



Cabinet

A meeting of the Cabinet will be held at The Forum, Towcester, NN12 6AF on Tuesday 17 January 2023 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 7 - 14) To confirm the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 20 th December 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.	Report from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (if any)
7.	Public Health & Integrated Care Board Integration Programme for Children & Young People's Community Health & Wellbeing Services (Pages 15 - 22)
8.	Public Health Framework (Pages 23 - 44)

9.	Care Home Services Commissioning Intentions for Adults Age 18 and Above (Pages 45 - 58)
10.	Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) (Pages 59 - 136)
11.	Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled West Northamptonshire schools for 2024 intakes (Pages 137 - 160)
12.	West Northamptonshire Council-Northamptonshire Partnership Homes Governance Framework (Pages 161 - 202)
13.	Purchase of the long leasehold interest in six houses in Brackley (Pages 203 - 212)
14.	Northampton Active Quarter (Pages 213 - 240)
15.	Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Lifecycle Works (Pages 241 - 246)
16.	Asset Disposal (Pages 247 - 266)
17.	Parking charge arrangements at parks (Pages 267 - 274)
18.	Capital expenditure relating to Rebuild of Windflower Place (Pages 275 - 280)
19.	<p>Exclusion of the Press and Public</p> <p>The following report(s) contain exempt information as defined in the following paragraph(s) of Part 1, Schedule 12A of Local Government Act 1972.</p> <p>Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).</p> <p>Members are reminded that whilst the following item(s) have been marked as exempt, it is for the meeting to decide whether or not to consider each of them in private or in public. In making the decision, members should balance the interests of individuals or the Council itself in having access to the information. In considering their discretion members should also be mindful of the advice of Council Officers.</p> <p>Should Members decide not to make a decision in public, they are recommended to resolve as follows:</p>

“That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that, if the public and press were present, it would be likely that exempt information falling under the provisions of Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraph(s) XXXXX would be disclosed to them, and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.”

Private Session

20. Northampton Market Square Redevelopment

Catherine Whitehead
Proper Officer
9 January 2023

Cabinet Members:

Councillor Jonathan Nunn (Chair)

Councillor Adam Brown (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Fiona Baker

Councillor Rebecca Breese

Councillor Matt Golby

Councillor Mike Hallam

Councillor Phil Larratt

Councillor Daniel Lister

Councillor Malcolm Longley

Councillor David Smith

Councillor Jamal Alwahabi

Councillor Phil Bignell

Councillor Rosie Herring

Councillor Nigel Hinch

Councillor Keith Holland-Delamere

Councillor Rosie Humphreys

Councillor Ian McCord

Councillor Kevin Parker

Councillor Bob Purser

Councillor Wendy Randall

Councillor Emma Roberts

Councillor Cathrine Russell

Councillor Danielle Stone

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

Supplementary Estimates

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

Evacuation Procedure

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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



Cabinet

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at The Forum, Towcester, NN12 6AF on Tuesday 20 December 2022 at 6.00 pm.

Present Councillor Jonathan Nunn (Chair)
 Councillor Adam Brown (Vice-Chair)
 Councillor Fiona Baker
 Councillor Mike Hallam
 Councillor Phil Larratt
 Councillor Malcolm Longley
 Councillor David Smith

Also Present: Councillor Sally Beardsworth
 Councillor Alison Eastwood
 Councillor Jonathan Harris
 Councillor Ian McCord
 Councillor Kevin Parker
 Councillor Ken Pritchard
 Councillor Wendy Randall
 Councillor Danielle Stone

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
 Jane Carr, Director of Communities & Opportunities
 Sarah Reed, Executive Director - Corporate Services
 Stuart Timmiss, Executive Director - Place and Economy
 Gillian Baldock, Political Assistant to the Conservative Group

118. **Apologies**

Councillor Rebecca Breese, Councillor Matt Golby, Councillor Daniel Lister

119. **Declarations of Interest**

None

120. **Minutes**

Agreed that the minutes from the Cabinet meeting on the 6th of December 2022 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

121. **Chair's Announcements**

None

122. **Urgent Business**

None

123. **Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – recommendations in respect of the Children’s Trust Budget**

At the Chair’s invitation Councillor Ian McCord, the Chair of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee presented the report. Members were advised that this report could have come to Cabinet earlier and had been flagged as such. It was noted that the findings should be brought to the attention of the Department of Education (Dfe).

Councillor Malcolm Longley advised that the DfE would be written to.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet would write to the Department for Education regarding the Children’s Trust model and state that, whilst West Northamptonshire Council will honour its contract regarding funding its agreed proportion of the Children’s Trust budget, any subsequent difference should be covered by the Department for Education

124. **Revenue Monitoring - Quarter 2 - Financial Year 2022-23**

At the Chair’s invitation councillors made the following comments.

- It would be useful to have more regular monthly figures.
- Overspend had been flagged but this was now expected to be zero, what roles/vacancies were being held to achieve this?
- Large amounts of reserves had been used, could there be more detail provided on how it was allocated.
- There seemed to be an underspend in education, why was this?
- There needed to be more focus on early years funding, there seemed to be no provision for EAL support.
- It was noted that although the running of Leisure services was costly it was important for the residents.

The Chair of The Corporate and Scrutiny Overview committee felt that reports needed to come to the committee faster than they presently do.

The Chief Executive advised that with regards to cost cutting, there were 150 lines of mitigation open to the Council.

Councillor Fiona Baker advised concerns would be raised at the schools forum.

Councillor Malcolm Longley presented the report to Cabinet and noted that further central government input would be welcomed.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- a) **Noted the forecast outturn position for 2022-23 and associated risk**
- b) **Noted the deliverability assessment of West Northamptonshire Council savings requirement for 2022-23 summarised in section 7 and detailed in Appendix B**
- c) **Delegated authority to the Executive Director – Finance in consultation with the portfolio holder to apply any budget virements required to effectively manage the overall budget during the 2023/24 year.**
- d) **Cabinet noted and endorsed the three requests made by the Children’s Trust set out in paragraphs 6.4, 6.5 and 6.7 and supported by the Strategic Commissioning Group and recommend to Council that they should be approved and for the approval of further contract sum adjustments to be delegated to the Executive Director – Finance in consultation with the Finance Portfolio holder.**
- e) **Noted the position on Capital Dispersations set out in paragraph 6.48.1**

125. **Quarter 2 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Monitoring Report 2022-23**

At the Chair’s invitation councillors made the following comments.

