or bus operators could commit at this stage. Therefore, the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme can be made as proposed.

8.5 **Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

8.5.1 Not applicable at this stage. Overview and Scrutiny may choose to consider the Enhanced Partnership or bus services more generally in future.

8.6 **Climate Impact**

8.6.1 The proposals in this report should have a positive climate/environmental impact through increasing bus use, reducing car use and potentially the introduction of lower or zero emission buses.

8.7 **Community Impact**

8.7.1 The proposals in this report reduce the risk that communities in West Northamptonshire will lose their bus service and may allow some communities which currently have no bus service to regain one.

8.8 Communications

- 8.8.1 Work will be undertaken with the Communications team to develop and implement an effective marketing strategy with the objective of increasing passenger numbers, and hence the reliance on Council funding to achieve this.
- 8.8.2 Communications planning and activities will be key to inform, engage and update all stakeholders as plans proceed to design a financially sustainable and passenger-focused network that works for changing travel patterns post-pandemic, particularly in relation to raising awareness and benefits of bus travel to influence and encourage take-up across all communities.

9. Background Papers

- 9.1 Cabinet paper, 8 June 2021, Agenda No 9 National Bus Strategy
- 9.2 Cabinet paper, 12 October 2021, Agenda No 9 Bus Service Improvement Plan
- 9.3 Transport Act 1985
- 9.4 Transport Act 2000 (as amended by Concessionary Bus Travel Act 2007 and Bus Services Act 2017)
- 9.5 Bus Back Better, the National Bus Strategy for England, Department for Transport 2021



West
Northamptonshire
Council

Enhanced Bus Partnership Plan

DRAFT

Final Draft for Cabinet Approval – March 2022

www.westnorthants.gov.uk

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Change History

Issue	Date	Comments
0.1	03/11/21	Draft for client input
0.2	10/11/21	Client input addressed and draft further developed
0.3	17/11/21	Guidance published so alignment updates
0.4	09/12/21	Final Council comments
0.5	20/12/21	Operator comment amends
1.0	21/12/21	Draft for operator consultation
2.0	25/01/22	Minor amends to update to Stakeholder Consultation
3.0	01/03/22	Date and status update post Stakeholder consultation
3.1	18/03/22	Minor changes
3.2	23/03/22	Minor changes

NB: Draft versions 0.1 - final published versions 1.0

Consultees

Internal	External
Cabinet	Bus operators
	Wider Stakeholders

Distribution List

Internal	External

Links to other documents

Document	Link
Bus Service Improvement Plan	Bus timetables, passes and improvements West Northamptonshire Council (westnorthants.gov.uk)
Enhanced Partnership Scheme	Bus timetables, passes and improvements West Northamptonshire Council (westnorthants.gov.uk)

Additional Comments to note

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Part 1 – EP Plan

The West Northamptonshire Council Enhanced Partnership Plan for buses has been prepared in accordance with Section 138H of the Transport Act 2000 and is Made in accordance with Section 138G by West Northamptonshire Council

Executive Summary

West Northamptonshire Council is a new Unitary Authority. Alongside other modes, the Council sees bus as an important travel option for local people, the relative importance of bus will be considered further when the Council develops its own Local Transport Plan. Bus, alongside rail, walking and cycling has a role to play in providing people with an alternative option to the car, and is a more inclusive mode of transport, accessible to most people regardless of whether they can drive, have mobility limitations or age.

This Enhanced Partnership Plan has been developed for West Northamptonshire Council to drive bus improvements for passengers over the three years from 30 April 2022 to 31 March 2025. It fulfils the statutory requirements set out by the Bus Services Act 2017 of an Enhanced Partnership Plan (EPP) for West Northamptonshire. In doing so, it covers the following legally required aspects:

- specifies the area and the period to which the plan relates,
- sets out an analysis of the local services provided in that area,
- sets out policies relating to local services in that area,
- sets out objectives as regards the quality and effectiveness of local services provided in that area by reference to that period,
- describes how the related enhanced partnership scheme or schemes is or are intended to assist in implementing those policies and achieving those objectives,
- describes the intended effect of the related enhanced partnership scheme or schemes on areas neighbouring the area to which the plan relates, and
- how the plan is to be reviewed and, including how it is reviewed and the specific dates by which reviews are to be completed.

This EPP builds on the Bus Service Improvement Plan agreed in October 2021, and puts in place binding commitments on the Council and partner organisations to provide the necessary enhancements to make bus attractive and easier to use and contribute to delivery of our vision for buses, which is:

Our vision for buses

The bus network will meet community need, it will be delivered reliably and efficiently, and the bus offer is understood by the wider community not simply bus users, finally bus use is affordable and easy to use by all

Alongside this EPP is a single Enhanced Partnership Scheme which sets out in greater detail the actions to be taken to deliver this EPP over the next 3 years.

In summary this EPP proposes the interventions set out in the Table of Actions, over.

Table of Actions

BSIP Objectives	EP Approach
1. Bus priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Address bottlenecks impacting bus services (quick wins) by utilising real time data where appropriate b) Identify opportunities for bus priority packages, especially at traffic lights c) Mitigate the impact of roadworks d) Deliver faster journey times and reliability improvements
2. Modern buses and decarbonisation and making passengers feel safer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Lock in current bus standards b) Develop a plan to raise bus standards during this EPP timescale c) Undertake a review of bus stops to ensure their position and layout is safe and reasonably attractive to users, bringing forward a plan to address the more significant shortcomings.
3. Fares and integrated ticketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Introduce capped fares b) Agree standard fare stages with the operators c) Commence plans for a smart ticket offer to be delivered for the next EPP
4. Service network improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Require all-day services to operate across common core hours (0730 to 1900hrs Monday to Fridays, except Bank Holidays) b) Review the bus network serving visitor attractions and work with operators on opportunities for network improvement.
5. Integrated services and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Develop and implement a three-year marketing plan for local bus services b) Require all operators to produce paper timetables and make these available in adequate quantity through agreed outlets c) Bus service maps are to indicate, with equal prominence all bus services operating in the area shown on the map, regardless of operator, and such information kept up-to-date at least every 6 months. d) Improve access to Real Time information e) All maps and timetables are to include prominent information explaining to passengers how to access Real Time information, using the form set out by the Council.
6. Giving passengers a say	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Working with operators and passenger advocacy groups we will develop a Bus Passenger Charter and require operators to abide by its commitments.

1.0 Overview and Governance

- 1.1 The Government has set out its plan to support Local Transport Authorities to improve bus services through the National Bus Strategy: Bus Back Better.
- 1.2 In response to the publication of the National Bus Strategy in March 2021, West Northamptonshire Council confirmed its intention to use an Enhanced Partnership as the way of securing and facilitating further development and improvement of the bus network.
- 1.3 The Enhanced Partnership builds on the longer term strategy set out in the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) which set out the Council's plans over the next 3 to 5 years and longer.
- 1.4 BSIP was formally considered by the Council's Cabinet on 12 October 2021, with a delegated decision taken on 24 October 2021 and aims to deliver simple and more cost effective fares, cheaper fares for young people, an integrated bus network, one set of integrated information making it easier for passengers to plan and use the network, reliable journey times with better routing and the continued improvement of bus infrastructure.
- 1.5 As required and set out in section 138F of the Transport Act 2000, notification of intent to introduce an Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme was published by the Council at the end of June 2021 following approval at the Council's Cabinet meeting on 8 June 2021.
- 1.6 Benefits of an Enhanced Partnership include the enhancement of quality standards and access to funding for investment in public transport-related projects and activities which might not otherwise be available.
- 1.7 This Enhanced Partnership Plan has been prepared in accordance with Section 138 of the Transport Act 2000 as amended by section 9 of the Bus Services Act 2017, as well as Guidance published by the Department for Transport. Supporting this Enhanced Partnership Plan is an Enhanced Partnership Scheme which sets out the steps to be taken to deliver the vision set out below and the supporting actions.

Duration

- 1.8 This Enhanced Partnership Plan sets out the high level vision and objectives for bus services in the area over the 3 year period between 30 April 2022 and 31 March 2025, it is based on the BSIP, which itself was the subject of public consultation and was produced in accordance with guidance published by the Department for Transport on BSIP's. The timescale also aligns to the funding support requested from Government.
- 1.9 The Enhanced Partnership Plan should be read alongside the accompanying Enhanced Partnership Scheme which sets out in precise detail how the BSIP will be delivered and commitments made by West Northamptonshire Council, as well as standards to be met by bus operators operating services in the area.

Governance and Reviews

- 1.10 The BSIP is itself subject to an annual Review. This Enhanced Partnership Plan and accompanying Scheme will also be reviewed annually and the results of the Review published within 6 months of the anniversary date on which this Enhanced Partnership Plan came into effect. This approach will ensure that the three documents remain aligned.
- 1.11 The review will be led by a Management Forum comprising the Council and involving local bus operators and passenger representatives as a minimum, it will consider the effectiveness of the

Enhanced Partnership Plan and accompanying Scheme in increasing bus patronage and delivery of the underlying actions to improve bus reliability and drive up passenger satisfaction.

- 1.12 The Management Forum will also review the Plan and Scheme in the light of any new Local Transport Plan for West Northamptonshire, as it moves away from the LTP inherited from the former Northamptonshire County Council. If required this may necessitate triggering the legal processes to vary or revoke this EPP and Scheme, replacing these with newer versions reflecting the new Policy.
- 1.13 The Management Forum, comprising the following group(s), have helped develop this Plan, along with the Wider Stakeholder Group both of whom will be consulted as part of any review:

Management Forum

- West Northamptonshire Council (50% voting rights)
- Bus operators or their nominated representative(s) with services registered in this EPP area. One representative for each operator. (50% total voting rights, split in proportion to mileage of services falling within the EPP/EPs)

Wider Stakeholder Group

- Local Transport Groups (one representative per User Group)
- Business improvement districts (one representative per BID)
- Major employers (one representative per employer, employers to be agreed between the Essential members)
- Neighbouring local transport authorities
- Traffic Commissioner
- Local Enterprise Partnerships
- Parish Councils
- University or FE College
- Transport Focus
- Confederation of Passenger Transport
- Bus Users UK

- 1.14 Bus performance data will be published every 6 months.
- 1.15 The results of the reviews and the performance data will be made available to the public on the Council's website [Bus timetables, passes and improvements | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk)

2.0 Area Covered by this Plan

- 2.1 This Enhanced Partnership Plan covers the whole of the West Northamptonshire Council area. West Northamptonshire is a unitary authority area formed on 1 April 2021 through the merger of the three existing non-metropolitan districts of Daventry, Northampton, and South Northamptonshire, it absorbed the functions of these districts, plus those of the abolished Northamptonshire County Council. Figure 1 below, shows the area covered. The area chosen has been determined by the bus network which largely connects the local community into the nearest town centre and connects towns and villages, with cross-boundary travel into towards the towns in North Northamptonshire, especially Wellingborough), Banbury (Oxfordshire) and Milton Keynes (Buckinghamshire) by bus.
- 2.2 The majority of bus journeys are made within Northampton itself and buses operate on a traditional hub-and-spoke network, although there are some more complex routings particularly to serve the edge-of-town industrial estates and large educational institutions such as the University of Northampton and Northampton College.

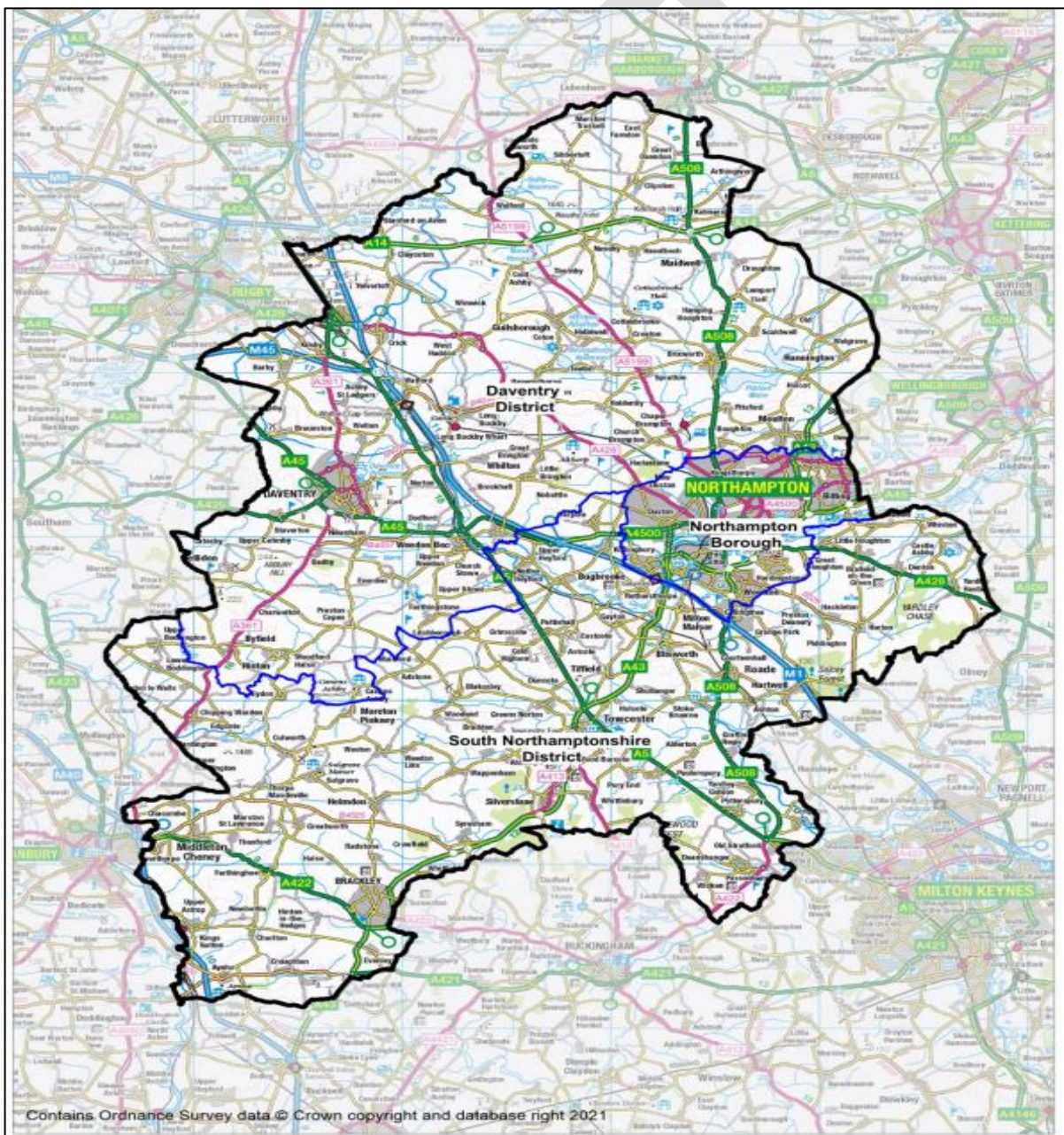


Figure 1 - The West Northamptonshire Council area (within Black line).

3.0 Analysis of Local Bus Services

- 3.1 The bus services across West Northamptonshire carried approximately 10.5m passengers per annum prior to Covid-19, in October 2021 patronage was running at 64% of this level.
- 3.2 In West Northamptonshire 85.2% of households have access to at least a car or van. Of households that own a car, 38.1% have 1 car available, and a further 34.6% have 2 cars available. 14.8% of households have no vehicle according to the 2011 Census.
- 3.3 Travel to work is dominated by private car use. Only 3% of all usual residents aged 16 to 74 travel to work by bus according to the 2011 Census.
- 3.4 This suggests that if the right bus offer can be put in place there is considerable opportunity to achieve modal shift. In doing so we support existing bus users, the bus companies as well as reduce congestion, harmful emissions and road safety risk.

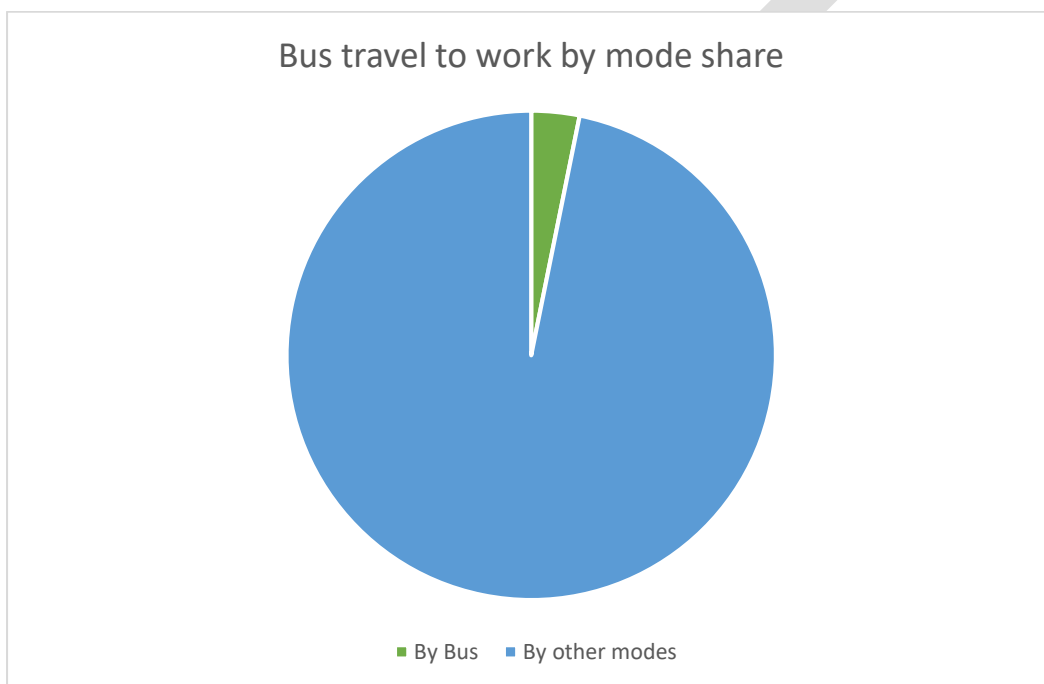


Figure 2 - Travel to work by bus in West Northamptonshire (2011 Census data)

- 3.5 Northampton North Gate bus interchange opened in 2014. Some services use this purpose-built facility, while other services use adjacent on-street stops in The Drapery. Daventry is the only other town in West Northamptonshire with a bus station. There are plans to relocate the facilities in Daventry as part of the Daventry Town Centre Vision 2035. Both bus stations are owned by West Northamptonshire Council.
- 3.6 The dominant operator across West Northamptonshire is Stagecoach Midlands, delivering most services in Northampton, with:
 - Uno providing university staff and students and the general public with services mainly across the north and north-east of Northampton into the town centre and to the University. These services can also be used by the public.
 - Britannia Bus provides services largely in Northampton.
 - A number of other operators typically provide cross-boundary services from further afield, this includes Arriva and Stagecoach East and West.
- 3.7 As well as local bus services there is a vast community transport network operating under section 22 permits. This community transport network serves the rural communities, and those with mobility challenges, for whom a traditional bus network is neither accessible or viable.

- 3.8 Northampton is the only place in West Northamptonshire which sees competition for the same passengers between operators following different routes although differences are small with competition occurring on weekday daytimes. To the north-east there is on street competition between Stagecoach and Unobus and to the north-west one corridor to Kings Heath with competition between Stagecoach and Britannia Bus, however the level of buses provided offer competition but do not constitute over-bussing.
- 3.9 The 2017 Northamptonshire Bus Passenger Survey undertaken by Transport Focus, reported that overall satisfaction with bus travel across Northamptonshire stood at 85%. However, only 68% were satisfied with the punctuality of the bus services.

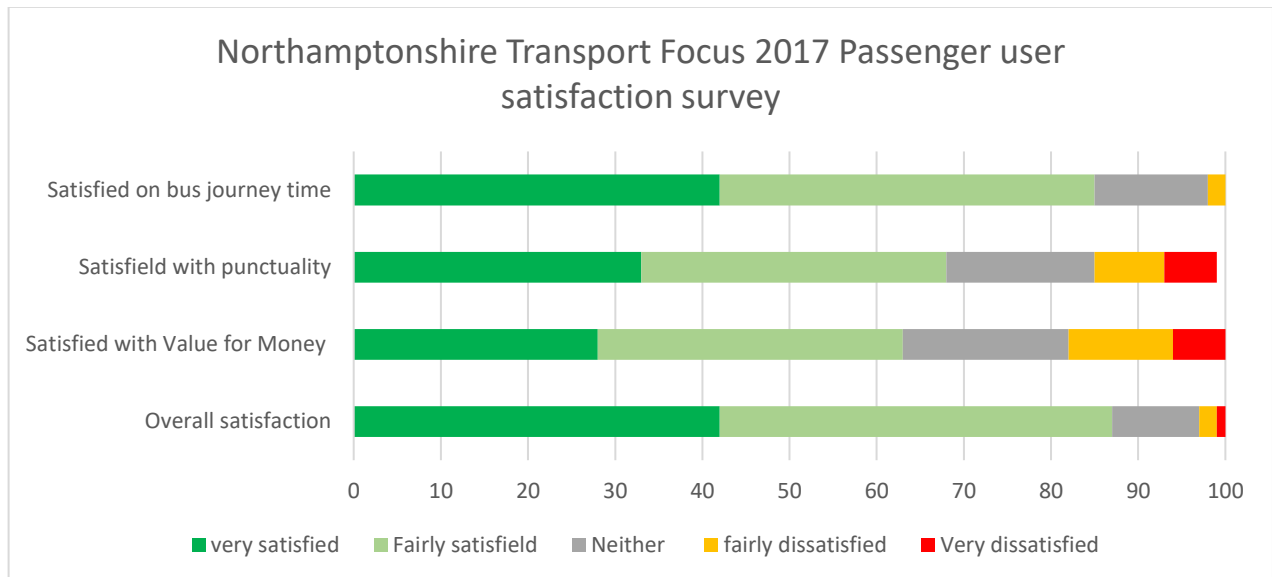


Figure 3 - Transport Focus passenger satisfaction data.

Bus priority

- 3.10 The nature of the road layout in the north eastern and southern expansion areas do not lend themselves well to bus travel resulting in indirect routing and extended journey times. Amongst other factors, bus passengers particularly suffer from the effects of traffic congestion due to the inability of buses to use alternative routes on an ad hoc basis, because of the bus service registration system. Increased congestion results in reduced journey reliability and punctuality.
- 3.11 Analysis of bus corridors, using Realtime data, prior to Covid-19, shows that journey time reliability is an issue on certain corridors. Corridors which require intervention are Harborough Road and Kettering Road. The services that operate reliably to time, run towards the east and west of Northampton. The journey time variability is not fully understood outside of commuter peak congestion, but is considered to be linked to roadworks, localised car parking obstructions, lack of traffic signal coordination and difficult to use bus stop designs. This EPP therefore needs to address the unreliability along the amber and red corridors especially along Harborough Road and Kettering.

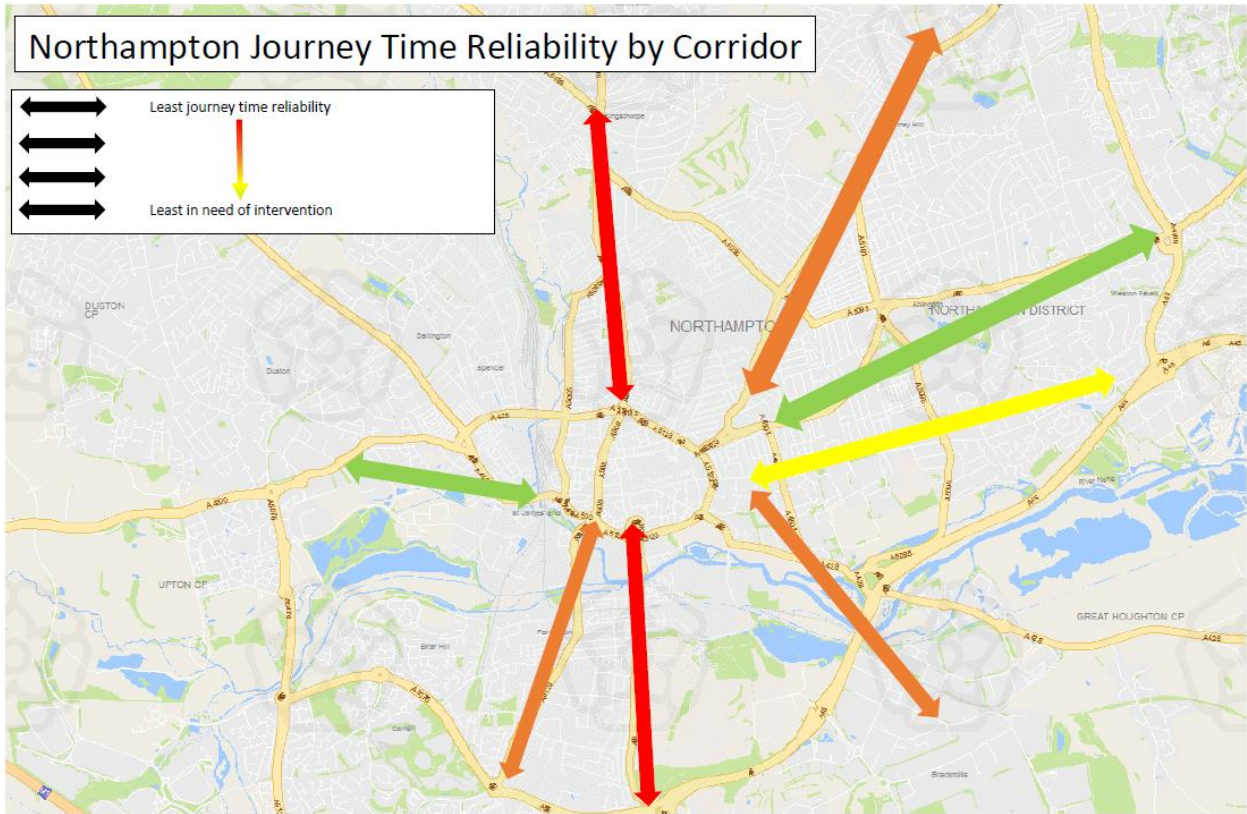


Figure 4 - Bus reliability by corridor

Modern Buses, decarbonisation and user safety

- 3.12 A number of areas have been declared as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) in Northampton with an additional AQMA in Towcester town centre.
- 3.13 West Northamptonshire Council has a stated commitment towards lessening the impact of climate change and achievement of decarbonisation objectives across West Northamptonshire through developing an Electric Vehicle Strategy as part of its Air Quality Action Plan and encouragement of sustainable transport and increased use of zero-emission vehicles.
- 3.14 Through the Northampton Low Emission Strategy 2017-2025, the Council will encourage and support bus operators to accelerate bus replacement programmes; operate newer, cleaner buses in urban areas; fit NOx and particulate abatement technology on buses; and consider low emission alternatives as part of a low emission pathway to 2025.

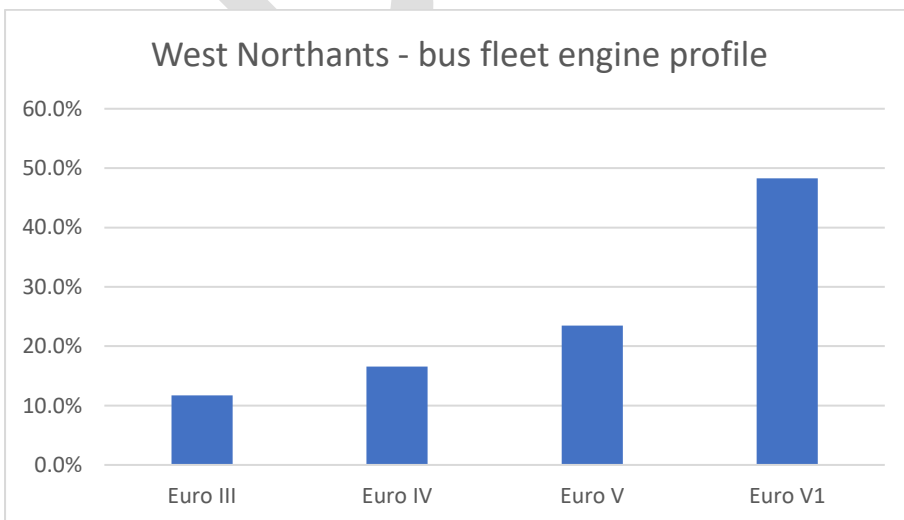


Figure 5 - Bus Fleet Engine Profile Autumn 2021

- 3.15 The 29% of Euro III and IV buses that operate on the network in West Northamptonshire need to be replaced by Euro V or VI (or equivalent) or better electric/hydrogen. This first EPP takes steps to make sure that bus standards are at least maintained, whilst we work on a longer term plan with operators to move towards a carbon neutral solution.
- 3.16 We also want passengers to feel safe at bus stops and on buses, this requires good lighting levels at bus stops, attractive stops and shelters with natural surveillance, and on bus CCTV.

Fares and integrated ticketing

- 3.17 The network is organised around a zonal commercial fare system. Two of the main commercial operators have zonal ticketing which allows unlimited travel over defined periods of time across their networks. In Northampton there is also an existing multi-operator ticket, the Buzz Card allowing daily or weekly travel across all buses in Northampton and villages immediately on its boundary. There is potential to take the Northampton Buzz Card from its current status and turn it in to a smart product, with fare capping enabled.
- 3.18 There is an aspiration to develop the Buzz Card to operate with multi-operators across the whole of West Northamptonshire.
- 3.19 The high level of affordable and free parking availability in town centre off-street car parks including in Northampton also contributes to peak period traffic congestion and associated travel unreliability, together with problems of poor air quality.

Service network improvement

- 3.20 More than 75% of West Northamptonshire's bus patronage is on urban services within Northampton. The remainder are conveyed on the inter-urban and rural services which link the various towns and surrounding villages.
- 3.21 The analysis of the bus services set out in the BSIP concludes that the bus network itself is largely fit for current needs, and currently there are no concerns about over bussing. The area of weakness is the lack of services on evenings and Sunday services on some routes. West Northamptonshire is a growing area and much housing development is underway which will require either the urban bus network to be extended beyond its current boundaries or inter-urban routes to be diverted.
- 3.22 The base network and service level tiers, which the Council wish to see provided are set out in Table 3.5, over. During peak times minor changes to the times quoted to ensure accurate timetabling are acceptable.
- 3.23 The network does not, however, provide services when people need them, especially during the evening and on Sundays. This EPP therefore needs to address gaps in timetable across the wider week and see services returned to pre-covid frequencies.
- 3.24 The network offer for the passenger is not predictable and Urban Tier 1 and 2 services should also operate core hours and frequencies which fully cover the extended peak hours (arriving/departing the town centre between 0730 through to 1900hrs Monday to Friday except bank holidays).
- 3.25 The network also needs to better serve visitor attractions; we will work with operators and attractions to improve access without depending on a car.

Service level	Monday to Saturday daytime	Monday to Saturday evening	Sunday daytime
Urban Tier 1	Typically every 15 minutes or more frequent	Typically every 30 minutes or more frequent	At least every 30 minutes
Urban Tier 2	Typically every 30 minutes or more frequent	Unlikely	Unlikely
Urban Tier 3	Hourly or infrequent or Demand Responsive Transport	None	None
Inter Urban Tier 1	Typically every 30 minutes or more frequent	At least hourly	At least hourly
Inter Urban Tier 2	At least hourly	Unlikely	Unlikely
Rural Tier 3	At least 2-hourly	None	None
Rural Tier 4	Infrequent or Demand Responsive Transport	None	None
Workers service	As justified	As justified	As justified
Academic service	Monday to Friday term time only	None	None

Table 1 - Desired commercial service tiers

Integrated services and Information

- 3.26 West Northamptonshire has a leading Bus Real Time Information system. The real-time information system exists and is working well. Currently, there are 112 real-time displays in the town centre and on key arteries in Northampton. A number of these displays, whilst functional, have been superseded by newer technology.
- 3.27 This Plan proposes expanding the number of Real Time displays especially outside of Northampton and upgrade older displays.
- 3.28 Better information at bus stops is a top 10 bus passenger priority (Transport Focus, Sept 2020) nationwide and a 2017 Transport Focus survey commissioned jointly by Northamptonshire County Council and Stagecoach Midlands gave a below-average rating of 63%. This indicates that, whilst net satisfaction is convincingly positive, there is room for improvement against our statistical neighbours and this EPP seeks to improve passenger understanding on hard to access the real time information.

Giving passengers a say

- 3.29 Through this EPP, the Management Forum and Wider Stakeholder Group, we want passengers and local employers to have the opportunity to influence the delivery of bus services across West Northamptonshire.
- 3.30 We will also work with passenger advocacy groups and operators to agree a Passenger Charter, which once agreed Operators will be obliged to operate in accordance with its commitments.

Summary

- 3.31 The above gaps and result in the Table of Actions, set out at the end of the Executive Summary on page 5 of this document. The Enhanced Partnership Scheme sets out in more detail how these interventions are going to be delivered.

4.0 Policies and Influences relating to Bus Services

- 4.1. This EPP and the supporting scheme will support local policy, informed by an assessment of local opportunities and risks, through acting on the passenger and community areas of concern discussed above. Equally Policies are themselves supportive of bus use and will generate Section 106 funding and put in place measures like Travel Plans to promote and encourage bus use, alongside other more sustainable travel options.

Local Policy

- 4.2. Local Policy is supportive of the Bus, this is necessary to maximise the potential development plans in the area and minimise the detrimental impact of vehicular trips in terms of safety, congestion and pollution.
- 4.3. The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2029, the Part 1 Local Plan for the area, was adopted in December 2014. In order to alleviate the effects of the significant new development proposed on the transport network, it includes challenging but realistic targets to increase levels of modal shift away from the private car towards other forms of travel including public transport, cycling and walking. The following modal shift targets, based on 2001 census data, are set for 2031:
- A reduction of 5% in single occupancy car journeys to work from the existing built up areas of the Growth and Market towns; and
 - A reduction of 20% in single occupancy car journeys to work from new developments compared to adjoining wards.
- 4.4. These targets are embedded in the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan (March 2012), which forms the current Local Transport Plan for West Northamptonshire. The Northamptonshire Bus Strategy (April 2018), which forms part of the Local Transport Plan suite of documents, identifies that to meet these targets it would be necessary for bus patronage to rise by 50% from the 2012 baseline figure. As bus use actually declined overall between 2012/13 and 2019/20, to achieve these targets will require a 70% increase between the pre-COVID baseline of 2018/19 and 2031/32.

Local influences on bus use

- 4.5. As well as considering the local Policy position it is also important to consider the other local factors which influence whether or not people choose to use the bus.
- 4.6. Supporting more local bus trips is:
- New development in the area, increasing demand for trip making
 - Development of Travel Plans linked to planning permissions granted
 - Parking enforcement
 - Population growth
 - Road congestion making car use less attractive
 - Increases in funding to maintain current and increased services and times of operation
 - Improved information and whole network marketing, to raise awareness of bus travel opportunities.
 - The Council's intention is to maintain Bus Concessionary funding at pre-pandemic levels, although this is subject to the legal exemptions being in place (or equivalent)

- 4.7. Against the opportunities supporting increased bus use, are the following local risks:
- The availability of free car parking in town centres
 - Online retail and other services
 - Cost of bus use if making a journey using more than one bus, or as a group
 - Taxi or car sharing, especially is traveling as a group
 - The winter emergence of further Covid-19 restrictions in response to rising levels of hospitalisation, or new variants of the virus emerging, all of which limit or deter people from travelling communally by bus or train
 - To restore patronage to pre-Covid levels, depends on maintaining the bus network, to do this we estimate that it will take 3 years to restore patronage to pre-pandemic levels. This will require funding support across this period to offset lost fare-box revenue
 - We consider that the service frequency offered across the network does not meet current largely rural community needs, especially in the evening and on a Sunday
 - Growth in car use creates added congestion causing delay and bus timetable unreliability
 - Roadworks are a known cause of bus network delay
 - Perception of safety at and ease of use of bus stops – bus stop upgrades
 - Understanding of the bus network – Information one may, expend real-time offers
 - Bus driver shortages

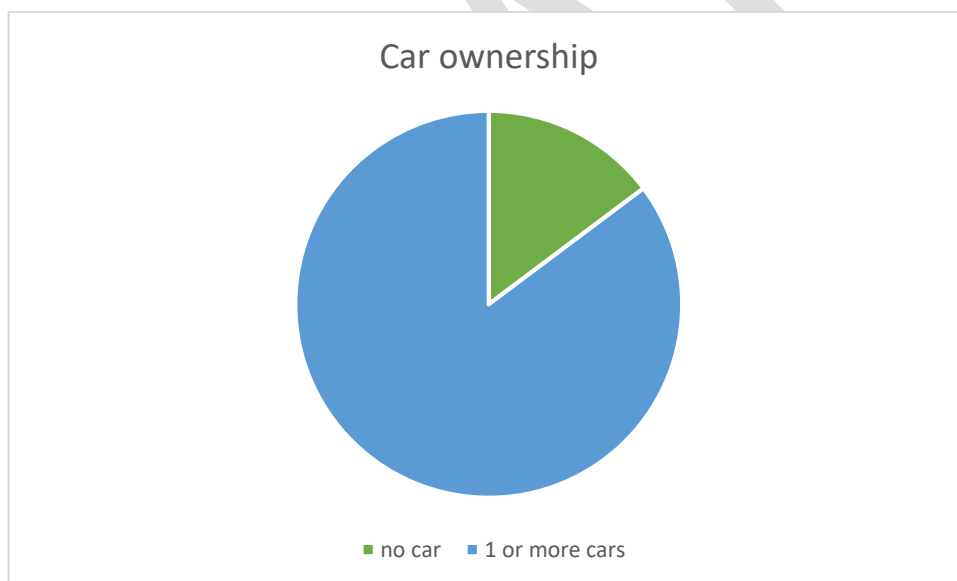


Figure 6 - car ownership levels in West Northamptonshire (2011 Census data).

5.0 Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
National Bus Strategy - Bus Back Better (BBB)	This is the Government's Bus Strategy, published in 2021, setting out how the Government wish to see bus services improved and requiring Local Transport Authorities to either follow the bus Franchising Route or the Enhanced Partnership route to improve bus services. There is always the do-nothing option, but this has been discounted as it would result in the immediate loss of funding to support bus services in the area.
Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)	A document setting out how buses are to be improved in West Northamptonshire over the new 5 years or so. This is prepared in line with Guidance published by the Government and is linked to the Council's declaration to pursue an Enhanced Partnership
Enhanced Partnership	A Partnership approach set out in the Transport Act 2000 as amended by the Bus Services Act 2017, where the Council can impose requirements on bus operators to be able to run services in the area.
Enhanced Partnership Plan (EPP)	This set out a high-level vision and objectives for bus services in the local area and closely follows or replicates relevant sections of the BSIP
Enhanced Partnership Scheme (EPS)	This sets out the precise detail of how the BSIP vision and objectives will be achieved, including any commitments made by the Council or standards to be met by bus operators
Local transport authority	The local authority responsible for transport planning and certain public transport functions within an area
Local Transport Plan	A statutory document prepared by a local transport authority setting out its policies for the encouragement of safe, integrated efficient and economic transport within its area and its proposals for implementation of those policies.
Section 106 developer funding	Funding secured by an obligation placed upon a developer under Section 106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990.