- It was noted that the Children’s Trust had raised an issue about their buildings, did the council have a budget set aside for this?
- It was queried whether any issues around Section 106 money been resolved.
- Flood resilience had been mentioned, the lakes in the eastern district should be added as they are important flood defences.

Councillor Malcolm Longley noted that there was about £2.5 million set aside for various purposes within the Children’s Trust.

The Executive Director Place & Economy advised that the Council had been given some funding by central Government to look at flood resilience, this information could be shared after the meeting.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet

- a) **Noted the latest capital monitoring position for the General Fund and HRA.**
- b) **Noted the new capital schemes and changes to the Capital Programme since the report that was considered by Cabinet in September 2022.**
- c) **Approved the budget virement outlined in section 10.**

126. **Treasury Management Update Quarter 2, 2022-23**

At the Chair's invitation councillors made the following comments.

- How many LOBO loans the Council currently had was queried?
- Could there be clarification as to the role interest rates.
- Cabinet was urged to review policy as soon as possible.
- It was important for the Council to implement socially responsible investments. Green and clean should not just apply to residents but also to where the Council chooses to invest.
- Having the correct framework in place was important.

Councillor Malcolm Longley presented the report and made the following comments.

- There were currently roughly 50 LOBO loans.
- Members would be provided with information regarding interest rates.
- The maturity table and capital expenditure would be broadly balanced over the next couple of years.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet noted the report and treasury activity for the second quarter of the 22-23 financial year.

127. **Progress Update Transformation and Local Government Reform**

At the Chair's invitation councillors made the following comments.

- It was queried whether some of the efficiencies and figures were too ambitious, could the Council deliver what had been promised.
- There had been a reduction in senior staff costs because of the amalgamation of the four councils. It was questioned how much knowledge had been lost as part of this process.
- It was noted that a lot of outsourcing had taken place.

The Executive Director Place & Economy advised that he would be happy to discuss any transformation queries with councillors.

The Chair presented the report to Cabinet and noted that the Lodge Hall site in Daventry was a valuable asset which had had a reasonable level of interest.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- **Noted the efficiencies delivered to date and planned for 2023-24;**
- **Noted the content of the detailed reports at Appendices 1,2 and 3 which set out the details of our progress against our plans, commitments, and savings targets.**
- **Noted the key elements of our Council operating model in Appendix 1 and the design principles that would underpin our future operation and service to stakeholders.**
- **Noted the summary of the West Northants Master Property Plan for our buildings, and**

- **Noted the progress on disaggregation of services from North Northants and status of services that are still shared.**

128. **2023-24 Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan**

At the Chair's invitation councillors made the following comments.

- Working on the budget should be a collaborative exercise.
- There had been no alternative options put forward with regards to the bus routes that had been removed.
- Could there be some further clarity given with regards to the community grant scheme figure, as it was not clear.
- The increase in various charges was noted.
- It was queried how the budget aligned with the corporate plan.
- It was noted that equality impact statements were not being produced alongside reports although they are a legal requirement.

Councillor Malcolm Longley presented the report and made the following comments.

- It was advised that there was an emissions budget, councillors would be welcome to discuss this.
- There was a working group dedicated to buses.
- Members were advised that all ideas were welcomed and to please ask for further detail should it be required.

The Executive Director of Finance noted that it would be unlikely that business rates would be reset and that the budget itself was aligned with the corporate plan.

The Chair advised that any increases in costs were only done, when necessary, with the goal of avoiding cuts to services.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet.

- a) **Approved for consultation the 2023-24 Draft Budget, including**
 - i. **an estimated net revenue budget of £798.3m (£377.1m excluding Dedicated Schools Grant) as set out in Appendix A.**
 - ii. **an average Band D Council tax of £1,693.73 for West Northamptonshire Council, which represents an average increase of 4.99%. (2.99% increase in 'core' Council Tax and 2% Adult Social Care Precept).**
 - iii. **proposed Fees and Charges as detailed in Appendix C**
 - iv. **provisional dedicated schools grant budget of £421.2m as detailed in Appendix D**
 - v. **the draft Capital Programme additions as set out in Appendix E**
- b) **Set the tax base for West Northamptonshire at 142,060.8, Band D equivalents, as set out in paragraph 6.67**
- c) **For the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG):**
 - i. **Noted the provisional allocations and planned usage of the DSG for 2023-24 pending the final DSG settlement, and**
 - ii. **Following consultation with the Schools Forum, delegated authority to the Executive Director for Children's Services to determine the DSG**

2023-24 schools funding formula, high needs funding arrangements and the Early Years Funding Formula in line with Department for Education guidance.

129. Draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2023/24 and Medium Term Financial Plan

At the Chair's invitation councillors made the following comments.

- WNC housing stock has been minimised by the right to buy scheme, how many of these houses are now in the hands of private landlords?
- Residents have advised that they are not able to sell their accessible homes back to the council.

Councillor Adam Brown made the following comments.

- A housing fund had been set up for residents who require help with rent payments.
- It was advised that the right to buy scheme cannot be stopped and agreed it does have a decimating effect on the councils housing stock.
- With regards to adaptive homes, the housing team would be happy to hear from residents who wish to sell back their homes. There is a budget in place for this.

Councillor Malcolm Longley advised that the uptake of the hardship fund by councillors had been trivial.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet.

1. **Approved for the draft HRA budget 2023-24**
2. **Approved for consultation the 7% (£6.79) increase in average rents from £97.00 to £103.79 per week in accordance with the government's amended Rent Standard with effect from the 3rd April 2023.**
3. **Approved for consultation the draft HRA Capital Programme and financing for 2023/24, as detailed in appendix 3 and notes the forecast programme from 2024/25 to 2027/28.**
4. **Approved for consultation the 10% increase in tenants and leaseholder service charges with effect from the 3rd April 2023 as set out in Appendix 5**
5. **Approved for consultation the 10% increase in garage rents and commuter surcharges with effect from the 3rd April 2023 as set out in Appendix 5**
6. **Noted the draft 2023-24 Total Fees proposed for NPH in appendix 4 to deliver the services in scope.**
7. **Noted that the Council has made an application in partnership with NPH for Wave 2 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation fund for £1.28m and approve delegated authority to the Executive Director of Finance to enter into a funding agreement with the Department of Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) if successful in the bid process.**

- 8. Approved for consultation the setting up of a new hardship/ management contingent budget within general management to provide help for tenants facing financial difficulties.**

The meeting closed at 8.00 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

17th JANUARY 2023

**CABINET MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR ADULT CARE, WELLBEING, AND
HEALTH INTEGRATION – COUNCILLOR MATT GOLBY**

**CABINET MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND
EDUCATION – COUNCILLOR FIONA BAKER**

Report Title	Public Health & Integrated Care Board Integration Programme for Children & Young People’s Community Health & Wellbeing Services
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Report Author	Sally Burns – Director of Public Health Sally.Burns@westnorthants.gov.uk Victoria Ononeze – Public Health Consultant victoria.ononeze@westnorthants.gov.uk
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Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

West MO	Catherine Whitehead	09/01/2023
West S151	Martin Henry	04/01/2023
Other Director/SME	Stuart Lackenby	04/01/2023
Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	04/01/2023

List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet members with an update on the progress of integrated 0-19 children and young people services, including Reach youth counselling and Strong Start universal early year service and note the recommended approach.
- 1.2 The Council currently has contracts in place for the delivery of:
- The 0-19 Public Health Nursing Service – a mandated service funded through the Public Health ring-fenced Grant. The current services are provided by Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHFT) across the county.
 - Youth counselling services are provided by the Reach Collaborative (5 community organisations) delivering across the county.
 - 0-5 universal non-clinical service is provided by Strong Start across Northamptonshire.
- 1.3 To remind Cabinet that public health grant funded 0-19 services, the Reach service and related services described below are currently being managed through a Section 75 (S75) lead and associate commissioner agreement with Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) (who are the lead commissioner). This formal commissioning arrangement was agreed in March 2019, commenced in July 2019, and is scheduled to terminate in March 2023. This so far has led to more effective contract management and plans to align, and ultimately join up, services have progressed since the creation of the ICB.
- 1.4 The timing of this proposal comes as West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) Public Health and the ICB make decisions regarding the longer-term arrangements post the current S75 agreement that expires in March 2023 and following a recently concluded scoping exercise undertaken in January 2021. ICB have formally indicated their intent to adopt the current Better Care Fund (BCF) S75 agreement to allow the extension of the 0-19 service arrangements.
- 1.5 Approval is now sought for delegated authority to be given to the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing and The Director of Finance, to secure an arrangement for the delivery of these services through the extension of the current S75 agreements with NHS partners, from April 2023 – March 2025. This will enable longer-term commissioning options to be explored.
- 1.6 The first year of the extension will allow the integrated system to review the profile of need for children and young people aged 0-19, as well as to creatively look at delivery options. Once the ICB has agreed 0-19 priorities the second year of the extension will deliver a procurement or other delivery option. It should not be assumed that the existing NHFT arrangements would continue, although this does remain an option. Possible replacement of existing services arrangements would require a procurement or related process, including potential migration of existing service resources.

- 1.7 This longer-term contract will continue to provide current services but will allow time to develop and transform services, and will increase interest from the market, as well as obtain better value for money. It will also provide stability for service users, for whom trust and confidentiality are very important.
- 1.8 Under the S75 there are opportunities for improved joint working/ integrating of children's commissioning, Children's Trust and aligning of 0-19 universal and specialist children's services to the Northamptonshire Children's Integrated Care system plan. This will focus on prevention, transform service delivery and lead to more effective and sustainable outcome focused contracts and services that take account of annual NHS and public health grant funding reductions.
- 1.9 Building on existing organisational and policy arrangements with commissioning and provider organisations would be the least disruptive option in terms of organisational change. This will allow the Council to continue using existing mechanisms to promote better integration of care across children's services while the development of wider joint commissioning plans takes place.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The report provides summary information on the progress so far with the integrated approach for children and young people's services with the ICB, including the 0-19 services, Children and Young People's (CYP) Mental Health and Reach counselling services. The report will also include the progress made by the Strong Start universal early years' service and options for future arrangements, as the contract is due to expire on 31 March 2023.

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- a) Agree that delegated authority be given to the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Public Health and Wellbeing and Children, Families and Education and the Director of Finance, to **extend** a Section 75 agreement (or equivalent public sector agreement) for up to 2 years with Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHFT) in partnership with North Northants Council and Northamptonshire Integrated care board (ICB) for a jointly commissioned 0-19 Public Health Nursing Services and a range of health commissioned services supporting children and young people in West Northants from April 2023 – March 2025 or an earlier end date as required.
- b) Agree that delegated authority be given to the Director of Public Health, in collaboration with the Director of Children Services and Cabinet Member for Public Health, to agree future governance arrangements for this service with the ICB.

4. Reason for Recommendations

4.1 The recommended course of action is the most cost-effective and likely to match future services with the changing profile of needs for children, young people and their families

4.2 To accord with legislation or the policy of the Council

4.3 Development of the previous decisions of Northamptonshire County Council in February 2020

5. Report Background

5.1 The 0 -19 Public Health Nursing Service is provided by Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHFT). The current annual contract value is £11,762,303 (combined Public Health funding by WNC and North Northamptonshire Council (NNC)). The contract ends on 31st March 2023.

5.2 Youth counselling services are provided by the Reach Collaborative (5 community organisations) delivering tier 1 and 2 counselling services for young people aged 11-18 across the county. The current annual contract value is £543,000. The contract ends on 31st March 2023.