West
Northamptonshire
Council

Enhanced Bus Partnership Scheme

DRAFT

Final Draft for Cabinet Approval – March 2022

www.westnorthants.gov.uk

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0.3	09/12/21	Client final amends
0.4	20/12/21	Operator feedback on draft
1.0	21/12/21	Draft for operator consultation
2.0	25/01/22	Minor amends for Stakeholder consultation
3.0	01/03/22	Competition Test update and date amends post consultation
3.1	18/03/22	Minor changes
3.2	23/03/22	Minor changes

NB: Draft versions 0.1 - final published versions 1.0

Consultees

Internal	External
Cabinet	Bus operators
	Wider Stakeholders

Distribution List

Internal	External

Links to other documents

Document	Link
Bus Service Improvement Plan	Bus timetables, passes and improvements West Northamptonshire Council (westnorthants.gov.uk)
Enhanced Partnership Plan	Bus timetables, passes and improvements West Northamptonshire Council (westnorthants.gov.uk)

Additional Comments to note

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Part 2 – EP Scheme

The West Northamptonshire Council Enhanced Partnership Plan for buses has been prepared in accordance with Section 138H of the Transport Act 2000 and is Made in accordance with Section 138G by West Northamptonshire Council

1.0 Enhanced Partnership Scheme Content

1.1 This document fulfils the statutory requirements for an Enhanced Partnership Scheme for West Northamptonshire. In accordance with statutory requirements laid down in Section 138 of the Transport Act 2000, this Enhanced Partnership Scheme document sets out:

Section 2 – Scope of the Enhanced Partnership Scheme and commencement date

Section 3 – obligations on West Northamptonshire Council

Section 4 – obligations on Bus Operators

Section 5 – Governance arrangements

1.2 The Enhanced Partnership Scheme can only be put in place if there is an associated Enhanced Partnership Plan. Therefore, this document should be considered alongside the associated Enhanced Partnership Plan for West Northamptonshire

1.3 This Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme shall come into effect from the 30 April 2022 and last for 3 years until 31 March 2025, with the option to extend for a further year at the discretion of the West Northamptonshire Council after consultation with Operators, and agreed by the Variation process in Section 5.0. This is to allow the planning needed to be developed further and the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme developed to meet the longer term local needs. In part this is a response to the newness of the Unitary Authority.

1.4 The Enhanced Partnership Scheme has been jointly developed by West Northamptonshire Council, and those bus operators that provide local bus services in the Enhanced Partnership Scheme area. It sets out obligations and requirements on the Council as both Local Transport Authority and Local Highway Authority and on operators of local services in order to achieve the intended improvements, with the aim of delivering the objectives of the associated Enhanced Partnership Plan.

1.5 The Enhanced Partnership Scheme aims to contribute towards meeting the six objectives set out in the Bus Service Improvement Plan and the Enhanced Partnership Plan, which in summary are:

- To deliver faster and more reliable journey times on the five corridors broadly to the north and south of Northampton;
- Lock in the current bus fleet standards and progressively deliver improved quality of buses linked to infrastructure improvements, to reduce harmful emissions and improve passenger comfort and safety;
- Introduce fairer fares, with more predictable and easier to use ticketing;
- Provide common hours of operation and better serve larger visitor attractions in the area;
- Improve the way the bus network is promoted to users and non-users, in particular communicate the whole bus offer and improve user and potential user access to information; and,
- Put in place a passenger charter which gives passengers more influence over bus services and delivery.

2.0 Scope of the Scheme and Commencement Date

Map of the Enhanced Partnership Scheme area

2.1. This Enhanced Partnership Scheme will support the improvement of all local bus services operating throughout the West Northamptonshire Council area other than those exempt as set out in paragraph 2.5 below. The area of this Enhanced Partnership Scheme is illustrated in Figure 1 below:

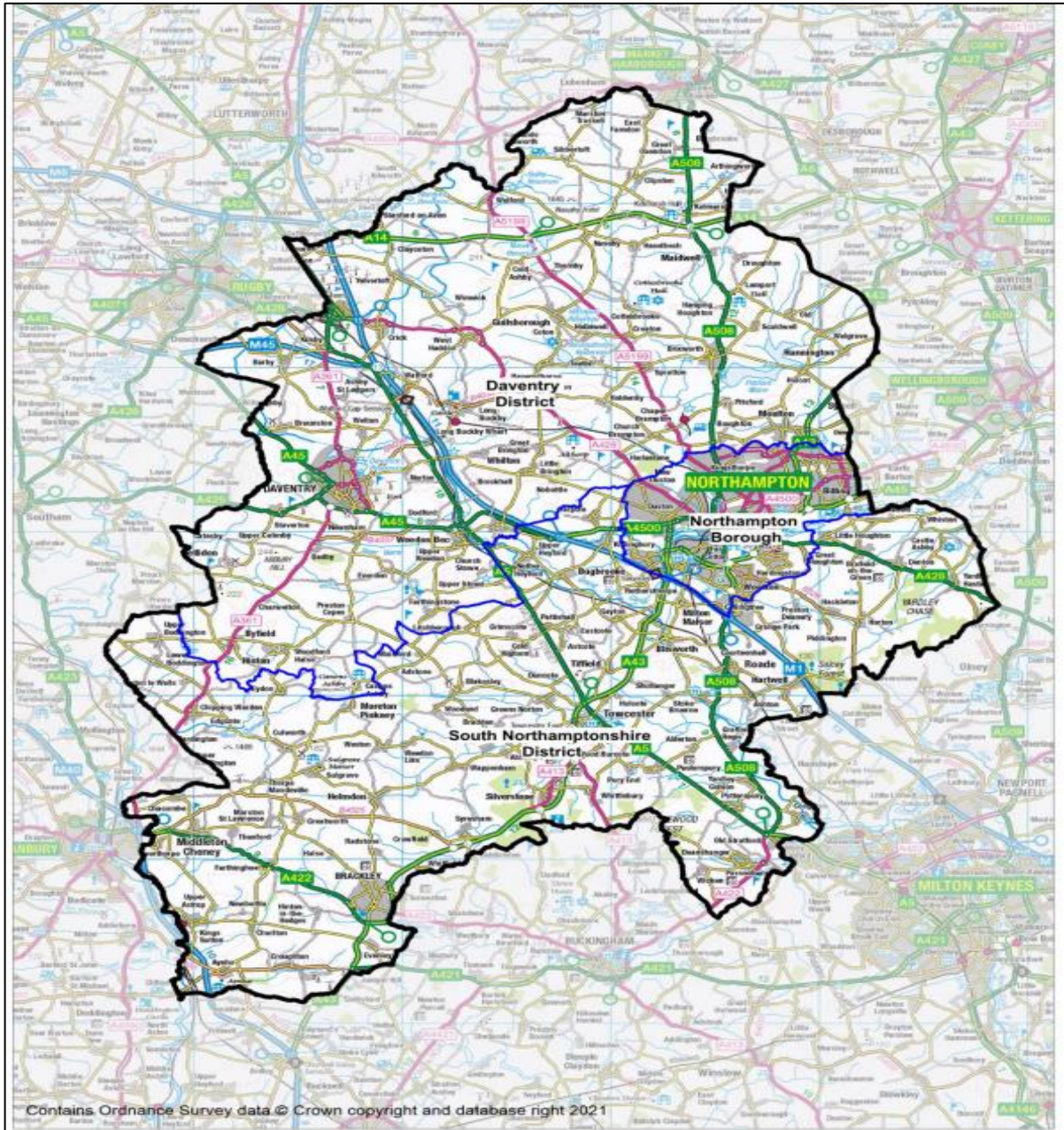


Figure 1 - The West Northamptonshire Enhanced Partnership area (within the Black line)

Commencement Date

2.2. The Enhanced Partnership Plan and Enhanced Partnership Scheme were made on [insert date] and will start on 30 April 2022, with subsequent milestone dates by which certain facilities and measures (Section 3) and bus service operator obligations will be introduced (Section 4). The Enhanced Partnership Scheme will have no specific end date but will be subject to a review by West Northamptonshire Council at least annually (see Section 5).

2.3. West Northamptonshire Council confirm that they have provided the required notice under Sections 138 F and G providing the full details of the scheme to the parties directly affected by this Plan and Scheme.

Exempted Services

2.4. With the exceptions detailed in 2.5, below, this Enhanced Partnership Scheme covers all registered Local Bus Services with three or more stopping places (in each direction) operating within the Enhanced Partnership Scheme area, these are classed as 'qualifying local services'.

2.5. This Enhanced Partnership Scheme will exclude from the 'qualifying local services' obligations, the bus services falling within the following locally-agreed exemptions:

- Services run under sections 89 to 91 of the Transport Act 1985 where West Northamptonshire Council retains all the revenue;
- Registered local services that are excursions or tours or operate for a limited period of up to 7 days to allow people to access a sporting, concert or similar event;
- Services operated under section 22 of the Transport Act 1985 (community bus services);
- Registered local bus services that have 10% or less of their overall distance within the Enhanced Partnership Scheme area;
- Services which operate on 2 or less days per week (excluding Sundays and Bank Holidays), that is unless these services operate in coordination with one or more other services such that they offer substantially similarly routed services on more than 2 days per week;
- Services operated by vehicles that by law do not permit standing; and
- Services operating under contract to local transport authorities outside of the area of the West Northamptonshire, where the adjoining authority supports the majority of journeys; and,
- **Academic Services or Workers Services** operating a limited number of services timed at shift start/end times and not timetabled to operate throughout the day. The primary purpose of these services are to provide either home to school journeys, or home to work at defined shift times and they are typically funded by the Council or employers/developers. Workers services will be agreed between the Operator and Council, if not recorded as such in Schedule E.

2.6. Bus services procured under Sections 89-91 will not need to comply with the vehicle requirements set out in this document for the duration of the current contract period. Any services procured after the making of the Enhanced Partnership Scheme must comply with these requirements through the contract terms and conditions.

3.0 Requirements of Local Authorities

- 3.1 This section lists the specific interventions that West Northamptonshire Council will deliver as its part of this Enhanced Partnership Scheme. It details when it will be provided, for how long, mindful that the Enhanced Partnership lasts for 3 years from 30 April 2022 until 31 March 2025, and what it will involve.
- 3.2 West Northamptonshire Council as the Local Authority, Local Transport Authority and Local Highway Authority are responsible for the delivery of the facilities and measures set out below.

Facilities and Measures

- 3.3 Through this Enhanced Partnership Scheme West Northamptonshire Council will continue to provide and maintain the facilities and undertake the measures as outlined in **Table 1**, for the duration of the Enhanced Partnership Scheme:

Facility/location	Measures	Responsibility
Weedon Road/St James' Road, Northampton peak time bus lane	Maintenance of the bus lane and traffic regulation order	West Northamptonshire Council
Drapery, Northampton bus-only street	Maintenance of the bus lane and traffic regulation order	West Northamptonshire Council
Wellingborough Road, Northampton bus lane	Maintenance of the bus lane and traffic regulation order	West Northamptonshire Council
112 Realtime Information displays	Maintain at-stop Realtime information displays	West Northamptonshire Council
Street lighting	Maintain street lighting at current levels in the vicinity of bus stops	West Northamptonshire Council
Concessionary travel	This will be maintained in line with DfT Guidance and related legislation.	West Northamptonshire Council
Bus Stations	Northampton North Gate bus interchange – manage and maintain the site, including departure displays Daventry will be similarly managed and maintained, and where plans to redevelop the town centre then operators will be involved in alternative discussions to generate trade.	West Northamptonshire Council
Parking and traffic offence enforcement	The Council will use its powers and resources to enforce Traffic Regulation Orders, to improve compliance and make journey times for bus reliable.	West Northamptonshire Council
Bus timetable information	Website – website links for all local bus operators will continue to be provided.	West Northamptonshire Council
Bus Service Mapping	Maps will continue to be made available on the Council's website, including summary information on service frequencies.	West Northamptonshire Council

Facility/location	Measures	Responsibility
Road work management	To report Road works see Schedule B	

Table 1 - Existing facilities and measures

3.4 Through this enhanced Partnership West Northamptonshire Council will work to provide new and upgraded facilities and additionally undertake the measures outlined in **Table 2**. These new facilities and additional measures will form part of this Enhanced Partnership Scheme only when the funding has been confirmed, when they will be introduced into the Enhanced Partnership via the Variation process outlined in Section 5.0 below, at which point delivery dates shall be agreed:

Facility/location	Measures/interventions	Responsibility
<p>Measures to reduce delays and unreliability along the following corridors in Northampton (see Schedule C for definitions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bedford Road • Harborough Road • Kettering Road • London Road • Towcester Road 	<p>Within funding limits, and as agreed with Operators a programme of works and measures to reduce delays in the listed corridors will be implemented, subject to advertisement and due process. Potential interventions include (but is not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TRO's to address on-street parking • Pedestrian crossing detection • Traffic signal detection utilising Scoot to speed buses up and hurry call buses behind time. 	West Northamptonshire Council in consultation with Operators
Concessionary fares and bus services will be funded in line with the DfT "Covid-19 Recovery Guidance"	Concessionary Travel and bus support will be funded at pre-covid levels, subject to the then utilise the step down arrangement set out by DfT from 6 April 2022.	West Northamptonshire Council
A review will be undertaken of all bus stops	Within funding limits, and as agreed with Operators, the review will lead to an agreed rolling annual upgrade programme to install raised bus boarders and timetables cases at appropriate locations, along with new bus shelters at selected locations and CCTV at locations where safety is a concern.	West Northamptonshire Council in consultation with Operators
Improved Realtime Information displays will be provided and also improving access and awareness of the information.	Subject to funding limits, and at stops agreed with Operators and local representatives, the on-street Realtime information will be upgraded in line with the phasing plan summarised below.	West Northamptonshire Council in consultation with Operators and others

Facility/location	Measures/interventions	Responsibility
	<p>Older generation "Classic" in-shelter displays will be replaced with thin-film-transistor (TfT) liquid-crystal super-widescreen multimedia displays during years 1 and 2 of the Enhanced Partnership.</p> <p>New displays will be installed at key stops where there are none at the moment. Concentrating on high usage stops, roll-out during years 1 and 2 of the Enhanced Partnership. These will use solar, or battery powered displays to attempt to make these more sustainable. Examples could include the Brackley and Towcester town centres as well as outside Northampton General Hospital. Due to the additional survey and installation work likely to be required, roll-out of these would commence in years 2 and 3.</p> <p>All existing in-shelter displays that are not current TfT will be replaced with these displays. Starting in year 3 of programme.</p>	
Reducing the Impact of Roadworks	Reduce the effect of road works on bus services by improving the disruptive impact of road works on bus services, and where this is not possible, then put in place better planning to minimise impacts on users. For further details see Schedule D.	West Northamptonshire Council
Undertake a review of bus stop safety.	Subject to funding limits, and at stops agreed with Operators and local representatives, stop locations, their position and layout will be reviewed to address accessibility barriers, actual and perceived safe risks and to make stops attractive to users. This review will bring forward a phased plan to address the more significant shortcomings.	West Northamptonshire Council in consultation with Operators
Promote bus use	Develop and implement a three-year marketing plan for local bus services.	West Northamptonshire Council in consultation with Operators

Facility/location	Measures/interventions	Responsibility
Develop a passenger charter	Working with operators and passenger advocacy groups we will develop a Bus Passenger Charter and require operators to abide by its commitments. This will set out for passengers how to use bus services and what passengers can expect and offer compensation where operators fail to deliver, or to reimburse taxi costs where the last bus fails to operate.	West Northamptonshire Council in consultation with Operators and bus user representatives
Planning for the future	Work with bus operators to develop a strategy for replacing diesel buses with electric (or alternative) bus with implementation to be agreed.	West Northamptonshire Council in consultation with operators

Table 2 - Additionally proposed facilities and measures.

3.5 The measures in Table 3.2 will be provided subject to due process such as consultation, approvals, Traffic Regulation Orders being successfully made, and funding being made available by the DfT.

3.6 Where the actions set out in Table 2 are first to agree what is to be provided, this will be followed up by using the bespoke variation process to embed the agreed actions into this Enhanced Partnership Scheme.

Monitoring of Bus Journey Times

3.7 West Northamptonshire Council will monitor bus journey times in the EP Scheme area by collecting and analysing Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) data and reporting these on a quarterly basis. The following measures will be made and compared with a first quarter baseline (after the EP Scheme is made).

3.8 This data will be published on West Northamptonshire Council's website and used to identify the need for further possible measures, facilities and influence on the management of roadworks in the EP Scheme area.

4.0 Requirements relating to Bus Operators

4.1 This section describes the standards of service that those operating registered local bus services in the EP Scheme area must meet. This section sets out what standards are to be met, by when and for how long. Where the actions are first to agree what is to be provided, this will be followed up by using the bespoke variation process to embed the agreed actions into this Enhanced Partnership Scheme.

Network and frequencies

4.2 The network offer for the passenger is currently not predictable. Urban Tier 1 and 2 “Qualifying Local Services” are required to operate core hours (arriving/departing the town centre between 0730 through to 1830hrs Monday to Friday except bank holidays) and retain normal daytime frequencies between these hours

4.3 Operators will work constructively with West Northamptonshire Council to:

- Enhance the bus network to better serve visitor attractions and work with operators on opportunities for network improvement.
- A network review shall be undertaken jointly by April 2023 and changes implemented as agreed.

Vehicle Standards

4.4 Operators and the Council will constructively work together to phase out Euro III and IV engine buses and bring forward plans to upgrade bus fleet linked to grant funding for new/improved buses, or defined corridor improvements, and agree deployment of the new buses and associated cascade. Such investment in corridors and buses will trigger a variation of this Enhanced Partnership.

Notwithstanding the above, from 1 April 2025 80% of each operators bus fleet operating on “qualifying local services” shall have digital recording CCTV installed for safety and security. This will record images of all passenger areas inside the vehicle and also facing forwards from the vehicle to help identify traffic issues.

- Notwithstanding the above, from 1 April 2023 AVL equipment installed that will feed into West Northamptonshire Council’s real time information system.
- All operators with fleets over 20 buses operating in West Northamptonshire Council area will be required to work with West Northamptonshire Council to develop investment plans to move to a non-fossil fuel fleet and agree a future implementation plan linked to a funding plan.

Ticketing Schemes

4.5 Regardless of fleet size from 1 April 2023, all buses will provide passengers the option to pay for the full ticket range offered for sale on board the bus through contactless payment.

4.6 For 1 April 2023 all operators will explore the introduction of common fare stage boundary points with the desire to align fare stages, this is to help communicate fares to passengers. For clarity an agreed fare stage does not mean an operator has to alter their fares at that location, fare stages shall not be more frequent than every 5 stops (regardless of whether a bus stops at every stop or not) and this fare charged will remain the operators own commercial decision. If the Enhanced Partnership is varied to adopt common fare stages, this will be binding as part of this Enhanced Partnership.

- 4.7 During the first 3 years of the Enhanced Partnership Scheme, West Northamptonshire Council will work with operators to put in place Smart ticketing which support the Buzz Card and operators own products should they wish. Additionally, the Partnership will work to put in place fare capping to allow passengers to use their smart card or other contactless travel options and only be charged up to the maximum fare for day, week or month/4-week travel with a date to be agreed aligned to technology roll-out.

Providing Information to the Public

- 4.8 Operators accepting multi-operator tickets will display the full range of such tickets and prices with equal prominence to their own products where these are communicated.
- 4.9 Operators will display details of relevant planned route changes and timetable changes on vehicles at least 2 weeks prior and 1 week following the change.
- 4.10 Operators must produce in both printed and on-line format either or both timetables or summary timetable(s) of all "qualifying local services" they operate or as otherwise agreed on a Partnership wide consistent basis.
- 4.11 Where operators provided publicity and information (at December 2021) they shall continue to maintain the production of the publicity and information, furthermore they shall work with the Management Forum to explore options to provide information on all other "qualifying local services" in the area shown on Figure 2.1 or of the map product produced. This is so that a more complete bus offer communicated in a way which is readily understood by the public. The Forum shall agree how best to do this and ensure reasonable currency of the information whilst not incurring excessive cost to those operators that produce such material. The option may be agreed to jointly pool funds and procure common mapping and summary timetable information at overall reduced cost.
- 4.12 Operators producing maps and timetables must prominently include details of the Realtime system and how to use it, using text shall be provided by West Northamptonshire Council and agreed at the Management Forum.
- 4.13 Operator producing maps and timetables/summary timetables must provide the West Northamptonshire Council with copies of the current maps and timetables for their "qualifying local services" at sites agreed between Council and operators, and adequate stock provided at all times.
- 4.14 Notwithstanding the above clause about promoting all operator services in an area, through this Enhanced Partnership, Operators are encouraged to work with the Council to pool information and financial resources to produce shared information at lower overall cost, with any and all savings jointly reinvested in improved passenger information and marketing to promote bus, as jointly agreed between those parties pooling funding.

Customer Charter

- 4.15 In collaboration with West Northamptonshire Council and bus user representatives, operators will put in plans a Passenger Charter covering as a minimum "qualifying local services", this shall set out what passengers might expect from a good bus operator, who to contact if the service falls short of these standards along with a contact email address, and fair compensation for failure to deliver to the standards set out, including reimbursement of a taxi ride home in the event that the last bus home failed to run, as a result of operator failures. Exception examples: compensation might be avoided due to very inclement weather, emergency utility works, industrial action, and other cases where the changes have not been notified to customers in advance (road works, planned utility works etc.).

Exceptions

- 4.16 It is understood that from time to time temporary and short-term exceptions may be needed to the above standards, where it is better to operate a sub-standard service than not run a service, examples include bus-factory recall, industrial action, ticket machine failure, passenger incident. In such circumstances the Operator shall agree with the Council the variation needed, duration and reason. The Operator will agree reasonable and proportionate customer communications with the Council, and these shall be funded by the Operator. The Council will also notify the Enhanced Partnership Board.

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5.0 EP Scheme Management and Governance

5.1 The future governance arrangements for after the Enhanced Partnership is 'made' are set out below:

Governance

5.2 The Enhanced Partnership will be overseen and managed by a Management Forum who will also review the Plan and Scheme in the light of any new Local Transport Plan for West Northamptonshire, as it moves away from the LTP inherited from the former Northamptonshire County Council. If required this may necessitate triggering the legal processes to vary or revoke this EPP and Scheme, replacing these with newer versions reflecting the new Policy.

5.3 The Management Forum, comprising the following group(s), have helped develop this Plan, along with the Wider Stakeholder Group who will be consulted as part of any review or future Enhanced Partnerships or variations to this one:

Management Forum

- West Northamptonshire Council (50% voting rights)
- Bus operators or their nominated representative(s) with "qualifying local services" registered in this EPP area. One representative for each operator. (50% total voting rights)

Note: Operator voting rights are to be split in proportion to "qualifying local services" mileage of services falling within the EPP/EP area, measured on a typical weekday on or close to 1 April each year, and only varied mid-year where:

- An operator of "qualifying local services" joins or leave the market
- An operator of "qualifying local services" adjusts their network such that it would change their vote level by 2% or more, be it upwards or down.

Wider Stakeholder Group

- Local Transport Groups (one representative per User Group)
- Business improvement districts (one representative per BID)
- Major employers (one representative per employer, employers to be agreed between the Essential members)
- Neighbouring local transport authorities
- Traffic Commissioner
- Local Enterprise Partnerships
- Parish Councils
- University or FE College
- Transport Focus
- Confederation of Passenger Transport
- Bus Users UK

5.4 Bus performance data will be published every 6 months and the Management Forum shall not meet less than every six months, allowing it opportunity to consult with and consider the Wider Stakeholder Group's comments on published performance data. Meeting dates shall be set a minimum of one month in advance, except for emergencies. The declaration of an emergency is determined by the majority vote of those eligible to do so by email. Chair of the Forum and Group shall be determined by the members.

- 5.5 Once considered by the Management Forum, the results of the reviews and the performance data will be made available to the public on the Council's website [Bus timetables, passes and improvements | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk)

Future changes and Enhanced Partnerships

- 5.6 Under the powers at Section 138E of the Transport Act 2000, this Enhanced Partnership Scheme has chosen to include Bespoke Variation Arrangements. Variations discussed in this section are subject to the voting mechanism as set out below and have been prepared in line with the statutory objection mechanism as set out in The Enhanced Partnership Plans and Schemes (Objections) Regulations 2018.
- 5.7 The powers to vary and make future changes to the Enhanced Partnership are subject to an operators own internal investment approvals processes, in the same way the Council will need to secure its own internal approvals, be they funding, planning consent, highway and traffic orders and approvals etc. These Bespoke Variation processes will follow and not be used to circumvent these approvals.
- 5.8 The Management Forum will be responsible for considering requests for variations and revocations to the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme and oversee the timely preparation of the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme to replace this one, mindful of its initial 3-year timeline.
- 5.9 Consideration will be given to potential Enhanced Partnership Scheme variations put forward in writing, at least 1 week prior to a notified Management Forum meeting. This can be done by any one of the organisations represented on the Management Forum or an operator of one or more "qualifying local service". The proposer of a variation should demonstrate how this might contribute to achieving the objectives set out in the Enhanced Partnership Plan and current local transport policies. Such requests should be set out in writing and submitted to:
chris.wragg@westnorthants.gov.uk
- 5.10 If there is not full agreement of all partners present, then the proposed variation will be put to the vote with a majority vote determining the outcome. Always provided that 2 or more operators having a combined voting right or at least 4% do not object. The Chairperson does not have a casting vote. In this case the variation can be agreed under the bespoke arrangements allowed under Transport Act 2000 section 138E.
- 5.11 Whilst moving forward all partners are expected to use best endeavours to work together in a spirit of Partnership if an unresolvable difference is reached, it is noted that West Northamptonshire Council wish to trigger a variation and agreement cannot be reach under the above bespoke powers, it is always open to the Council to bring forward a formal variation under the process set out in Part 2 of the Transport Act 2000 section 138L (2) (c). The proposed variation will be advertised on the West Northamptonshire Council website and emailed to operators of qualifying local services in the Enhanced Partnership Scheme area. If the proposed variation passes the operator objection mechanism, West Northamptonshire Council will make the Enhanced Partnership Scheme variation, subject to the approval of Elected Members.

- 5.12 Variations might include:
- Exercising the option to extend the Enhanced Partnership by the additional year.
 - Introducing measures set out in Table 3.2 and associated service enhancements in line with Table 4.1
 - It can also include other variations as agreed, and be used to trigger the Revocation process as set out in S1380

Review of the Enhanced Partnership Scheme

- 5.13 Once the Enhanced Partnership Scheme is made, it will be reviewed by the Enhanced Partnership Scheme Management Forum at least annually, commencing no later than on the anniversary of the scheme commencement date. West Northamptonshire Council will initiate each review and it will take no longer than 6 months to complete.
- 5.14 The review may suggest variations for adoption including:
- Definition of operators;
 - Processes for variations;
 - The Management Forum structure.
- 5.15 The Wider Stakeholder Group can also decide to review specific elements of the scheme on an ad-hoc basis. Wider Stakeholder Group members should contact West Northamptonshire Council using the following email address chris.wragg@westnorthants.gov.uk explaining what the issue is and its urgency. West Northamptonshire Council will then decide whether to table at the next scheduled meeting or make arrangements for all or the necessary Management Forum members to gather more quickly, using the Emergency Arrangements set out above.

Revocation of the Enhanced Partnership Scheme

- 5.16 An Enhanced Partnership Scheme can only exist if an Enhanced Partnership Plan is in place. If, for any reason, the Enhanced Partnership Plan is revoked, it would automatically mean that the Enhanced Partnership Scheme would cease. Equally, if all Enhanced Partnership Scheme(s) ceased, the Enhanced Partnership Plan would be revoked.
- 5.17 If, for some reason, it becomes necessary for the Enhanced Partnership Scheme to be revoked, the Enhanced Partnership Scheme Wider Stakeholder Group will be reconvened and follow the same process as outlined above.
- 5.18 If at any point in the future, any area covered by this Enhanced Partnership Scheme is included in a bus franchising scheme, the relevant requirements set out in this Enhanced Partnership Scheme document will cease to apply to areas covered by the franchising scheme, in line with the arrangements set out in the franchising scheme.

Dispute Resolution

- 5.19 If there is a dispute about the interpretation of the specification and application of any of the obligations set out in this EPS (as amended), and agreement cannot be reached at the Management Forum, then the matter under dispute will not be voted upon, until the matter has been discussed by the line managers of the most senior person representing each partner organisation that is eligible to vote (unless that person is the Managing Director or equivalent).
- 5.20 This senior group will discuss the matter in dispute, work to reach an agreed position, then refer their recommendation back to the Management Forum to implement as advised.
- 5.21 If this senior group cannot themselves reach agreement, then the matter shall be referred to arbitration, to a body or person agreed between the parties.

6.0 Consideration of Effect of the EPS

Neighbouring areas

- 6.1 As described the local bus network is largely self-contained, with some cross boundary services providing links to adjacent towns. The impact of this EPP has been discussed with local operators and cross-boundary Council's consulted on these plans. Where services operate with material support from a cross-boundary authority we feel that it is for that authority to specify the services operated, although we would work with that authority to ensure that services follow the fares and ticketing arrangements set out in this Enhanced Partnership, where they operate in West Northamptonshire.
- 6.2 The EPP does not seek to alter service routes or tackle over bussing as this is not an issue locally. Therefore, in terms of bus routes and service frequency there is no impact on adjoining areas.

Small and medium-sized operators

- 6.3 The needs of small and medium-sized operators (SMOs) have been considered in the development of the Enhanced Partnership, with opportunities for all bus operators to participate in its preparation. This has either been done through individual discussions or through consultation. The Plan seeks to support improvements in all aspects of bus provision, regardless of the size of operators providing services. With the Enhanced Partnership area, smaller operators have been given extended periods to comply with the improved bus quality standards.

Competition

- 6.4 The Enhanced Partnership has been subject to the Competition Test as set out in Part 1 of Schedule 10 of the Transport Act 2000. The assessment set out in Schedule F, was undertaken by Consultants SCP, supporting West Northamptonshire Council and shared with the Competition and Markets Authority, concluded that there will be no adverse impact on competition and that the EP Plan and Scheme is justified because:
- (a) it is with a view to achieving one or more of the following purposes:
- securing improvements in the quality of vehicles or facilities used for or in connection with the provision of local services;
 - securing other improvements in local services of benefit to users of local services; and
 - reducing or limiting traffic congestion, noise or air pollution.
- (b) its effect on competition is or is likely to be proportionate to the achievement of that purpose or any of those purposes. The Competition and Markets Authority has also been consulted on the proposals as required by section 138F of the Transport Act 2000

Consultation

- 6.5 The BSIP was itself the subject of public consultation, engagement with stakeholders, including operators, adjoining authorities. Use was also made of Transport Focus survey data for the whole of Northamptonshire to help develop our ambitious BSIP.
- 6.6 This Enhanced Partnership does not itself change routes, alter frequencies or fundamentally change buses, therefore the immediate impact on passengers is modest and positive. However, if BSIP funding is provided this will have a very material impact for example by improving bus corridors, hubs and rural service provision. However, public consultation on these changes would be more appropriate at the time the schemes are being planned when their impact can be more fully assessed and meaningful dialogue undertaken.

- 6.7 With this in mind the consultation undertaken on the Enhanced Partnership has been firstly focused around bus operators and statutory consultees.
- 6.8 Once in place this EP Plan, the Board and Wider Stakeholder Group, we want passengers and local employers to have the opportunity to influence the delivery of bus services across North Northamptonshire.
- 6.9 Also we will work with passenger advocacy groups and operators to agree a Passenger Charter, which once agreed means Operators will be obliged to operate in accordance with its commitments.

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7.0 Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
Adopted highway	A highway maintainable at public expense. When new roads are constructed by developers, the council requires them to be brought up to a suitable standard before they are adopted.
National Bus Strategy - Bus Back Better (BBB)	This is the Governments Bus Strategy, published in 2021, setting out how the Government wish to see bus services improved and requiring Local Transport Authorities to either follow the bus Franchising Route or the Enhanced Partnership route to improve bus services. There is always the do-nothing option, but this has been discounted as it would result in the immediate loss of funding to support bus services in the area.
Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)	A document setting out how buses are to be improved in West Northamptonshire over the new 5 years or so. This is prepared in line with Guidance published by the Government and is linked to the Council's declaration to pursue an Enhanced Partnership
Enhanced Partnership	A Partnership approach set out in the Transport Act 2000 as amended by the Bus Services Act 2017, where the Council can impose requirements on bus operators to be able to run services in the area.
Enhanced Partnership Plan (EPP)	EP plan - this is a high-level vision and objectives for bus services in the local area and closely follows or replicates relevant sections of the BSIP
Enhanced Partnership Scheme (EPS)	EP scheme - this sets out the precise detail of how the BSIP vision and objectives will be achieved, including any commitments made by the local authority or standards to be met by bus operators
Local highway authority	The local authority responsible for rights of way and adopted highways with an area, except trunk roads and motorways which are the responsibility of National Highways.
Local transport authority	The local authority responsible for transport planning and certain public transport functions within an area
Local Transport Plan	A statutory document prepared by the local transport authority setting out its policies for the encouragement of safe, integrated efficient and economic transport within its area and its proposals for implementation of those policies.
Section 106 developer funding	Funding secured by an obligation placed upon a developer under Section 106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990

Schedule A: List of qualifying bus services (as of 10/11/2021)

Schedule A1: Bedford Road Corridor

Service	Description	Operator
9B	Duston – Northampton General Hospital	Stagecoach
41	Northampton – Bedford	Stagecoach
Lakes Link	Northampton – Rushden Lakes	Unobus

Schedule A2: Harborough Road Corridor

Service	Description	Operator
4	Northampton – Sunnyside	Stagecoach
14	Northampton – Acre Lane	Stagecoach
19	University Waterside – Boughton Green Halls via Kingsthorpe and St David's	Unobus
60	Northampton – Guilsborough – Welford	Unobus
77	Northampton – Market Harborough	Stagecoach
X7	Northampton – Market Harborough	Stagecoach

Schedule A3: Kettering Road Corridor

Service	Description	Operator
2	Northampton – Blackthorn	Stagecoach
6	Parklands – Northampton	Stagecoach
7	Northampton – Booth Lane College	Stagecoach
7A	Northampton – Moulton Park	Stagecoach
7B	Northampton – Moulton	Stagecoach
10	Northampton – Kettering	Stagecoach
13	Northampton – Northampton	Britannia Bus
21 Lilac	Northampton – Rectory Farm	Unobus
58	Northampton – Moulton Park	Stagecoach

Schedule A4: London Road Corridor

Service	Description	Operator
3	Mereway – Northampton	Stagecoach
X6	Northampton – Milton Keynes	Stagecoach
11	Grange Park – Northampton	Stagecoach
11A	Grange Park – Northampton	Stagecoach
17 Poppy	Little Billing / Wellingborough Road – Northampton	Unobus
33	Northampton – Milton Keynes	Arriva
33a	Northampton – Milton Keynes	Arriva
86	Deanshanger – Northampton	Britannia Bus
88	Northampton – Silverstone	Stagecoach

Schedule A5: Towcester Road Corridor

Service	Description	Operator
3	Mereway – Northampton	Stagecoach
12	Northampton – Brackmills	Stagecoach
12A	Northampton – Brackmills	Stagecoach
17 Poppy	Little Billing / Wellingborough Road – Northampton	Unobus
88	Northampton – Silverstone	Stagecoach

Schedule B: Reporting Mechanisms to West Northamptonshire Council

Highway Issues

All highway defects reported to West Northamptonshire Council will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's current highway maintenance and management service contract requirements. Highway defects should be reported through: <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-transport/report-highway-problem>

Issues are reported via Street Doctor. By using Street Doctor, reports are logged appropriately, go to the right team and updates are sent.

This includes:

- Potholes (or other road and pavement issues)
- Faulty or broken streetlighting;
- Abandoned vehicles;
- Flooding or drainage issues;
- Fly tipping;
- Litter and street cleaning (leaf litter, dead animals, graffiti or glass)

Issues reported will be looked at initially within 5 working days to determine what further action may be required.

Parking Issues

Information on how to request a new parking restriction can be found on our website <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-transport/request-new-parking-restrictions>

For abandoned vehicles call ELVIS on 08456 121 999 or email: elvis.recovery@northants.police.uk

Roadwork Notifications

Information about roadworks being planned in the coming weeks and months is available on the KierWSP website: <https://www.kierwsp.co.uk/news>

Live updates about roadworks in Northamptonshire via the national one.network website is also available at: <https://one.network/uk/northamptonshire>

Schedule C: Corridor Boundaries and potential upgrade works

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Figure 2 - Map of Bedford Road corridor showing potential upgrade works.

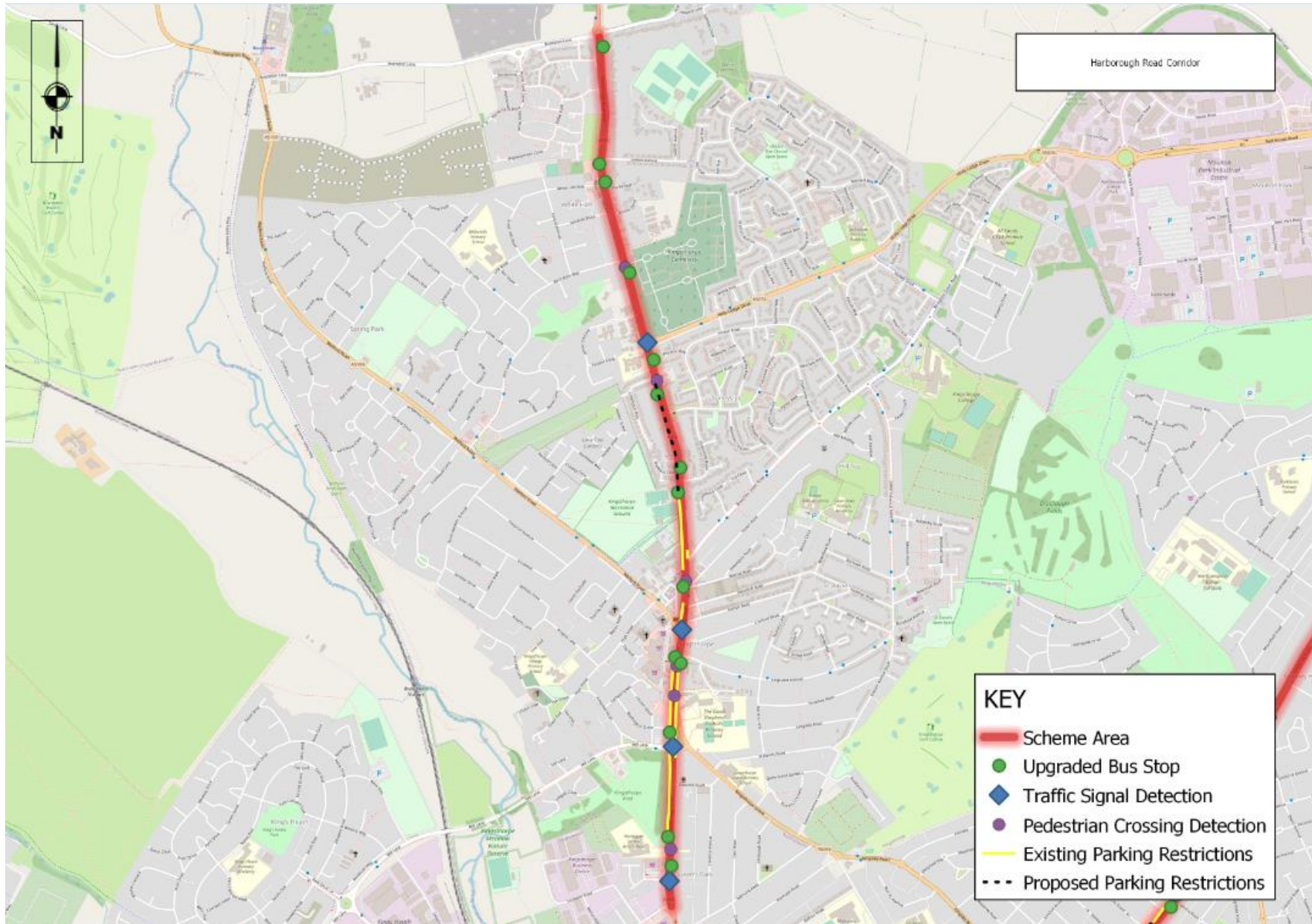


Figure 3 - Map of the Harbrough Road corridor showing potential upgrade works.