5.3 -5 universal non-clinical service is provided by Strong Start across Northamptonshire under an Accountability Arrangement. This service delivers parenting and baby groups, 1-1 support and an online offer, working very closely with maternity and health visiting services for referrals. The contract value is £601,000, The contract ends on 31st March 2023

5.4 The 0-19 Public Health Nursing Service is public health ring-fence grant funded. The service delivers the Healthy Child Programme which is a series of mandated interventions offered to all families that promote child development and safeguarding. The Northamptonshire service delivers health visiting, school nursing, family nurse partnership (a bespoke programme for teenage parents) and breastfeeding services.

5.5 The responsibility of the 5-19 year old element of this contract was transferred from NHS England to local authority public health teams in April 2013 and the 0-5 year old contract element was transferred in September 2015. Between September 2015 and May 2018 this 0-19 contract was managed by NCC public health commissioners independently of wider children services commissioned by the Northamptonshire CCGs.

5.6 During 2021/22 Northamptonshire CCG and West and North Northamptonshire Public Health (PH) Services spent approximately just over £30 million in **separate** commissioned contracts to provide a range of universal and specialist community-based services for the same population of 185,756 children and young people aged 0-19 years.

5.7 In 2018 the CCG supported the movement of the 0-19 Public Health Nursing Service contract into a S75 agreement for a fixed period, pending a decision whether to retender as a separate contract or learn from other areas and start the process of commissioning jointly.

5.8 In June 2018 the contract was transferred under a S75 agreement to be included in the Northamptonshire CCGs specialist children services community contract. The S75, under the NHS Act 2006 (as amended), allows local authorities and National Health Service (NHS) bodies to enter into partnership arrangements in relation to certain functions, where these arrangements are likely to lead to an improvement in the way in which those functions are exercised. The specific provision for these arrangements is set out in the NHS Bodies and Local Authorities Partnership Arrangements Regulations 2000. The establishment of S75 whereby delegation of duty of care is assigned to the Health Authority are exempt from procurement regulations.

5.9 The transfer to a S75 that commenced in July 2019 therefore negated the need to re-tender the service and was in line with local transformation plans agreed through the Northamptonshire Health and Care Partnership (NHCP) for local sustainable, more efficient, longer term contract provision.

5.10 This agreed S75 until 31 March 2023 designates lead commissioner responsibilities for the full community contract to Northamptonshire ICB, with NNC Public Health as associate commissioners with lead responsibility for the universal 0-19 element and a range of specialist community based mental health services of the contract. The impact of the disaggregation of Public Health services across the 2 Councils can be addressed during the proposed 2 year S75 extension.

5.11 Resources for contract management and performance are being provided by the ICB until 31 March 2023, and as partner commissioners, Public Health attend all contract meetings to direct this element of the contract and are responsible for leading service development. This arrangement for contract and performance management may move to the two Public Health teams for the period of the S75 extension.

6. Issues and Choices

6.1 The existing Section 75 arrangement for 0-19 Services ends in March 2023. It is proposed that the integrated commissioning approach through the S75 agreement between the 2 councils and Integrated Care Board (ICB) will be extended for up to 2 years on a “one plus one” basis that would allow for the extension to be ended earlier if preparation for replacement service arrangements can be completed before March 31st 2025. Also, that services described above under this arrangement continue to be delivered during that period. During the period of the extension commissioners will be reviewing the options for long term integration of children services and the development of a transformed model of service provision and how this can be achieved.

During the two-year period of the S75 extension, commissioners will research and project 0-19 need, and agree the outcomes that are necessary to meet that need as part of a needs led and data driven commissioning process. The period of the extension will allow provider options, including that of bringing the services in house, to be modelled.

6.2 The option to end the existing S75 led services in 2023 cannot be considered as it would result in significant loss of essential services.

6.3 Delivery of other options, including bringing services in-house or running a procurement would not be possible before the end of the current S75 arrangement.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

- **Resources and Financial**

7.1 The table below shows the current year’s funding with projections for a one plus one extension to a maximum of contract period to end before 31st March 2025.

	0-19 Forecast		
	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£000	£000	£000
Funded by	<i>100% funded from the Public Health Grant</i>		
On-going costs (revenue)	£11,792,004	£11,792,004	£11,792,004
Add Agenda For Change to contract value as per PH guidance	See 7.2 below	See 7.2 below	See 7.2 below

	Reach Collaborative Forecast		
	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£000	£000	£000
Funded by	<i>100% funded from the Public Health Grant</i>		
On-going costs (revenue)	£543,000	£543,000	£543,000
Add potential inflation cost pressure	TBC	TBC	TBC

	Strong Start Forecast		
	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£000	£000	£000
Funded by	<i>100% funded from the Public Health Grant</i>		
On-going costs (revenue)	£601,000	£601,000	£601,000

7.2 The Council is holding Agenda for Change funds given to the Council and due to NHFT for its staff incremental pay uplift. The actual amount due is being finalised with NHFT and will be released in due course. Agenda for Change payment will not therefore impact on the Council's finances.

- **Legal**

7.3 The S75 arrangement behind the Council's oversight of these services and will ensure compliance with legislation and good governance.

- **Risk**

7.4 The main risk identified to date is the potential failure to identify a provider by the end of the S75 extension in 2025.

Risk	Mitigation	Residual Risk
Provider performance declines	Contract management arrangements are in place that reduce risk of this occurrence with effective escalation to service improvement processes established	Green
Disagreement with co-commissioners	Agreement reached with Northamptonshire ICB to withdraw from s75 arrangement if this is in the best interests of WNC.	Green

- **Consultation & Communications**

7.5 This report was produced for both Councils and submitted through the established governance arrangements.

- **Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

7.6 None

- **Climate Impact**

7.7 The Council, having declared a climate change emergency in June 2021, is committed to reducing its climate impact both within its own Council buildings and in working with businesses and the wider community to achieve net zero energy emissions. During the S75 extension and in preparation for new arrangements from 2025 climate impact will be a key factor in consideration of service delivery options.

- **Community Impact**

7.8 The report considers the health and wellbeing of Northamptonshire children, young people and their families

8. Background Papers

- Introducing The Children and Young People Transformation Pillars and Leads
northamptonshirehpc.co.uk/2021/09/introducing-the-children-and-young-people-transformation-pillars-and-leads/
- What Good Children and Young People’s Public Health Looks Like
www.adph.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/What-Good-Children-and-Young-Peoples-Public-Health-Looks-Like.pdf;
- Healthy Child Programme Update (0-19) (2021)
[Healthy Child Programme update](#) ;
- The Best Start for Life: A Vision for the 1001 Critical Days – The Early Years Healthy Development Review Report 2021
[The Best Start for Life: A vision for the 1001 Critical Days - The Early Years Healthy Development Review Report \(2021\)](#)



WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

17TH JANUARY 2023

CABINET MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE & PUBLIC HEALTH – COUNCILLOR MATT GOLBY

Report Title	Public Health Framework
Report Author	Sally Burns, Director of Public Health Hannah Ellingham, Business Manager

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

West MO	Catherine Whitehead	04/01/2023
West S151	Martin Henry	05/01/2023
Other Director/SME	Stuart Lackenby	01/12/2022
Communications	Becky Hutson	04/01/2023

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Public Health Framework 2022-24

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 This report is to introduce the Public Health Framework, which sets out the approach and key priorities for the expenditure of the public health grant in the period 2022-24. The framework outlines how the council will assure that:-

- The public health grant is spent in support of strategic priority areas
- Expenditure is demonstrably in line with the grant determination requirements
- Governance processes are robust and adequate
- Public health outcomes are reviewed and monitored

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Director of Public Health (DPH) is assigned as a statutory chief officer for their authority and the principal adviser on all health matters to elected members and officers. They have a vital leadership role for system-wide efforts to secure better public health across the following domains:- health improvement; health protection and population healthcare.
- 2.2 The DPH has a number of statutory responsibilities, including:-
- All of their local authority's duties to take steps to improve the health of the people in its area
 - Any of the Secretary of State's public health protection or health improvement functions that s/he delegates to local authorities
 - Exercising their local authority's functions in planning for, and responding to, emergencies that present a risk to the public's health
 - Their local authority's role in co-operating with the police, the probation service and the prison service to assess the risks posed by violent or sexual offenders
 - Such other public health functions as the Secretary of State specifies in regulations and under dental public health powers.
- 2.3 To support these responsibilities, the DPH is responsible for a public health grant. The level of the grant is set by the Treasury and is ring-fenced for specific uses. In 2022/23, West Northants Council has been allocated £19,107,223 for public health services.
- 2.4 The ring-fenced grant is provided on the condition that the 'main and primary purpose of all spend from the grant is to secure public health improvement'. The DPH and Chief Executive/S151 Officer have to confirm that expenditure of the grant is in line with the grant determination criteria as set out by the Department of Health & Social Care.
- 2.5 Business case bids are welcomed into Public Health from internal and external partners as well as local voluntary and community groups, which have identified a need, or that would benefit the health and wellbeing of their customers.
- 2.5 The framework accompanying this report clearly sets out the grant conditions by which the Public Health Grant should be spent, alongside local and national priorities. The framework also outlines measures that are being taken by Public Health officers to ensure a robust governance process is in place for initiatives that may require funding from the grant. It details the process to ensure there is a robust approval process in place that scrutinises the public health outcomes proposed to be met, as well as value for money and sustainability of any project that is brought forward for approval.

1. Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet note the contents of the attachment and approve the adoption of this framework going forward.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 Bringing forward this paper to Cabinet is to ensure there is complete awareness and transparency around the usage of the Public Health Grant and conditions by which it should be spent. It is also to ensure a clear governance process is in place and agreed.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 Following the disaggregation of the countywide Public Health team on 1 October 2022, and the formation of Public Health in West Northamptonshire, it was important to set out clearly the factors involved when allocating non budgeted spend through the Public Health Grant. The attached paper therefore details the conditions of how the Public Health Grant should be spent, expectations of the role of the DPH and commitment to residents in West Northants on how the grant and more specifically, the reserve, would be used to improve health outcomes.
- 5,2 Also, important to clearly identify, is the process taken to allocate funds and to ensure information about such is available in one place. The accompanying framework document therefore encapsulates all of this information to help guide, not only the public health team, but others, through this process to ensure the correct governance is followed.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 A reserve budget has been built up in Public Health over the last few years and it is now imperative that a plan to spend this is in place. Key themes of investment have therefore been identified by the DPH, in line with local priorities as follows:-
- Adults and Early Years - Wellbeing and Prevention
 - Wider Determinants - Housing/Homelessness/Anti-Poverty/Environment
 - Communities and Health Improvement
- 6.2 As well as identifying the local needs, it is also important that we ensure a robust, fair and equitable system is in place to assess and review requests for funding. Although this approach is something that Public Health has adopted for funding requests in recent years, this has been the first time that requests have been invited in such frequency. It has therefore become necessary for us to ensure rigorous processes are in place to award funding and to assure that public health outcomes are at the centre of all bids.
- 6.3 As there is quite a complex series of conditions surrounding public health grant spend it is also important for us to ensure the parameters that we have to follow, are understood across the council and with local partners. This not only safeguards that the rules and conditions are being followed appropriately, but also helps others to focus on areas that public health can help to

fund, meaning that time is not wasted by all parties on bids that would not be appropriate.

7. Implications

a. Resources and Financial

This paper does not ask for a specific sum of money to be spent but rather outlines the parameters around how resources should be spent, and the priorities for the use of the Public Health Reserve, and the processes involved in doing this.

b. Legal

There are no legal implications arising from the proposals.

c. Risk

The risk of not adopting this framework would be for ambiguity to remain present for the spend of the Public Health Grant which may lead to money being inappropriately spent, with potential repercussions from the Department of Health & Social Care and the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities.