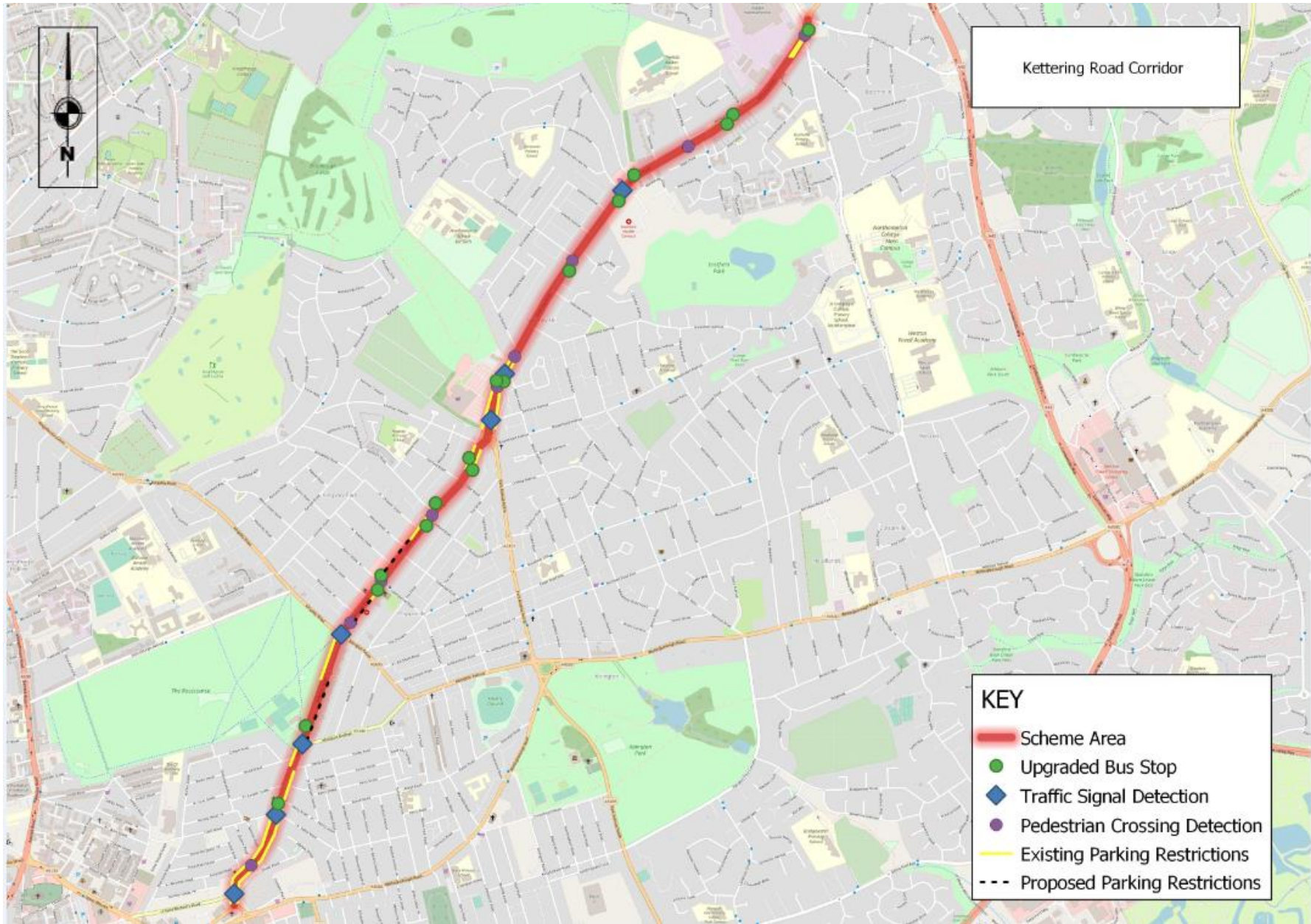


Figure 4 - Map of the Kettering Road corridor showing potential upgrade works.

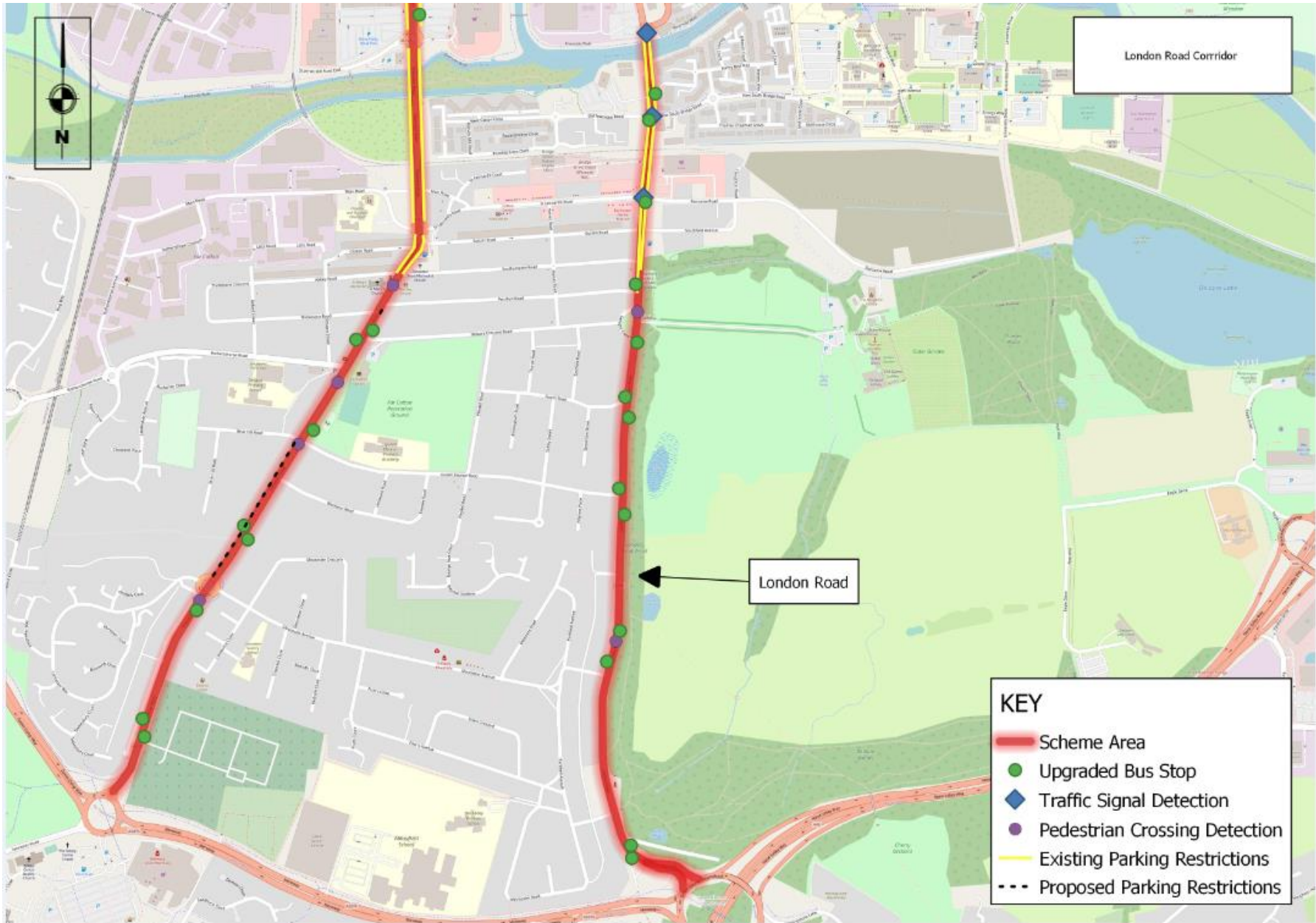


Figure 5 - Map of London Road corridor showing potential upgrade works.

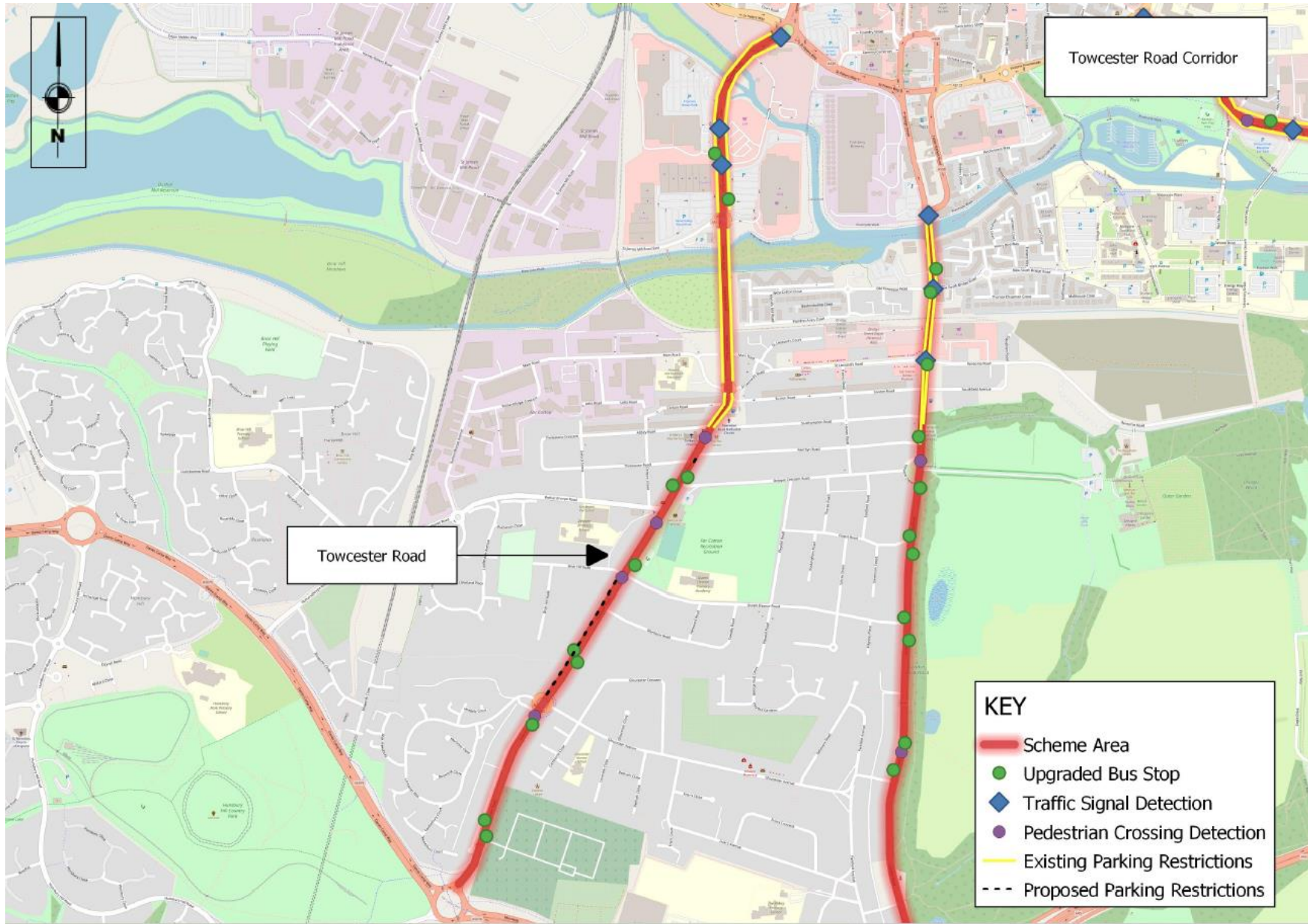


Figure 6 - Map of Towcester Road corridor showing potential upgrade works.

Schedule D: Reducing the impact of roadworks

Red Tier

These works will be extremely disruptive to buses. This could be because of the duration of the works, regularity of the buses or the unavailability of diversion routes, for example. As a rule of thumb they would:

- Have 10-or-more buses per hour operating on them
- Be of a duration of over one week
- Have a diversion route deemed unworkable or with the consequence of omitting a significant community or destination by the Bus & Rail team unilaterally or in discussion with bus companies
- Lane or bus stop closures or turning movement bans may also be considered "Red Tier" if they result in similar consequences.

When Red Tier works are identified they should:

- Have early proactive engagement with the Bus & Rail team to enable early proactive engagement with bus operators
- Be planned not to clash with other significant road closures or bus disruptions
- Be planned in conjunction with the weather forecast to make best endeavours not to have it disrupted by inclement weather
- Not to be scheduled or re-scheduled with less than 48-hours' notice
- Signage advising of the closure and disruption should be prepared and displayed by the contractor, giving clear advice on what disruption is taking place and what the intending passengers should do

Yellow Tier

Whilst still very disruptive, there is a workable diversion for buses and it can be managed. Works in this category will still result in buses being diverted and passengers needing to be informed about what is being planned but they are generally not as disruptive as the Red Tier.

Generally, these would:

- Be of duration up to 10 days
- Not have more than 9 buses per hour running on them
- Have a diversion route which is workable albeit with some planning
- Residents affected have an option to get to an alternative service or stop as long as they are informed

Yellow Tier should attract the following:

- Have early proactive engagement with the Bus & Rail team to enable early proactive engagement with bus operators
- Be planned not to clash with other significant road closures or bus disruptions
- Signage advising of the closure and disruption should be prepared and displayed by the contractor, giving clear advice on what disruption is taking place and what the intending passengers should do

Green Tier

This road closure will generally not impact buses at all, but there may be some limited examples where the disruption is so minor it does not significant advanced publicity.

Generally, these would:

- Be of duration up to 10 days
- Not have more than 9 buses per hour running on them
- Have a diversion route which is workable and not in need of significant rescheduling
- Residents affected have an option to get to an alternative stop simply on the day

Green Tier should attract the following:

- Have early proactive engagement with the Bus & Rail team to enable early proactive engagement with bus operators
- Be planned not to clash with other significant road closures or bus disruptions
- Signage advising of the closure and disruption should be prepared and displayed by the contractor, giving clear advice on what disruption is taking place and what the intending passengers should do

Schedule E: Classification of commercial services by service level tier

Note: the services allocated to the tiers below are those operating at the required frequency and falling with the definitions, as at November 2021. New services or service changes may result in services moving between Tiers during the life of the Enhanced Partnership. The definitions of tiers define the service Tier.

Urban Tier 1 – defined as a higher frequency service substantially serving one town and for the majority of the route travels within the one urban area the typical frequency for buses along the main corridor is 15 minutes or better in the weekday daytime.

- 1 Northampton Town Centre – Rectory Farm via Wellingborough Road (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 2 Northampton Town Centre – Rectory Farm via Kettering Road (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 3 Northampton Town Centre – Camp Hill (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 4 Northampton Town Centre – Obelisk Rise (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 7/7A/7B Northampton Town Centre – Broadmead Avenue combined frequency (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 8 Northampton Town Centre – Kings Heath via St James (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 9/9A/9B Northampton Town Centre – Duston combined frequency (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 16 Northampton Town Centre – Ecton Brook (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 21 Northampton Town Centre – Weston Favell – Rectory Farm (Unobus)
- 31 Northampton Town Centre – Kings Heath via Spencer Bridge (Britannia Bus)

Urban Tier 2 - defined as a medium frequency service substantially serving one town and for the majority of the route travels within the one urban area the typical frequency for buses along the main corridor is 30 minutes or better in the weekday daytime.

- 3 Extension of Northampton Town Centre – Camp Hill to Mereway Tesco (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 5 Northampton Town Centre – Southfields (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 7 Northampton Town Centre – Moulton Park via Broadmead Avenue (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 7A Northampton Town Centre – Weston Favell Centre via Broadmead Avenue (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 7B Northampton Town Centre – Moulton via Broadmead Avenue (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 9 Northampton Town Centre – Duston (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 9A Northampton Town Centre – Duston (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 9B Northampton Town Centre – Duston (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 11/11A Northampton Town Centre – Grange Park (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 12 Northampton Town Centre – East Hunsbury – Wootton – Brackmills – Northampton Town Centre (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 12A Northampton Town Centre – Brackmills – Wootton – East Hunsbury – Northampton Town Centre (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 14 Northampton Town Centre – Acre Lane (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 15/15A Northampton Town Centre – St Giles Park (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 17 Little Billing – Northampton Town Centre – Waterside Campus – Far Cotton (Unobus)
- 19/19A Boughton Green Halls – Northampton Town Centre – Waterside Campus (Unobus)

Urban Tier 3 - defined as less frequent than hourly throughout the weekday daytime

- 6 Northampton Town Centre – Parklands (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 13 Northampton Town Centre – Links View (Britannia Bus)
- 19A Diversion via Avenue Campus (Unobus)
- 55 Northampton Town Centre – Swan Valley (Stagecoach Midlands)

Inter-Urban Tier 1 – higher frequency (around 30 minutes on most parts of the route (daytime weekday)

- 500 Brackley – Banbury (Stagecoach West)
- D1/D2 Northampton – Daventry – Rugby (Stagecoach Midlands)
- X4 Northampton – Wellingborough – Kettering – Corby (Stagecoach Midlands)
- X6 Northampton – Milton Keynes (Stagecoach Midlands)
- X7 Northampton – Market Harborough – Leicester (Stagecoach Midlands)
- X46/X47 Northampton – Wellingborough – Rushden – Raunds combined frequency (Stagecoach Midlands)

Inter-Urban Tier 2 lower frequency (around hourly on most parts of the route (daytime weekday)

- 41 Northampton – Bedford (Stagecoach East)
- 86 Coventry – Rugby – DIRFT (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 88 Northampton – Towcester – Silverstone (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 96 Northampton – Long Buckby – Rugby (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 200 Daventry – Banbury (Stagecoach West)
- D3 Daventry – Bugbrooke – Northampton (Stagecoach Midlands)
- X10 Kettering – Northampton (Stagecoach Midlands)
- X46 Raunds – Rushden – Wellingborough – Northampton (Stagecoach Midlands)
- X47 Raunds – Rushden – Wellingborough – Northampton (Stagecoach Midlands)
- X60 Aylesbury – Buckingham – Milton Keynes (Arriva)

Rural Tier 3

- 89 Potterspury – Deanshanger – Milton Keynes (Britannia Bus)

Rural Tier 4

- 86 Deanshanger – Northampton (Britannia Bus)
- 90 Deanshanger – Towcester (Britannia Bus)
- 131/132 Banbury – Brackley – Buckingham (Redline)

Workers Service

- 51 Weston Favell Centre - Northampton Town Centre – Brackmills (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 53 Northampton Eastern District – Brackmills (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 54 Northampton Town Centre – Brackmills (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 58 Northampton Town Centre – Moulton Park (Stagecoach Midlands)

Academic Service

- 80 Akeley – Brackley (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 81 Buckingham – Brackley (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 82 Moulton – Silverstone UTC (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 83 Milton Keynes – Silverstone UTC (Stagecoach Midlands)
- 131 Brackley – The Royal Latin School, Brackley (Langton & Tasker)
- 943 Newton Leys – The Royal Latin School, Brackley (Marshalls)
- G1 Pitsford Turn – Guilsborough Academy (Hamiltons & Buckbys)
- G2 Lamport – Brixworth – Guilsborough Academy (Hamiltons & Buckbys)
- G3 Daventry – Welton – Guilsborough Academy (Hamiltons & Buckbys)
- X44 Wellingborough – Brackmills (Stagecoach Midlands)

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Schedule F: Competition Test

Note - this is not part of the EPS, it is included for information. It is owned by the Council who will review and amend, as necessary, without recourse to the Bespoke Variation arrangements. However, every time the bespoke arrangements are proposed to be used this Competition Test will need to be reviewed to see if the changes proposed have any implications.

SCP on behalf of West Northamptonshire Council has undertaken an assessment of the impacts of the EP Plan and Scheme to be Made to come into effect on 30 April 2022 on competition and believes it will not or is unlikely to have a significantly adverse effect on competition, for the purposes of Part 1 of Schedule 10 of the Transport Act 2000.

The Competition and Markets Authority has also been consulted on the proposals as required.

The legislative test, as it applies to Enhanced Partnerships and Ticketing Schemes says (in Part 1 of Schedule 10 Clause 2):

- (1) For the purposes of this Part of this Schedule the exercise or proposed exercise of a function to which this Part of this Schedule applies meets the competition test unless it —
 - (a) has or is likely to have a significantly adverse effect on competition, and*
 - (b) is not justified by sub-paragraph (2).**
- (2) The exercise or proposed exercise of a function is justified if —
 - (a) it is with a view to achieving one or more of the purposes specified in sub-paragraph (3), and*
 - (b) its effect on competition is or is likely to be proportionate to the achievement of that purpose or any of those purposes.**
- (3) The purposes referred to in sub-paragraph (2) are —
 - (a) securing improvements in the quality of vehicles or facilities used for or in connection with the provision of local services,*
 - (b) securing other improvements in local services of benefit to users of local services, and*
 - (c) reducing or limiting traffic congestion, noise or air pollution.”**

The following sections break down the test into the above 3 component parts. Firstly exploring what is the impact on competition. Secondly is it justified by Step 2.

Stage 1 – Does the EPS have a potential impact on competition?

The Council considers that EPS has a potential influence on Competition in the following ways, in reaching these conclusions it has considered the effect on existing operators and potential new operators joining the market. The rationale for each intervention flow from the Bus Service Improvement Plan, and are being brought forward through the Enhanced Partnership Scheme (EPS):

- The EPS seeks to require Urban Tier 1 and 2 “Qualifying Local Services” to operate core hours (arriving/departing the town centre between 0730 through to 1830hrs Monday to Friday except bank holidays) and retain normal daytime frequencies between these hours.
The Council are seeking make the bus offer more predictable to users.
Does this have a potential impact on competition – **no**.
Why? These are the high frequency services, and serves in these tiers already operate across these times. Less frequent and longer distance services in other Tiers are not covered by this requirement so it is not a barrier to entry.
Without the EP, there would be no obligation on operators to run buses throughout the hours specified, however as already stated services in these tiers already comply with the specification and as such it is likely the higher frequency urban routes would continue to voluntarily comply.

- Vehicle standards this covers the provision of CCTV and the fitting of automatic vehicle location technology.
The Council considers that CCTV is required to reassure passengers about the safety of using the bus and reduce crime and incidents that might cause buses to be taken out of operation. AIL is discounted from this test as it is already a legal requirement for operators.
Does this have a potential impact on competition – **no**
Why might it impact on competition? – the specification of the bus to a high standard may be a barrier to entry to the market for new operators. Retrofitting CCTV on buses is not costly to the point of being a barrier to entry.
Without the EP automatic vehicle location technology is still required by law but emissions may not be reduced and West Northamptonshire might be vulnerable to larger operators swapping out newer buses for other areas. CCTV is already fitted on many buses in West Northamptonshire, and can be affordably making retrofitted, so is not seen as a barrier to entry.
- Common fare stage boundaries will enable journey cost information to be provided to bus users. Does this have a potential impact on competition – **no**
Why might it impact on competition? – the setting of common fares stages does not mean operators have to change fares at every fare stage, it also does not influence the fares charged.
In the absence of an EP it would continue to be up to operators to choose the locations at which fares change, this would make it hard to communicate fares information to customers in a simplified form.

Stage 2 – Does each intervention proposed contribute towards the specified purposes?

The interventions are justified if they support delivery of one or more of the objectives set out in paragraph 3 Part 1 of Schedule 10 Clause 2(3), above, but repeated below for clarity:

- a) securing improvements in the quality of vehicles or facilities used for or in connection with the provision of local services,
 - b) securing other improvements in local services of benefit to users of local services, and
 - c) reducing or limiting traffic congestion, noise or air pollution.
- The EPS seeks to set minimum hours of operation for high frequency Tier 1 and 2 services. This will allow users to enjoy a more consistent bus offer and plan journeys with greater predictability, **it achieves purpose #b**
 - Vehicle standards including the provision of CCTV and the fitting of automatic vehicle location technology. CCTV on board buses reassures bus users that buses are safe to use and will reduce incidents and issues which might delay or cause buses to be cancelled, **it achieves purposes #a and b**
 - Common fare stages will allow improved fares information to be made available to users, **it achieves purpose #b**

The Council believes that in all three areas the Stage 2 test is met, as each intervention addresses one or more of the specified purposes.

Stage 3 – Is the adverse effect on competition proportionate?

This stage considers whether the effect of each intervention (singularly and collectively) on competition is proportionate. As there is no foreseen impact on competition this test is not required.

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West Northamptonshire Council Enhanced Partnership Stakeholder Responses

<i>Stakeholder's Organisation</i>	<i>Points Made</i>	<i>West Northamptonshire Council Response</i>
Hinton-in-the-Hedges Parish Meeting	I feel that it is a largely 'tick box' exercise as its relevance to almost everyone in South Northamptonshire is zero. The only mentions for Brackley are as a stopping place for east/west routes.	This is not the case, however capital investment is more likely to be focused on the parts of the road network used by more cars and where more bus passengers are travelling. This does not mean rural areas are forgotten, access from rural area to town centres and key education and wider services is important, and as these services approach the busier parts of the network they will benefit from priority measures too. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme (EPP/EPS)
Hinton-in-the-Hedges Parish Meeting	The decision to halt the Northampton to Brackley service at Silverstone was a complete mystery to all in Brackley.	The decision was a commercial one by the operator, as revenue on the Sulverstone - Brackley section was insufficient to cover the cost of operation. Point noted, but this is not a matter covered by this consultation. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme (EPP/EPS)
Hinton-in-the-Hedges Parish Meeting	The Northampton to Oxford Service has just disappeared off the map.	The Northampton - Oxford subsidised service was withdrawn as usage was insufficient to cover the costs of operation. More recently the Brackley - Bicester subsidised service has been introduced, using
Hinton-in-the-Hedges Parish Meeting	No mention of the Brackley to Bicester service and the villages just do not exist in this scheme.	Stagecoach 505 service is a supported service and as such is exempt from the Enhanced Partnership (EP), hence why is not listed in Schedule E. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme (EPP/EPS)
Competition and Markets Authority (CMA)	The CMA has a statutory function within the Transport Act 2000 (as amended). Should the CMA consider that a partnership agreement does not meet the 'Competition Test', the CMA may open an investigation. The Act recognises that while an agreement might have a significant adverse effect on competition it may still pass the Test if it is a proportion means to delivering improvements to bus services. The act does not require the CMA to provide an opinion on whether the partnership proposals meet the requirements of the Test.	The CMA comments are general and cover a number of Enhanced Partnership Plans (EPP) and Enhanced Partnership Schemes (EPS) which they have seen and are not made in specific response to the West Northamptonshire's draft. The EPP/EPS has been reviewed against each comment and the arrangements are considered to comply with the feedback, however the Competition Test has been strengthened to consider the counter-factual position. turning to each point: - the first two points are CMA context. they are to note only. - the voting arrangements provide every operator of "Qualifying Local Services" with a vote, there are no proxy arrangements (where a representative operator votes on behalf of others). Therefore this is not a local concern.
CMA	Any comments provided in the course of the CMA's review should not be interpreted to provide legal assurances that there will be no adverse impact for competition or that a proposed agreement is compliant with competition law. We ask that EP plans and documents, reflect this position (by avoiding references that imply that EP plans have been cleared by the CMA).	- Compensation arrangements only apply to the failure to run the last bus (regardless of time but subject to being due to the operators own fault). Therefore the issue does not apply to this area.. - Branding - it is noted that operator own branding must be visible (on London the operator of a service is named by the entry door). This will need considering as the branding issues come forward. - the exemption criteria is believed to be transparent. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme however the Competition Test has been updated to include the Counter-factual position. The Competition Test does not form part of the EPP or EPS.
CMA	Care needs to be taken so that voting/governance arrangements are based on contestable criteria, and do not exclude operators.	

West Northamptonshire Council Enhanced Partnership Stakeholder Responses

CMA	To fully satisfy themselves, authorities should consider the state of competition under the counterfactual (i.e. absent the EP) and how it will be impacted by new requirements on operators. Appropriate transition periods may mitigate some of these impacts. The use of non-prescriptive/outcome based objectives may give greater flexibility to operators to deliver your objectives, but it is for the authority in partnership with operators to consider the policy objectives that are to be delivered.	<p>The CMA comments are general and cover a number of Enhanced Partnership Plans (EPP) and Enhanced Partnership Schemes (EPS) which they have seen and are not made in specific response to the West Northamptonshire's draft.</p> <p>The EPP/EPS has been reviewed against each comment and the arrangements are considered to comply with the feedback, however the Competition Test has been strengthened to consider the counter-factual position.</p> <p>turning to each point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the first two points are CMA context. they are to note only. - the voting arrangements provide every operator of "Qualifying Local Services" with a vote, there are no proxy arrangements (where a representative operator votes on behalf of others). Therefore this is not a local concern. - Compensation arrangements only apply to the failure to run the last bus (regardless of time but subject to being due to the operators own fault). Therefore the issue does not apply to this area.. - Branding - it is noted that operator own branding must be visible (on London the operator of a service is named by the entry door). This will need considering as the branding issues come forward. - the exemption criteria is believed to be transparent. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme however the Competition Test has been updated to include the Counter-factual position. The Competition Test does not form part of the EPP or EPS.
CMA	Some EPs include proposals for encouraging flexible business models, like Demand Responsive Transport, though the level of thinking and evidence base that has gone into those business models across the EP plans varies. We would encourage you to explore existing trials of these models and learn from best practice in other authorities, where it exists.	
CMA	The removal of single operator tickets will have a potentially significant impact on the incentives of operators to compete against each other. We encourage careful consultation with operators, so that operators who are uncertain about the legal risks of offering multi-operator tickets are not excluded. We would recommend seeking legal advice to ensure that any scheme is compliant with competition law as the CMA as the UK's lead competition enforcement agency cannot provide this.	
CMA	If you have plans for introducing refund guarantees on certain routes, again we would encourage careful consultation with operators, so new schemes do not create the unintended consequence of providers not wanting to service routes or enter the market.	
CMA	Where an authority wishes to require buses to adopt a standard livery or branding scheme we would recommend that operator brands should be clearly visible, particularly where operators are competing on overlapping routes. Care should be given to the impact on operators of cross-border routes.	

West Northamptonshire Council Enhanced Partnership Stakeholder Responses

CMA	Where governance arrangements do not include individual representation for each bus operator, we advise that there is some form of shared representation (or similar arrangement) for smaller operators that might otherwise be excluded. Where larger operators have greater representation in governance arrangements, this should be defined by contestable criteria (e.g. total mileage) rather than fixed, named operators.	The CMA comments are general and cover a number of Enhanced Partnership Plans (EPP) and Enhanced Partnership Schemes (EPS) which they have seen and are not made in specific response to the West Northamptonshire's draft. The EPP/EPS has been reviewed against each comment and the arrangements are considered to comply with the feedback, however the Competition Test has been strengthened to consider the counter-factual position. turning to each point: - the first two points are CMA context. they are to note only. - the voting arrangements provide every operator of "Qualifying Local Services" with a vote, there are no proxy arrangements (where a representative operator votes on behalf of others). Therefore this is not a local concern.
CMA	Should you include exemptions, these should be clearly defined with objective criteria to give confidence the exemptions will be applied appropriately.	- Compensation arrangements only apply to the failure to run the last bus (regardless of time but subject to being due to the operators own fault). Therefore the issue does not apply to this area. - Branding - it is noted that operator own branding must be visible (on London the operator of a service is named by the entry door). This will need considering as the branding issues come forward. - the exemption criteria is believed to be transparent. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme however the Competition Test has been updated to include the Counter-factual position. The Competition Test does not form part of the EPP or EPS.
Member of the public	I rarely use the bus at present, but would do so more if it went to the station from Deanshanger outside peak hours and also stopped at the shopping centre. Environmentally we should be investing in better public transport so we are not using polluting cars with only one person in them.	The support is welcomed, however the bus operators need to balance the destination needs across all users, that said this feedback should be raised with the local operators. Action: No change required to the EPP/EPS. However, the termination destination is being raised with local bus operators so they can review local routing and make a commercial decision.
Braunston Parish Council	Improved Realtime Information should include: At stops where funding does not allow for realtime information displays, a Quick Response (QR) code that links to the operator's, or ideally West Northamptonshire Council's, realtime app will be prominently displayed. Explanation – There are three pairs of active bus stops in Braunston. It is unlikely that all or any of them can be prioritised for realtime information displays. Most potential passengers carry a smart phone that could be used to scan a code to get realtime information.	These are valid points and as realtime is rolled out, information at stops and elsewhere would help users access the information and interpret the messages communicated. The use of QR codes has been used by other authorities. Action: No change required to the EPP/EPS. However, the Partnership and Council should consider the suggestion to encourage broader use of Realtime data.

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Braunston Parish Council	<p>Ticketing Schemes should include: Fares should be calculated from zone to zone regardless of whether a change of bus is required. Explanation – Stagecoach run two buses an hour between Northampton and Rugby. The 96 goes via Long Buckby which has a station and goes via Rugby Station. The D1/D2 goes via Daventry which does not have a station and no longer reaches the station at Rugby. Braunston (and Daventry) has always previously had a service to Rugby Station. To reach the station now it is necessary to change buses and pay a new fare even though this is more time consuming and inconvenient.</p>	<p>Multi-operator ticketing schemes offer day and longer products usable between operators within the Northampton Buzz Card area. There are however no plans to have a cross-boundary multi-operator ticketing scheme that covers both West Northamptonshire and Warwickshire. Action: No change proposed to the EPP/EPS</p>
Hollowell & Tetton Parish Council	<p>The 'Plan' should include a 'Schedule' identifying those bus services which have been specifically excluded and reason stated to ensure awareness of all bus services and avoid unnecessary queries about 'other services'. I note that there is no reference in either the 'Plan' or 'EP' document to service 59 (Welford to Market Harborough) which links with service 60 (Northampton to Welford).</p>	<p>Both services 59 and 60 are subsidised services, and therefore exempt. It was considered that a look at the timetables and the definitions of exempt services was the better way to go, because services and timetables change and this may alter the status of services, the risk being with a table that people rely on the table and ignore the impact of change, the definitions in paragraph 2.5 should prevail. The exception being than for academic or workers services, which we felt were less clear from the timetable, these are listed in Schedule E. Action: No change proposed to the EPP/EPS</p>
Hollowell & Tetton Parish Council	<p>Not able to identify anything 'missing' but note that a larger proportion of items quoted in following tables 3.1 & 3.2 would appear to be orientated to Northampton and it is not clear if any of these 'Facility / locations' could be applied to more rural centres. These priorities will assist with bus usage.</p>	<p>The capital investment is concentrated on areas with more frequent bus services, this is important to ensure a good return for the investment made and a balanced approach between differing road users. However rural services also approach Northampton on the main corridors and therefore will benefit from the measures in the busier part of the network (for example). Action: No change proposed to the EPP/EPS</p>
Hollowell & Tetton Parish Council	<p>Yes agree with proposals for investment in buses, ticketing and Information are the immediate priority for the first 3 years. Query whether the 'obligations' would apply to any / all 'supported services'?</p>	<p>The plan is to extend the "obligations" to supported bus services when the tender next comes up for renewal, it is not planned to do this mid-contract as there would not be a means of ensuring a competitive price to deliver any enhancement. Action: No change proposed to the EPP/EPS</p>

West Northamptonshire Council Enhanced Partnership Stakeholder Responses

Hollowell & Tetton Parish Council	No suggestions for additional members but you could consider whether Parish Councils are involved individually or through a representative body (Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils (NCALC)).	Parish Councils are invited to be a part of the Wider Stakeholder Group, it is possible for them to choose to be engaged individually or through an umbrella body, in the interests of efficient working. Action: No change proposed to the EPP/EPS
Parish Council for Barby and Onley	This may not be the correct forum for this request but with the popular focus on more sustainable, efficient transport solutions I would ask that consideration be given to the reinstatement of a route to Onley. Services of No. 12 bus were withdrawn in June 2016. The service which ran from Daventry to Rugby Via A45 Dunchurch diverted to Willoughby and Onley serving the Estate and Prisons on an hourly basis. The removal of this service denied available bus route for the residents and for the visitors, released occupants and employees of the Prisons located at Onley. Please advise if there is a more appropriate way of requesting this should it be deemed out of scope for the Enhanced Partnership Scheme.	Looking at what can be done to reinstate bus services to communities which have lost one will be part of a separate process once we know how much funding we have for next year from the Council's budget and the Department for Transport. Is Onley Park still served by the Flexibus service 203 on Mondays and 214 on Wednesdays? Action: No change proposed to the EPP/EPS
Spratton Parish Council	Q1 response - Our own bus service consists of a combination of two services from Northampton to Market Harborough consisting of the 59 route from Welford to Market Harborough but the same bus is used on the Market Harborough journey with passengers travelling to Market Harborough having to buy a separate ticket on the same bus if they travelled from south of Welford on the 60 service. It may be convenient to iron out any anomalies in the "exempt" system and ensure the appropriate conditions and reasons for exemption are clarified. I am not clear about what help will be given to the exempt services but hopefully money and policies will be produced which will raise their standards as well as the non-exempt services. Are there any plans for supporting on demand services such as those researched by UNO (University bus company)?	Services like #59 and 60 operate under contract. They are exempt from the EPP/EPS because their operation and specification is governed by contract, the means of securing improvements is most easily achieved through the requirements of the contract. That is relatively easy/no cost when it comes to things like participation in a ticketing scheme, but other things such as the use of particular types of vehicle are likely to come at a cost. Demand responsive services are certainly something West Northamptonshire Council want to look into more, but heavily dependent on how much funding is secured as to what will be possible. Again they are supported services and so exempt from the EP. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
Spratton Parish Council	Q2 response - They all look positive and hope that they will be applied equally to rural as well as urban areas. (It might be worth mentioning that I was initially misdirected to the EPP rather than the EPS by the word "Plan" in the first line of the question with a capital "P" so that I looked first at the EPP when checking the appropriate tables.)	The support is welcomed. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme

West Northamptonshire Council Enhanced Partnership Stakeholder Responses

Spratton Parish Council	Q3 Response - Yes and of course reliability, frequency and accessibility are part of these priorities.	The support is welcomed. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
Spratton Parish Council	Q4 Response - Although schools have their own legislation and service, there is still a reasonable number of children and staff who use the public service and it may be appropriate to notify the heads of schools.	The support is welcomed. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
Potterspury Parish Council	Potterspury Parish Council would like to see an improved bus service to Potterspury and surrounding villages.	Looking at what can be done to reinstate/improve bus services to rural communities will be part of a separate process once we know how much funding we have for next year from the Council's budget and the Department for Transport. . Supported services are governed by contract and as such are exempt from the EP. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
Daventry Town Council (North Ward - Ashby Fields, Drayton Park, Lang Farm, Middlemore & Monksmoor)	We would have preferred to respond as a council but due to the time frame this is not possible.	The challenges of responding to consultations is appreciated, in this case we allowed just over 4 weeks, which is in excess of the statutory 28 day timescale provided to bus operators. The timescales to deliver the EP has also been imposed by the Department for Transport, although they have recently relaxed this. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
Daventry Town Council (North Ward - Ashby Fields, Drayton Park, Lang Farm, Middlemore & Monksmoor)	I don't have many comments as the EPP probably does all it can. I would just like to emphasise that the partnership should try to include local people (including parish councils) as possible as they often have knowledge which can improve the service.	User group representatives including Parish Councils are invited to be part of the Wider Stakeholder Group to ensure the voice of local bus users is heard. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
Brackley Town Council	The plan does not include Brackley and as we are an expanding town it needs to. It seems to be Northampton centric – Brackley is a growing part of West Northants and seems to have been forgotten.	The focus of the EP is on commercial bus services rather than supported services, meaning that the commercial network does create a greater emphasis on Northampton. However, all commercial services serving Brackley are listed in the EP, and there are proposals for real-time information displays subject to funding. Brackley may also benefit from improved rural services, which as noted elsewhere will be part of a separate process. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
Billing Parish Council	Improving connectivity has to be the number one priority for our Parish. We currently have two areas that no longer have a dedicated bus route the Northern half of Ecton Brook Road and the a section of Fishponds Road which runs from the corner of Fieldmill Road up to the top of Orchard Hill and onto Little Billing Way. Ecton Brook does have the Number 16 route however this only covers the bottom half of Ecton Brook. The North of Ecton Brook Road from Overmead Road is only serviced by 53 & 54. The number 54 to Moulton Park only runs once in the mornings (05:10) Monday to Friday so workers are unable to get a bus straight home or get to or from work on a weekend.	The ability to extend coverage of bus services in Northampton will form part of the Network Review which forms part of the EPS. The return journey on commercial service 54 was withdrawn because it was used by significantly fewer people than the outward run.. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme

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Billing Parish Council	Bellinge is lucky to have a regular bus number 16 bus service which connects able bodied people and the elderly that live around Fieldmill Road area however the people that live from Faracre Court up to Orchard Hill and The Leather Works have between a 5 minute to 20 minute walk before they can reach a bus service. As you can appreciate this is not acceptable for people who are not able bodied who wish to use this service to get them to vital services such as the hospital, supermarkets and doctor surgeries.	The ability to extend coverage of bus services in Northampton will form part of the Netrowk Review which forms part of the EPS. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
Billing Parish Council	Our Parish also doesn't have a direct bus route to the General Hospital.	The ability to extend coverage of bus services in Northampton will form part of the Netrowk Review which forms part of the EPS; however it is inevitably difficult to provide a through service from all parts of the town to the General Hospital. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
Billing Parish Council	The bus stops that have the live update screens need to be improved. Sometimes they show that when a bus is late its way however it then disappears from the display. They should show that it's been cancelled like on the App so people can decide whether to use another mode of transport especially if they need to get to an appointment.	The quality of information depends on how near the start and end of the route the service is. However working through the partnership there is the need to improve accuracy, improve access to information and improve peoples understanding on the meaning of the messages being displayed. The EP makes some progress on this for example operators, producing maps and timetables, are obliged to prominently include details of the Realtime system and how to use it, using text shall be provided by West Northamptonshire Council and agreed at the Management Forum. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
Billing Parish Council	Some of our Parish Bus Stop need to be cleaned up and trees covering them need to be cut.	The EPS includes actions for the Council to work with Operators and local representatives to review stop locations, their position and layout to make stops more accessibility, safe and attractive, within the available funding. It would be good to know which stops the Parish had in mind. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme, however the Parish Council will be contacted to see which stops they were referring too.
Kingsthorpe Parish Council	The plan only refers to local bus services. While this consultation is limited in scope to the Unitary Authority, it neatly sidesteps the issue of the totally inadequate Coach station in Northampton. Serious consideration needs to be given to constructing a coach interchange that is more than a few benches and a port aloo. There are currently 3 transport hubs in the town, The Northgate bus station, the Northampton Train station, and the coach 'station' on Victoria street. More needs to be done to improve the connectivity between the three, and serious investment needs to be done to make the coach station provide a positive first impression on visitors to the town using this service.	The legislation covering bus services is different to coach services, coaches are not part of the EP, therefore whilst the point is appreciated, it does not impact on the EP. The routing of services between the bus, coach and rail stations is a matter of balancing needs of people making onward trips vs. this using retail/employer and other town centre services. All are within 600-800m walk of the bus station. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme

West Northamptonshire Council Enhanced Partnership Stakeholder Responses

Kingsthorpe Parish Council	There are numerous issues with the public transport provision in Northampton. Northgate Bus station is inadequate to service the number of services that are required for a town the size of Northampton, with the consequence that the drapery has become very congested. The former Greyfriars bus station, whilst it certainly had numerous issues, at the very least was of sufficient size that the Drapery was not overwhelmed with buses and provided a convenient location for changing service. There is also a large distance between the bus station and train station, and while certain bus services do pass the Train Station, it is inconvenient for commuters to have to travel a large distance between interchanges on foot.	Within the life of the EP there are no plans to enlarge the bus station. The walk distance is within acceptable standards, but for customers with luggage or less able to walk up to 800m then catching a service which stops closer to the rail station is an option. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
Kingsthorpe Parish Council	We agree that improving the current routes is desirable. We are pleased to see that the partnership plan has identified that bus stops need to be safer and proposes spending money on street lighting around bus stops and upgrading the information boards. Maybe we could suggest that maintenance of them is improved, there are numerous locations in Northampton generally, and Kingsthorpe Parish specifically where the bus stops are in a poor state of repair due to vandalism and graffiti.	The support for improving bus stops and shelters is welcomed. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
Kingsthorpe Parish Council	The bus routes themselves are still at the mercy of the inadequate roads. The unpredictable service delays along the Harborough Road corridor, and, as part of this piece of the document it references a route that no longer exists (the 77), includes several routes that use the Welford Road rather than the Harborough Road, and that suggests removing on-street parking along the Harborough Road to make those times more predictable. Member's feelings are the delays to buses in Kingsthorpe are more likely to be when they are navigating the suburban streets than an A road, and that the proposed modifications to on-street parking will only benefit (in its whole) one route out of those that service Kingsthorpe (X7) and will have very little impact on bus services in the area. Maybe, as a compromise, they could increase the area around the size of the bus stop (opposite the BP garage) to ensure that buses have enough space to safely pull in or a dedicated 24-hour bus lane would ensure that bus services would not be hindered by congestion from cars.	Stagecoach service 77 still exists but shares a timetable with X7, and provides a foreshortened route early in the morning. The corridor improvements will look at the detail of the routes and the cause of delays, this will validate the cause of delays to buses and inform the improvements to be brought forward. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme

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Kingsthorpe Parish Council	<p>The consultation also seems to only concentrate on improving existing services rather than looking into additional services and how they may improve public transport provision. The majority of services start and terminate at Northgate bus station, or along the drapery. This means moving around the periphery of Northampton as a bus user necessitates a journey from your start point, to the centre of town, and then out to your destination. For example, travelling from Thorplands to Moulton park means using the number 1 or 2 service into the town centre, and then changing to the number 7 or 58 service to travel to Moulton Park. This journey can take up to 1 hour on the bus, 30-40 minutes to walk, 15-20 minutes to cycle, and 5-10 minutes to drive. A circular route, or routes would allow commuters to travel around Northampton to locations such as Moulton Park or Brackmills without needing to travel into the town centre.</p>	<p>The EPP and EPS do not of themselves increase or reduce the bus service quantum, rather they address service specification. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme</p>
Kingsthorpe Parish Council	<p>There is also a paucity of school busses in Northampton proper in relation to the more rural areas of the authority. This obviously leads to more car journeys to drop students off at school. If there was to be investment in school busses it could have an effect on congestion, and at the same time start to encourage a modal shift in young people and make them more likely to use busses in the future.</p>	<p>Further to the answer above, bus operators run commercial bus services where passenger demand and income covers cost. The Council can fund service enhancements where commercial services do not run and subject to having the budget. However, budgets are tight at present and there are competing demands for investment. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme</p>
Kingsthorpe Parish Council	<p>We agree that they are important. Having a simple payment method that would allow you to use multiple different service providers, as well as easy access to visual aids with which to plan your route would allow commuters to better plan their journeys. The move away from diesel busses to more environmentally friendly and less polluting vehicles is also important. However, we feel the immediate priority should be consulting the public on exactly which bus services they would like to see introduced or improved, and then delivering those services, and at the same time ensuring that busses have priority over other motor vehicles on the roads. If modal shift towards public transport can be encouraged, by having services that are convenient, have short journey times, and are along routes that are wanted, then the public is more likely to use public transport over their cars or other personal vehicles.</p>	<p>The support for improved multi-operator ticketing and reduced bus emissions is welcomed. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme</p>

West Northamptonshire Council Enhanced Partnership Stakeholder Responses

Deanshanger Parish Council (DPC)	Our comments, in summary, were that Deanshanger residents deserved a bus service that allowed our children to get to school and college and our residents to get to work, to the doctors/hospital, to the affordable shops in neighbouring towns and to services such as youth and community services and Foodbanks. These issues were not addressed in the Bus Improvement Plan and the proposed Enhanced Partnership Scheme and Plan does not address them either.	The EPP and EPS do not of themselves increase or reduce the bus service quantum, rather they address service specification., bus operators run commercial bus services where passenger demand and income covers cost. The Council can fund service enhancements where commercial services do not run and subject to having the budget. However, budgets are tight at present and there are competing demands for investment. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
DPC	Deanshanger is a large village with 4,000 + residents in rural South Northants and is very poorly served by buses in recent years since Northants County Council removed its support and subsidies for buses . The Britannia, 89 bus that has, in the past 3 years, serviced Deanshanger every two hours weekdays, daytime is now, since December 21 even further reduced to one bus a day, four days a week, leaving Deanshanger at 9.30 am for MK and returning from MK at 11.30 am. The service in recent years up has been wholly inadequate and the current service, since December 2021 that still continues, is now scandalous. We note the COVID related issues cited by Britannia Buses for the reduction to 1 bus a day and that as a small operator such issues have had a great impact on service delivery than larger operators.	I refer to the answer above, the concern about Covid affected timetables is understood, it is hoped (but not guaranteed) that as patronage returns to the bus, services will return to pre-covid levels. This is an exceptional situation, and we would expect operators to return services to the levels contained in their service registration at the earliest opportunity. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
DPC	DPC calls upon West Northants Council (WNC) to reconsider its support for bus services that service Deanshanger (and rural South Northants) and request an urgent meeting on this matter with relevant officers. DPC understand that the Britannia Bus service 89 is a commercial service and note that no supported / subsidised service serves Deanshanger. Our residents deserve better. They should be able to access school and college, get to and from work, access medical and other essential services and we demand urgent action to provide an improved service. A WNC supported / subsidised service delivered under contract with a Bus Operator or funding for other Bus Operators to divert into and service Deanshanger are urgently required.	The concern of the Parish Council with the current situation is understood, but subsidised services are only intended to operate where no commercial service exists. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
DPC	DPC is very willing to work with WNC officers and Deanshanger WNC Councillors to progress this matter and look forward to hearing from you to arrange an urgent meeting.	This offer of joint working is welcomed and is something West Northamptonshire will follow up on. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme. WNC officers will follow up a meeting to discuss service provision in Deanshanger.

West Northamptonshire Council Enhanced Partnership Stakeholder Responses

DPC	Deanshanger Parish Council also requests information on what bus services are currently subsidised as part of WNC's funded support for the county's bus network.	This will be addressed in the aforementioned meeting. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme. WNC officers will outline the level of locally funded supported bus services in the aforementioned meeting.
DPC	The Enhanced Partnership Scheme and Plan offers next to nothing to our village. The scheme's objective to deliver faster journey times on the five corridors to Northampton have no relevance to our residents as we cannot even access these corridors. It's objectives to provide common hours of operation and better serve larger visitor attractions in the area; improve the way the bus network is promoted to users and non-users, in particular communicate the whole bus offer and improve user and potential user access to information; and, put in place a passenger charter which gives passengers more influence over bus services and delivery are largely irrelevant when we do not really have any bus service to speak of. have such a desperately poor service that does not meet even the basic daily needs of our residents.	Given that the bus services from Deanshanger is mainly towards Milton Keynes, this is inevitable. West Northamptonshire Council addresses delays to bus services in its area, and Milton Keynes Council will do the same for their area.I. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
DPC	While we wish WNC well with its Enhanced Partnership Scheme and Plan and hope that it is able to draw down government funding to deliver it, we are extremely disappointed that no actions or recommendations are in place to support rural bus services in the south of the county particularly to Deanshanger.	I refer to the answer above. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
South Northants CLP	I was disappointed to see the emphasis being on Northampton with little reference to South Northamptonshire's market towns and rural areas. After all this is the West Northamptonshire Bus Partnership scheme, which includes, Northampton, Daventry and South Northants. Surely to understand what is needed in West Northants, greater research and data gathering has to be carried in all areas of West Northants. This lack of knowledge meant the draft had little relevance in addressing the great need we have outside of Northampton.	The commercial bus network, varies across West Northamptonshire, but as all but 1 of the Tier 1 and 2 urban and the Tier 1 inter-urban bus services all travel into Northampton, it is inevitable that works will focus on the areas served by the majority of commercial bus services. The steps to improve reliability in the busier parts of the bus network will benefit those travelling on these bus services and growing patronage on commercial services will best help retain or improve the services. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme

West Northamptonshire Council Enhanced Partnership Stakeholder Responses

<p>South Northants CLP</p>	<p>The draft spoke repeatedly of a return of bus usage to pre-covid levels and yet admitted that "bus use actually declined overall between 2012/13 and 2019/20." At no point did the report explain why this decline had happened and I feel this is a real failing as the causes of this decline was not establish. To address the problem going forward, there has to be an understanding of the decline before the pandemic and not just as a result of the pandemic.</p>	<p>The longer term trends and analysis is set out in the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), the Enhanced Partnership is one tool being used to deliver the BSIP. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme</p>
<p>South Northants CLP</p>	<p>The reality of bus services outside of Northampton are simply not addressed in the draft. Although for example the number 88 bus service is mentioned in the report it is put under the heading of Inter-Urban Tier 2 (around hourly on most routes). The reality is that after the first two buses in the morning, the service is actually every two hours. Pre- pandemic it was an hourly service, so to classify it as around hourly is simply incorrect.</p>	<p>The BSIP categorises bus services based on their pre-Covid timetables, as the aim is to return to that level of service as paroinage increases . The 88 was an hourly service (pre-Covid) so its classification is correct. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme</p>
<p>South Northants CLP</p>	<p>In terms of the more rural areas of Northamptonshire, the report does not mention that before the pandemic, the number 89 stopped running from Northampton to Milton Keynes, via Towcester and the villages of Paulerspury, Potterspury and Deanshanger. This change resulted in some of these villages having a 1 bus every hour service reduced down to a 1 bus a day service and for some villages no bus service at all. This happened before the pandemic and the impact of this on those areas was not examined. This is also crucial as many villages in South Northants are closer to the big urban area of Milton Keynes, than to Northampton and so it is essential to understand South Northants in the context of bus services across counties for example Buckinghamshire. No mention of this is made in the draft.</p>	<p>Service 89 was originally a subsidised service, which Stagecoach ran commercially for a time after the former County Council reduced its bus subdisy budget in 2011. However, patronage was insufficient to sustain commercial operation. Looking at what can be done to reinstate bus services to communities which have lost one will be part of a separate process once we know how much funding we have for next year from the Council's budget and the Department for Transport. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme</p>

West Northamptonshire Council Enhanced Partnership Stakeholder Responses

<p>South Northants CLP</p>	<p>The draft refers to Part 1 Local Plan of the West Northants Joint Core Strategy, which included targets to increase modal shift away from the private car towards other forms of transport, including public transport and aimed for a 5% reduction in single occupancy car journeys to work from the existing built up areas. Milton Keynes and Northampton provides a great number of employment opportunities, and yet the poor service from the market towns of Brackley and Towcester and the the villages to these big urban centres means that people in South Northants have no choice but to resort to cars as a means of commuting. Brackley and Towcester, the two market towns, which are a mere 20 minutes away by bus and with all their accompanying employment and educational opportunities, is connected by one service a day, which is simply woeful. The draft mentions none of this.</p>	<p>Looking at what can be done to reinstate bus services to communities which have lost one will be part of a separate process once we know how much funding we have for next year from the Council's budget and the Department for Transport. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme</p>
<p>South Northants CLP</p>	<p>There has been huge levels of house building across South Northants and this is set to continue. These new developments have become like satellite towns in their own right. Often lacking basic infrastructure like GP surgeries, schools and shops, these developments are cut off from the towns nearby and residents are forced to resort to cars to travel to vital services. None of this is mentioned in the draft</p>	<p>The point is noted, it would be for developers to pump-prime services via Section 106 funding, as already stated supported bus services are managed under a contract and for that reason the Enhanced Partnership does not apply. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme</p>
<p>South Northants CLP</p>	<p>The vision set out in the scheme is that "the bus network will meet community need" and one of those community needs in rural areas is accessing schools and colleges. Since the pandemic the number 88, which already provides students with transport to Silverstone College, no longer runs an early 7am service in to Northampton. This has resulted in the farcical situation that young people who wish to attend Northampton College have to drive to Greens Norton to get the 7am number 87 bus service just to get to college. Northampton offers vocational courses and so students who wish to do such a course are deterred from doing so as there are simply unable to get there. This greatly reduces young people's educational choices and life chances. Schools are often oversubscribed, so it is crucial that young people are able to travel to other alternatives.</p>	<p>The point is appreciated, however the EPP/EPS is only designed to improve control and standards of commercially provided bus services. By implication, where no such services exist, the relevance of the Enhanced Partnership is minimal. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme</p>

West Northamptonshire Council Enhanced Partnership Stakeholder Responses

South Northants CLP	The draft mentions upgrading real time information displays and although that might be suitable for Northampton, the reality for South Northants is that there are not even timetables at the bus stops and even on the main high street in Towcester for example, there isn't a single bus shelter, let alone bus shelters elsewhere across South Northants.	The lack of bus shelters is not a barrier to realtime information improvements, and the EPS suggests examples of areas for investment could include Brackley and Towcester town centres as well as outside Northampton General Hospital. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
South Northants CLP	To seriously increase bus patronage and to fulfil the vision set out in the scheme that the "bus offer is understood by the wider community not simply bus users" and "is easily used by all", these very simple things need to be addressed. Buses used to carry paper copies of timetables, but these are no longer available and so for users as well as non-users, it is difficult to know when buses are running, particularly since the pandemic altered bus timetables so frequently. None of this is mentioned in the draft.	The problems with bus service changes during Covid is understood, the issues caused by financial sustainability and drivers isolating. Exemptions were granted by Government during this time and the Council and DfT have been financially supporting bus operators. Looking forward the Enhanced Partnership include plans to improve information provision, and potentially pooling resources to diver more for the same cost. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
South Northants CLP	For this scheme to have any relevance, there has to be a greater understanding of the public transport need and situation across West Northamptonshire and this draft comes no-where near providing that.	The EP can only deal with a limited part of the issues affecting public transport, the BSIP explores this area more fully. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
Hunsbury Meadows Parish Council	Commercial bus services primarily benefit other commercial businesses in urban areas such as people travelling to/from work and visitor attractions. A typical resident in a rural area relies on Council / community supported services which are excluded from scope of the Enhanced Partnership. Usually, the commercial service and the community/supported services are operated by the same bus operator. All bus services in the area ought to be integrated as one network to give passengers more choice. We are concerned that the potential benefits of the Enhanced Partnership will be limited to commercial services in urban areas with community services in rural areas being left further behind.	The point is a criticism of the legislation, the fact EP's only impact on commercial services is not a matter the Council can control. Action: No change is required to the EPP and EPS

West Northamptonshire Council Enhanced Partnership Stakeholder Responses

<p>Hunsbury Meadows Parish Council</p>	<p>Hunsbury Meadows Parish Council (HMPC) has seen significant population growth over the years with the following notable developments. The planning applications: N/2007/1570 - up to 625 dwellings – Pineham Village including a retail area. N/2015/0524 - Pineham New Primary School and Community Centre. 10/0188/FULWNN - up to 200 properties at Pineham Lock. N/2015/0872 - up to 34 dwellings - Land off Banbury Lane, Northampton, NN4 9QE The above is in addition to what was the original Hunsbury Meadows / Banbury Lane development with circa 300 houses. In total, the electoral roles showed Hunsbury Meadows Parish Council having just short of 1800 electors on the electoral roll last May 2021. This continues to rise and the area there needs an integrated and regular bus service. The planning statements and travel plans for the above developments aimed to encourage residents and visitors to use of sustainable public transport to travel in and out of HMPC. Bus “55 Northampton Town Centre – Swan Valley (Stagecoach Midlands)” does not directly serve the residents in Pineham Village or Hunsbury Meadows Banbury Lane. The hourly frequency of Bus 55 provides the needed accessibility to meaningful public transport compared with the infrequent community Bus 87. We call upon West Northamptonshire Council</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to encourage the operator to run services directly through Pineham Village to provide better access to the 55 service by Pineham Village residents. 2. To construct a suitable bus stops on Upon Valley Way East, at the top of Banbury Lane to enable access to the 55 service by residents on Hunsbury Meadows and Pineham Lock. 3. To request the operator to include a stop at these new bus stops as in (2) above. 	<p>The point is noted, but not a matter within the scope of the EPP and EPS. Action: No change is required to the EPP and EPS</p>
<p>Hunsbury Meadows Parish Council</p>	<p>For Hunsbury Meadows Parish Council, we would like to have included the above referenced bus stops on Upton Valley Way East and in the centre of Pineham Village. Currently, apart from the infrequent Bus 87 services, the residents do not have access to any regular public service into and from Northampton Town Centre. If the objective of this Enhanced Partnership is to encourage use of public transport, then meaningful and regular public service must be made available. Aside of these, we agree with the measures and priorities in the Tables in sections 3.3 and 3.4 of the consultation.</p>	<p>Please refer to the above answers about supported bus services. Action: No change is required to the EPP and EPS</p>
<p>Hunsbury Meadows Parish Council</p>	<p>Question 3 - Yes.</p>	<p>The support is welcomed (Q3 - Do you agree with the proposals for investment in buses, ticketing and Information are the immediate priority for the first 3 years). Action: No change is required to the EPP and EPS</p>

West Northamptonshire Council Enhanced Partnership Stakeholder Responses

Hunsbury Meadows Parish Council	We would suggest the inclusion of Primary and Secondary Schools to the Wider Stakeholder Board. Currently, congestion at schools by parents parking, often irresponsibly, is an issue. If the objective of this consultation is to encourage more people to use public transport, then schools should be consulted, and proper consideration given to how they are serviced by public service routes.	As dedicated home to school services are exempt it is not clear what value schools would add to the wider stakeholder board, however the Board membership is flexible enough to change if the participation of a school representative was seen as having merit. Action: No change is required to the EPP and EPS
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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

12 APRIL 2022

CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADULT CARE, WELLBEING, AND HEALTH INTEGRATION: COUNCILLOR MATT GOLBY

Report Title	West Northamptonshire Anti-Poverty Strategy 2022-2025
Report Author	Stuart Lackenby, Deputy Chief Executive Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing (DASS) Stuart.lackenby@westnorthants.gov.uk

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

West MO	Catherine Whitehead	Emailed 28 th March 2022
West S151	Martin Henry	29 th March 2022
Other Directors/Officers	Stuart Lackenby – Deputy Chief Executive Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing (DASS)	Emailed 28 th March 2022
Communications Lead/Head of Communications		Emailed 30 th March

List of Appendices

Appendix A: *West Northamptonshire Anti-Poverty Strategy 2022-2025*

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To seek approval of the West Northamptonshire Anti-Poverty Strategy 2022-2025.
- 1.2. To approve the creation of an additional delivery fund to underpin the strategy, namely 'Community Health and Wellbeing Innovation Fund' using available Public Health Grant Reserve.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 In our Corporate Plan for West Northamptonshire we committed to focus on the things that will significantly improve the quality of life and well-being for all our residents. This Strategy is a major step in ensuring that our residents are offered opportunities, support, advice and information that will address the causes of poverty.
- 2.2 'Our vision is for a fairer and more inclusive West Northamptonshire, where everyone is able to live their best life, prosperous and fulfilling, free from poverty and inequality'
- 2.3 Living in poverty has negative impacts in other aspects of people's lives and is not just about money – it impacts educational attainment, access to good paying work, increases the risk of developing poor health conditions and reduces life expectancy. It also means that many people are not able to take part in the normal life of a place as experienced by other residents. The pandemic has particularly exacerbated the impacts of poverty on our most vulnerable residents and communities.
- 2.4 To achieve our vision, we must work together to maximise our resources and focus on activities that are likely to have a lasting impact on reducing poverty across West Northants to improve the lives of our local communities.
- 2.5 West Northamptonshire's Anti-Poverty Strategy provides a strategic framework for how we intend to tackle poverty. The Strategy for 2022-2025 has three key priorities: Supporting people who are struggling in poverty now; Preventing people from falling into poverty in the first place and Influencing the Government and other national organisations to get a better deal for the communities in West Northants.
- 2.6 Our priorities are supported by 8 strategic objectives and 33 commitments, high level ambition statements that collectively support the shared vision and are aligned to the 3 priorities. Our vision, priorities and shared commitment statements maps our strategic direction.
- 2.7 Through continued engagement and consultation, a detailed action plan and performance framework will be developed which will underpin the strategy, setting out how we intend to deliver our outcomes.

- 2.8 The strategy has been coproduced through the Anti-Poverty Oversight Group, a West Northants partnership of cross party elected members, service providers, public health, housing, and voluntary and community representatives, including the VCSE Assembly and the Poverty Truth Commission.
- 2.9 Its aim is to add value to work already being undertaken and seeks to add value to this through further collaborative work. The strategy will be regularly reviewed to ensure continued alignment with other policies and strategies and reflect the voices and involvement of people with a lived experience of poverty.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 To approve the West Northamptonshire Anti-Poverty Strategy 2022-2025 for adoption and implementation by the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 3.2 To approve the continued engagement of our community, partners and community and voluntary sector organisations to develop a robust set of action plans, aligned to the objectives set out in the strategy and the performance framework which will underpin the strategy.
- 3.3 To approve the creation of an additional delivery fund to underpin the strategy, namely 'Community Health and Wellbeing Innovation Fund' using available Public Health Grant Reserve. That the strategy includes a commitment to produce an annual summary detailing key achievements and challenges faced in the preceding year.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 Approval of the strategy will lead to a fairer and more inclusive West Northamptonshire, where everyone is able to live their best life, prosperous and fulfilling, free from poverty and inequality.
- 4.2 The strategy will deliver the following outcomes:
- An improvement in population health and wellbeing.
 - Fewer households (and children) living in poverty.
 - An increase in average household incomes and wages.
 - Fewer people unemployed and in receipt of out of work benefits.
 - An increase in the number of people paid at least the real Living Wage.
 - An increase in the amount of lower cost rented and social housing
 - Fewer young people aged 16-17 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).

- Fewer people with no qualifications or skills training.
- Reduce the impact of fuel poverty on families

5. Report Background

- 5.1 The vision for West Northants Council is to create a great place to live, work, visit and thrive, working with our residents, the voluntary and community sector, our communities, social enterprises, businesses and partner organisations.
- 5.2 A commitment to harness the strengths of West Northants people, businesses and places, to create an inclusive and productive area where everyone and every place can thrive, where everyone has the opportunity to live their best life.
- 5.3 Like all areas we face some uncertainty as we emerge from the recent pandemic, which has amplified many of the inequalities that existed, across our communities in West Northamptonshire. It has resulted in a further demand of increased need and support.
- 5.4 We know that there will be an increase in people who will be experiencing poverty as we emerge from the pandemic and for those in poverty prior to the pandemic, are most likely to be struggling even more.
- 5.5 Poverty has wide ranging impacts. Being in poverty can mean that basic material resources are lacking and can lead to people living in poor quality housing, or not having a home. It can also lead to missed opportunities exclusion and even stigma and discrimination. If people are prevented from accessing resources and experiences, it limits their ability to participate and feel valued and included in society. The places where people live and the circumstances into which they are born have a fundamental effect on life chances. People may be considered to be living in poverty if they lack the financial resources to meet their needs, whereas people can be regarded as deprived if they lack any kind of resources, not just income. One in five (22%) people nationally and 10.4% of people in Northamptonshire are living in Poverty.
- 5.6 The links between poverty and poor physical health and mental wellbeing are clear and there are significant health inequalities in West Northamptonshire in both children and adults in some communities as a result.
- 5.7 West Northamptonshire's Anti-Poverty Strategy provides a framework for how we intend to tackle poverty.

5.8 The Strategy for 2022-2025 has three key priorities:

- Supporting people who are struggling in poverty now
- Preventing people from falling into poverty in the first place
- Influencing the Government and other national organisations to get a better deal for the communities in West Northants.

5.9 A series of objectives and commitments sit underneath these priorities. The Strategy is aimed at reducing poverty for people of all ages and personal circumstances, but there are certain groups that face a much higher risk of living in poverty than others. The Strategy seeks to reflect the needs of these vulnerable people and disadvantaged communities most at risk of poverty and identifies a range of factors that continue to contribute to people's risk of experiencing poverty.

5.10 A performance framework has been developed which will help to measure our success against the delivery of the outcomes. The strategy and its performance will be accountable to the Health and Wellbeing Board

6. Issues and Choices

6.1 Cabinet agrees to adopt the Strategy, priorities and commitments.

6.2 Cabinet agrees an alternative focus for future action.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

7.1.1 There are several funding sources that are already contributing to the priorities identified in the Strategy, including the Household Support Fund and the STAR Fund, West Northants also provide direct grants to several community and voluntary organisations who are delivering against some of the outcomes identified in the Strategy.

7.1.2 There is an opportunity to utilise part of the Public Health Reserve to support the delivery of the strategy in particular to focus on initiatives to support improved health and wellbeing in communities. Therefore, creating a 'Community Health and Wellbeing Innovation Fund' to harness the capacity of local organisations. The criteria for the fund will be developed further by the Interim Director of Public Health in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Portfolio holder.

7.1.3 In addition to this there is a commitment to identify additional funding and opportunities are currently being sought. Should any additional funding be identified as part of the

implementation of the Strategy, this would be subject to approval at a future Cabinet meeting once quantified.

7.2 Legal

7.2.3 There are no legal implications arising from the proposals

7.3 Risk

7.3.3 The Strategy focuses on ensuring that the most vulnerable people in our communities receive the support they need, those most at risk and in need of accessing our services.

7.4 Consultation

7.4.3 In addition to the data, it is important that we listen and learn from the lived experiences of people in poverty that we engage with those with first-hand knowledge. To inform the development of the strategy we have sought evidence from local voluntary and community organisations, along with key front-line services who are directly supporting West Northants most vulnerable people.

7.4.4 The Strategy has been coproduced in consultation and discussion with partners, cross party elected members, service providers, public health, housing and voluntary and community representatives, including the VCSE Assembly. An Oversight Board was established comprising of these partners to develop the framework and shape the strategy.

7.4.5 The strategy will be kept under regular review as new evidence and learning emerges from the impact of the pandemic and we continue to be informed by the findings of the West Northants Poverty Truth Commission.

7.4.6 The Poverty Truth Commission has provided the opportunity to listen and learn from the lived experiences of people in poverty. A website has been set up for the Poverty Truth Commission in West Northants poverty-truth.org.uk which is encouraging real life stories, from those with lived experienced of poverty. These case studies are coming from seldom heard groups within our communities, those that are vulnerable and those most in need.

7.4.7 The Hope Centre, working with other organisations and community groups conducted research with specific groups affected by poverty, capturing lived experience, providing the opportunity to feed into the strategy.

7.4.8 The engagement and activity that is driven through the Poverty Truth Commission and the work of Hope and partners has helped to define what poverty means in West

Northamptonshire, develop the strategic objectives and commitments, and will continue to influence the actions that will underpin the strategy

- 7.4.9 The close involvement of our communities in shaping our approach will ensure that we are meeting the differing needs in all the communities of West Northamptonshire to ensure those who experience poverty first-hand remain at the heart of what we do.

7.5 Climate Impact

- 7.5.1 There is no specific climate and environmental impact that may arise from implementing the strategy. However, there is potential for positive impact in developing initiatives to reduce fuel poverty.

7.6 Community Impact

- 7.6.3 The Strategy provides a framework to prevent people from falling into poverty as well as supporting those who are already struggling. Therefore, this Strategy will have an overall positive effect across all equality strands.
- 7.6.4 Delivery of the ambitions of the Strategy will make a significant difference to the health and wellbeing of our local communities and tackle health inequalities. Equality and diversity considerations are an integral part of our approach to addressing poverty in West Northants. The 'effects' and 'causes' sections of the strategy provide a useful summary of the inequalities that we are tackling.
- 7.6.5 An Equalities Screening Assessment has been completed.

8 Background Papers

None

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**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Anti-Poverty Strategy

2022-2025



“Our vision is for a **fairer and **more inclusive** West Northamptonshire, where everyone is able to live their best life, prosperous and fulfilling, free from poverty and inequality.”**

Foreword

Cllr Matt Golby

Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Public Health



West Northants is a great place to live, with a wonderful blend of rural towns and villages mixed with our larger urban centres.

It is a place of heritage, open spaces, leisure opportunities and many strong established businesses, a place that has many strengths, and attractions for investors, new business and visitors.

A place that has had past challenges, and like all areas now facing some uncertainty as we emerge from the recent pandemic, which has amplified many of the inequalities that existed across our communities in West Northamptonshire. It has led to an increased need for services from the Council and partners who have been working hard to find ways to maintain and increase support for those facing hardship.

We know that there will be an increase in people who will be experiencing poverty as we emerge from the pandemic and for those in poverty prior to the pandemic we recognise they are most likely to be struggling even more.

West Northamptonshire's Anti-Poverty Strategy provides a framework for how we intend to tackle poverty, which can impact upon many different people in many different circumstances, prevent people from reaching their potential and can have a negative effect on people's health and wellbeing.

It is important that we do what we can to respond to poverty among all sections of our community and prevent people falling into poverty in the first place.

Poverty prevention and lifting people out of poverty is at the heart of the strategy. The emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic in West Northants has been unprecedented and there has been an immense collective response from

partners, voluntary organisations, community groups and residents who have supported the most vulnerable individuals in our communities, at a time when they have needed it the most. The engagement and dedication from everyone involved has been truly inspiring. In addition to helping those who are already struggling, we must look to prevent people from falling into poverty in the first place and this sets the direction for our strategy.

We recognise that those experiencing poverty are best placed to understand what their needs are and how to respond to them. We also, as a collective, recognised from the outset that the development of the strategy transcends politics.

We have worked in a way that we haven't before, across our political parties towards a vision that we all aspire to. We have listened to our residents, voluntary organisations, community groups and partners who have made clear, that there is much we can do by sharing our resources, and promoting a range of support. Feedback has been clear about making sure we tailor our activities to suit both the rural and the urban pressures that low income households face.

Running alongside the strategy, we have commissioned a West Northants Poverty Truth Commission, engaging those with lived experience. These voices will shape our strategic direction and help deliver and drive our actions.

I would like to take this opportunity to offer our thanks to all those involved in the development of the strategy, including Salford City Council, who have shared their journey and the lessons they have learned along the way, allowing us insight to frame our strategy to deliver the best outcomes for our communities.

I look forward to working with you to ensure its effective implementation, to enable everyone in West Northamptonshire to live their best life.



I am proud to have been part of this process and I am pleased that we have, whilst considering all options, maintained our desire to achieve real change and implement a strategy that can deliver results. Work should be the route out of poverty. More than half of people in poverty now live in a working family.

We must recognise that. Delivery of this strategy won't happen by accident and will take leadership, vision and ambition with social values at the heart of the continued work we do.

I look forward to working with everyone on that delivery and demonstrating our commitment to inclusive growth for the people of West Northamptonshire. I would like to thank everyone who has got us this far.

Cllr Emma Roberts
Labour Group Deputy Leader
Delapre & Rushmere

Oversight Strategy Development Group



what do we mean when we talk about poverty?

The definition of poverty “the state of being extremely poor”, does not reflect the impact of poverty on all aspects of an individual’s and family’s life. West Northants has adopted the Joseph Rowntree Foundation definition of poverty, and the Child Poverty Action Group definition, as these address not only the lacking sufficient money aspect of poverty, but goes further by defining what being “extremely poor” actually means to people.

Living in poverty has been defined as when a family has a total net income of less than 60% of the median income for their family type, after housing costs.

Our agreed definitions of Poverty:

Individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack resources to obtain the type of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or at least widely encouraged and approved, in the societies in which they belong.

Source: Child Poverty Action Group

Poverty means not being able to heat your home, pay your rent, or purchase the essentials for your children. It means waking up every day facing insecurity, uncertainty, and impossible decisions about money.

Source: The Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Poverty has wide ranging impacts. Being in poverty can mean that basic material resources are lacking and can lead to people living in poor quality housing, or not having a home. It can also lead to missed opportunities, exclusion and even stigma and discrimination. If people are prevented from accessing resources and experiences, it limits their ability to participate and feel valued and included in society.

Risk and vulnerability

The places where people live and the circumstances into which they are born have a fundamental effect on life chances. People may be considered to be living in poverty if they lack the financial resources to meet their needs, whereas people can be regarded as deprived if they lack any kind of resources, not just income. One in five (22%) people nationally are living in poverty.

Although this strategy is aimed at reducing poverty for people of all ages and personal circumstances, there are certain groups that face a much higher risk of living in poverty than others. This strategy will seek to reflect the needs of these vulnerable people and disadvantaged communities most at risk of poverty.

We recognise that some of the data sets are a number of years old, however the data that has been used is the most current information that is available.

As newer data becomes available, it will be utilised to further develop the strategy and action plans.



Childhood Poverty

Child poverty is increasing, in 2019 13.9% (10,231) of children were living in poverty in West Northants (this is lower than England, 17.%).

Childhood poverty has knock on effects for later life; Poverty can result in poor educational outcomes for children, bring shame and stigma, can lead to crime and disorder, health problems, drug and alcohol abuse, homelessness, child abuse and neglect and family breakdown. These risks can be passed down through the generations in a vicious cycle. Evidence suggests that childhood poverty increases the likelihood of being out of work as an adult.

In 2020/21 79% (4,961) of children in Northamptonshire achieved a good level of development at 2-2.5 years, which is lower than England (82.9%).²

In 2019, 81% of 5 year olds in Northamptonshire achieved 'expected level' on communication early learning goals, 72.9% of 5 year olds achieved 'expected level' in literacy early learning goals and 78% of 5 year olds achieved 'expected level' on maths early learning goals.³

In 2019/20, the percentage of young people achieving GCSEs (and equivalent qualifications) in English and Maths by age 19 was 65.6% in Daventry, 63.2% in Northampton and 76.5% in South Northants.⁴



Lone parents, large families, carers and care leavers

Lone parents, large families, carers and care leavers are more likely to experience poverty than people without children or caring responsibilities. Extra costs such as childcare or the loss of income from the need to reduce working hours are particularly significant drivers.

These groups are also more likely to be in low paid jobs and have high unemployment rates. Furthermore, they have been more affected by squeezes in housing costs. Lone parents are nearly twice as likely to be in poverty than any other group, and they are twice as likely to live in persistent poverty (being in poverty in the current year as well as at least two out of three of the previous years). Many young people leaving care also face particular challenges, as they often find it difficult to secure employment or work experience opportunities and often lack the confidence to access public services.

In 2021 17.5% of Northants residents responding to a GP patient survey had a caring responsibility.⁵

A Carers Joint Strategic Needs Assessment in 2020 estimated that there were approximately 40,000 carers in West Northants.⁶

Women

Women are more likely to experience persistent poverty. More than one fifth of women (22%) have a persistent low income, compared to approximately 14% of men. Living in persistent poverty denies women the opportunity to build up savings and assets to fall back on in times of hardship. This effect accumulates for older women which can result in extensive poverty.

Some of the contributing factors include lower pay, part-time work; higher rates of unemployment and economic inactivity; likelihood of being a single parent.

Nine out of ten lone parents are women. The median gross weekly pay for male single parents is £346, while for female single parents it is £194.40.⁸



People with a disability or suffering ill health

Families with at least one disabled person are more likely to live in poverty.

Adults with disabilities are also more likely to be in poverty than those who are not disabled, and this has increased in the past five years.

In 2021 53.1% of Northants residents responding to a GP survey had a long-term condition.⁹ Applied to the local adult population this would equate to 164,800 people.

In 2020/21 11% of GP patients responding to the GP patient survey had a long-term mental health problem, which equates to 34,203 people.

Older people

Low income in retirement is often linked to earlier low pay, or time out of employment. Many older people are also missing out on the entitlements they are due to lack of knowledge or assumptions that they are not entitled. While pensioner poverty rates have fallen in recent years, with an ageing population action is required to ensure that progress is maintained.

In 2019 10.8% (9,398) of older people in West Northants were living in deprivation.¹⁰

This is lower than England (14.2%). In 2011, 29.4% (16,407) of older people in West Northants were living alone.¹¹

(this data is from the last census and will be updated when the 2021 data becomes available in Summer 2022).

Some ethnic minority groups

Certain ethnic groups experience higher levels of poverty as a result of a number of factors such as higher levels of unemployment, poorer housing and low take up of and access to services.

According to the 2011 Census (data from 2021 is due to be released later this year) there were 375,101 residents and 89.8% of those classed themselves as White British. 5.1% of residents were born outside the British Isles, with 2.7% born outside the EU.

The most common non-British Isles countries for residents to have been born in are Poland and India.¹² 93.4% of people living in West Northamptonshire speak English. The other top languages spoken are 1.8% Polish, 0.5% Bengali, 0.3% Romanian, 0.3% Lithuanian, 0.3% Gujarati, 0.2% Russian, 0.2% Chinese.¹³

No recourse to public funds - As a condition of their visa, most categories of migrants in the UK have no recourse to public funds, meaning that they and their children are unable to claim benefits. Undocumented migrants and people whose immigration status is insecure are also unable to claim benefits. The Children's Society has estimated that more than 1.4 million people have NRPF, including nearly 175,000 children (UK).