Without this being approved, there would also be a lack of clarity on the process of approving business cases within Public Health. This could cause delays in projects and work streams being started, some of which are extremely time sensitive and could have a damaging impact on the council's reputation, particularly for high profile issues such as fuel poverty in winter.

d. Consultation

The principles of having a framework document in place have been shared with the regional DPHs who is supportive of this approach. In addition, the framework has been shared with our external audit partner.

e. Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

The Public Health framework is a statement of the key priorities of the public health services grant. It has not been considered by Scrutiny but would fall within the remit of the People Scrutiny Committee.

f. Climate Impact

- g.** There is an opportunity for the framework to positively impact on the climate through promoting public health and wellbeing initiatives with a positive environmental impact e.g promoting physical activity.

h. Community Impact and Inequalities

Many of the areas of spend impact certain communities or cohorts affected by health inequalities, so this paper helps to streamline a process which will benefit these at risk groups and those with protected characteristics .

i. Communications

The Council's corporate communications activities will keep the public informed and engaged on the key priorities for expenditure as part of the Public Health Framework and how these objectives and outcomes will benefit local communities.

8. Background Papers

[Public Health Grant Circular](#)

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Public Health Framework 2022-2024

Introduction

West Northants Council has a duty to improve the health and wellbeing of the population. The National Health Service Act 2006 states that the council 'must take such steps as it considers appropriate for improving the health of the people in its area'. This means that the council should pay regard to the evidence of need and identify services, approaches or interventions to improve health outcomes and address inequalities.

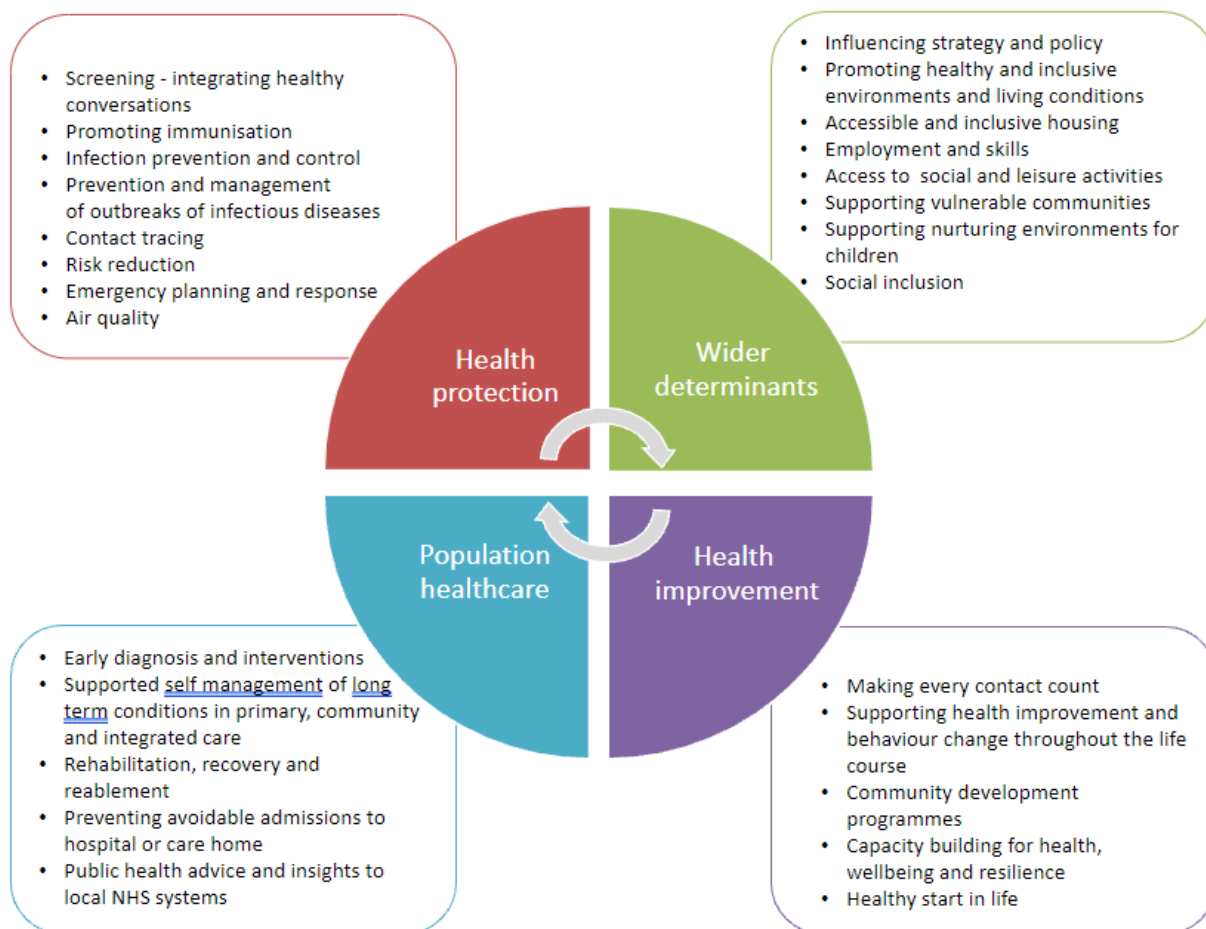
To support this duty, a Director of Public Health (DPH) is appointed jointly by the Council and Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. The DPH is accountable for the delivery of their authority's public health duties and is an independent advocate for the health of the population and provides leadership for its improvement and protection. The DPH is a statutory chief officer of their authority and the principal adviser on all health matters to elected members and officers, with a frontline leadership role spanning all three domains of public health - health improvement, health protection and Population healthcare. They have a vital leadership role for system-wide efforts to secure better public health.

The DPH has a number of statutory responsibilities, including:-

- all of their local authority's duties to take steps to improve the health of the people in its area
- any of the Secretary of State's public health protection or health improvement functions that s/he delegates to local authorities
- exercising their local authority's functions in planning for, and responding to, emergencies that present a risk to the public's health
- their local authority's role in co-operating with the police, the probation service and the prison service to assess the risks posed by violent or sexual offenders
- such other public health functions as the Secretary of State specifies in regulations and under dental public health powers.