National Citizens Advice research suggests:

People with NRPF are four times more likely to be behind on at least one essential bill (81% against 20% for the UK population) with rent, utilities and council tax the most common bills missed.

Almost half (48%) report living in overcrowded accommodation and 1 in 5 (18%) have experienced homelessness or housing insecurity.

Three-quarters (75%) have suffered from at least one negative consequence of having NRPF, including not being able to feed themselves or their family, or afford clothing and footwear appropriate for the weather.

1 in 4 (23%) already can't afford to heat their homes. With big price rises now kicking in for fuel bills, many more are likely to face impossible choices this winter.

In-work poverty

Whilst it is true that unemployment remains a key factor, poverty amongst working people in the UK has risen significantly. In-work poverty has risen to 56% of people in poverty. The increase of in-work poverty has ever been experienced by families where all adults work full time within the household.



Some people living in higher working households comprised 17% of people living in poverty in 2018/19, compared to 14% 10 years earlier and 9% in 1996/97.

People living in lower work intensity households comprised 47% of people living in poverty in 2018/19, compared to 42% 10 years earlier and 35% in 1996/97.¹⁷

Unemployed

The number of people unemployed in West Northamptonshire in 2020 was 10,000.¹⁴

In 2020/21 41,400 people were economically inactive¹⁵

In 2019/20 5,415 were claiming unemployment benefit¹⁶ and 779 were long-term unemployed.

Being in a working family (especially one where there is a full-time worker and all adults are in work) reduces the risk of being in poverty, and this will be supported by recent changes to the benefits system. It is by no means a guarantee, especially if that work is part-time or in self-employment, a low-paying sector or if there is a single earner in the household. Around a third of working-age adults in families where there is only part-time work are in poverty, as are almost a quarter of people working in the administrative and support service sector.

Poverty in West Northamptonshire

In 2019 9.6% (37,318) people in West Northants were living in income deprivation. This is lower than England (12.9%.) However, Citizen's Advice have suggested that deprivation data does not give the full picture.

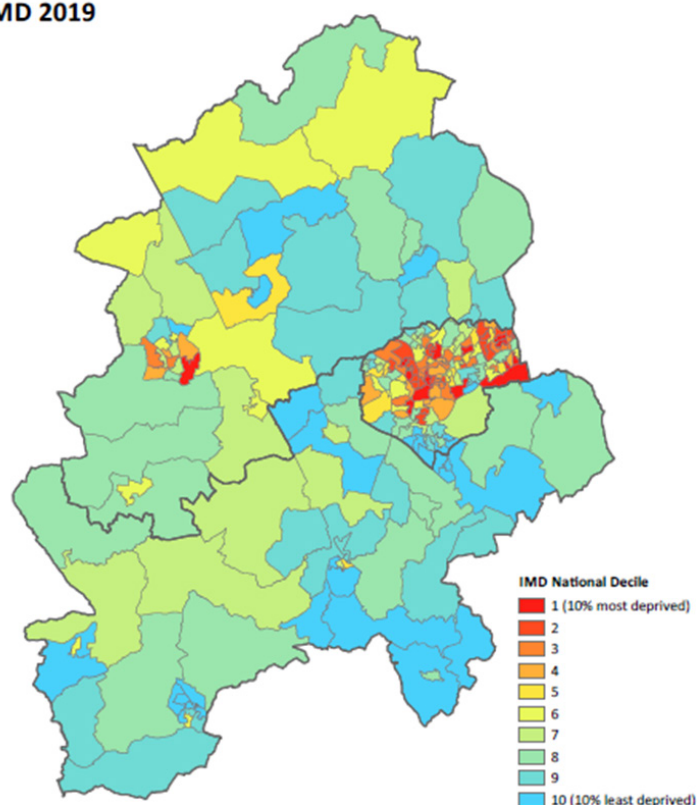
They have found that 30% of people accessing their services live in the most deprived areas, but 72% of people accessing their service are living below the poverty line. Over half of those living in poverty live in working households, where work does not provide enough income to meet basic needs or people fall into poverty due to circumstances beyond their control.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is the official measure of relative deprivation in England and is part of a suite of outputs that form the Indices of Deprivation (IoD).

It follows an established methodological framework in broadly defining deprivation to encompass a wide range of an individual's living conditions.

- The IMD shows that 16.9% of the population of West Northamptonshire live in the 20% most deprived areas (LSOA).
- The area with the highest proportion of residents living in the top 20% deprived areas is Northampton (28.2%).

West Northamptonshire
IMD 2019



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Table 1: The LSOA areas in the most deprived decile on IMD

Local Authority District name (2019)	IMD Rank	Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Decile	LSOA Name
Northampton	185	1	Billing Aquadrome, Bellinge- Fieldmill Road
Northampton	1,139	1	Briar Hill- Ringway, Southwood Hill
Northampton	1,372	1	St James' End- St James Retail Park, Black Lion Hill, St Peter's Way, Drapery
Northampton	1,398	1	Kingsheath- Park Drive, West Oval
Northampton	1,520	1	Dallington Road, Merthyr Road
Northampton	1,803	1	Blackthorn Primary School
Northampton	2,238	1	Eastfield park, Grange Road
Daventry	2,375	1	Borough Hill, Trafalgar Way
Northampton	2,420	1	Marriot Street, St George's Street, Deal Street, Sheep Street
Northampton	2,765	1	St Andrews Hospital, Rushmere Road
Northampton	2,963	1	Auckland Close, Kingsland Avenue, Whilton Road
Northampton	3,065	1	Ecton Brook Road, Pennycress Place
Northampton	3,246	1	Goldings/ Overstone Lodge/ Blackthorn

Causes of Poverty

The anti-poverty strategy recognises that the core aim is to address both the causes of poverty and its effects. We know that the variations of inequalities of health including education, housing and employment drives variations in outcomes for physical and mental health. These impact on an individual's inability to prevent sickness, or to take action and access treatment when ill health occurs. Therefore, whilst the core purpose of the strategy is to reduce poverty within West Northamptonshire communities, we recognise the need to look at access to activities and services which will improve health and wellbeing, to increase resilience in communities and prevent people from falling into poverty in the first place as well as addressing the impacts of poverty. This will add value and complement any established activity towards actively reducing poverty.

The causes and consequences of poverty are often complex. Analysis of the available evidence suggests that there is no single cause, but a range of factors contribute to people's risk of experiencing poverty. Over half of those living in poverty live in working households, where work does not provide enough income to meet basic needs or people fall into poverty due to circumstances beyond their control. In the past twenty years poverty rates have fallen.

However, since 2013 previous reductions in poverty among families have gone into reverse. This is largely due to rises in housing, food and fuel prices increasing the cost of living.

In 2019 11.8% (15,192) people in West Northants were in fuel poverty¹⁹



Unemployment and low pay

There is still a strong association between unemployment and poverty, along with a significant rise of in-work poverty.

Young people are particularly impacted, with the number aged 16 to 18 not in employment, education or training increasing.

In 2019 3.5% of 16-17 year olds in Northamptonshire were not in education, employment or training (NEET)²⁰

Although getting more local people into good quality work will undoubtedly play a major role in tackling poverty, it must be acknowledged that even when people do work it is not always a guaranteed route out of poverty. Low pay and low wage growth continues to be a key cause of poverty, we have seen a significant rise in part-time contracts.

In 2021 gross median weekly pay in West Northants was £515.30 and in 2019 the gross value added per hour worked was £31.46.

Lack of skills and qualifications

Job opportunities for those with few qualifications are limited and austerity and the COVID pandemic has meant that there are fewer resources to tackle poverty, adversely affecting those worse off.

In 2020 11,900 people aged 16 - 64 (4.8%) had no qualifications, which is lower than the national average (6.4%).²¹

In 2019/20 the percentage of young people achieving GCSEs (and equivalent qualifications) in English and Maths by age 19 was 65.6% in Daventry, 63.2% in Northampton and 76.5% in South Northants.²²



We know there is a strong link between poverty and poor mental health

In Northamptonshire in 2018/19: 6% reported a low happiness score²⁶ and 18.1% reported a high anxiety score.²⁷

In 2020/21 14.3% (88,642) of GP registered patients had depression recorded in their record and 11% of those responding to the annual GP survey had a long-term mental health problem.²⁸

Household debt

National figures suggest that there are around 8.3 million people in the UK who are unable to pay their bills and around 22% of UK adults have less than £100 in savings.

Renters, young people, lone parents and those with three or more children are most likely to be affected, and this often compounded by the recovery charges associated with paying off those debts.

More and more families are having to borrow to support their day-to-day living standards.

High housing and living costs

High housing and living costs constitute one of the most direct impacts on poverty and material deprivation. Rising house prices, rents in the private sector and interest rates are pushing more renters and homeowners below the poverty line and increasing demand for lower cost housing, for example, social housing. The [West Northamptonshire Council, Housing and Economic Needs Assessment, 2021](#) shows that 1,253 new affordable rented homes are needed in West Northants each year, between 2020-2050.

Since 2017, West Northamptonshire has seen the number of people presenting as homeless increase (from 983 to 2059). The high cost of housing is not the only problem. The rising cost for other basic necessities such as food, clothing and utilities, coupled with weak wage growth, means more and more families are reaching crisis point. In addition, many of those on low incomes are also forced to pay over the odds for some essential goods and services (known as the Poverty Premium) including energy, finance, furniture and white goods. Estimates suggest that the poverty premium can amount to £490 a year, but sometimes can be as high as £2,250. The type of fuel tariff low income households are on contributes the most to the poverty premium.

The table below shows the initial estimate of the number of households with a current housing need. These figures are before any 'affordability test' has been applied to assess the ability of households to meet their own housing needs and has been termed 'the number of households in unsuitable housing'. Overall, the analysis estimates that there are currently just over 12,049 households living in unsuitable housing (or without housing) in West Northamptonshire.

Poor physical and mental health

The link between poverty and a higher risk of illness and premature death is well established.

Poverty leads to feelings of insecurity and uncertainty, and impacts on people's attitudes towards the future. It can result in unhealthy choices, such as smoking and using drugs or alcohol, which may be used to cope with daily stresses and prevents people from being able to invest in their future.

All of these factors can have a significant impact on mental and physical health, and lead to health inequalities.

In Northamptonshire in the period 2018–20 life expectancy at birth was 79.8 for males and 82.8 for females²³ and in 2017-19 healthy life expectancy was 63.4 for males and 63.6 for females.²⁴

In the period 2017-19 the gap in life expectancy between people living in the most and least deprived parts of Northamptonshire was 8.8 years for males and 7.1 years for females.²⁵

Table 2: Estimated Number of Households Living in Unsuitable Housing ²⁹

	Homeless/ concealed households	Households in over-crowding	Existing affordable housing tenants in need	Households from other tenures in need
Daventry	317	623	100	682
Northampton	1,346	4,763	341	2,282
South Northants	304	475	79	737
West Northants	1,967	5,861	520	3,701

The figures presented are estimates and may include an element of double counting as households could fall within more than one category.

Lived Experience

In addition to the data, it is important that we listen and learn from the lived experiences of people in poverty; that we engage with those with first-hand knowledge. To inform the development of the strategy we have sought evidence from local voluntary and community organisations, along with key front-line services who are directly supporting West Northants' most vulnerable people.

The Strategy has been coproduced in consultation and discussion with partners, cross party elected members, service providers, public health, housing and voluntary and community representatives, including the VCSE Assembly. An Oversight Board was established comprising these partners to develop the framework and shape the strategy.

The strategy will be kept under regular review as new evidence and learning emerges from the impact of the pandemic and we continue to be informed by the findings of the West Northants Poverty Truth Commission.

The Poverty Truth Commission has provided the opportunity to listen and learn from the lived experiences of people in poverty. A website has been set up for the Poverty Truth Commission in West Northants poverty-truth.org.uk which is encouraging real life stories, from those with lived experienced of poverty. These case studies are coming from seldom heard groups within our communities, those that are vulnerable and those most in need.

The Hope Centre, working with other organisations and community groups, conducted research with specific groups affected by poverty, capturing lived experience, providing the opportunity to feed into the strategy.

The engagement and activity that is driven through the Poverty Truth Commission and the work of The Hope Centre and partners has helped to define what poverty means in West Northamptonshire. The Poverty Truth Commission will continue to develop the strategic objectives and commitments.

The close involvement of our communities in shaping our approach will ensure that we are meeting the differing needs in all of the communities of West Northamptonshire to ensure those who experience poverty first-hand remain at the heart of what we do.

Live Your Best Life

In West Northants we want children and adults to have every opportunity to live their best life. Living your best life for us means people have equality of opportunity to be the best version of themselves. To be the best version of themselves we recognise that people need;

- The best start in life.
- Access to the best available education and learning.
- Opportunity to be fit, well and independent.
- Employment that keeps them and their families out of poverty.
- Housing that is affordable, safe and sustainable in places which are clean and green.
- To feel safe in their homes and when out and about.
- Connected to their families and friends
- The chance for a fresh start, when things go wrong.
- Access to health and social care when they need it.
- To be accepted and valued simply for who they are.

To support our residents with these 10 domains means that we have to collaborate, not just with our partners and local business but also with local people to ensure we understand the uniqueness of each of our Neighbourhoods and the people who live in them. Understanding this uniqueness enables us to ensure the right support, environment and interventions are in place to support people to live their best life.

This strategy will provide a significant contribution to enable people to live their best life and does not intend to duplicate any of the work that is already underway but, seeks to add value, align, enhance, and support delivery. The Health and Wellbeing Board will ensure this strategy and its implementation contributes to our overall approach and will provide an annual report to West Northants Council detailing progress and outcomes delivered for local people.

What are we going to do?

To achieve our vision we must work together to maximise our resources and focus on activities that are likely to have a lasting impact on reducing poverty across West Northants, to improve the lives of our local communities. We will do this by focusing on three key priorities:



These in turn are supported by 8 strategic objectives and 32 commitments, high level ambition statements that collectively support the shared vision and are aligned to the 3 priorities. Our vision, priorities and shared commitment statements map our strategic direction. We are clear that this is the start of our journey, identifying our commitments against what we know now and recognising we still have a long way to go.

Through continued engagement of our community, partners, local businesses and community and voluntary sector organisations we will develop a robust set of action plans and a performance framework which will underpin the strategy.

Supporting people who are struggling in poverty now

As clearly demonstrated, levels of poverty remain unacceptably high. It is for us all - public sector, businesses, the voluntary and community sector, communities and individuals to come together to provide better support for those who are struggling, and those who are in poverty now.

Commitment of resource and funding - to deliver the strategy and resultant action plan, with a focus on those most in need

To really make a difference there is a need for effective support services that reach beyond the public sector, at an organisational and individual level. These organisations are also faced with their own challenges of rising demand and reducing resources.

We will:

- Work to map existing resources and services to understand the need and identify gaps across West Northants to drive our actions.
- Work with partners and communities across West Northants to develop a better understanding of the characteristics and experiences of those most in need; the different types of poverty that most affects them; and how we can work together to provide more tailored support when needed.
- Continue to provide appropriate funding to the relevant voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations working across West Northants who provide critical support for those in severe hardship, measuring outcomes and effectiveness of investment.
- Provide more targeted support to those most in need, our high risk groups experiencing severe hardship.

Improve communication and awareness of information and support for those who are in need

This strategy is designed to help bring about change and improve the lives of all people on low incomes, regardless of personal circumstances, across the whole of West Northants.

We will:

- Develop a communication and engagement strategy that ensures we target specific communities, those most at risk and most in need as identified within the strategy.
- Ensure all our residents are aware of the services available to support them and have access to these services when they are in need.

Increase access to affordable credit, free welfare advice and debt advice

Free and independent advice services play a hugely important role in the fight against poverty.

We will:

- Continue to invest in necessary free and independent advice services; front line services, providing vital support to help maximise people's incomes and ensure everyone understands their rights and legal entitlements.
- Work with providers of welfare rights and debt advice reviewing the way these are delivered to ensure more people are able to access the free and independent advice they need.
- Enhance the awareness of affordable credit and savings options to those excluded from mainstream banking; ensuring more people can benefit from cheaper lending and a convenient way of saving regularly.
- Review the Council's debt collection practices (including the use of external enforcement agencies), so that they are undertaken in as sensitive a manner as possible, and in a way that does not create further hardship or financial difficulties for vulnerable people.

Preventing people from falling into poverty in the first place

As well as taking action to alleviate some of the causes of poverty in the short term, we must work collectively to address many of the underlying causes of poverty to prevent people from falling into poverty in the first place. We will seek to do this by:

Helping people on low incomes to maximise their income and minimise their costs

West Northants continues to have fantastic growth potential and our Local Plan sets out clear frameworks for attracting investment and delivering new jobs and opportunities over the coming years. It is essential that local people are given opportunities generated through economic growth and we use our influence to target employers who offer local jobs, pay well and treat their employees well.

Commitments:

- The Council has recently agreed to a pay award for all directly employed staff, which is above the current real living wage
- A commitment to encourage businesses and organisations based in West Northants to pay all their staff the living wage.
- Support benefit claimants to receive their full entitlement to all benefits.
- Promote social mobility, by raising skills and improving access to a range of employment opportunities for people on low incomes, including apprenticeships and adult education.

Meet housing need with good quality social housing and enable the private rented sector to be an effective housing contributor

We have an absolute commitment to preventing homelessness in West Northants and providing alternative housing options, wherever possible, to avoid the need for people to make a homeless application and face the prospect of living in temporary accommodation or on the streets.

It is clear we need lower cost rented and social housing in West Northants to support the existing and growing population.

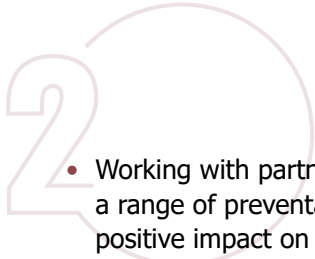
Commitments:

- Develop a new West Northants Housing Strategy.
- Support the development of new homes and ensure rent levels support local housing need.
- Support private tenants and landlords to improve energy efficiency standards of homes to help tenants and residents to reduce their energy costs.
- Develop a new West Northants Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
- Help to prevent and reduce homelessness by seeking alternative housing options and increasing the number of good quality private sector homes available to rent.

Build resilient and supportive communities through investment in services that support health and social wellbeing, working in partnership with communities to develop local assets and build community resource

Commitments:

- We will listen to residents' views on local issues and work with communities to identify the solutions. We will seek to coordinate and facilitate community action to help address poverty.
- Work with partner organisations to develop area based approaches and multi-agency initiatives, supporting at a neighbourhood level where there are higher levels of poverty and discrimination.
- We will use an approach that recognises and builds on the strengths of individuals, families and communities. We will continue to build the relationship between public services and residents, communities and businesses that enables greater shared decision making and genuine co-production of services. We saw great examples of this during our response to COVID 19 and we need to ensure we continue to make full use of the assets, skills and resources that already exists within our diverse local areas.



- Working with partners across the system to provide a range of preventative services that can have a positive impact on health outcomes for low income residents and communities. Promoting healthy lifestyles and physical activity, including through the provision of leisure centres and providing access to green spaces, working with local voluntary groups and businesses to promote healthy eating and access to sustainable food.

- The Poverty Truth Commission has identified mental ill health as a particular area of concern. Working with those individuals and families with lived experiences of these issues, along with our health partners, we will explore ways we can better understand the relationship between poverty and mental health, and seek to better support the mental health and wellbeing of our most vulnerable.

Influencing the Government and other national organisations to get a better deal for the communities in West Northants

Whilst there is a lot of action that we can take locally to address poverty, many of the main drivers still lie with national government, which is why it is imperative that we influence the poverty debate at a regional and national level. Working together we must continue to do all we can to build the evidence base for change.

Engage members of parliament and central government departments, to advocate for equality and fairness to get the best deal for our communities

Commitments:

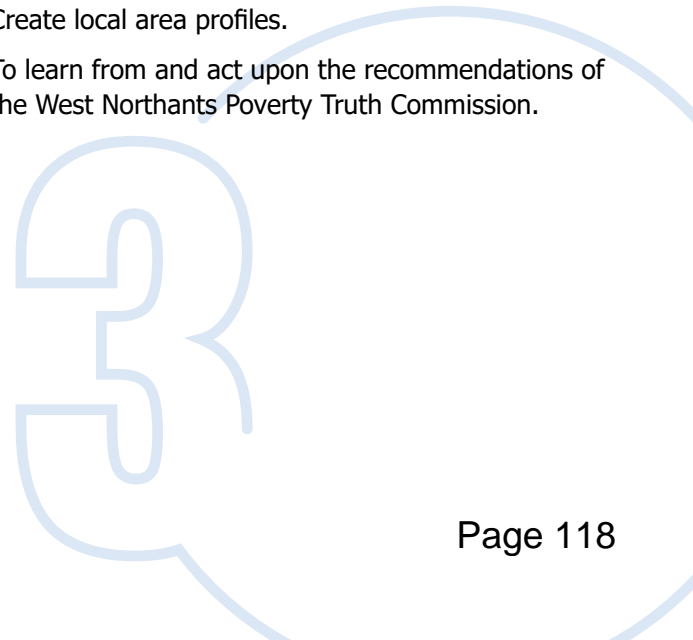
- Harness the appetite and continue to work together, as agencies, as partners, across political parties and across our communities.
- Continue the work of the oversight group which has helped to develop and shape the strategy so far.
- Building on the work that is already taking place at a national level, we will develop a campaign to highlight the hidden dangers of taking out short term, high cost credit and promote more responsible lending.

Utilise the evidence base for action and share this to lever in funds both locally and nationally

West Northants has a wealth of local data and intelligence on poverty and deprivation that has been used to inform the development of this strategy. We will continue to keep our knowledge base up to date and review in a timely fashion.

Commitments:

- Utilise organisations such as the University of Northampton to help provide high quality research, analysis and evaluation.
- Utilise local best practice, to learn and share and influence policy.
- Create local area profiles.
- To learn from and act upon the recommendations of the West Northants Poverty Truth Commission.



Measuring Success

The following outcomes will indicate we are making a difference. Our action plans will focus on those in greatest need and we will continue to collectively champion the cause of those who are most at risk.



A performance framework, which will include a set of performance indicators and a detailed action plan will be developed to measure the effectiveness of our strategy.

The performance indicators that will be used are those for which we have existing data sets available nationally or locally, collected by West Northants Council. We recognise that other partners and our community and voluntary sector have valuable data, which will provide a richer picture. Our intention is to use this information to help inform the future development of our strategy and drive our actions.

Rachel and Joleen's Story

For Rachel and Joleen, two young care leavers who agreed to share their experiences, poverty is about not having the resources (like money, food, or clothes) to cover their basic needs. "I think I realise it more now that I'm older", Rachel explained. "When you are young you don't really pay attention to stuff like that, until you get your own place. Then, it's a different story". "That's when you struggle", Joleen adds. "You think: I had this help when I was in foster care, but now what do I do? Who do I ask for help? I think you think about it more, and it makes you more appreciative of the things that you have now."

As Rachel and Joleen have received lasting support from the Leaving Care team, they expressed their gratitude and admitted how they would turn to them if they needed help. However, Rachel – who is not with Leaving Care anymore – acknowledged she no longer knows where else to get support from. "I wouldn't know what to do, no. I wouldn't know what to do to get out of this situation." She alluded to the abrupt transition into independent living and what a daunting and overwhelming experience it was. "It's the shock when you leave Leaving Care for me. I was 21, I didn't know what was going on, or what to do, or anything, and then it went downhill from there".

Over time, Rachel and Joleen have gradually gained more confidence to ask for help, but it is not without its challenges as they still struggle to receive the support they need. When reflecting on her experiences contacting services for support, Joleen explained: "You wait there (on the phone) for an hour, and they say 'call back tomorrow'. You could ring in the morning and it's still a 45-minute wait". "It's finding the courage to ask for help, then finding it, then waiting through it", said Rachel. "It's frustrating, and it just makes you want to give up. But you've got to persist".

For Joleen and Rachel poverty is a full circle – a cycle with barriers that stop them from escaping from it. "We were talking earlier about driving lessons. Obviously, if a young care leaver was able to experience learning to drive and then buying a vehicle, the opportunities for employment expand. But it's not easy to be able to do driving lessons and buying our own car, so we don't have an opportunity of a bigger, wider range of employment. So even if we were to get a job, we'd have to find out how to travel there", they add. "How are we even going to afford to travel there? It's just things like that, and it goes round."

Lorraine's Perspective on Poverty

Lorraine is a working mother, grandmother and student who recently shared her story on how she is struggling with debt and financial distress. For her, living in poverty means not having enough to pay her bills and the cost of essentials, like food or heating. Although her understanding of what poverty means has remained pretty much the same over time, she got angrier about it over the years when she realised she was stuck in the same position.

With her debts, Lorraine feels that outside her family, there are not enough places for her to go get help. She contacted Citizen's Advice, and she is now in a 60-day breathing space which gives her temporary protection from her debtors and bailiff action. Lorraine has already struggled with council tax bailiffs in the past – not because she does not want to pay it, she explained, but because she can't afford to pay it. "You start off with a debt that I think it was £1,600, but now is £2,300, because every time a bailiff comes, you get £200 put on top. And you have to, obviously, not answer your door, because... it's all been very stressful."

Lorraine is nearly finished with her master's degree, which she started soon after completing her first degree in International Relations and Politics. Nevertheless, as a student Lorraine has been suffering the stress of having to continually switch between universal credit and her student loan. She expressed how, as a result, there were periods of time when she could not claim any benefits. "In that time, I think it was the September when I started uni, until January, I had been entitled to absolutely zero. And now I owe them over £1,000. Then this is how people get in debt."

Even though Lorraine hopes getting these degrees will help her secure a better job, she is not oblivious to the barriers that stand in her way out of poverty, one of them being her age: "I'm going to be 60, so I may not be most employers first choice, because of my age". Lorraine added: "I wish I had gone to university years ago, but you get stuck in that trap – you're so busy spending your whole life concentrating on how you're going to live, that you forget maybe there's something you can do about it. It's just a constant loop you get stuck in."

Lorraine also reflected on how difficult it is for people and families to break the cycle of poverty. "If I get a better job, it will change for me. But all these people that are in world wage, they can't all go out and go get degrees and get better jobs. It doesn't work like that, because there are not enough jobs anyway. Who would do the jobs that people look down on if everyone got out and tried to do better? People should be paid for the value of their work – a cleaner is valuable, but they don't treat it like that", she says. "There should be a minimum wage and it should be enough that people can live on, and if they go out to work, they should be able to live on it. Have enough to pay their bills, to eat and everything, and have a little bit leftover. Everyone should have that."

Case Studies

Case Study F

F is originally from Kenya. She is 68 years old and has been in the UK for 19 years and has no recourse to public funds. She is married to a British national who is 67. Neither of them works, and although he is on a state pension, they find it hard to make ends meet. "We don't have enough money to buy washing salts, food, clothing".

When she first came to this country, in 2002, she worked in care, for private agencies. She paid tax with a fake ID, which she paid £200 for. From the money she was paid, she remitted money back to Kenya regularly, to support her children and family there.

"I used to have good weekly money. "At that time I was even supporting in the house, I had everything" In 2015, she had to stop work, due to ill health. "Now I can't stand for long, I can't lift, so I can't work." To make end meets, F has been doing cash-for-work jobs for community, mostly childminding, for which parents pay cash-in-hand. F has also taken on domestic, housekeeping work, as and when it has been available. For a period, she was doing ironing for cash, earning £20 for 5 or 6 hours work. "They don't pay good money"

F is an overstayer. She has applied for settled status but has been refused 5 times. Each time she has applied, she had to find significant amounts of money. She has been badly advised, legally. The last time she tried was in 2018, when she was arrested on suspicion of forging her marriage certificate. She was remanded in custody and, after trial, was sentenced to 3 months and 2 weeks, had already been in for three months in Gloucester. She was released after three weeks, once they were satisfied that her marriage was genuine. She was told she would not be deported because of her ill health. She told us that someone wrote to her GP while she was in prison, to instruct him/her not to treat her. She has since been receiving support from Doctors of the World for all her medical needs, including the Covid vaccine.

"When you are not a citizen you don't get enough support from the surrounding, from the police, from the hospital, you don't get enough support because they learn that you are not allowed to be in this country, so they support you very little".



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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

12TH APRIL 2022

CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION AND GROWTH: COUNCILLOR LIZZY BOWEN

Report Title	Appointment of an Operator for the Vulcan Works Creative Hub
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List of Appendices

Appendix A - Tender document – Invitation to Submit Final Tender (ISIT)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report requests approval to enter into contract with the preferred bidder for the operation of the Vulcan Works Creative Hub.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Vulcan Works Creative Hub (VWCH) is located within the heart of the cultural quarter in Northampton and comprises of 68 lettable units, co-working space, breakout areas and meetings rooms. The Hub will give creative business a place where they can be based and collaborate.
- 2.2 The construction works of the hub reached practical completion in July 2021, with the focus of the work now being on the procurement of an operator for the centre and the fit out.
- 2.3 A competitive procurement process has now taken place to procure a suitably qualified operator for the management of the Vulcan Works Creative Hub with a preferred bidder being identified. This report seeks approval of the appointment of the preferred bidder to allow for the Vulcan Works to become operational and become a hub for business support for businesses in the creative and cultural industries within Northampton.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
- a) Approve the appointment of the preferred bidder following the procurement process for the operation of the Vulcan Works Creative Hub using Competitive Procedure with Negotiation (CPN).

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 Reasons for recommendations:
- a) to allow the Vulcan Works Creative Hub to become operational as well as a hub for business support for businesses in the creative and cultural industries.
 - b) to ensure the operator is appointed and allow the centre to begin to generate income.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 The VWCH aims to expand and develop Northampton's Cultural Quarter and the Northampton Waterside Enterprise Zone (EZ) by establishing new creative activity in a creative business centre.
- 5.2 The VWCH will be set up as a managed workspace centre and contains 68 new lettable units which is a mixture of co-working space and office space and creative 'messy' workshops. The centre will offer business support as well as including breakout areas and bookable meeting rooms which can be used by the businesses located within the centre.

- 5.3 The VWCH is anticipated to increase footfall and economic activity in the town centre, foster local creativity and entrepreneurship and improve graduate retention in the town. The center will also attract highly skilled entrepreneurs and employees to the area. This is more important than ever as Northampton works towards its economic recovery from the COVID pandemic. It is also envisaged that this is a good time for the center to open with regards to businesses potentially downsizing their required office space due to a larger culture of working from home, as well as businesses that are now outgrowing their space or workshops that they use at home.
- 5.4 The businesses in the Vulcan Works will be offered on site business support which will be provided as part of the operators remit. This will help to ensure businesses thrive and grow. Supporting businesses as we head out of the pandemic is an important part of the recovery plan for Northampton to help nurture and grow businesses which may have been detrimentally affected by the current situation. VWCH will help to encourage economic growth at a time when it is needed most.
- 5.5 The procurement of an operator to run and manage the facility was hoped to have been completed by the end of 2020 but due to pressures caused by COVID, this delayed progress, and the procurement was launched in October 2021.
- 5.6 The council is procuring an operator for the supply of services for the day-to-day operation and management of the VWCH.
- 5.7 The procurement process was a Competitive Procedure with Negotiation (CPN) under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended), which provided the opportunity for a structured approach to the procurement.
- 5.8 The operator must develop an effective business support programme to ensure that, as a minimum, all users are aware and are able to access the business support they need. This will include working with partners such as the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) Growth Hub and the University of Northampton.
- 5.9 The procurement process has ensured that an experienced and value for money operator has been appointed to ensure that the Vulcan Works Creative Hub meets its key performance indicators such as:
- Supporting 116 businesses by year five
 - 75 new businesses created by year five
 - 295 gross direct and indirect jobs supported by year five
 - £18m of net additional GVA generated by year five

- 5.10 The council commissioned an operating model options appraisal in May 2019 to assess options for how the VWCH should be operated and recommend a preferred approach.
- 5.11 The appraisal set out to analyse nine operators against a range of market indicators in order to establish the most effective way the VWCH should be operated. The council was also considered as a potential operator as part of this process to assess its own suitability to operate the center.
- 5.12 The report concluded that for the VWCH to succeed there was a need to secure a high quality, experienced operator to drive the delivery of the VWCH.
- 5.13 Accordingly, the council sought a suitably skilled and experienced operator that provided a managed workspace service, including marketing and premises management. The appointment of the operator will be through a management agreement and lease. The contract will be for an initial 3 years with the option for a 2-year extension at the discretion of the council.
- 5.14 The procurement of an operator commenced in October 2021 under the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (PCR 2015) using the Competitive Procedure with Negotiation.
- 5.15 Five prospective operators submitted the Selection Questionnaire (SQ). As part of the SQ phase this was then shortlisted down to three preferred bidders following an initial sifting exercise based on their previous experience of managing centers of similar nature and size.
- 5.16 Within the Invitation to Submit Initial Tender (ISIT) phase, the three bidders reduced to two and these final two bidders were then taken through to the negotiation stage ahead of the submission of their final tenders which were assessed on the following metrics:
- 5.17 **Management of the Centre**
This was weighted as 20per cent of the total quality criteria and required bidders to provide a vision for the center and what their approach is for managing the hub such as ensuring they maintain adequate staffing to provide high quality management of the VWCH, how they will manage the building including repairs and maintenance as well as providing detail on how they will meet the objectives and outputs of hub.
- 5.18 **Marketing and Promotion**
This was weighted as 15 per cent of the total quality criteria and required bidders to detail their marketing plan to promote, support and enhance the activities of the VWCH as well as the development of a website for the hub and developing relationships with partners to maximise links and synergies.
- 5.19 **Implementation Plan**
This was weighted as 10 per cent of the total quality criteria and required bidders to detail how they will mobilise plans to ensure that they have adequate and suitable arrangements in place to get the center up and running as soon as possible. It also included how they will ensure the

units are in a lettable state and the meetings rooms and common areas are accessible and useable for all,

5.20 Tenant Support

This was weighted as 10 per cent of the total quality criteria and required bidders to detail how they will build a strong relationship with all tenants. This would include how they would maintain a high standard of customer service and satisfaction through ensuring there is regular communication with tenants, comprehensive induction for tenants and ensuring that any complaints or queries are dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner.

5.21 Business Support Services

This was weighted as 30 per cent of the total quality criteria and required bidders to submit a costed business support programme for the full 5-year period of the contract. It would need to demonstrate how they meet the requirements of providing a business support service to tenants, through working with partners such as the Growth Hub and University of Northampton to provide training and support on topics such as leadership, management, change management, marketing skills, entrepreneurship, finance, and strategic planning.

5.22 Performance Monitoring

This was weighted as 10 per cent of the total quality criteria and required bidders to demonstrate how they will ensure that key performance indicators (highlighted earlier in the report) will be met and how they will work with the Council to ensure that all supporting information is ready as and when required, as well as ensuring they have adequate systems and processes in place to handle and review data and sensitive information.

5.23 As part of the tender, bidders were also assessed on their financial plan for the center which included their forecast for occupancy levels and projected income, expenditure on the management of hub such as repairs and maintenance costs, health and safety, utilities, business support and marketing activities.

5.24 Bidders were also required to propose a management fee which will be paid to the operator each contract year as their fee for managing the center, a percentage 'success fee' which is calculated after the management fee and center operational costs are deducted from the income which will be paid each contract year, with the success fee needing to be between a minimum of 5% and a maximum of 30%.

5.25 When it came to assessing the bids, several different teams were involved in the independent evaluation. This included Major Projects & Regeneration, Assets, Economic Development, Assurance and Performance Monitoring, Communications, Legal, Finance, as well as Amion (external consultants) and SEMLEP. The Procurement team has also been involved throughout the process.

5.26 The scoring was split between quality and price criteria with a weighting of 60 per cent and 40 per cent respectively. Bidder 1 (preferred bidder) scored 43.2 per cent on quality and 38.1 per cent on price.

cent on price with a total score of 81.51 per cent. Bidder 2 (unsuccessful bidder) scored 37.8 per cent on quality and 36.96 per cent on price with a total score of 74.76 per cent.

Criteria	Bidder 1 Score (/10)	Bidder 2 Score
Management of the Hub	7	6
Marketing Plan	8	6
Implementation Plan	7	7
Tenant Support	8	7
Business Support Services	8	7
Performance Monitoring	7	7
Finances	38.31%	36.96%

- 5.27 Despite not being part of the scoring, it is important to highlight the overall profitability of the two bids. Over the five-year term, Bidder 1 expects to generate a cumulative profit of £186,512. Bidder 2 over the five-year term expects to incur a cumulative loss of £169,223.
- 5.28 Although the prices submitted by the bidders were based on assumptions which have been assessed and tested, bidder one's fixed costs were £429,668 lower than bidder two which means that even if the assumptions appear to be optimistic it will still be a lower cost to the Council and value for money.
- 5.29 Both bidders expect to incur losses in the first two years which would need to be funded by the council. The cumulative loss projected by the preferred bidder (Bidder 1) is £587,000. Bidder 1 expects the center to generate profits in years 3,4 and 5 that would recoup those early losses and provide an overall surplus. Bidder 2 does not expect the profits in years 3, 4 and 5 to be sufficient to cover the early years losses.
- 5.30 The preferred bidder has been notified of the intent to enter contract with the council for the management of the Vulcan Works Creative Hub and discussions have started on the mobilization so all processes are in place for when the authority is given.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 To approve the outcome of the procurement evaluation so the council can enter into contract with the preferred bidder for the management of the Vulcan Works Creative Hub.
- 6.2 To not approve the appointment of the preferred bidder for the operation of the Vulcan Works will mean that the centre will not be able to open and be an incubation space for businesses within Northampton, it will also mean a loss of income to the council. It would also mean that the centre would not be able to reach its targets which were set by the funder (SEMLEP) and might result in a claw back of the funding.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

- 7.2 Dun & Bradstreet checks were undertaken during the procurement process to assess the financial background of the bidders and to minimise risk to the council.
- 7.3 Over the five-year term of the contract, the preferred bidder expects to make a cumulative profit of £186,512. There is an expected loss projected in the first two years by the preferred bidder of £587,000 and it is expected that the centre will make a profit in years 3, 4 and 5 which will be sufficient to cover the early year losses.
- 7.4 With the form of operator agreement that the council will be using all of the income risk is sitting with the council and not the Operator.
- 7.5 While some of the costs that make up these figures are known or fixed, the income figures are estimates based upon the Bidders experience within the market. While these figures have been tested by council officers and external consultants there is risk that the occupancy levels that have been assumed are not able to be met which could cause the financial position to worsen.
- 7.6 On the reverse of the above if the centre can be filled faster than forecast then the council would achieve a surplus position sooner than forecast. The operator is incentivised to do through a profit share within the contract.
- 7.7 Prior to the tender process a forecast was produced estimating the level of net surplus of deficit the centre would produce over the first 5 years. This forecast estimated a smaller deficit over the first three years of the centres operation with this being £320k.
- 7.8 The council have allocated £150k from the Covid recovery monies to offset some of the deficit, due to some of the delays in opening the centre being because of Covid.
- 7.9 A request for the underspend from the current year 21/22 to carry forward will be submitted as part of the year end process to offset the year 1 gap.
- 7.10 Going forward as part of 22/23 budget setting process we will profile the forecast multi year deficit and surpluses through the Medium Term Financial Plan.

8. Legal

- 8.1 On 13 November 2019, Northampton Borough Council Cabinet delegated authority to the Economic Growth and Regeneration Manager in consultation with the Borough Secretary, the Chief Finance Officer and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise to appoint the successful operator for the Vulcan Works Creative Hub following an OJEU compliant procurement process.
- 8.2 A fresh cabinet decision, almost identical except for the adjustments in the timetable due to delays caused by COVID, is now required as the Northampton Borough Council Cabinet

decision needs to be re-validated by West Northamptonshire Council under whose remit responsibility for this project now rests.

9. Risk

- 9.1 If the outcome of the procurement is not approved, then there a series of financial and reputational risks associated with the decision. The council is liable for the centre which means that for every day that the centre isn't occupied, the council is already incurring charges and costs such as utility costs and business rates. It also means a loss of revenue as there is no income received through rent from tenants.
- 9.2 If the centre was not to be become operational then the council wouldn't be able to meet the requirements set out by SEMLEP which would result in a claw back of the funding.
- 9.3 The Vulcan Works forms a key part of the plans for the economic recovery from Covid and will have a big impact for local businesses. Any delays of the opening of the centre will have a detrimental effect on this element of the recovery plan. The centre needs to be in a position to support businesses as soon as possible.
- 9.4 The council would also experience reputational damage with SEMLEP, Government and the local business community who are anticipating the hub to be open and operational soon.

10. Consultation

- 10.1 Consultation was undertaken in respect of both planning and listed building consent applications.
- 10.2 Market Demand assessment required external consultation carried out by Underwood's Ltd (Commercial Agent.)
- 10.3 Deyton Bell carried out consultation work to complete the VWCH operating model options appraisal.
- 10.4 SEMLEP have been consulted throughout the project during its construction phase and during the procurement of an operator.

11. Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

- 11.1 N/A

12. Climate Impact

- 12.1 The council will ensure the operator will undertake the relevant Environmental Impact Assessments.

13. Community Impact

- 13.1 The council will ensure the operator will undertake programme-wide level impact assessments, relevant project-level impact assessment and Equality and Impact Assessments when required.
- 13.2 This project will have a positive impact on the community of Northampton and West Northamptonshire.

14. Communications

- 14.1 The Communications Team was involved in assessing the marketing element of the shortlisted bids. It has also checked this document for accessibility.

15. Background Papers

- 15.1 November 2019 Cabinet Report
- 15.2 March 2021 Cabinet Report

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Draft 7 May 2021



Dated _____ **2021**

**West Northamptonshire Council ("the Authority")
Invitation to Submit Initial Tenders ("ISIT")**

**Northampton Vulcan Works Creative Hub - Operator
Project**

NOTICE TO CANDIDATES: This is a copy of the proposed document that will be issued to candidates successful in being shortlisted to be invited to the tender stage of the Competitive Procedure with Negotiation.

This document is provided for the purposes of Regulation 53 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended) and is for information only. The information is indicative of the approach the Authority intends to take but the authority reserves the right to vary the content and requirements of the **Invitation to Submit Initial Tenders** used for the first stage of the Competitive Procedure with Negotiation.

The final version of the **Invitation to Submit Initial Tenders** will be confirmed and issued to candidates that have been successfully shortlisted.

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IMPORTANT NOTICES

This **Invitation to Submit Initial Tenders ("ISIT")** has been prepared by West Northamptonshire Council of Guildhall, St. Giles Square, Northampton, NN1 1DE ("the Authority") and is for use by those invited to bid for the Northampton Vulcan Works Creative Hub (VWCH) Operator project, their professional advisers, and other parties essential to preparing the bid for the project and for no other purpose.

You are deemed to fully understand the process that the Authority is required to follow under relevant European and UK legislation, particularly in relation to the public procurement rules.

Bidders' attention is drawn to the further notices set out in **Appendix 1 (Important Notices)** which form part of the conditions of participation in this procurement process.

1 INTRODUCTION

General

- 1.1 Thank you for submitting the Selection Questionnaire (SQ) in response to the call for competition advertisement placed in the Find A Tender Service with reference number [DETAILS].
- 1.2 [Four] Bidders, including your organisation/consortium, have been invited to participate in the Competitive Procedure with Negotiation (in accordance with Regulation 29 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015) ("CPN") with the Authority. This Invitation to Submit Initial Tenders ("ISIT") provides further details of the proposal and process.
- 1.3 It should be noted that the return deadline for Bidders' final responses to the ISIT (being the Initial Tenders) is 12 Noon on 19 July 2021 for the assessment to shortlist the final **two** Bidders to be invited to the next stage of the CPN process or for the award of the contract at Initial Tender stage.
- 1.4 The [four] Bidders invited to commence the CPN are:
- [BIDDER NAME]
 - [BIDDER NAME]
 - [BIDDER NAME]
 - [BIDDER NAME]

Procurement Documents

- 2.1 The Authority is utilising an electronic tendering tool to manage this procurement process. All documents and communications issued by the NCC Procurement Team will be sent via web based software provided by PROACTIS called ProContract. Tenders and communications submitted by potential providers via any other means will be rejected.
- 2.2 ProContract is located at <https://procontract@due-north.com/Login>
- 2.3 Potential providers who experience technical difficulties when using ProContract should contact the support desk Monday to Friday, 9:00 to 17:30:

Tel: 0330 005 0352

Email: ProContractSuppliers@proactis.com

Alternatively, the electronic ticket logging system can be found [here](#).

Competitive Procedure with Negotiation

- 1.5 This ISIT has been developed to set out the key steps in this procurement to achieve the selection of a provider to deliver the Northampton Vulcan Works Creative Hub (VWCH) Operator project as described in the FTS Notice [FTS REFERENCE NUMBER] (the "Project").
- 1.6 The Authority will procure the Project using the CPN, which provides the opportunity for a structured approach to procurement.
- 1.7 The purpose of this ISIT document is to provide the framework for the competition process and to provide further information about the scheme.
- 1.8 The ISIT aims to:

- 1.8.1 provide information to Bidders on the Project and the opportunities available;
 - 1.8.2 set out clearly the Authority's requirements;
 - 1.8.3 provide information on the Authority's approach to the CPN procurement process;
 - 1.8.4 set out the deliverables required from Bidders at the first stage of the procurement for their Initial Tender responses; and
 - 1.8.5 set out the evaluation criteria that the Authority will use to assess Bidders' Initial Tender responses.
- 1.9 Details of the overall timetable and submission deadlines and other key dates are outlined in **Section 3** below.
 - 1.10 The CPN will take place in successive stages in order to reduce the number of tenders to be negotiated in applying award criteria set out in this ISIT. The initial reduction of Bidders will be on the basis of an evaluation of the Initial Tenders submitted.
 - 1.11 The first stage of the CPN is an invitation to Bidders to submit an Initial Tender in the form as detailed in this document. The questions that Bidders are required to answer in response to the ISIT stage in the submission of Initial Tenders are set out in **Appendix 2 (Quality Questions)** and **Appendix 4 (Financial Submissions)** to this document. There will be no negotiations with the Council permitted during CPN Stage 1.
 - 1.12 **The CPN procedure permits the Authority to award the contract on the basis of an evaluation of the Initial Tenders and the Authority reserves the right to do so at its absolute discretion.**
 - 1.13 If the Authority decides not to award the contract on the basis of the Initial Tenders then the Authority intends to invite the Bidders with the two highest scoring compliant Initial Tenders to participate in the subsequent CPN Stage 2 to commence negotiations with the Authority. At this point, the Authority will issue an Invitation to Negotiate ("ITN") that sets out clearly the defined set of Final Tender bid deliverables and well as the defining the areas for negotiations with the Authority.
 - 1.14 During the negotiation phase in the CPN Stage 2, the Authority will engage and negotiate with the final two Bidders on the basis of their Initial Tenders with the intention to improve and refine the offerings prior to the submission of the Final Tenders.
 - 1.15 At the end of the negotiation phase, the Authority will declare the conclusion of negotiations and issue an ISFT to Bidders to confirm the award criteria applying to the evaluation of Final Tenders and Final Tender submission requirements.
 - 1.16 Final tenders should be based on the Initial Tenders presented and reflect the negotiated position reached with the Authority at the conclusion of the negotiation stage of the CPN.
 - 1.17 Final tenders are should be final and complete in meeting the Authority's requirements as no further negotiations are permitted following the submission of Final Tenders.
 - 1.18 However, the Authority may request Bidders to clarify aspects of their tenders where the Authority considers it appropriate to do so.
 - 1.19 Following the submission of Final Tenders, the Authority expects to undertake an evaluation and selection process to identify the most economically advantageous tender to be put forward for consideration to be awarded the contract.
 - 1.20 The evaluation criteria against which Bid responses will be assessed and the evaluation methodology applied is provided in **Section 4** below.

1.21 The Authority reserves the right to vary the selection procedure to support continued competition, avoid unnecessary bidding costs and adhere to subsequent technical or legal guidance.

2 SUBJECT MATTER OF THE PROCUREMENT AND CHARACTERISTICS

2.1 The Authority wishes to invite tenders for the supply of services for the day-to-day operation and management of the Vulcan Works Creative Hub (VWCH).

2.2 The VWCH is a conversion of an existing Victorian warehouse (the Vulcan Works) with a new-build extension and new-build annex totalling circa 5,500 sq. m gross external area of SME offices and ancillary workspace for new and growing businesses within the creative industries sector. The £12.5m cost of the new facility is being met by the Authority, the South East Midlands LEP, and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

2.3 This procurement process is being run in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended).

2.4 The Authority proposes to enter into an Agreement for an initial period of 3 years with an option to extend for a further 2 years; 5 years in total.

3 TIMETABLE AND PROCESS

Project Timetable

3.1 The table below sets out the key dates in the procurement process.

Date	Stage
Wednesday 12 th May 2021	Dispatch of the FTS Contract Notice by the Authority. SQ and draft Procurement Documents made available over the internet.
12 Noon Monday 14 June 2021	Deadline for SQ to be returned by applicants to the Authority.
By 21 June 2021	Review and evaluation by the Authority of the SQs.
CPN Stage 1	
22 June 2021	Issue of Invitation to Submit Initial Tenders ("ISIT") by the Authority to up to 4 shortlisted SQ Applicants. Debriefing of unsuccessful SQ applicants.
28 June 2021	Deadline for request for site visit
2 July 2021	Bidder clarification deadline
9 July 2021	Authority clarification response deadline
12 Noon on 19 July 2021	Deadline for return of Initial Tenders.
20 - 26 July 2021	Evaluation of Initial Tenders and then: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Award Decision of the Authority on the basis of the Initial Tenders (and debriefing all unsuccessful and commencement of the 10-day standstill <u>OR</u> No Award Decision reached and selection of Bidders to participate in the negotiation stage CPN (and debriefing bidders unsuccessful shortlisted to continue to the next stage)
CPN Stage 2	

27 July 2021	Issue of Invitation to Negotiate ("ITN") to the 2 shortlisted Bidders.
2 weeks	Period of negotiation meetings with remaining 2 Bidders.
30 July 2021	Bidder clarification deadline
3 August 2021	Authority clarification response deadline
10 August 2021	End of Negotiation Stage and issue of Invitation to Submit Final Tenders ("ISFT")
17 August 2021	Deadline for the Submission of Final Tenders
24 August 2021	Evaluation of Final Tenders and recommendation for the most economically advantageous tender.
27 August 2021	Completion of Authority approval and award decision processes.
30 August 2021	Notification by the Authority of the award decision, debriefing unsuccessful bidders and commencement of the 10-day standstill period.
10 September 2021	Expiry of standstill period.
10 September 2021 onwards	Appointment of the successful Bidder, award of the contract and notification of contract conclusion to participants.

At this stage, the timetable is subject to confirmation and the Authority reserves the right to amend it **as the project progresses.**

General Information about CPN Stage 2

- 3.2 If the Authority does not award at Initial Tender stage, the detailed requirements relating to the CPN Stage 2 will be set out in the ITN and provided to the final two Bidders that are successful in being shortlisted to participate in this stage of the competition.
- 3.3 The ITN will also set out the proposed tender requirements and evaluation criteria and methodology that will apply to the Final Tenders. These requirements will be confirmed in the ISFT.
- 3.4 This ITN stage will involve a series of online meetings with the Council to negotiate from the basis of the Initial Tenders. Topics for negotiation will include business support and management in addition to other topics to be confirmed closer to the time.
- 3.5 The available dates and times for the meetings with Bidders (together with Draft Agendas) will be confirmed shortly after the issue of the ITN to shortlisted Bidders.
- 3.6 Negotiation meetings are expected to be held on Microsoft Teams in the period indicated in the project timetable.
- 3.7 The Authority reserves the right to change the location, times and dates of these meetings.
- 3.8 Bidders should make arrangements for maintenance of their own record of meetings.
- 3.9 The Authority will maintain its own record of meetings, which, insofar as specific to a particular bidder, would not be circulated to the other Bidders. Bidders should note that issues raised and/or responses

given which are generic may be communicated to all Bidders, in accordance with equal treatment principles.

- 3.10 The meetings will be held commercially in confidence and Bidders are directed to the information in **Appendix 1 (Important Notices)** below in relation to the obligations of the Authority under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004.
- 3.11 Additional meetings may be considered appropriate by the Authority. If so, these will be arranged by the Authority with due notice and run to an agreed agenda.

Initial Tender Submissions

- 3.12 Bidders should present their responses as per the instructions below.
 - 3.12.1 All responses should be in English, text submitted in A4, with a font size of no less than 10 and any financial references should be in Pounds Sterling.
 - 3.12.2 Completed responses should be signed by a partner or director of the bidder and, in the case of a Consortium, by a partner or director of each member).
 - 3.12.3 Bidders are required to submit completed responses by uploading electronic documents via <https://procontract@due-north.com/Login> by 19 July 2021 12:00 Noon
 - 3.12.4 The Authority reserves the right, at its discretion, to reject bids delivered after the date and time specified. Please see **Appendix 1 (Important Notices)**.
 - 3.12.5 The Authority reserves the right, at its discretion, to request clarifications in writing or further relevant information from any bidder after the submission of responses.
 - 3.12.6 Tenders are expected to remain open for acceptance for a period of 120 days.
- 3.13 Potential providers are required to:
 - 3.13.1 Only submit one tender.
 - 3.13.2 Submit tenders in English only.
 - 3.13.3 Meet the Authority's minimum requirements, operate as a standalone bid and not be dependent on any other bid or any other factors external to the tender itself.
 - 3.13.4 Answer fully all relevant questions in the online questionnaire(s) and respond in accordance with any specific requests as detailed in the question e.g. maximum word/page limits, etc.
 - 3.13.5 Only submit information requested. Additional information which has not been asked for in the ITT will not be taken into account.
 - 3.13.6 Submit any attachments requested in an acceptable format to the Authority which includes MS Word, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint, JPEGs and PDF files or any file format as specified in the question. Potential providers who wish to submit an attachment in an alternative format should first check with the Authority that it will be accepted.
 - 3.13.7 When uploading attachments please state the question number and your organisation name in the title.
 - 3.13.8 Submit any zipped files in WinZip format only.

On-going Questions

- 3.14 Any queries arising from the Procurement Documents (including this ISIT) which may have a bearing on the Initial Tender submissions to be made by Bidders should be raised as soon as possible and in any event by no later than 2 July 2021. All queries in relation to this procurement must be submitted through the messaging function of ProContract. The Authority reserves the right not to respond to clarifications in respect of the ISIT stage submitted after this period.
- 3.15 Where the Authority considers that questions are material to the procurement process and the fullest understanding of its objectives, these questions and their subsequent replies will be disseminated to all Bidders. The Authority will keep confidential all information relating to its negotiations in relation to Bidders' proposals and will not share this information with any other Bidder.
- 3.16 Bidders should note, in relation to all responses to questions that the Authority and its advisers offer no guarantee that such information in response to questions will be made available at this stage and are not warranting the accuracy of any responses.

Confidentiality and Freedom of Information

- 3.17 The Authority acknowledges the need during the CPN to treat Bidder's tender proposals confidentially. If during the process any questions asked of or information provided to the Authority is considered by the Bidder to be confidential, the request must be clearly marked "in confidence – not to be circulated to other bidders" and Bidders must set out the reason(s) for the request for non-disclosure to other Bidders.
- 3.18 The Authority will consider such requests and will act reasonably as regards the protection of commercially sensitive information relating to the Bidders but will have sole discretion as to such disclosure, subject to complying with the Authority's duties under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and the Environmental Information Regulations (2004).

Return of Certificates

- 3.19 The Authority requires Bidders to make certain undertakings if they wish to remain in the competition. These undertakings include signing the following documents, which must be completed and submitted at the Initial Tender submission and again at the Final Tender stage. Copies of the certificates are provided in **Appendix 7 (Certificates)**.
- 3.19.1 Certificate of Non-Canvassing
- 3.19.2 Certificate of Non-Collusive Tendering

4 EVALUATION

- 4.1 This section sets out the evaluation criteria and selection process against which the Initial Tenders and all subsequent stages of the CPN, including Final Tenders will be assessed.
- 4.2 Bidders are required to respond to each of the questions set out in Appendix 2 (Quality Questions) and complete in full the requirements in Appendix 4 (Financial Submission) for the Initial Tenders.
- 4.3 **Compliance**
- 4.4 Prior to carrying out the detailed scoring of bids, an assessment of the Bidders' responses to the bid deliverables at each stage of the procurement will be made to ensure that sufficient information at the required standard has been provided as requested. Bids which are substantially incomplete or which are non-compliant with the requirements set out in this ISIT may be rejected.
- 4.5 The Authority reserves the right to call for information from Bidders to clarify their Bid responses.
- 4.6 **Evaluation Methodology**

- 4.7 Following compliance checks, each Bid will be evaluated and scored against the evaluation criteria and weightings set out in this Section below and Bidders ranked in line with their scores.
- 4.8 **Evaluation Criteria and Weightings**
- 4.9 The evaluation criteria and weightings that will be applied by the Authority in each stage of the CPN procedure are shown in Table 1 below.
- 4.10 Bidders should note that the same weightings will be applied at the Initial Tender and Final Tender stage as shown in the table.
- 4.11 The detailed evaluation criteria (and sub-criteria) and weightings that will be applied by the Authority when evaluating the Initial Tenders are shown in Table 2 below.
- 4.12 The Authority reserves the right to update and refine the quality questions (Appendix 2) and sub-criteria as well as the financial evaluation approach and sub-criteria (Appendix 3 and Appendix 4) for the ITN and ISFT stage of the CPN process.
- 4.13 The detailed evaluation criteria (and sub-criteria) and weightings that will be applied by the Authority when evaluating the Final Tenders will be confirmed in the ITN (and confirmed in the ISFT document) issued to Bidders invited to respond to those stages of the competition process.
- 4.14 **Scoring**
- 4.15 The FTS contract notice confirmed that Bids will be assessed on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender.
- 4.16 The scoring of Bids will be based on a detailed analysis of the responses in for criteria in accordance with the methodology below.

Quality Criteria

In relation to the Quality criteria and sub-criteria (as indicated), each question will be scored in application of the following scoring scale:

SCORING SCALE	
Score	Commentary
0	Extremely weak or no answer
1	Very weak - almost unacceptable
2	Weak - well below expectations
3	Poor - below expectations
4	Satisfactory but below expectations
5	Meets expectations
6	Slightly exceeds expectations
7	Good - well above expectations
8	Very good
9	Outstanding
10	Exceptional

- 4.17 The Authority can take into account both the quality and performance of the Bid response as well as its deliverability in applying the scoring scale in the evaluation.

Legal Criteria – Evaluation Approach at Initial Tender Stage: Pass/Fail

- 4.18 Bidders must confirm their unconditional acceptance of the terms of the Management Agreement as part of their Initial Tender submission. No negotiation or mark-up is permitted. A Bidder who confirms their unconditional acceptance of the terms of the Management Agreement as part of their Initial

Tender submission will pass this question and receive the full 5% weighting at Initial Tender stage for the Legal Criterion. No weighting or score other than 0% or 5% is available.

- 4.19 If any Bidder does not unconditionally accept the terms of the Management Agreement, the Bidder will fail this question. The Authority will award a 0% weighting and reserves the right to deem the Bidder's bid as non-compliant, reject the Bid and exclude the Bidder from being eligible for an award at Initial Tender stage or exclude the Bidder from continuing further in the procurement process.

Legal Criteria – Evaluation Approach at Final Tender Stage (5%)

- 4.20 Evaluation of all amendments to the contractual documentation, consisting of the Management Agreement, proposed in a Bidder's submission shall be based on a number of factors:
- (a) the degree of acceptance of the terms of the contractual documentation as identified in the scoring table below; and
 - (b) where amendments are proposed, whether the allocation of risk in respect of the project is beneficial or detrimental to the Authority.
- 4.21 The contractual documentation will be given a raw score of between zero and five, this raw score will then be applied to the weighting for the Legal & Commercial Criteria.
- 4.22 Amendments will be evaluated and allocated a score by reference to the degree to which such provisions conform to the provisions of the contract and the risk allocation reflected therein. The Authority will apply a lower score to those Bidders which include amendments which vary the position of the parties as set out in the contracts and either increases the risk to the Authority or decrease the risk to the contractor or which vary the position in another way unsatisfactory to the Authority. A Bidder's score may result from a single amendment or a combination of amendments.

The scoring methodology is set out below.

LEGAL SCORING SCALE	
Score	Commentary
5	Amendments Advantageous: The proposed amendments vary the risk position and are, on balance, advantageous to the Council as compared to the Council's presented commercial position.
4	No Amendments: no amendments; or the submission contains amendments to reflect the bidder's solution which have no commercial impact on the Council; or the overall effect of the amendments is broadly equivalent to the Council's presented commercial position.
3	Amendments of Minor Impact: The proposed amendments vary the risk position and on balance have a minor negative commercial impact on the Council as compared to the Council's presented commercial position.
2	Amendments Moderately Significant: The proposed amendments vary the risk position and are, on balance, moderately disadvantageous to the Council as compared to the Council's presented commercial position.
1	Amendments Significant: The proposed amendments vary the risk position and are, on balance, significantly disadvantageous to the Council as compared to the Council's presented commercial position.

0	Amendments Highly Significant: The proposed amendments vary the risk position and are, on balance, highly disadvantageous to the Council as compared to the Council's presented commercial position and unacceptable.
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The legal document mark-up submitted as part of the ISFT submission should reflect the position agreed with the Council during the negotiation stage. In the event that the legal submission for the purposes of the ISFT submission does not reflect the position agreed with the Council during the negotiation stage the Council reserves the right to reject such an ISFT submission for non-compliance.

Pass/ Fail Minimum Score for Legal:

The Authority reserves the right to disqualify any Bidder that scores 1 or below in the Legal Scoring Scale for this element of their tender, meaning that the Bidder will be excluded from continuing in the procurement process. A score of 1 or below would potentially place the Authority in a significant position of risk so this has been set as a threshold below which a bid may be deemed non-compliant.

Financial Criteria

The Financial criteria will be scored by applying the methodology set out in **Appendix 3 (Financial Criteria Evaluation Methodology)** to the response provided by Bidders in their Financial Submissions in the format set out in **Appendix 4 (Financial Submissions)**.

Table 1: Evaluation Criteria and Weightings for the CPN Stages

No.	Criteria	Weighting for the evaluation of Initial Tenders	Quality sub-weightings for the evaluation of Initial Tenders	Weightings for the evaluation of Final Tenders	Quality sub-weightings for the evaluation of Final Tenders
QUALITY AND LEGAL CRITERIA		Quality and legal: 60%		Quality and legal: 60%	
1	Management		20%		20%
2	Marketing Plan		15%		15%
3	Implementation Plan		10%		10%
4	Tenant Support		10%		10%
5	Business Support Services		30%		30%
6	Performance monitoring		10%		10%
7	Legal		5% (Pass/Fail)		5% (Scored)
FINANCIAL CRITERIA		Financial: 40%		Financial: 40%	
1	Management fee		55%		55%
2	Success fee		38%		38%
3	Business support		7%		7%

APPENDIX 1– IMPORTANT NOTICES

1 CONFIDENTIALITY

- 1.1 The procurement process may involve the Authority providing Confidential Information to the Bidders. The Bidders shall at all times:
- 1.1.1 treat all Confidential Information as confidential;
 - 1.1.2 not disclose, copy, reproduce, distribute or pass the Confidential Information to any other person at any time;
 - 1.1.3 not use the Confidential Information for any purpose other than for the purposes of making (or deciding whether to make) a Bid in relation to the Project ("Bid"); and
 - 1.1.4 comply with the provisions of paragraph 6 below (which contains restrictions on publicity activity within any section of the media or similar)
- 1.2 Bidders shall procure that, if it is a Consortium, each Consortium Member who receives any of the Information is made aware of, and complies with, the confidentiality obligations in this section.
- 1.3 Bidders may disclose, distribute or pass the Confidential Information to another person (including, but not limited to, for example, employees, consultants, subcontractors or advisers, the Bidder's insurers or the Bidder's funders) if either:
- 1.3.1 this is done for the sole purpose of enabling a Bid to be made and the person receiving the Information undertakes in writing to keep the Information confidential on the same terms as set out in this ISIT; or
 - 1.3.2 the Bidder obtains the prior written consent of the Authority in relation to such disclosure, distribution or passing of the Information
- 1.4 The Authority may disclose detailed information relating to Bids to the Authority's members, directors, officers, employees, agents or advisers and they may make the key Bid documents available for private inspection by the Authority's members, directors, officers, employees, agents or advisers.
- 1.5 The Authority also reserves the right to disseminate Information that is materially relevant to all Bidders (even in the event that the Information has only been requested by one Bidder), subject to the duty to protect any Bidder's commercial confidence in its Bid. It is the responsibility of the Bidder to avoid such disclosure by stating in writing to the Authority that the request is clearly marked "Commercial in confidence - not to be circulated to other Bidders" and the Bidder must set out a proper and relevant reason or reasons for the request for non-disclosure to other Bidders.
- 1.6 The Authority will act reasonably as regards the protection of commercially sensitive information relating to the Bidder, subject to the Authority's duties under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (see below).
- 1.7 The Authority reserves the right to:
- 1.7.1 provide general information about the successful SQ submissions to unsuccessful applicants in order to provide debriefing information in accordance with principles under EU procurement rules;
 - 1.7.2 provide information about successful Bid(s) to unsuccessful bidders as part of debriefing obligations under Regulation 55 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended) (including but not limited to the financial or price score of the successful Bid(s));
 - 1.7.3 provide information about the winning tender to unsuccessful bidders as part of debriefing obligations during the standstill period in accordance with Regulation 86 and 87 of the

Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended) (including but not limited to the financial or price score of the successful tender);

1.7.4 publish information on *Contracts Finder* in accordance with Regulation 108 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended) and any relevant guidance concerning any contract awarded (including but not limited to the value of any contract awarded); and

1.7.5 publish information in the Find A Tender Service (FTS) in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended) concerning any contract awarded (including but not limited to the value of any contract awarded).

2 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 AND ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION REGULATIONS 2004

2.1 The Authority is subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the "Act") and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 ("EIR"). Accordingly, all information submitted to it may need to be disclosed by the Authority in response to a request under either the Act or the EIR (a "Request").

2.2 In making any submission during this procurement process, each Bidder acknowledges and accepts that information contained therein may be disclosed by the Authority under the Act or EIR without consulting the Bidder, although the Authority will endeavour to consult with the Bidder and consider its views before doing so.

2.3 If Bidders consider that any information made available to the Authority is commercially sensitive, they should identify it and explain (in broad terms) what harm may result from disclosure, and the time period applicable to that sensitivity. Even where information made available to the Authority is marked commercially sensitive, the Authority shall be entitled (acting in its sole discretion) to disclose it pursuant to a Request. Please also note that information marked "confidential" or equivalent by Bidders does not bind the Authority to any duty of confidence by virtue of that marking.

2.4 Exemptions to disclosure pursuant to a Request do exist and the Authority reserves the right to determine (acting in its sole discretion) whether there is any available exemption and whether to disclose any information made available to it by Bidders pursuant to any Request. If you are unsure as to the Authority's obligations under the Act or EIR regarding the disclosure of sensitive information

3 CONFLICTS

3.1 The Authority requires all actual or potential conflicts of interest to be declared and resolved to the Authority's satisfaction prior to the delivery of a Bidder's Initial Tender submission. Failure to declare such conflicts (including new conflicts which may arise during the competition) and/or failure to address such conflicts to the reasonable satisfaction of the Authority could result in a Bidder being disqualified at the sole discretion of the Authority.

4 CANVASSING AND NON-COLLUSION

4.1 The Authority reserves the right to disqualify (without prejudice to any other civil remedies available to the Authority and without prejudice to any criminal liability which such conduct by a Bidder or Consortium Member (as the case maybe) may attract) any Bidder or Consortium Member who (or its directors or any other person who has powers of representation, decision or control of the Bidder or Consortium Member), in connection with this ISIT:

4.1.1 offers any inducement, fee or reward to any member or officer of the Authority or any person acting as an adviser for the Authority in connection with this ISIT;

4.1.2 does anything which would constitute the offence of within the meaning of section 1(2) of the Public Bodies Corrupt Practices Act 1889 or section 1 of the Prevention of Corruption Act 1906, where the offence relates to active corruption;

- 4.1.3 does anything which would constitute the offence of bribery, where the offence relates to active corruption;
 - 4.1.4 does anything which would constitute bribery within the meaning of section 1 or 6 of the Bribery Act 2010;
 - 4.1.5 canvasses any member or officer of the Authority or any person acting as an adviser for the Authority in connection with this ISIT;
 - 4.1.6 contacts any officer of the Authority prior to financial close about any aspect of the ISIT in a manner not permitted by this ISIT (including without limitation contact for the purposes of discussing the possible transfer to the employment of the Bidder of such officer);
 - 4.1.7 fixes or adjusts the amount of his Bid by or in accordance with any agreement or arrangement with any other Bidder or Consortium Member of any other Bidder (other than its own Consortium Members or supply chain);
 - 4.1.8 enters into any agreement or arrangement with any other Bidder (or Consortium Member of any other Bidder) to the effect that it shall refrain from making a Bid or as to the amount of any Bid to be submitted;
 - 4.1.9 causes or induces any person to enter such agreement as is mentioned in either paragraph 4.1.7 or 4.1.8 or to inform the Bidder (or a Consortium Member of the Bidder) of the amount or approximate amount of any rival Bid;
 - 4.1.10 canvasses any person connected with this ISIT who is not one of its own Consortium Members or one of its own team;
 - 4.1.11 offers or agrees to pay or give or does pay or give any sum of money, inducement or valuable consideration directly or indirectly to any person for doing or having done or causing or having caused to be done in relation to any other Bid (or proposed Bid) any act or omission;
 - 4.1.12 communicates to any person other than the Authority the amount or approximate amount of his proposed Bid (except where such disclosure is made in confidence in order to obtain quotations necessary for the preparation of a Bid);
 - 4.1.13 enters into any agreement with any other Bidder (or a Consortium Member of any other Bidder) aimed at distorting the outcome of the competition;
 - 4.1.14 undertakes to unduly influence the decision-making process of the Authority; or
 - 4.1.15 undertakes to obtain confidential information that could confer upon an undue advantage in the award of the contract.
- 4.2 Bidders will be required to complete and submit certificates of non-collusion and non-canvassing at the Initial Tender submission stage and also the Final Tender submission stage.

5 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

- 5.1 This ISIT (and all Procurement Documents) may not be reproduced, copied or stored in any medium without the prior written consent of the Authority except in relation to the preparation of a Bid.
- 5.2 All documentation supplied by the Authority in relation to this ISIT (and all Procurement Documents) is and shall remain the property of the Authority and must be returned on demand, without any copies being retained. Bidders are not authorised to copy, reproduce, or distribute the information in the Procurement Documents at any time except as is necessary to produce a Bid.

6 PUBLICITY

- 6.1 Bidders shall not undertake (or permit to be undertaken) at any time, whether at this stage or after financial close, any publicity activity with any section of the media in relation to the Project other than with the prior written agreement of the Authority. Such agreement shall extend to the content of any publicity. In this paragraph the word "media" includes (but without limitation) radio, television, newspapers, trade and specialist press, the internet and email accessible by the public at large and the representatives of such media.

7 LIABILITY OF THE AUTHORITY AND ITS ADVISERS

- 7.1 In the Procurement Documents, "the Authority" includes all or any of the Authority and its members, officers and Advisers, and the directors, officers, members, partners, employees, other staff, agents or advisers of any such body or person.
- 7.2 The Procurement Documents have been prepared by and on behalf of the Authority for the purposes of:
- 7.2.1 providing an application procedure for individuals or organisations interested in tendering for the Project; and
 - 7.2.2 to assist persons interested in tendering for the Project role in making their own evaluation of the potential opportunity
- 7.3 The Procurement Documents are intended only to provide a background explanation of the Project and are not intended to form the basis of any decision on whether to enter into any contractual relationship with the Authority. The Procurement Documents do not purport to have been independently verified. The Procurement Documents should not be relied on as an investment recommendation of the Project made by the Authority to the potential contractor.
- 7.4 The Authority and its Advisers:
- 7.4.1 do not make any representation or warranty (express or implied) as to the accuracy, reasonableness or completeness of the Procurement Documents provided. Any persons considering entering into a contractual relationship with the Authority should make their own investigations and independent assessment of the Authority and its requirements for this scheme and should seek their own professional technical, financial and legal advice; and
 - 7.4.2 exclude all liability for any loss or damage (whether caused by contract, tort (including negligence), misrepresentation or otherwise) (other than in respect of fraud or fraudulent misrepresentation or personal injury or death) in relation to the Procurement Documents and/or arising as a result of reliance on the information in the Procurement Documents or any subsequent information made available to Bidders. Any and all liability is expressly excluded to the maximum extent permissible by law.
- 7.5 Only the express terms of any written contract relating to the Project (as and when it is executed) shall have any contractual effect in connection with this Project.
- 7.6 The publication of the Procurement Documents in no way commits the Authority to award any contract to deliver the Project. The Authority reserves the right to vary or change all or any part of the procedures for the procurement process at any time or not to proceed with the procurement.
- 7.7 For the purposes of the procurement, all Advisers referred to in this document are acting exclusively as the advisers to the Authority and will not be responsible or owe any duty of care to anyone other than the Authority.

8 PROVISION OF FURTHER INFORMATION TO BIDDERS PRIOR TO MAKING A BID

- 8.1 The Authority is relying on the information provided by Bidders during the procurement process (including but not limited to Bids and SQ submissions). If, at any time during this procurement process there are any material changes to that information, the Bidder must advise the Authority as soon as practicable (even if this is prior to the submission of a Bid). Upon receipt of such information, the Authority shall be entitled to revisit the selection and/or evaluation of the Bidder and exclude the Bidder if necessary, as a result of that process.

9 BIDDING PROCESS AND COSTS

- 9.1 The Authority reserves the right at any time:

- 9.1.1 to require a Bidder and/or its Consortium Members to clarify their Bid(s) in writing and/or provide additional information (failure to respond adequately may result in a Bidder not being successful); and/or
- 9.1.2 to reduce the number of Bidders in the procurement process
- 9.1.3 to amend the terms and conditions of the procurement process;
- 9.1.4 not to consider Bids other than those specified;
- 9.1.5 to negotiate with one or more of the Bidders during the ITN stage to obtain arrangements which best meet its requirements;
- 9.1.6 to issue amendments or modifications to the ISIT;
- 9.1.7 to alter the timetable to contract award;
- 9.1.8 to cancel or withdraw from the tender process at any stage; and
- 9.1.9 not to award a contract.

- 9.2 All Bidders are solely responsible for their costs and expenses incurred in connection with the preparation and submission of Bids and participation in this and all future stages of this procurement. Under no circumstances will the Authority be liable for any costs or expenses borne by Bidders or any of its supply chain, partners or advisers in this procurement process.

10 THE AUTHORITY'S RIGHT TO REJECT BIDS

- 10.1 The Authority reserves the right to reject or disqualify a Bidder and/or any of its Consortium Members at any time during the procurement procedure where:
- 10.1.1 a Bid is submitted late, is completed incorrectly, is materially incomplete or fails to meet the Authority's submission requirements which have been notified to the relevant Bidder;
 - 10.1.2 the Bidder and/or any of its Consortium Members are unable to satisfy the terms of Regulation 57 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended) at any stage during the tender process;
 - 10.1.3 the Bidder and/or its Consortium Members are guilty of material misrepresentation in relation to its application and/or the process (including but not limited to the SQ selection stage of the competition);
 - 10.1.4 the Bidder and/or its Consortium Members contravene any of the terms and conditions of this ISIT; or

- 10.1.5 there is a change in identity, control, financial standing or other factor impacting on the selection and/or evaluation process affecting the Bidder and/or its Consortium Members.
- 10.2 The disqualification of a Bidder will not prejudice any other civil remedy available to the Authority and will not prejudice any criminal liability that such conduct by a Bidder may attract.
- 10.3 The Authority reserves the right to require Bidders at any moment during the procurement procedure to submit all or any of the supporting documents (or to supplement or clarify certificates received) where it is necessary to ensure the proper conduct of the procurement procedure for the purposes of:
 - 10.3.1 establishing the absence of grounds for exclusions under Regulation 57 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended)); and/or
 - 10.3.2 establishing the continued fulfilment of the SQ stage selection criteria and requirements (including where relevant the continued possession or attainment of quality assurance standards and environmental management standards (or evidence of their equivalents)).
 - 10.3.3 establishing whether the Bidder fulfils (or continues to fulfil) the rules and criteria for reducing the number of Bidders being invited to the CPN tender stages of the competition.
- 10.4 Furthermore, before awarding the contract, the Authority reserves the right to require the Preferred Bidder to submit up-to-date supporting documents (or to supplement or clarify certificates received) for the purposes of:
 - 10.4.1 establishing the absence of grounds for exclusions under Regulation 57 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended)); and/or
 - 10.4.2 establishing the continued fulfilment of the SQ stage selection criteria and requirements (including where relevant the continued possession or attainment of quality assurance standards and environmental management standards (or evidence of their equivalents)).

11 THE BIDDERS

- 11.1 The Consortium Members of any Bidder and the principal relationships between Consortium Members may not be changed in relation to this procurement process unless the Authority's prior consent has been given, and subject to:
 - 11.1.1 any replacement Consortium Member being satisfactorily pre-qualified by the Authority; and
 - 11.1.2 any other condition which the Authority may specify having been met.
- 11.2 The Authority reserves the right, at its absolute discretion, to refuse to allow any change in the Consortium Members of any Bidder and/or the principle relationships between Consortium Members.
- 11.3 The Authority reserves the right, at its absolute discretion, not to consider any Bid where there is a change in the Consortium Members of any Bidder and/or the principal relationships between Consortium Members.

12 GOVERNING LAW

- 12.1 All negotiations will be conducted, and all documents and Bids will be prepared, in the English language. The negotiations and all subsequent contracts negotiated will be subject to English law and the exclusive jurisdiction of the English courts.

13 ACCEPTANCE OF BIDS

- 13.1 Bidders are reminded that no offer or Bid is deemed accepted until the relevant contractual documents have been duly signed on behalf of the Authority, the successful Bidder and all other relevant parties and declared unconditional. No dialogue or communication with the Authority, whether prior to or after the commencement of the ISIT stage, up to and including any notification of the Preferred Bidder award decision commencing the standstill period, shall imply acceptance of any offer or constitute an indication that the Bidder will be awarded the contract.
- 13.2 Please note that only the express terms of any written contract which is finally agreed between the Authority and the successful Bidder and which is duly declared unconditional shall have any contractual effect.

APPENDIX 2 - QUALITY QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS BIDDERS ARE REQUIRED TO ANSWER AT THE ISIT SUBMISSION STAGE (INITIAL TENDERS)

All words in any format (including but not limited to words in diagrams, pictures, maps, tables and charts) will count towards the word count limit specified in relation to each question. Bidders must state the number of words in any diagram, picture, map, table or chart directly underneath it. This includes any other method of presentation which is not just text. Bidders must not attempt to circumnavigate the word count limit e.g. by joining up words or using special characters to join words. Words submitted over the specified page limit will not be evaluated.

Management

Q.1 (20%) 2000 words

Tenderers should provide a full management summary, including details of: key personnel and summary details of the proposal including:

Management

- Please provide your overall vision and approach to the project that meets the strategic direction, objectives, outputs and aims of the Council by managing the VWCH and providing business support services to the specification.
- How will you maintain adequate staffing to ensure high quality management of the VWCH, incorporating procedures in relation to recruitment, induction and training, payroll, pension arrangements, and grievance procedure fully meeting UK employment law.
- How will you operate effective processes for appropriate occupier policies in relation to occupational terms, include simple single payment arrangements disputes, claims, notices and evictions, and debt recovery.
- How will you manage or provide the operation of the buildings including repairs and maintenance; business liaison; and engagement of contractors.
- How will you establish and implement a Security Policy and Plan detailing how a safe and secure environment for occupiers and visitors will be provided.
- How will you provide a virtual office offering a postal address and mail forwarding, telephone answering and access to meeting rooms and other facilities for non-occupiers.