To support these responsibilities, the DPH is responsible for a public health grant. The level of the grant is set by the Treasury and is ring-fenced for specific uses. Since transferring to local government in 2013, there has been a real terms reduction in the grant. In 2022/23, West Northants Council has been allocated £19,107,223 for public health services.

The Council needs to demonstrate that the public health grant has been used to improve the health and wellbeing of the population in line with evidence of need and in accordance with the legislative requirements set out in the grant determination letter. These requirements use the public health domains of health improvement, health protection and population healthcare with the addition of tackling the wider determinants of health (see diagram below).



Purpose

The Public Health Framework sets out the approach and key priorities for the expenditure of the public health grant between 2022 and 2024. It outlines how the council will assure that:-

- The public health grant is spent in support of strategic priority areas
- Expenditure is demonstrably in line with the grant determination requirements
- Governance processes are robust and adequate
- Public health outcomes are reviewed and monitored

Strategic Objectives

Improvement to the health and wellbeing of the population is delivered through a combination of interventions, including provision of expert advice, understanding the needs of the population, influencing system policy and developing collaborative and integrated approaches. Commissioning is also a tool that can be used to effectively and efficiently deploy resources to ensure that wider system outcomes are met.

In 2022/23 there will be a move from a county wide Public Health Function to a West Northamptonshire service with some shared responsibilities maintained on a county footprint. West Northants Council will use this opportunity to review expenditure of the Public Health Grant and ensure that there is a strong shift and focus on investment in prevention. The review will incorporate the following:-

- A line by line review of in year expenditure to ensure focus on priorities, incorporate an efficiency challenge (15%) and develop accurate in year profiling
- Closure and delivery of reinvestment funding
- Review of existing reserve commitments
- Development of a three-year programme to ensure appropriate investment of the reserve fund and return to a proportionate level of reserve. (£2 million)
- Investment in service pressures to ensure delivery is achieved

Focusing on prevention supports residents to make healthier choices and reduces the risk of developing health conditions that may reduce healthy life expectancy. In addition to commissioning for prevention, the Public Health Team will look for opportunities to incorporate prevention in other internal and partner services, through the provision of expert advice, funding and integration.

The West Northamptonshire Public Health Team is focusing to support the following key strategic objectives:-

- Support Corporate, ICS and Community Delivery
- Strengthen and increase investment in Prevention
- Reduce the health inequalities gap in West Northamptonshire
- Support residents to **'live their best life'** by living longer, and healthier lives
- Targeted interventions to the most vulnerable to keep them safe, supported, and healthy
- Strategic Commissioning for outcomes

Strategic commissioning cycle and principles

Commissioning is the strategic activity of identifying need, allocating resources and procuring a provider to best meet that need, within available means. West Northamptonshire Council will ensure that strategic commissioning will be firmly based in engagement and co-production with communities and be based on evidence of need, for example through health needs assessments. Commissioning intentions will also be guided by available resources and strategic priorities. In public health terms, it is important that equity of provision and tackling inequalities are built into the approach taken by the team.

Specialist procurement advice is needed to ensure that contracts are awarded in line with internal and national legal requirements. Ideally, public health contracts will be focused on delivering improved outcomes (changes in people's lived experience) and will use key performance indicators to understand progress and impact.

Commissioning Cycle



Where the public health grant is invested in internal council services, formal contracts may not be required. These investments will be supported by service level agreements that demonstrate the contribution to improving outcomes and are reviewed at least annually.

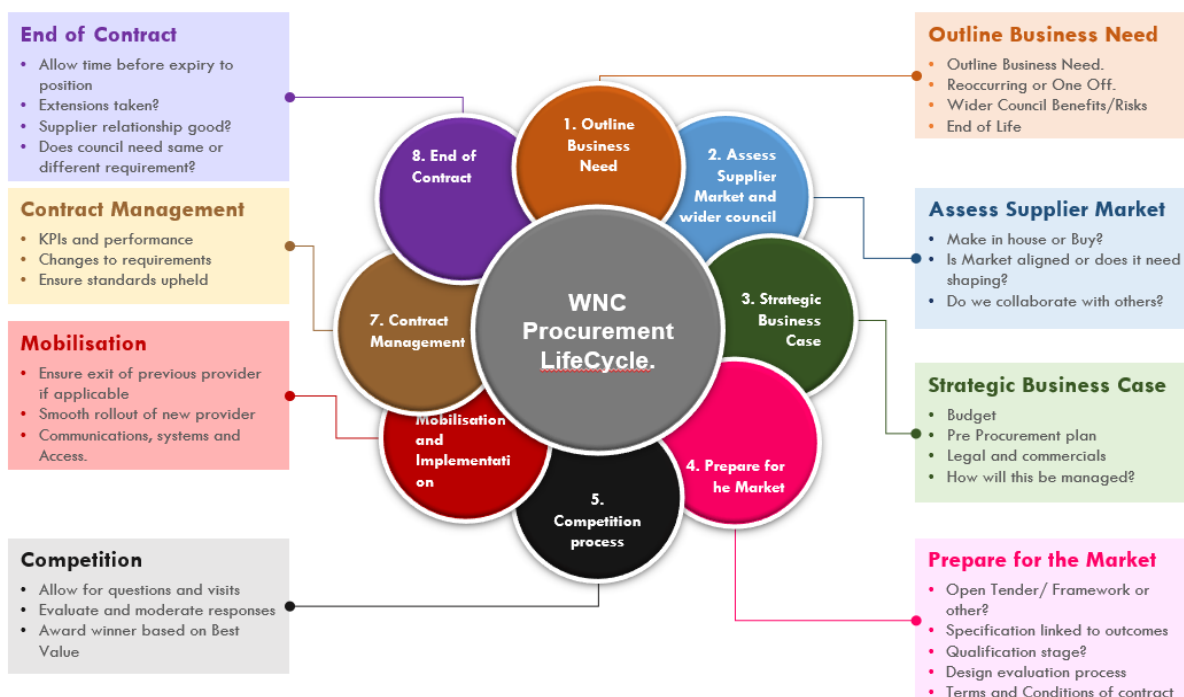
The West Northamptonshire Council Public Health Team will adopt the following principles when undertaking strategic commissioning activities:-

- Based on robust evidence base of need, valuing lived experience and resident voice
- Led by subject matter experts
- Guided through engagement and co-production with service users, residents or communities, based on a prevention approach (see strategic objectives) and reducing inequalities, focused on developing upstream interventions
- Seek opportunities for integration and joint commissioning with partner agencies to maximise benefits for residents and use of public funds
- Assessment of value for money and opportunities for social value
- Balance the need for stability of provision (for providers and service users) alongside the need to retain flexibility and responsive to changing circumstances and context.