Supply chain

- A database of contracts should be maintained and available for inspection. This takes into account contracts which the Service Provider will enter into. Please explain how you will ensure appropriate procedures for selecting third party suppliers to ensure that they are capable, reputable, and provide good value for money, bearing in mind that the Council will want to approve above a value of £10,000.

Your responses to this question should be limited to no more than 2000 words. Diagrams, pictures, maps, tables and charts may include words but only to the extent that those words are necessary to enable evaluators to understand or interpret the diagram, picture etc. Words contained within diagrams, pictures etc. will be disregarded for the purpose of the evaluation of a Bidder's substantive response to the question.

Marketing plan

Q.2 (15%) 2000 words

Tenderers must submit a marketing plan to reflect the requirement:

Explain how you will effectively carry out the following Management Agent activities:

- Supporting a comprehensive marketing plan to promote, support and enhance the activities of the VWCH, to include social media activities, newsletter activities, PR activities, brochures, advertising and promotion campaigns, events, initiatives and exhibitions, press releases, media campaigns and sector based campaigns to raise awareness of existing sectors and to promote, target and attract further investment and additional tenants.
- Developing a website for the VWCH and provide website activity analysis.
- Developing and fostering relationships with other business/enterprise/incubation/co-working centres to maximise links, ensuring strong networks are established to support growth and acceleration, including the Growth Hub, University of Northampton and SEMLEP.
- Promoting linkages with other business/enterprise/incubation/co-working centres to support tenants at VWCH to collaborate and exchange information to support growth and acceleration.
- Ensuring that all social media activities campaigns are maintained and promote the success of tenants and the VWCH.
- Please explain how you will effectively carry out the process for ensuring that news of new tenants are shared with sitting tenants within 7 days and are promoted within newsletters to encourage closer collaboration with other tenants.

Your responses to this question should be limited to no more than 2000 words. Diagrams, pictures, maps, tables and charts may include words but only to the extent that those words are necessary to enable evaluators to understand or interpret the diagram, picture etc. Words contained within diagrams, pictures etc. will be disregarded for the purpose of the evaluation of a Bidder's substantive response to the question.

Implementation Plan

Q.3 (10%) 2000 words

Tenderers must demonstrate how they would implement services at VWCH.**Please provide your proposal in relation to the following issues:**

- How you will mobilise to ensure that you put arrangements in place during the Implementation Plan period (by delivering and/or procuring) to ensure that there will be adequate repairs and maintenance provision for the buildings, maintenance of M&E services and lifts, cleaning and environmental, health & safety, security, utilities; managed services for reception, meeting rooms and telephony/internet services (including the 'virtual office' services for occupiers and non-occupiers).
- How you will mobilise to ensure that units are in a lettable state, meeting rooms and common areas are accessible and usable and there is a process and resources in place to collect rents, service charges, and other income from business occupiers and other users.

Your responses to this question should be limited to no more than 2000 words. Diagrams, pictures, maps, tables and charts may include words but only to the extent that those words are necessary to enable evaluators to understand or interpret the diagram, picture etc. Words contained within diagrams, pictures etc. will be disregarded for the purpose of the evaluation of a Bidder's substantive response to the question.

Tenant Support

Q.4 (10%) 1000 words

Explain and detail how you, as Managing Agent, will build a strong relationship with all tenants and maintain a high standard of customer standards and satisfaction including:

- Regular communication with tenants informing them of significant issues affecting the level of service or the building
- Regular informal tenant events and communications, invitation to VWCH events, partner events, surgeries and specialist support.
- Regular tenant meetings to ensure all issues, concerns are listened to and addressed, and solutions provided.
- Comprehensive new tenant inductions, with welcome packs on the broad support available from the Managing Agent and partner organisations.
- The provision of an annual customer satisfaction surveys.
- Responding to complaints or queries within 48 hours and to provide a full response with 10 working days.

Your responses to this question should be limited to no more than 1000 words. Diagrams, pictures, maps, tables and charts may include words but only to the extent that those words are necessary to enable evaluators to understand or interpret the diagram, picture etc. Words contained within diagrams, pictures etc. will be disregarded for the purpose of the evaluation of a Bidder's substantive response to the question.

Business Support Services

Q.5 (30%) 3000 words

Tenderers should submit a costed business support programme for the full 5-year period to demonstrate how they meet the requirements. The costed business support programme will be subject to review after the first year.

The Council requires the Managing Agent to explain how it will effectively:

- Assess all incoming tenants to ensure their viability, need for the workplace, ability to meet the overheads and growth projects and acceleration.
- Have a process in place to ensure structured periodic reviews with tenants of their business strategies are held and to support their business with further guidance and support, training needs and referring to other stakeholders for additional support, as well as growth into external commercial premises.

The Council requires the Managing Agent to ensure the delivery of following services as set out in the funding agreement between SEMLEP and the Council, please:

- Explain how you will ensure the support is flexible and tailored, adaptable to change, the life-cycle stages of businesses and is constantly changing in response to client and market developments.
- Demonstrate you have full knowledge and understanding of public sector initiatives and policies in the context of business support, including public sector funding, SEMLEP, the Growth Hub and job programmes including DWP programmes.
- Demonstrate you have full knowledge and understanding of business and finance networks.
- Explain how you will provide a business advisory service with sound and impartial advice business advice, support and guidance and signposting to other agencies for specialised support include exporting, importing, innovation support and ensuring the support package is relevant to business needs. You will be expected to offer low cost or free support to maximise the benefit to local businesses.
- Explain how you will deliver state of the art training and business support that provide skills, tools and techniques needed for business start-up and growth including leadership, management, coaching skills, innovation, influencing skills, finance, entrepreneurship, pitching skills, strategic planning, team performance, presentation skills, negotiation skills, change management, sales skills and marketing skills. You will be expected to offer low cost or free support to maximise the benefit to local businesses.
- Explain how you will provide a wide range of networking opportunities at regional level through the established networks formed with other business/enterprise/incubation/co-working centres.
- Explain how you will provide a wide array of activities to support networking, collaboration and information exchange amongst businesses at the VWCH.
- Explain how you will support any Council led initiatives to support enterprise, entrepreneurialism, business growth and acceleration, inward investment to attract new industries to the area, innovation, including grant schemes.

Your responses to this question should be limited to no more than 3000 words. Diagrams, pictures, maps, tables and charts may include words but only to the extent that those words are necessary to enable evaluators to understand or interpret the diagram, picture etc. Words contained within diagrams, pictures etc. will be disregarded for the purpose of the evaluation of a Bidder's substantive response to the question.

Performance Monitoring

Q.6 (10%) 1000 words

Tenderers should submit proposals to demonstrate how they will meet the requirements:

- The Council requires the Managing Agent to provide key information with details of statistical and service quality measures on a quarterly and annual basis. The Council will manage the contract on a continual basis, naming a Key Liaison Officer to liaise with the Managing Agent, and act as Contract Manager, holding regular contract monitoring meetings to ensure performance and compliance of the contract.
- The Managing Agent will be required to produce a detailed end of year Annual Report within two months of the year end with a detailed list of outputs for incorporation into the Annual Report.
- The Council requires quarterly summary reports within one month of the end of the first three quarters, (the final quarter will be part of the Annual Report), which will be used to monitor progress against targets, and address any problem areas where there is evidence of under-performance.
- The Managing Agent will need to continue, participate in and maintain The Advisory Board to monitor the overall performance of the Centre, with key members from West Northamptonshire Council and SEMLEP and other business support providers.
- The Managing Agent will need to have a process in place to provide the following to the Advisory Board as and when needed:
 - Quarterly and annual reports, evaluation results and any other reports from the Managing Agent or Key Liaison Officers
 - Progress against key targets and address any issues or under-performance
 - Expert guidance and support on key strategy approaches such as business emphasis, alignment with other strategies
 - Act as ambassadors and champions for the VWCH
 - Recommend to the Council and Managing Agent adjustments, initiatives to support the current offer in terms of operation, outputs and outcomes

There are certain KPIs which you will need to attain and meet (as set out below) and other information reporting requirements (as set out above). How will you ensure that there is reliable and high quality data and details collected, interpreted and communicated to the Council for these purposes.

Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Measures	Measure
150 new businesses created	75 by contract year 5
116 businesses supported	116 by contract year 5

490 gross direct and indirect jobs supported	295 by year 5 contract year 5
220 net local additional jobs supported	135 by contract year 5
£28 million of net additional GVA	£18 million by contract year 5

Your responses to this question should be limited to no more than 1000 words. Diagrams, pictures, maps, tables and charts may include words but only to the extent that those words are necessary to enable evaluators to understand or interpret the diagram, picture etc. Words contained within diagrams, pictures etc. will be disregarded for the purpose of the evaluation of a Bidder's substantive response to the question.

Legal - Evaluation Approach at Initial Tender Stage: Pass/Fail

Bidders must confirm their unconditional acceptance of the terms of the Management Agreement as part of their Initial Tender submission. No negotiation or mark-up is permitted. A Bidder who confirms their unconditional acceptance of the terms of the Management Agreement as part of their Initial Tender submission will pass this question and receive the full 5% weighting at Initial Tender stage for the Legal Criterion. No weighting or score other than 0% or 5% is available.

If any Bidder does not unconditionally accept the terms of the Management Agreement, the Bidder will fail this question. The Authority will award a 0% weighting and reserves the right to deem the Bidder's bid as non-compliant, reject the Bid and exclude the Bidder from being eligible for an award at Initial Tender stage or exclude the Bidder from continuing further in the procurement process.

Please confirm your unconditional acceptance of the terms of the Management Agreement as part of your Initial Tender submission.

Confirmation of unconditional acceptance of the terms of the Management Agreement.	Response
	Yes
	No

APPENDIX 3 - FINANCIAL CRITERIA EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Bidders are required to complete and submit the financial plan submission template.

The financial model is that the operator is paid a fixed, guaranteed management fee and any remuneration above that comes via a 'success fee' mechanism.

The Bidder is required to bid back:

- 1) A management fee which will be paid each contract year.
- 2) A percentage 'success fee' (calculated after the management fee and centre operational costs are deducted from the income), which will be paid each contract year in accordance with the terms of the contract. The Bidder must bid back a success fee minimum of 5% and a maximum of 30%.
- 3) The Bidder is also required to fully complete the document 'Financial Plan Submission Template'.

Management Charge/ Fee Evaluation Methodology: Calculation (55% weighting)

The lowest management fee Bid will receive full marks.

Other management fee Bids will be scored according to the following calculation:

Lowest bid
----- X 100 = score out of 100.
Bidder's bid

The information in the financial plan template submission that will be assessed is the information in cell I58 (this cell represents the total of all management fees added together across the full term).

Bidders must complete the numerical cells in the financial plan submission template and must not caveat and qualify their response or change any excel formula (including the projected rates for Business Rates and Utilities pre-populated by the Council) in the financial plan submission template. The Council reserves the right to reject a tender which seeks to do so.

Bidders must enter their figures for the projected expenditure on the management of the hub for each of the 5 years which will determine the management fee figure for each of the five years.

This will give the Council an indication of projected expenditure to understand the make-up and composition of the management fee requested forming part of your offer.

The management fee will be payable by the Council under the terms of the Management Agreement.

If actual expenditure exceeds the projected expenditure in the performance of the Management Agreement then Bidders should note that there will be no adjustment to the management fee payable by the Council and it will be the Bidder's risk and responsibility to cover any shortfall arising.

In the *Assumptions* section of the financial plan template, please provide a narrative response to demonstrate and provide confidence to the Council that the project expenditure figures are realistic, justifiable, credible and sustainable. Bidders should not seek to use the *Assumptions* section to qualify or caveat their management fee offer. The Council reserves the right to reject any Bid which seeks to do so.

The response in the *Assumptions* section will not be taken into account in scoring the Management Agreement but the Council reserves the right to take them into account in deciding whether the bid may be abnormally low. The Council reserves the right to reject a Bid if it considers it to be abnormally low in accordance with Regulation 69 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended).

Business Support: 7%

The Bidder is required to submit a day rate, to be provided for an 8 hour day

Lowest bid

----- X 100 = score out of 100.

Bidder's bid

This day rate will be assessed using the calculation above. The information in the financial plan template submission that will be assessed is the information in cell D84.

Success Fee Evaluation Methodology (38% weighting):

The success fee bid backs will be proportionally scored, as illustrated in the following table which summarises the success fee scoring approach.

Success fee bid backs below 5% or above 30% may be deemed to be non-compliant bids and in this situation the Authority reserves the right to reject a Bidder and exclude them from the procurement process.

The success fee percentage bid back should be a whole number.

Bidders should include their success fee bid back in their Bid submission.

Success Fee Bid%	% Mark
30	0
29	4
28	8
27	12
26	16
25	20
24	24
23	28
22	32
21	34
20	28
19	42
18	46
17	50
16	54
15	58
14	62
13	66
12	70
11	74
10	80
9	84
8	90
7	94
6	98
5	100

APPENDIX 4- FINANCIAL SUBMISSIONS

APPENDIX 5– MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT

APPENDIX 6 - GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The capitalised words and expressions in this ISIT have the meanings set out below unless the context specifically requires otherwise. References to the singular include the plural and vice versa.

Advisers means all professional advisers of the Authority involved in the procurement of the Project

Bid means each of the written proposals submitted by a Bidder as part of this procurement process at any stage of the procurement

Bidders means individuals and/or organisations who have been pre-qualified and to whom this ISIT has been issued by the Authority

Consortium means either an entity which is to be formed by a group of Organisations or a group of Organisations acting jointly as the Bidder

Consortium Member means where the Bidder is a consortium, any individual economic operator forming part of that consortium

Final Tender means the Bid submitted in response to the ISFT

Confidential Information means all information designated as confidential and disclosed to the Bidders by the Authority or its Advisers in order for them to formulate and prepare their Bid; or which may be supplied by the Authority or its Advisers at a future date (whether in written or visual format or otherwise)

Initial Tender means the Bid submitted in response to the ISIT

Organisation means a sole trader, partnership, limited partnership, limited liability partnership, co-operative or company and any analogous entity established inside or outside the UK and should be interpreted accordingly

Preferred Bidder means the bidder which has been assessed by the Authority as having the most economically advantageous Final Tender (and in the case where the Authority has decided to award on the basis of Initial Tenders, the most economically advantageous Initial Tender)

Procurement Documents means any document issued by the Authority as part of this procurement process

APPENDIX 7 - CERTIFICATES

TENDER FOR NORTHAMPTON VULCAN WORKS CREATIVE HUB - OPERATOR PROJECT

CERTIFICATE OF NON- COLLUSION

In the case of a Consortium, each Consortium Member must complete and return this Certificate.

To West Northamptonshire Council (“the Authority”)

The essence of the public procurement process is that the Authority shall receive bona fide competitive Tenders from all Bidders. In recognition of this principle I/We certify that this is a bona fide Tender, intended to be competitive and that I/we have not fixed or adjusted the amount of the Tender or the rates and prices quoted by or under or in accordance with any agreement or arrangement with any other party.

I/We also certify that I/we have not done and undertake that I/we will not do at any time any of the following acts:

- a) communicate to a party other than the Authority the amount or approximate amount of my/our proposed Tender (other than in confidence in order to obtain quotations necessary for the preparation of the Tender);
- b) enter into any agreement or arrangement with any other party that he shall refrain from tendering or as to the amount of any Tender to be submitted;
- c) offer or agree to pay or give or pay or give any sum of money inducement or valuable consideration directly or indirectly to any person for doing or having done or causing or having caused any act or omission to be done in relation to any other tender or the proposed Tender; or
- d) enters into any type of agreement or arrangement with any other party aimed at distorting the outcome of the competition

In this Certificate:

- the word “person” includes any person, body or association, corporate or incorporate
- the phrase “any agreement or arrangement” includes any transaction, formal or informal whether legally binding or not.
- the word “Tender” includes all tender submissions including Initial Tender submissions, Final Tender submissions together with associated clarifications provided by the Bidder

1 **SIGNED**
 POSITION

 2 **SIGNED**
 POSITION

On behalf of
 Date

TENDER FOR THE NORTHAMPTON VULCAN WORKS CREATIVE HUB - OPERATOR PROJECT

CERTIFICATE OF NON - CANVASSING

In the case of a Consortium, each Consortium Member must complete and return this Certificate.

To West Northamptonshire Council ("the Authority")

I/We hereby certify that I/we have not in connection with the award of the contract for the project or any other proposed contract for Northampton Vulcan Works Creative Hub - Operator Project.

- canvassed any member, employee, agent of the Authority
- undertaken to unduly influence the decision-making process of the Authority
- undertaken to obtain confidential information that could confer upon an undue advantage in the award of the contract

and that no person employed by me/us or acting on my/our behalf has done any such act.

I/We further hereby undertake that I/we will not in the future do or seek to do the prohibited acts referred to above and that no person employed by me/us or acting on my/our behalf will do any such act.

1	SIGNED	
	POSITION	
2	SIGNED	
	POSITION	

On behalf of

Date

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

12 April 2022

CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY & ENGAGEMENT, AND REGULATORY SERVICES: COUNCILLOR DAVID SMITH

Report Title	Homes for Ukraine Scheme
Report Author	Joanne Barrett, Assistant Director Housing & Communities Joanne.barrett@westnorthants.gov.uk

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

Assistant Director - Finance	James Smith	11 th April 2022
Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	11 th April 2022
Other Directors/Officers	Jane Carr - Director of Communities & Opportunities	11 th April 2022

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Presentation on current position regarding Refugee Resettlement in West Northamptonshire

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To update Cabinet members on the current position regarding resettlement of refugees in West Northamptonshire, in particular the Homes for Ukraine.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 As a result of the Russian government's war against Ukraine, the UK government has opened several routes of safety in the UK for people fleeing Ukraine: UK Family Scheme visa; Homes for Ukraine Scheme. These new schemes will operate alongside existing resettlement schemes such as Afghan Relocations & Assistance Policy (ARAP) and Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS).
- 2.2 West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) is actively supporting people who have fled Afghanistan in West Northamptonshire to resettle and re-build their lives in the UK. With the announcement of schemes enabling people fleeing Ukraine to come to the UK, WNC is developing its working arrangements to be able to provide appropriate support to people arriving in West Northamptonshire.
- 2.3 A Powerpoint presentation has been prepared that outlines the different schemes currently operational in West Northants, the current position locally and our response. This document is included as Appendix A.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 To note the content of this report and associated appendices.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 To support the work being taken by statutory agencies across the county and the approach being taken locally in West Northants.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 The Homes for Ukraine scheme was launched on 14 March 2022. On 18 March a Home Office form opened for visa applications. Since then, there has been ongoing information provided on GOV.UK for sponsors, guests and local authorities. The latest guidance for councils was updated on 30 March 2022.
- 5.2 The Homes for Ukraine scheme has been launched whilst the council is still providing wrap around support to two Bridging Hotels accommodating people who have fled Afghanistan.
- 5.3 Appendix A outlines the current position regarding Afghan resettlement, the schemes that have been put in place to assist people fleeing Ukraine and our current position locally in supporting the schemes.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1.1 Central government considers councils have a critical role to play in the success of the Homes for Ukraine scheme and are uniquely placed to support communities to welcome Ukrainians to the UK. The guidance on the Homes for Ukraine scheme outlines a specific role for councils across England in supporting the scheme.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1 Councils will be provided with grant funding from DLUHC based on a funding rate per person and this is to be used in order to meet the associated costs both for providing council services and for administering payments. Further details of the funding/tariff are outlined in Appendix A.

7.2 Legal

- 7.2.1 Central government has issued guidance outlining the role of councils across England in supporting the scheme. The guidance does not replace or contradict the council's statutory duties or responsibilities.

7.3 Risk

- 7.3.1 The countywide Tactical Co-ordination Group has established a risk register that is monitored on a weekly basis to identify the key risks and develop strategies and processes to manage and mitigate these risks.

7.4 Consultation

- 7.4.1 The countywide response to Homes for Ukraine across statutory agencies is being coordinated through a Tactical Coordination Group under the Local Resilience Forum arrangements. Therefore, health colleagues, Fire and Police are part of the multi-agency arrangements developing our response to Homes for Ukraine and other resettlement work.

7.5 Climate Impact

- 7.5.1 There are no specific climate and environmental impact that may arise from our work to support the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

7.6 **Community Impact**

- 7.6.1 The council has had one meeting with key community and voluntary sector organisations and faith groups to start collaborative working to design our local integration support package for the Ukrainian families coming into our local communities. Key partners have been invited to a Task & Finish Group where partners will work with the council to help design our local response. Underneath the Task & Finish Group locality groups will be set up where the council will work with local community and faith groups to develop the localised response and offer. The council is also meeting with town and parish councils to establish what role they can play in developing our local response across West Northants.

8. **Background Papers**

None



West
Northamptonshire
Council

Refugee Resettlement Update

8 April 2022

Background

Key work areas:

- Afghan resettlement
- Ukrainian resettlement

Afghan Resettlement

- 2 Bridging Hotels in West Northants
- Went 'live' Sept 2021
- Expected to operate until end June/early July (possibly September 2022)
- 379 arrived at the bridging hotels
- 132 people moved out of hotels (122 into permanent accommodation)
- Currently more than 200 people accommodated in the hotels
- Every child of school age, has had a place in our local schools, whilst staying at the bridging hotels.
- No Afghan refugee children without their parents supported in the hotels
- Permanent resettlement pledge: 10 households – 3-year support programme

Ukrainian Refugee Resettlement

Currently 2 key routes set up to welcome Ukrainians to the UK:

- Ukraine Family Scheme
- Homes for Ukraine Scheme (part 1)

*** Guidance & information is regularly being updated & re-issued ***

Ukraine Family Scheme

- Family Scheme is an extension of usual family visa scheme.
- Free to apply.
- Immediate & extended family living in Ukraine on or before 01/01/22 can apply to join UK-based family members.
- UK-based family members not just British Citizens but some other people with settled or pre-settled status
- No income test; no English Language test
- Applications subject to security checks
- People can stay in the UK for up to 3 years.
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-ukraine-family-scheme-visa>

Background – Homes for Ukraine (Phase 1)

- Similarities with Canadian Refugee Resettlement Programme – strong element of "private & community sponsorship".
- "Sponsor" = individual, group or organisation who has been approved to accommodate an individual or household from Ukraine under the 'Homes for Ukraine' sponsorship scheme.
- "Guest" = individual or household who have secured a visa under the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme which enables them to be housed by a sponsor.

Background – Homes for Ukraine (Phase 1)

- 'Homes for Ukraine' Phase 1:
 - from 14 March - sponsors could register in hosting a guest
<https://www.gov.uk/register-interest-homes-ukraine>
 - from 18 March – Home Office visa applications opened
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-visa-under-the-ukraine-sponsorship-scheme>
- Scheme expected to be expanded at some point – 'Phase 2'.
- Phase 2 – enable community groups or organisations to sponsor multiple guests.

Homes for Ukraine (Phase 1)

Eligibility

- Scheme open to Ukrainian nationals resident in Ukraine prior to 01/01/22; to their immediate family members (e.g. spouse/partner and children under 18) who may be of other nationalities, to be sponsored to come to the UK.
- Applicants can apply from Ukraine or from any other third country.
- The number of people who can access this scheme is uncapped and is dependent on the capacity of the sponsors who come forward
- Those arriving need to meet standard security checks prior to being issued with a visa.

Homes for Ukraine (Phase 1)

Eligibility

- Guests will be able to live & work in the UK for up to 3 years.
- Guests will be able to access benefits, healthcare, employment & other support.

Requirements & Role of Sponsors

- Sponsors must be in the UK.
- Any nationality and any immigration status provided at least 6 months leave to remain
- Sponsors and all adults in sponsors' households will also be subject to initial criminal records checks by the Home Office before the visa is approved.

Homes for Ukraine (Phase 1)

Requirements & Role of Sponsors

- Accommodation must be:
 - at least a private room, with suitable access to bathroom and kitchen facilities
 - be free of serious health & safety hazards
 - full details of accommodation requirements set out in the scheme FAQs

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-scheme-frequently-asked-questions>

Homes for Ukraine (Phase 1)

Requirements & Role of Sponsors

- Sponsors are required to:
 - check with their mortgage lender or landlord (if a tenant)
 - notify their insurers (prior to arrival of guests)
 - stay in contact with guests to organise/coordinate arrival in UK and instructions to reach their accommodation
 - support & help guests to: adapt to life in UK; have access to food and essential supplies; have access to mobile phone and/or internet to stay in touch with family members; and help direct guests to public services e.g. GP and dentist.

Homes for Ukraine (Phase 1)

Requirements & Role of Sponsors

- No rent can be charged
- Sponsors can receive an optional £350 per month 'thank you' payment for up to 12 months (1 payment per residential address regardless of number of individuals sponsored/accommodated)
- Payment does not affect benefits, council tax etc
- No requirement to cover food & living expenses – although can choose to offer this.

Homes for Ukraine (Phase 1)

The Process

- Matching - sponsors and guests can find each other but from early April DLUHC has funded RESET to pilot a matching service
- <https://resetuk.org/about/ukraine>
- Visa applications can be made by the sponsor or applicant – online
- On approval of visa ‘permission to travel’ letter issued to guest
- Specific councils with primary ports of entry (key airports/ports) are providing welcome arrangements for guests including: meet & greet; immediate humanitarian assistance; social care for safeguarding concerns flagged by Border Force.
- If required guests are eligible for one free single onward journey from port of entry to anywhere in UK.

Homes for Ukraine (Phase 1)

The Process – other information

- Reset is working with Refugees at Home, an independent UK charity, to deliver training to the sponsors.
- <https://www.refugeesathome.org/>

Homes for Ukraine (Phase 1)

Role of Councils

- Central Government considers councils have a critical role to play in the success of the Homes for Ukraine scheme.
- Guidance has been issued to councils in England on the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme but this does not replace or contradict their statutory duties or responsibilities.

This slide-deck is based on the guidance for councils on GOV.UK

Homes for Ukraine (Phase 1)

Role of Councils

- When a visa application is received, councils will be notified of the sponsor household and guest household, including address.

Accommodation checks

- At least one in-person visit & check of accommodation prior to arrival of guests wherever possible.

Safeguarding checks

- Complete DBS checks of all adults in the sponsor household and enhanced DBS if any guest is under 18 or a vulnerable adult
- Following guest(s) arrival councils should confirm asap that: the guest is well; there are no serious safeguarding/welfare concerns; or needs for care & support.
- If concerns emerge to be dealt with under usual safeguarding practices and procedures.

Homes for Ukraine (Phase 1)

Role of Councils

- To administer an interim £200 cash payment per guest on arrival for subsistence costs (funded from the tariff).
- Provide school places for school age children (specific funding will be provided to support this).
- Where necessary, provide advice and referrals to specialist public and health services as appropriate e.g., mental health services, adult social care, and children's services (further advice to follow).
- Support guests to access local Jobcentre Plus appointments for benefit assessments and job-seeking.
- The Council's statutory homelessness duties will apply where sponsor/guest relationships breakdown.
- Supporting integration into local communities, including access to translation services and working with faith groups & local voluntary sector organisations to help signpost guests to advice and support.
- To administer the £350 'thank you payment' to the sponsor each month.

Homes for Ukraine – Funding for Councils

- Tariff offered = £10,500 per person for first year.
- Future years funding to be reviewed
- Additional grant to pay £350 per month in arrears to sponsor households

Councils will be expected to use the tariff to meet all of their associated costs (both for providing council services and for administering payments)

Homes for Ukraine – Funding for Councils

- Councils will be paid additional funding to support with this. Further details are set out below
- DfE will allocate funding on a per pupil basis for the three phases of education at the following annual rates:
 - Early years (ages 2 to 4) - £3,000
 - Primary (ages 5 -11) - £6,580
 - Secondary (ages 11-18) - £8,755
- These tariffs include support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Homes for Ukraine - Current Position

Governance

- System oversight via countywide Tactical Coordination Group (TCG)
- TCG includes WNC, NNC, health, Police & Fire.
- WNC internal working group.

Data Management

- Anticipated arrivals across West Northamptonshire – 08/04/22
- Total number of sponsor households – 155
- Total number of Ukrainian guests – 303

Homes for Ukraine - Current Position

LA role & duties

- WNC has access to Homes for Ukraine database & receives data for West Northamptonshire on a daily basis – live data on visa applications made.
- Trained staff to facilitate DBS applications.
- Visits to sponsor/host households commenced w/c 04/04/22 for accommodation and safeguarding checks.
- Process to pay cash payments to guests in place.
- Developing a process to pay thank you payments to hosts.
- New post of Resettlement Manager – commenced 01/04/22
- 4 x Resettlement Support Worker role – being advertised w/c 11/04/22.

Homes for Ukraine – Current Position

Role of Community/Voluntary Organisations, Faith Groups & Town and Parish Councils

- Initial meeting with key voluntary/community organisations and faith groups took place w/c 4th April.
- Task & Finish Group being set up where key voluntary/community organisations and faith groups can work with the council to develop our local response.
- The council will support the development of locality groups in locations where there are clusters of sponsors.
- Town & parish councils also being given the opportunity to become actively involved in developing the local response.



WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

12TH APRIL 2022

CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION AND GROWTH: COUNCILLOR LIZZY BOWEN

Report Title	Towns Fund: 35-45 Abington Street Project- Business Case and Delivery Strategy
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List of Appendices

Appendix A – 35 - 45 Abington Street - Appraisal Report

Appendix B – 35-45 Abington Street-Outline Business Case and Procurement Delivery Strategy EXEMPT

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report requests approval of the Outline Business Case (OBC) and the Procurement and Delivery Strategy for the 35-45 Abington Street project. The regeneration project covers three sites, 35-39 Abington Street (the former British Homes Stores premises), 41-45 Abington Street (the former Marks and Spencer premises) and 20-28 Wood Street and was previously covered as two Towns Fund projects but now is being carried forwards as one project.
- 1.2 Approvals will allow the funding to be drawn down from Northampton's Towns Fund grant allocation of £9.7m across both projects.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The July 2021 Cabinet noted the Towns Fund grant allocation to West Northamptonshire Council from MHCLG of £24.9m, subject to approval of stage two business cases for each project and in addition noted that each project business case would need to come back to Cabinet for consideration and approval.
- 2.2 Abington Street is the principal shopping street in Northampton, also acting as a key pedestrian arterial route the town centre, connecting Abington Square through to the Market Square. However, with changes in retail habits it has struggled. The Northampton Town Centre Masterplan, October 2019, sets out a vision for the part of Abington Street which is the subject of this report as "a re-development opportunity to help redefine a struggling part of the town centre as a residential neighbourhood."
- 2.3 The site has therefore been strategically identified as a residential opportunity. Introducing quality town centre residential provision to this area will increase and diversify the existing mix of accommodation offer and will be a catalyst for creation of a town centre neighbourhood. By increasing the town centre's residential population, it will bolster the town centre sustainability and competitiveness, increase footfall, and resolve the problem of what to do with unviable large format retail units that have no obvious other viable use.
- 2.4 The Abington Street site occupies approximately 0.8 Hectares (2 acres) of footprint in the town centre, presently occupied by two large vacant retail units, and a former office building.
- 41-45 Abington Street (Former M&S) is owned by the Council, having been acquired by Northampton Borough Council (NBC) in September 2020.
 - 35-39 Abington Street is in third party ownership and is proposed to be acquired in order to take the combined project forward.
 - 20- 28 Wood Street, a former derelict office building is in third party ownership and is proposed to be acquired in order to take the combined project forward.
- 2.5 This Cabinet report seeks approval of the 35-45 Abington Street Project OBC (Appendix B). This has been developed in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) appraisal guide and HM Treasury Green Book requirements by Cushman and Wakefield, the Council's consultant. It will enable draw down on a combined

total of £9.7m of capital grant investment funding to enable project delivery. This is already allocated as £4.2m for 35-39 Abington Street and £5.4m for 41-45 Abington Street.

- 2.6 This report also seeks approval of the Procurement and Delivery Strategy (Appendix B) for the delivery of the 35-45 Abington Street, which identifies options that have been considered and the recommended approach, which is to appoint a development partner for the site.
- 2.7 The OBC (Appendix B) has established the strategic case for redevelopment of the combined site for residential development, an initial masterplan prepared by 5Plus Architects comprises approximately 340 dwellings. The proposal includes for retained active commercial frontage to Abington Street.
- 2.8 The Procurement and Delivery Strategy (Appendix B) establishes the preferred procurement route and the reasons and provides an options analysis. The conclusion is that WNC's delivery objectives are more likely achievable through a form of Development Agreement (DA). The PDS sets out that using a framework is the preferred way of procuring a development partner. A DA will enable a greater degree of control than simply relying on planning controls when seeking to influence the development of the site, enabling the Council's delivery objectives, outputs and outcomes to be delivered.
- 2.9 As noted above, delivery of this scheme would require acquisition of two sites which are 35-39 Abington Street Northampton and 20-28 Wood Street Northampton. If this could not be achieved through negotiation, then a Cabinet decision to use compulsory purchase powers may be sought. The negotiations would be undertaken in a way to allow for this.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
 - a) approves the Outline Business Case (OBC) for the 35-45 Abington Street Project, to draw down on £9.7m of Towns Fund funding.
 - b) approves the Procurement and Delivery Strategy (Appendix B) that sets out the recommended delivery route for the 35-45 Abington Street Project (which recommends using a form of Development Agreement to deliver the project).
 - c) authorises the purchase of each of 35-39 Abington Street and 20-28 Wood Street, in each case subject to a red book valuation and satisfactory due diligence on the site, a resultant acquisition being made at no more than a fair commercial price taking account of all relevant factors.
 - d) confirms it is willing in principle to exercise its compulsory purchase powers to facilitate the development, if necessary.
 - e) notes a further Cabinet report would be brought back upon the completion of the procurement process to seek approval for the preferred bidder.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 To allow the 35-45 Abington Street development site to proceed and to ensure the grant award is spent within the award timescales.

- 4.2 To maximise the opportunities for the effective use of public money.
- 4.3 To reduce the likelihood that current owners will attempt to 'ransom' the Council's aspirations for regeneration of the town centre by seeking excessive prices for their properties.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 At the July 2021 Cabinet approval was given to develop the stage two business cases for the projects included within the £24.9m Towns Fund grant allocation, including for 35-39 and 41-45 Abington Street projects. It was noted that each business case would return to Cabinet for approval.
- 5.2 Given the strategic nature of the two sites, 35-39 and 41-45 Abington Street, along with 20-28 Wood Street are being grouped together due to their proximity, shared objectives and opportunity to procure and deliver them simultaneously. If any of the sites were not brought forward at the same time then there is a risk that the costs for the redevelopment of these sites would increase substantially due to issues around buildability that would prevent these being viable, leaving these poor-quality sites in the town centre for the long term.
- 5.3 The OBC has been developed on this basis and it is envisaged that should negotiated acquisition of 35-39 Abington Street and 20-28 Wood Street not be possible, the Council would to pursue compulsory purchase.
- 5.4 A number of key activities have taken place since summer 2021:
- Appointment of dedicated Project Manager.
 - Towns Fund submission requirements reviewed, and strategy for business case and delivery of the site established.
 - Identification of programme milestones and development of the project risks register.
 - Appointment made of Cushman and Wakefield Public Sector Developments team to develop the OBC, Development Appraisal, viability assessments and a Delivery and Procurement Strategy for the project. (Appendix B)
 - Appointment of 5Plus Architects to provide a site masterplan concept for massing purposes, informing appraisal testing and viability.
 - Appointment of Hatch Ltd, independent appraisers of the OBC.
 - Appointment of Specialist legal support on subsidy control, DWF Law
 - Soft market testing of development mix by professional advisers.
 - Appointment of valuation advice for acquisition purposes of 35-39 Abington Street and 20-28 Wood Street properties (Red Book valuations awaited).
 - Initial dialogue with the third-party owners of 35-39 Abington Street.
- 5.5 The OBC has been independently appraised by Hatch Ltd and subsequently approved by the Northampton Forward Oversight and Delivery Group on the 14th Feb 2022. The Northampton

Forward Board approved the OBC on the 23rd February 2022, confirming the OBC is acceptable and meets the required criteria. This appraisal is included in Appendix A

5.6 The OBC is split into five sections. These are summarised below.

The Strategic Case

5.7 It is recognised that the unprecedented levels of change experienced by Northampton's town centre in recent times has created a series of challenges it must tackle and overcome, including:

- Creating a Vibrant and Welcoming Town Centre
- Supporting Our Growth by Delivering Housing

5.8 The Northampton Town Centre Masterplan, published in October 2019, sets out a vision for this part of Abington Street as “a re-development opportunity to help redefine a struggling part of the town centre as a residential neighbourhood.” Introducing further residential provision to this area would increase and diversify the existing offer and will support the creation of a new town centre neighbourhood. This would begin to increase the town centre's residential population. This spending power from this should support wider town centre sustainability and competitiveness.

5.9 The redevelopment of the 35-45 Abington Street site is an opportunity to meet an identified need for high-quality residential accommodation in Northampton town centre.

5.10 An initial site masterplan has been prepared by 5plus Architects, comprising 342 no. 1, 2 and 3 bedroom apartments, arranged over three blocks ('Abington', 'Wellington' and 'Wood'), with the following development mix:

- 159 no. 1 Bed Apartments
- 158 no. 2 Bed Apartments
- 10 no. 3 Bed Apartments
- 15 no. 3 Bed Duplex Apartments

5.11 The £9.7m Towns Fund investment into the site is intended to cover the current viability gap. The OBC Development appraisals identifies a gap of £10.4m (Appendix B). Cushman and Wakefield have advised that the remaining £0.7m gap to deliver the development should be able to be dealt with through the competitive stage of selecting a development partner. This issue is however recorded as a project risk.

Rationale for intervention

5.12 The combined site has significant viability challenges, particularly significant “fixed costs” (such as acquisition, demolition and expensive remediation works). The market will not currently intervene. The Town Deal investment is crucial, the site would simply not be delivered without it.

- 5.13 Intervention will directly lead to the repurposing this key site and will create a catalyst for the wider regeneration within the town centre and benefit of the town centre and wider local economy.
- 5.14 Without intervention, it is likely that the Abington Street site will remain in redundant and vacant retail use following the departure of M&S and BHS stores. This would have an ongoing adverse effect on the immediate surrounding area.

Evidence of Demand for Proposal

Private Sale Residential and PRS (Private Rented Sector)

- 5.15 The OBC confirms whilst there is a varied mix of residential accommodation available in Northampton town centre, recent new build stock has generally been limited to apartment schemes and student accommodation, with larger, more suburban residential schemes located further afield.
- 5.16 It is the view of Cushman & Wakefield's Residential Agency team that there is sufficient demand for town centre apartments at the subject site from both an occupier and developer perspective.
- 5.17 Notwithstanding this, 342 units is considered to be too great a quantum of private sale apartments to be absorbed into the market, without having a detrimental impact on absorption rates. On this basis, it is assumed that one of the three blocks would be delivered as purpose-built Private Rented Sector (PRS) accommodation with the other two being for private sale.
- 5.18 Within the context of the subject site, PRS accommodation is considered to be a suitable use, given town centre location and the proximity to the Railway Station, and other key amenities. There isn't currently a strong PRS market in Northampton, but Cushman & Wakefield consider this to be strengthening.
- 5.19 The extent of the site and quantum of housing proposed will result in phased development, rather than the entire site being built at once. In the initial modelling there are three proposed blocks. Full market commentary is included within the OBC.

The Economic Case

- 5.20 The economic case demonstrates that the preferred option offers an 'acceptable' value outcome for money from both a Towns Fund only and total public sector cost perspective. An initial Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of 1.1 is generated when the development is assessed, both on a Towns Fund only and on a total public sector cost basis.
- 5.21 The economic benefits assessment undertaken only quantifies the direct land value uplift benefits (and some minor labour supply impacts) associated with the scheme. There could be

wider indirect land value uplift benefits associated with the regeneration and increased footfall benefits which would be generated by the scheme.

- 5.22 The additional residents who would live at the completed development would increase footfall along Abington Street and should therefore increase visitor spend within the surrounding retail units.
- 5.23 A high-quality scheme will provide transformative regeneration benefits and could have a wider catalytic impact upon Abington Street by increasing investor and occupier confidence in the area. As a result, this is likely to result in an uplift in commercial and residential property values along Abington Street and the wider town centre and result in significant indirect land value uplift benefits which have not been monetised in the BCR.
- 5.24 Residential accommodation delivered under the preferred option would provide both unit sale and Build to Rent accommodation to appeal to a broader range of the occupier market and diversify Northampton's town centre housing offer.
- 5.25 The ancillary commercial leisure floorspace would also diversify the retail/leisure provision on Abington Street and improve Northampton's evening economy offer.
- 5.26 The preferred option is that the Council could use Town Deal funding to acquire the former BHS store and 20-28 Wood Street Properties, complete asbestos strip, and as the discussions with developers progress consider and develop the appropriate level of enabling works for the project (such as whether full demolition and site clearance works take place or not). This should result in a residential led development scheme under a negotiated development agreement providing around 25,009m² Gross Internal Area of new high quality residential floorspace and 859m². GIA of ancillary commercial (food and beverage/ leisure) floor space.

The Financial Case

- 5.27 This Financial Case outlines the affordability and funding of the preferred option along with identifying key project risks. The Financial Case has set out in detail the various cost and revenue assumptions which support the development appraisal undertaken for the Abington Street site.
- 5.28 Based upon the Development Appraisal, it clearly demonstrates that the full £9.7m of the Town Investment Plan (TIP) submission for Abington Street amount is required for the project.
- 5.29 The maximum available public sector intervention would be set out not to exceed the maximum available as the procurement and delivery dialogue commences. So, whilst the appraisal shortfall of £0.7m exists (which amounts to circa 7% of the identified gap), this is expected to be overcome through the competitive tendering process to appoint the development partner. The Council's advisers have expressed confidence that this will occur.

Funding Source profile

Type	Source	Total Amount
35-45 Abington Street		
Public sector	Former NBC acquisition 41-45 Abington Street	£1.5m
Public sector	Town Investment Plan (includes some advanced monies)	£9.7m
Private sector	Private developer investment (residential and commercial active frontage including)	£60.3m
Total		£71.5 m

The Commercial Case

- 5.30 The commercial case assesses the commercial viability of the proposed scheme, and sets out a credible assessment of the commercial viability of the scheme (including residential outputs for market sale and purpose built Private Rented Sector housing). There is analysis on market demand, an overview of the procurement and delivery options, indicative milestones and timescales and key commercial dependencies.
- 5.31 A suitable development partner would be procured through a competitive process, see appendix B. The delivery and procurement strategy recommends further soft market testing in advance of launching a procurement process.

Subsidy Control

- 5.32 Subsidy control advice has been provided ahead of stage approval, an independent legal opinion has been received from DWF Law (Appendix B). The headline view is that the Council may use the £9.7m of public funds for the intended activities and sets out the compliant fashion. Subsidy control advice will be an integral part of the delivery stage to ensure a compliant use of funds is delivered.

The Management Case

- 5.33 The Council is the accountable body for the project. As the accountable body the Council will be responsible for discharging all obligations with MHCLG. The Council will be responsible for overseeing the financial management and accountability monitoring of the project.

Procurement and Delivery Strategy

- 5.34 Cushman and Wakefield were appointed to review the Delivery and Procurement options (Appendix B). A number of potential delivery mechanisms and their suitability when related to the context of the site opportunity and the Council's delivery objectives have been considered and reported on at a high level. The procurement and delivery strategy identifies these options in the light of the Council's Delivery and project objectives. The strategy provides an analysis of each option, informed by Cushman and Wakefield experience on similar projects and broader knowledge of the market. Options considered includes:
- Disposal following planning
 - Development management (Direct Delivery)
 - Development Agreement (DA)
 - Contractual Joint Venture Partnership (DA+)
 - Joint venture partnership (JVCo)
 - Investment Partner (InvestCo)
- 5.35 The development market does typically prefer the contracting authority to set out its preference for a delivery route, and having a stated route would simplify the ongoing legal process. On the basis of the options analysis, it is considered that the Council's delivery objectives are likely to be more achievable through the Development Agreement (DA) approach, or potentially a contractual Joint Venture partnership (DA+) approach. Both offer a 'tried and tested' approaches, in essence both being based on a traditional development agreement structure.
- 5.36 Cushman and Wakefield recommends that the Council initially proceed to test the market view of this recommended delivery route of a DA, in order to better understand whether the market has a strong preference for the DA route.
- 5.37 The DA route, either a DA or Contractual JV give the Council the ability to include provisions that provide the control it requires over development, at the same time as maximising market attractiveness through it being familiar and 'tried and tested' approach.
- 5.38 Advice has been given concerning the procurement status of the opportunity, and it is essential to ensure that the delivery vehicle is compliant with Public Procurement Regulations. This requires the notification of the opportunity on the UK Government's 'Find a Tender' (FTS) service. This can be done by the Council directly or by using a pre-notified framework. In the Procurement and Delivery Strategy C&W identified two compliant procurement frameworks that could be used.
- 5.39 Appendix B sets out the relative benefits of each approach with the key advantages of using a framework including:

- Speed – Panel members are “pre-procured”, avoiding the need for a pre-qualifying ‘sifting’ stage.
- Cost – There are cost savings associated with the shorter timescales, but there is a reduced level of detail and governance when compared with an open procurement process.
- Competition – Through an Expression of Interest stage, the Council will be able to engage with suppliers to understand in advance whether they will be pursuing the opportunity. This reduces the risk of bidders de-selecting themselves partway through the process and promotes healthy competition.
- Market attractiveness – Suppliers have already been through a Find a Tender compliant procedure to secure a place on the framework.

5.40 Using a compliant framework is therefore the recommended route for securing a development partner at this stage. The next stage would be to determine which is most suitable for the project.

5.41 To ensure that the proposals meet the requirements of the council a range of project objectives have been produced which the developers will be scored against when submitting their proposals. They provide the framework for ensuring that the process delivers the Council’s vision for the site. The most appropriate delivery option and procurement route will be one that achieves the optimal balance across the Council’s objectives, whilst avoiding the need for subsidy above the Towns Fund grant available.

5.42 The proposed themes of the objectives are set out below while the precise wording of each objective will be refined ahead of the procurement process:

- **Design Quality** – To set new standards of design quality for residential within Northampton, referencing the distinctive character of Northampton with original and attractive designs, drawing from the area’s heritage.
- **Residential Neighbourhood** – To provide a mix of good quality private residential units to form a new neighbourhood and community.
- **Transport, Linkages & Connectivity** – To connect the site to the wider town centre, with a focus on encouraging permeability and pedestrian flows within the town centre.
- **Partnering Approach** – To create a partnering structure with the Council that: aligns the parties’ goals; plays to their strengths; appropriately apportions risks and provides sufficient control for each party to determine those aspects of the development that are core to their respective organisations.
- **Delivery & Resources** – The timely delivery of the scheme, with appropriate and sufficient resources.
- **Stakeholder engagement** – The production of a stakeholder engagement strategy that clearly identifies who will be consulted in the development of proposals for the site, that identifies any potential obstacles and how they are going to be managed, focusing on the development of constructive and productive relationships over the period of the project that maximise project objectives.

- **Long Term Structure** – The provision of a long-term management and maintenance structure over the completed scheme in order to maintain the environment as an attractive place to live, where people feel safe and secure, at minimal cost and risk to the Council.
- **Green and Sustainable** – The provision of an environmentally sustainable development with high-quality spatial design that fits in with wider town centre developments and supports the Council’s sustainability and climate change strategies.
- **Technology** – To incorporate digital and smart technology within the scheme to create a better place that improves wellbeing, mobility, equality, communities and prosperity. To future proof buildings and infrastructure technology.
- **Social Value** – Typically involves requirements around local employment, community organisations, sustainability.
- **Viability & Funding** – To deliver a viable and fundable scheme and secure sufficient private sector funding on reasonable and appropriate terms to deliver the scheme and unlock public sector funding where gap funding is required.

Project Milestones

5.43 Included below are indicative timescales and milestones for the procurement and delivery of the 35-45 Abington Street scheme.

Project Milestone	Indicative Date
Finalise Delivery & Procurement Strategy & preparation of procurement Documents	February 2021 – April 2022
Launch procurement process	Spring - Summer 2022
Acquisitions (35-39 Abington Street and 20-28 Wood Street)	Summer – Winter 2022
Dialogue stage	Summer – Autumn 2022
Tender evaluation stage	Winter 2022/2023
Complete acquisitions	
Asbestos strip	Winter 2022/2023
Preferred bidder stage	Spring 2023 – Winter 2023
Preparation of further technical work, submission of planning application, determination period and planning permission granted	Winter 2023 – Winter 2024
Funding approval & start on site	January 2025
Abnormal & enabling Works	February 2025 – July 2025 (Demolitions – could be brought forward)
Construction phases	August 2025 – 2032

Key Risks

5.44 A risk register has been developed as part of the project and will be updated regularly. Risks identified are:-

- Risk of judicial review or any other challenges on procurement– ensure proper procurement procedure is followed and seek suitable legal advice.
- Lack of interest from the development market – The advice the Council has received is that the proposals are attractive to the market but that some further market testing with development partners through the early stages of procurement will be necessary and will crystallise the position.
- Funding gap of c£0.7m – It should be noted that the commercial view is that the market will respond to this through the competitive process. The Council should also be clear on its requirements i.e. no subsidy funded by the Council.
- Land assembly costs. A market valuation is underway and will establish the ‘Red Book’ value of the third-party interests. The allowance in the development appraisal is considered to be comfortable at this stage.
- Additional costs should a negotiated acquisition of land not be possible, and additional costs of compulsory purchase may then be required.
- Increased costs such as construction elements or enabling works (such as safe removal of asbestos and demolition). There is a contingency allowance in the appraisals, but it should be noted that all costs are “present day”, and whilst a case could be made for including inflation on the appraisal costs, similarly a case could be made for also inflating the appraisal values (in terms of rents and capital values). It is therefore a traditional approach when preparing development appraisals to present both costs and values in current day’s prices for consistency.
- Delivery team resourcing – The council has assigned a Project Manager and has appointed a technical team to lead on the procurement and delivery of the development, including specialist commercial advisers. This is funded from the overall project budget. If resourcing issues arise this will be identified and managed thorough regular monitoring of progress and responded to.
- Obtaining planning permission – The proposed scheme is to deliver a significant quantum of housing. The Project Manager will work closely with planning throughout the project process to minimise any potential permission issues, identifying issues at early stage.

Intervention Requirements

5.45 The OBC, outlines the strategic, commercial, and financial case for the intervention for the 35-45 Abington Street project. There is significant viability gap and without the Towns Fund grant these strategic sites will likely remain an unsolved problem. Investment is required to enable

the site to come forward to make the project viable. This will best be delivered by a developer bringing the site forward in partnership with the Council.

- 5.46 The approval of the OBC foresees the full draw down of the £9.7m of the Towns Fund to meet the viability gap of delivering the scheme and would be used to cover the costs as set out in 7.13 below.

Acquisition of 35-39 Abington Street & 20-28 Wood Street Properties

- 5.47 The Council has been engaging with owners of the 35-39 Abington Street over the scheme and has discussed the proposals to acquire the properties. This has been on the basis of a negotiated acquisition. The owners have indicated their openness to receiving an offer.
- 5.48 The Council will need to engage with the owners of 20-28 Wood Street (a derelict property understood to be owned by Legal and General) to discuss and agree the acquisition.
- 5.49 Prior to completing any acquisition, the Council would undertake full due diligence including title searches and appropriate building condition reports (noting that we are planning to demolish the properties). Acquisition consideration will be guided by a Market Valuation.

Compulsory Purchase

- 5.50 Every reasonable effort will be made prior to appointing a development partner to acquire all land interests within the project area. However, the Council may need to use its statutory powers to facilitate development on the site.
- 5.51 Should the Council not be able to reach agreements with the remaining private interests within the site area it is proposed to seek a resolution to use compulsory purchase powers to acquire these sites. If it is considered that the Council would need to make a compulsory purchase order in respect of land, planning permission would have to be in place or a scheme sufficiently advanced to justify this.
- 5.52 The compulsory purchase process from making the order to the Secretary of State confirming the Order could take in the region of 12 to 24 months. The making of a compulsory purchase order is a function which the Cabinet may exercise. It would have to consider the justification when the specific property interest is identified.

6 Issues and Choices

- 6.1 To approve the drawdown of the funding for 35-45 Abington Street as described in this report.

- 6.2 To not approve the funding for these projects will mean that the project will not be able to take place as the project is reliant on the Towns Fund. This would mean that the funding allocated by Government will be lost and not be used for the regeneration of Northampton town centre.
- 6.3 To approve the Procurement and Delivery Strategy for the 35-45 Abington Street project as described in this report.
- 6.4 To not approve the Procurement and Delivery Strategy. The Procurement and Delivery Strategy set out above has been carefully scrutinised and recommended by C&W as the best option for bringing forward these sites. If this is not approved, this would mean looking at other options that would not meet the objectives in delaying the project which is likely to then result in losing the allocated Government funding which in turn would mean the project would not be brought forward.

7 Implications (including financial implications)

Resources and Financial

- 7.1 WNC is the accountable body for the Towns Fund grant and will be managing the total amount of £9.7m for these projects. The funds are governed by legal agreements between WNC and Government. WNC's responsibility is the administration and monitoring of the grant funding.
- 7.2 Government has already forward funded approximately £1.24m of the Towns Fund total allocations (as explained in the July 2021 Cabinet report). The Council has used this forward funding to undertake enabling works at 41-45 Abington Street (a full asbestos strip), and to fund OBC development for each Towns Fund project, including a portion towards 35-45 Abington Street. This has been allocated to professional services, and advice to deliver the proposals.
- 7.3 The project is intended to be delivered at low cost to the authority. The costs associated with bringing this project forward are:-
- **Procurement and Development Agreement** (costs will relate to professional services required through these processes, including legal and professional advice, this will likely be in the region of £250k). This is budgeted from the Towns Fund revenue element and within existing regeneration budgets.
 - **Holding of property stage** (such as business rate liability for a short period while strip out works happen, security, utility costs, and interim management). This is currently unbudgeted. The team will work to commence the asbestos strip out as a priority once the acquisitions have been completed to minimise these costs. The costs will be met through Towns Fund revenue grant.
 - **Third party property acquisitions** (including purchase price, associated professional fees including valuation, legal and stamp duty land tax costs). These costs are built within the £9.7m of Towns Fund grant.

- **Site preparation stage** (all relevant site remediation costs, pre-commencement enabling works, creation of a cleared site including asbestos removal, remedial and services removal and capping, and demolition costs). These costs are built within the £9.7m of towns fund grant.
- **Development viability gap** (the remaining viability consideration that will be documented in the Development Agreement as gap funding to the developer to bring the viability issue). These costs are built within the £9.7m of Towns Fund grant and will have a cap defined by the overall costs up to the headline budget.

7.4 Whilst it is intended that these costs would be met from the Towns Fund grant, some of them may be revenue costs more than the revenue element of the grant, in which case the Council would need to bear them itself. All reasonable steps will be taken to minimise these costs to seek to ensure these can be met through the Towns Fund Grant. If there are additional costs as identified above which cannot be met through existing budgets a further report will be prepared for Cabinet in order for them to consider how they could potentially fund the costs.

Legal

- 7.5 It is noted pursuant to paragraph 2.4 above that consideration of the outline business case by Cabinet of the proposals relating to 41-45 Abington Street and 35-39 Abington Street, and use of the capital grant investment follow the approval process as set out in the Cabinet Report entitled Northampton Town Fund dated 13th July 2021. However, it is also noted that whilst the authority to purchase 20-28 Wood Street forms part of the recommendations to Cabinet, the property itself was not identified as an independent project for consideration in the same way as 41-45 Abington Street and 35-39 Abington Street have been, so it follows that that the property has not been subject to the same approval process, although the purchase of the property appears to be integral to the re-development project
- 7.6 It is noted pursuant to paragraph 2. 6 above in relation to the proposed delivery strategy, it is understood that this part of the strategy involves the proposed acquisition of property, and a joint venture partnership with a developer and in the event that the proposed acquisition of the property (either whole or in part) fails consideration of the alternative option which is to use of the Council’s compulsory purchase powers to secure the property in order to progress with the re-development project.
- 7.7 Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides a general power of competence which provides the Council with the same power to act that an individual generally has and provides that the power may be used in innovative ways, and the Council can also use more specific powers under statute, see further below.
- 7.8 It is noted above that the costs of the re-development project may exceed that allowed for under the grant provision, and the potential for a development viability gap. Section 12 of the Local Government Act 2003 provides the Council with the power to invest, if so required. Under the statute the meaning of “investment” covers for example, a loan made to a joint venture or to a third party, provided the investment was for any purpose relevant to its functions under any enactment or for the purposes of prudent management of its financial

affairs. It is noted that further work is to be undertaken with respect to viability and funding it is therefore recommended that further specialist legal advice be obtained.

- 7.9 As noted in paragraph 7.5 above if the proposed property acquisitions fail to happen (in whole or in part) the Council could exercise its compulsory purchase powers to acquire the property. There are a number of different acts of Parliament that use compulsory purchase powers, one of which for example is pursuant to, Section 226 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which authorises the Council to compulsorily purchase land if the Council thinks that the acquisition of same, will facilitate the development or re- development or improvement of land, or acquisition is required to achieve the proper planning of an area. If such powers are required for the re-development project, it is recommended that further specialist legal advice should be obtained.
- 7.10 It is recommended given the scope and complexities of the proposed re-development project that an appropriate level of budget will be allowed to provide for specialist external legal expertise, where necessary and appropriate commensurate with the nature of the project, beyond that already received with respect to subsidy control.
- 7.11 The OBS Appendix B provides for a headline options analysis of the procurement options available to the Council for the appointment of a development partner, this analysis has been undertaken by Cushman and Wakefield from the perspective of a property adviser and not a legal adviser, accordingly legal advice must be sought to confirm the recommended and most appropriate procurement route to ensure strict compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

Risk

- 7.12 As well as general project delivery risks identified at 5.12.12, If the Towns Fund projects are not delivered, there will be significant financial, reputational, and political risks for both the Council and the chosen developer.
- Financial risks: if the projects are not delivered within time and deadlines are not met, the Council risks losing external funding and faces increased costs within projects through not being able to undertake appropriate due diligence. Holding costs would also increase.
 - Reputational risks: if the programme of work is not delivered in a timely manner, then it weakens the Council's position to secure future funding from Government and other external funders in the future. There would also be reputational harm with the public, as many of these schemes have already been heavily promoted.
 - Political risks: as a new authority, the Council is under increased scrutiny from Government and the public. If the projects are not delivered efficiently or efficiently then this could seriously harm the Council's perception to these audiences.
- 7.13 Each project will have a project board established, with a wide range of representatives from the Council. A project specific risk register will be developed and regularly monitored by the project board.

Consultation

7.14 The development of the Town Investment Plan (TIP) was guided by community and stakeholder consultation. The TIP builds on the initial consultation work undertaken to inform the development of the Town Centre Masterplan which seeks to address many of the challenges faced by the town centre.

Online Consultation

7.15 Online consultations on the potential TIP proposals were held in September 2020 to determine the community's priorities for investment, gain feedback and opinions on a range of proposed investment areas and determine the challenges and opportunities for the town.

7.16 Approximately 434 individuals replied to the questionnaire creating a total of 1,495 pieces of project level feedback. The responses were evenly split between males and females. 18% of respondents were aged under 35 and 15% were over 65.

7.17 Overall, the majority of responses were positive about how beneficial the projects would be to improve the town centre. The main challenges highlighted were a lack of quality goods offered in the town centre, poor appearance of the town centre and competition with other areas. The main opportunities were bringing disused buildings and public space back into use and improving the public realm. The initial survey was followed by more detailed questioning of a consultation group across three days.

7.18 This builds on more than two years of consultation completed on the ground and through all media channels. The online consultation completed for the Town Centre Masterplan in 2019 informed the development of the longlist of projects developed for the TIP.

7.19 Key local priorities identified at that stage include the restoration and upkeep of historic buildings, improving the quality of retail, the quality of public realm and greenspace in enhancing the town centre, pedestrianisation in the town centre, and the potential to accommodate new homes.

Consultation Workshops

7.20 A series of consultation workshops were completed in October 2020 focusing on urban regeneration; deprivation and inequality; and business, enterprise, and skills. Approximately 150 stakeholders were approached to take part in the workshops. Workshops were attended by key stakeholders in Northampton including local businesses, social enterprises (Northampton Social Enterprise Town), community safety teams, Digital Northampton, NN Contemporary Arts and the University of Northampton.

- 7.21 Engagement with private sector bodies aided understanding of growth barriers and helped to ensure the plan remains responsive in uncertain times. Engagement with public sector and community organisations highlighted how social enterprises can be incorporated into projects.
- 7.22 The consultations produced a number of themes for the TIP including re-energizing cultural and historic assets, diversifying the housing offer to match the needs of the community, make the town centre feel safer and upgrade and improve the management of key public spaces.
- 7.23 The detailed TIP consultation findings can be found in the appendices.
- 7.24 A stakeholder engagement plan has been developed to accompany Northampton's TIP. This document sets out our commitment to develop ongoing relationships with key stakeholders to ensure implementation of the TIP remains responsive to the overarching needs of the town.

Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

- 7.25 N/A

Climate Impact

- 7.26 The new build will be required to deliver net zero no later than 2030. Additionally, construction carbon impacts will have a significant weight in selecting developers and then contractors, through the development agreement. The Council will also undertake environmental impact assessments in line with the Towns Fund guidance and the stage two business cases will look at the climate and environmental impact as part of their development.

Community Impact

- 7.27 As the project develops of this scale there will be engagement and consultations with local stakeholders through all stages, and statutory consultations will take place during the planning stages.
- 7.28 The Council will undertake programme-wide level impact assessments, relevant project-level impact assessment and equality and impact assessments when required.

Communications

- 7.29 A communications strategy will be developed as part of taking the project forward, and to cover all key milestones. Publicity agreement with the chosen developer and contractors will be required to ensure WNC's involvement and contribution is reasonably reflected in any output.

8 Background Papers

- 8.1 Towns Fund Cabinet Report – Tuesday 13th July 2021.

Project Assessment Report

Key requirements of the business case have been identified and assigned a RAG rating. A headline description of each of the ratings is provided below.

Risk Rating Key	
Red	The gap in information or issue raised fundamentally undermines the overall case or specific, critical elements being assessed. Without resolution, approval would not be recommended.
Amber	The information provided demonstrates the business case has the potential to be compliant subject to specific conditions being met.
Amber - Green	The information provided does not fully align with the requirements, but in the assessor's view, this is not sufficient to undermine the overall case. For example, the assessor believes a reasonable case could be made against the relevant assessment criteria or the information provided is proportionate to the investment sought. These are highlighted for information to the Northampton Forward Board.
Green	The information required is fully compliant with the assessment criteria; no further action required.

Project Details

Project Name	Abington Street
Project Applicant	West Northamptonshire Council
Senior Responsible Owner	Kevin Langley – West Northamptonshire Council
Project Manager	Rob Saunders - West Northamptonshire Council
Total Project Cost	£57.8 million
TIP Request	£9.7 million
Proposed Start Date	August 2025
Proposed End Date	October 2032
Project Description	The subject site currently comprises two large vacant retail units, formerly occupied by M&S (41 – 45 Abington Street) and BHS (35 – 39 Abington Street). Following the decline in the retail market, the two town centre units have become redundant and as such, have been earmarked to provide residential redevelopment opportunities through a Council-led approach to delivery. The site is located within Northampton town centre, around half a mile to the east of Northampton Railway Station.
	An initial site masterplan has been prepared by 5plus Architects, comprising 342 no. 1, 2 and 3 bedroom apartments, arranged over three blocks (Abington, Wellington and Wood), with the following

development mix:

- 159 no. 1 Bed Apartments
 - 158 no. 2 Bed Apartments
 - 10 no. 3 Bed Apartments
 - 15 no. 3 Bed Duplex Apartments
-

Appraisal Summary

Project recommended to proceed subject to conditions on procurement approach.

- **Strategic Case** – Overall, the strategic case presents a clear rationale for investment and considers the need and opportunity around this scheme and Northampton’s town centre housing offer. There is good evidence provided by independent consultants of demand for housing and this a need for public sector intervention to meet the strategic objectives of the Town Investment Plan.
- **Economic Case** - The proposed approach is reasonable and appropriate for a scheme of this type and focussed on a core assessment of the direct impact of the scheme on land values and associated labour market impacts. On this basis, the business case presents a marginally positive benefit cost ratio (BCR) of 1.1 - which is considered acceptable value for money. However, a fuller assessment, considering additional impacts that have not been monetised would likely deliver a non-trivial level of economic benefit over and above the core benefits. Nevertheless, even with a marginal BCR, the close alignment of the scheme to the TIP’s strategic objectives and these wider non-monetised benefits should be taken into account in the full assessment of its Value for Money.
- **Financial Case** - The business case presents the required information around project costs and funding. Assumptions underpinning any cost estimates have been clearly articulated and are supported by evidence. The project seeks to fund acquisition of third-party property on Abington Street, abnormal development costs and fill the remaining viability gap. The central estimate of the viability gap remains above the available budget, meaning the competitive process to secure a development partner will be crucial to deliver the project objectives with the available budget.
- **Commercial Case** - The commercial options available are discussed in some detail and recommendations are presented around two potential procurement routes that are expected to ensure a suitable development partner can be procured via a competitive process. The delivery and procurement strategy also recommends further soft market testing in advance of launching a procurement process. A credible assessment of the commercial viability (both market sale and purpose built PRS housing) is presented.

Subsidy control advice has been provided and indicates that the cost of site acquisition and assembly, plus associated demolition/site preparation works can be completed without subsidy control issues provided a prepared site is to be disposed of at full market value. Further grant will constitute a subsidy but procurement can be made compliant.
- **Management Case** - The management case presents an appropriate set of project management and governance arrangements to deliver a scheme of this nature. Project delivery timescales are clearly set out and appear realistic. The approach to monitoring and evaluation and benefits realisation are set out in principle and are appropriate for a scheme of this type. Further evidence on project team’s track record would support the board in determining if additional resource is required or appropriate.

Strategic Case

Project Details	Comments	RAG Rating
Strategic fit to the Town Investment Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposal aligns closely to the Town Investment Plan's objectives. It states how the scheme will drive regeneration of Northampton's town centre, instil pride and a strong sense of identity and re-energise and breathe new life into heritage assets and redundant buildings. 	
Confirmation of the Strategic Objectives and Critical Success Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic objectives for the scheme have been identified and are SMART. These are closely aligned to the objectives set out in Northampton's Town Investment Plan. Options longlisting has been undertaken to identify the preferred option in the Economic Case. Critical Success Factors are set out in accordance with HMT Green Book Guidance. 	
Strength of the market failure evidence and rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market failures have been clearly identified and the rationale for public sector investment has been provided. Identified market failures include the existence of viability challenges, quasi-public goods and positive externalities. The market failure argument also links to evidence in the financial case. 	
Evidence of demand, need and additionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A view of demand is given, with further information provided in the commercial case. Evidence of future need provided by appealing to the Housing Background Paper. 	
Stakeholder buy-in to the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key stakeholders in support of the project have been identified. Although, stakeholder engagement is set out in the Management Case, this section could be improved if more detail was provided in the Strategic Case. 	
Integration/links with other projects/programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposal mentions other projects that the scheme links to and how the Abington Street scheme will complement these projects. The proposal also mentions a variety of policies and strategies that the project aligns with. This section could be improved by drawing more explicit links between the project and these policies/strategies although these links can be inferred and appear justified. 	
Implications of any strategic risks and dependencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key project dependencies and constraints have been identified alongside mitigations. 	

Assessor Comments

- This section provides a clear overview of the scheme’s strategic intent. Fundamental requirements of the Strategic Case are in place and are clearly articulated. The proposal shows how the scheme aligns with the TIP and provides strong evidence of market failure as well as the need for public sector intervention.
- The proposal mentions many policies that the project links to but it does not explicitly explain how the scheme will contribute to each of these.
- Greater detail on the demand and need for market sale and PRS accommodation is provided through the commercial case.

Clarifications

All clarifications have been resolved

Overall Strategic Case RAG Rating



Economic Case

Project Details	Comments	RAG Rating
Range and credibility of options (including the do-nothing and do minimum case)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportionality cited alongside the existing TIP as a reason for only undertaking a cost benefit analysis for two scenarios: the preferred option versus a Business As Usual / reference case. • A long list of 10 project options was presented which considered the “business as usual” scenario and a range of other options varying the scope, delivery and financing of the project. • A RAG rating matrix against a set of critical success factors has been included. Coverage of the long-list is suitable, further clarification of some of the options was sought to illustrate ratings that were not initially clear and the short-listing and the short-listing exercise is judged to be credible. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheme delivers value for money 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the profile of Town Deal costs from the Financial Case and the NPV costs is replicated successfully. • The method for calculating the benefit cost ratio is appropriate (albeit subject to comments above regarding the optimism of certain assumptions) and produces an initial BCR of 1.1 – which is considered acceptable. With no public sector match funding included in the preferred option this is equivalent in a Towns Fund only and total public sector assessment of the BCR. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implications of reference case / do nothing option considered for additionality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a clearly defined Business as Usual / Do Nothing scenario against which the preferred option is assessed. The justification for the Do Nothing scenario is set out clearly and links to the viability assessment made in the financial case. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumptions underpinning the economic model and sensitivity testing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Value Uplift is identified as the most appropriate measure of private benefits to the scheme. Published VOA land values are chosen to value the scheme although with a development appraisal available this would have been an alternative option, subject to adjustment of costs to reflect Towns Fund. • A justification for a nil existing use value is provided in the narrative – although this is contestable. However, since the £2.0 m acquisition cost for 35-39 Abington St is covered by the development appraisal and subsumed into the abnormal costs any further existing use valuation could also represent double counting. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The calculation steps for the direct Land Value Uplift are clear and approximately replicable on the information provided. • Labour Supply Impacts are included in line with methodology previously employed in the Future High Streets Fund. However, an estimate of new / re-entrants to the labour market of 10% is at the high end of expectations. • The 10-year persistence of these benefits is also at the upper end of acceptable estimates for labour supply impacts. However, sensitivity tests suggest that these problems are minor, given the negligible impact of labour supply on value for money. The VfM category is not affected by removing this category of benefits.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriateness of risk assessment and adjustments for optimism bias 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The approach to costs is in line with guidance. However, Optimism Bias of 10% is relatively low considering the stage of development. Clarifications from Cushman and Wakefield suggest the use of recently tendered build costs and a significant contingency allowance are contributing factors in the reduction of OB from the upper bound. Sensitivity tests also suggest that at the upper bound (24%) for standard building projects, the initial BCR would remain above 1.0.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of additionality and adjustment of gross benefits to account for deadweight, displacement, substitution, leakage and economic multipliers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low displacement assumption for residential units (20%) is applied and justified on the basis of strong demand, differentiated housing typology and viability constraints locally. • Higher (albeit still low/medium) displacement of commercial floorspace is justified on the grounds of differentiated product. This is less clear cut given the evidence presented in the strategic case around demand for town centre uses. Sensitivity analysis of the displacement rates is used later to test the value for money position with respect to higher displacement.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits appraisal aligns with refreshed Green Book and departmental guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The value for money approach is consistent with the 2016 MHCLG Appraisal Guide and the 2020 HMT Green Book, applying Land Value Uplift alongside labour supply benefits.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitivity tests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitivity test – excluding labour supply impact – has marginal impact. No change in value for money assessment overall i.e. BCR remains at 1.1. • Changing OB to 44% reduces BCR to 0.9, as does doubling of displacement across both land use types. Switching value of +15% costs and -13% benefits to reach BCR of less than 1.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value for Money assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The economic case rightly identifies that the value for money position is marginal but that there are wider economic benefits that could acceptably be monetised. These are benefits that also closely align with the strategic objectives of the Town Investment Plan. The economic case concludes that wider benefits that have not been monetised e.g. Land Value Uplift would be expected given the nature of the scheme. This helps to address any concerns over the marginal nature of the initial BCR.
<p>Assessor Comments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a competent assessment of the initial BCR which indicates a path to acceptable value for money. The assumptions underpinning the initial BCR are, in places, at the upper end of credibility and means the value for money assessment is borderline on direct land values and labour supply impacts alone. No formal quantification of the wider benefits has been made, however, in clarifications a credible scenario was presented (using high level methodology) under which only a relatively small number of commercial property receive a proportionally modest property value uplift and the BCR increases to approximately 1.5. Coupled with the strong strategic rationale which aligns the project closely with the Northampton TIP, the initial BCR, and the potential for wider monetisable benefits can be shown to demonstrate value for money in line with the principles outlined in the Green Book 2020.
<p>Clarifications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All clarifications have been resolved
<p>Overall Economic Case RAG Rating</p>	

Financial Case

Project Details	Comments	RAG Rating
Robustness of the project costs	<p>The project costs have been assembled by qualified professionals using appropriate benchmarks e.g. BCIS.</p> <p>There is only a very high-level breakdown by activity as the project anticipates undertaking a ‘gap funding to developer’ approach – in which the procurement process offers to part fund the development process through grant as opposed to WNC commissioning specific activities.</p> <p>Noted that there is not much scope for slippage within the Town Fund period to spend the funds.</p> <p>However, it is noted that the “gap funding to developer” approach and front loading of acquisition costs allows for funding to be spent before the end of the Town Fund period. Nevertheless, this approach may require consideration over contractual requirements of developer partner given the requirement to frontload these costs to meet Town Fund programme requirements.</p>	
Scheme funding	<p>The project has been entered into the Town Deal as a candidate for public funding on the basis of a gap funding requirement as it is considered unviable in its own right. The initial assessment of the viability gap is larger than the level of available funding (£10.4 m vs £9.7 m, +7%) which is identified as a project risk.</p> <p>The competitive nature of the procurement process and potential value engineering on the part of any developer act as mitigation against this risk.</p> <p>A set of sensitivities on developer profit indicate that a competitive process to secure a development partner could still feasibly deliver the scheme for the given level of funding (viable at 19% profit on cost).</p> <p>While acquisition (£2m) is identified as a Town Deal cost there is no clear breakdown of how</p>	

	<p>the remaining £7.7m should be spent. The approach to dealing with this has been clarified as generic “gap funding to developer” which will allow for a fixed sum of grant to be offered with developers reacting to this through the procurement process.</p> <p>Excluding inflation from the Financial Case – <u>this is typically against best practice</u>. A justification is provided that carries a certain logic, as relates to the overall viability gap.</p> <p>Given the “gap funding to developer” approach which is proposed to carry through to the procurement of a development partner the explicit nominal cost of activities funded will not be directly subject to inflation per se. As such the identified gap represents Cushman & Wakefield’s best judgement of the identified viability gap to be met in nominal terms given potential movements in costs and revenues over time.</p>	
Project viability assessment (where appropriate)	The overall viability assessment has been provided and has been conducted appropriately.	
Assessor Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The viability assessment is suitably comprehensive and key issues over affordability have been explored. • Typically the financial case would explicitly consider inflation. The nature of the project funding e.g. “gap funding to developer” means excessive cost inflation may have more of an impact on project outcomes than project deliverability if developers have to value engineer the proposals to mitigate cost increases. • This approach slightly contradicts the Subsidy Control advice, which considers some site-preparation and clearance works as pre-procurement for the purpose of their advice. • The economic case has some buffer in terms of value for money to absorb this risk and a monitoring and evaluation strategy / benefit realisation process have been identified to manage these through the project. 	
Clarifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WNC to confirm that the site preparation, clearance and demolition activities will be procured with all other development activity under a competitive process. 	
Overall Financial Case RAG Rating		

Commercial Case

Project Details	Comments	RAG Rating
Appropriateness of procurement arrangements	Either the Homes England DPS or the Pagabo framework would be appropriate procurement routes for the developer and construction team.	Green
Rationale for and appropriateness of the commercial structure and delivery arrangements	<p>Delivery through either a development agreement or contractual joint venture partnership would be appropriate for this scheme. Evidence to support this judgement is set out in the Delivery & procurement strategy.</p> <p>It is noted that the recommendation includes the need for further soft market testing against the proposed delivery structure.</p>	
Depth and appropriateness of the risk assessment and adequacy of approaches to risk transfer and management	<p>The Delivery & Procurement strategy highlights the pros and cons of a range of delivery and procurement options for the project. The ability to clearly apportion risks are pros set attributed to the Development Agreement or Contractual joint venture partnership approach (DA+) routes recommended.</p> <p>The assessment is detailed and comprehensive covering both delivery and procurement options. Contractual milestones indicate timeline for risk transfer given the recommended procurement strategy.</p>	Green
Capacity of applicant to deliver the investment (where applicable) risks.	<p>West Northamptonshire Council has provided high-level details of the project team's track record in delivering capital projects. The governance structure also allows specifically for external advisers to be involved in project boards and the cost plan has an allowance for professional fees.</p> <p>The business case would be strengthened by further information as to the nature of project team's past experience with respect to procurement of similar development agreements and the nature of the external support required.</p>	
Asset ownership after project completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 41-45 Abington Street is owned freehold by Northampton Borough Council, having been acquired from Marks and Spencer PLC in September 2020 • 35-39 Abington Street is currently in private ownership, and has been earmarked for 	Green

	<p>acquisition in 2022, for which an allowance of £2m has been included in the appraisal of the site, as referred to in the Financial Case</p> <p>Further asset transfer details will be developed as part of the development agreement or joint venture partnership.</p>	
<p>Comment on subsidy control position of the project and whether advice has been sought</p>	<p>DWF Law LLP have provided Subsidy Control advice. This confirms that the project will probably confer a subsidy on a developer but this subsidy can be made compliant with the legislation. This will require the council to commit to particular procurement principles – e.g. open procurement, with a subsidy amount no more than necessary and proportionate to the objective at hand. Further details of these principles are contained in DWF Law’s Advice Note.</p> <p>WNC/the Board should proceed to procurement with these principles in mind.</p>	
<p>Assessor Comments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A market assessment and summary of the local housing need/demand has been provided to evidence the likely commercial viability for new build town centre property in Northampton. • The demand for purpose built PRS has been explained and justified. • A number of potential delivery and procurement routes have been outlined (see Cushman & Wakefield, Delivery & procurement strategy – Abington Street, Northampton). A development Agreement or DA+ approach and procurement via the Pagabo or Homes England DPS routes are recommended based on a comprehensive analysis of a wider range of options. • The strategy notes further soft market testing is advised before making a final decision on procurement but that a number of suitable developers could be engaged through either route. 	
<p>Clarifications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All clarifications have been resolved 	
<p>Overall Commercial Case RAG Rating</p>		

Management Case

Project Details	Comments	RAG Rating
Effective governance and management arrangements	Governance and management structure is clearly set out including level of oversight by different board.	Green
Availability of capacity and capability to deliver the project effectively	<p>The project team has a history of delivering capital projects. A full procurement plan for a preferred development partner has been included.</p> <p>The business case would be strengthened by further information as to the nature of project team's past experience with respect to procurement of similar development agreements and the nature of the external or internal support required to manage this project along with other Town Fund investments to the same timescale.</p>	Yellow
Realism of delivery plan and milestones	Delivery plan across the procurement process and over the 3 blocks of construction is clear and realistic.	Green
Existence of particular barriers such as planning consent, land purchase etc.	<p>Barriers include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Purchase of 35 – 39 Abington Street for a reasonable price - Planning consent on both sites <p>Realisation plans for both have been included in the report</p>	Green
Delivery risks and mitigation	A number of delivery risks are identified in the risk register and with high level mitigation plans.	Green
Ongoing management costs and risks to benefit realisation	Ongoing management costs are by implication passed on eventual asset owners although this has not been made explicit.	Yellow
Monitoring and evaluation plan	A clear monitoring and evaluation plan has been included KPIs to be developed as the project continues.	Green
Assessor Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed governance structure looks appropriate to support a scheme of this nature provided appropriate external professional support is in place. • Some evidence of past delivery of capital works provided although this section is light on detail with respect to project value/complexity. • Further information and detail on additional (internal/external) resource requirements to manage this (alongside other Town Fund projects) would be beneficial. 	

Clarifications

- Update the date for finalisation of delivery and procurement strategy and procurement documentation (**currently January to March 2021**)
- Clarify when and how asset ownership is expected to pass to a third party or if not how management costs will be met by WNC in the long term.

Overall Management Case RAG Rating



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