Social Value

The Public Health Framework will adopt commitments within West Northants Council's Procurement Strategy (2021-2023) to ensure the Council's purchasing power is used to secure the best possible value and outcomes for West Northants and its citizens. This includes consideration of economic, social and environmental factors (all of which are wider determinants of health and wellbeing), throughout the commissioning and procurement cycle.

Procurement Life Cycle



National strategic drivers

Commissioning decisions will consider:-

- National Health Service Act 2006
- Health and Social Care Act 2012
- Health and Care Bill
- PHE Strategy 2020-2025 (or if UKHSA/OHID successors)

Local strategic drivers

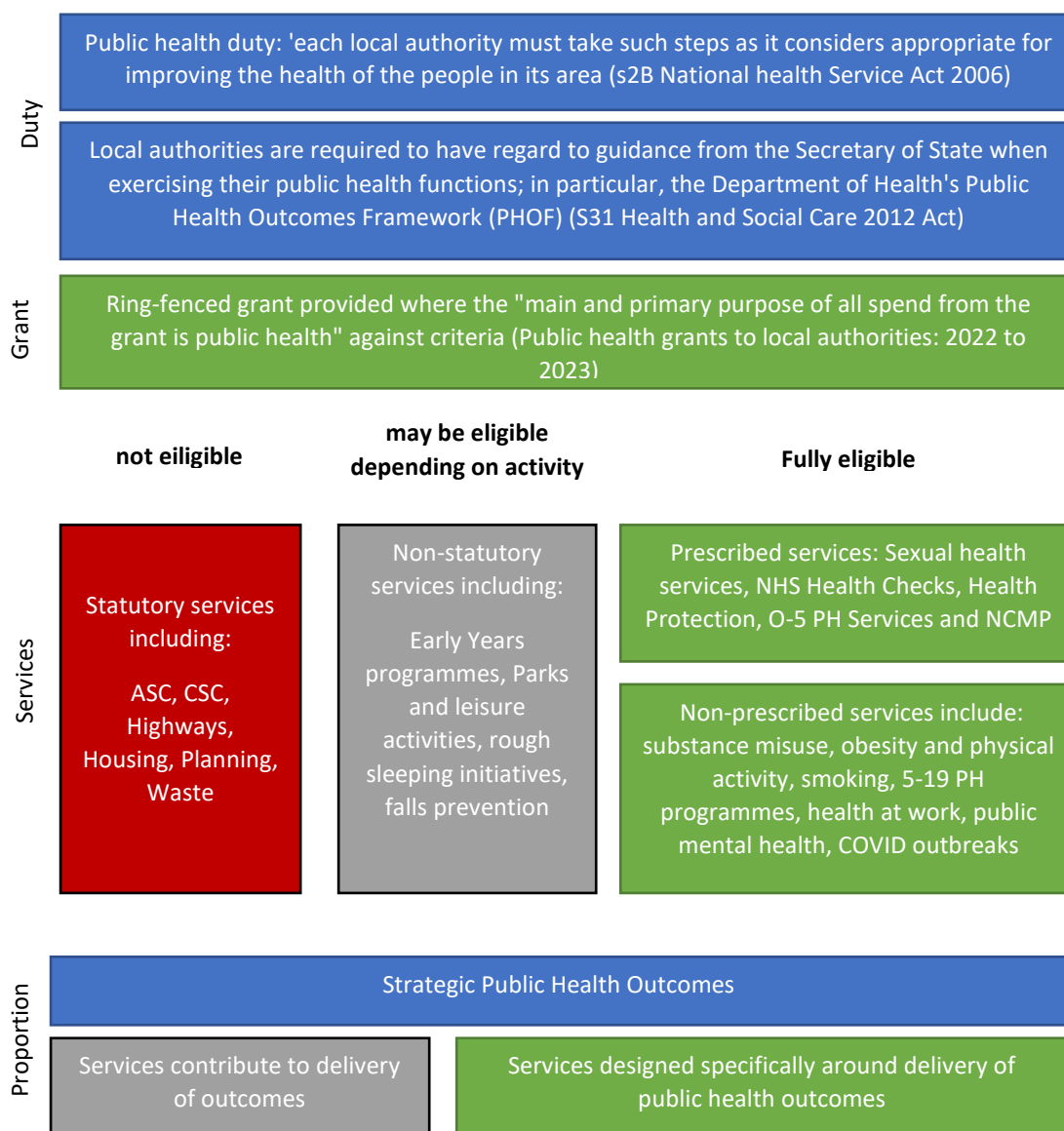
Commissioning decisions will be prioritised to focus on:-

- West Northants Council Corporate Plan
- West Northamptonshire JSNA
- Northamptonshire ICS Live Your Best Life Strategy 2022

- ICS inequalities strategy
- Emerging West Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy
- West Northants Anti-Poverty Strategy

Principles of public health grant allocation

West Northants Council receives a ring-fenced grant which is provided on the condition that the 'main and primary purpose of all spend from the grant is to secure public health improvement'. The DPH and Chief Executive/s151 officer have to confirm that expenditure of the grant is in line with the grant determination criteria (see appendix 1). The public health grant will be used to support a breadth of services against strategic outcomes. These services will ensure equity of access to members of the local community, and cover different levels of prevention activity, with a common focus on reducing health inequalities. The roles and responsibilities in relation to the management of the Public Health Grant are set out in appendix 2.

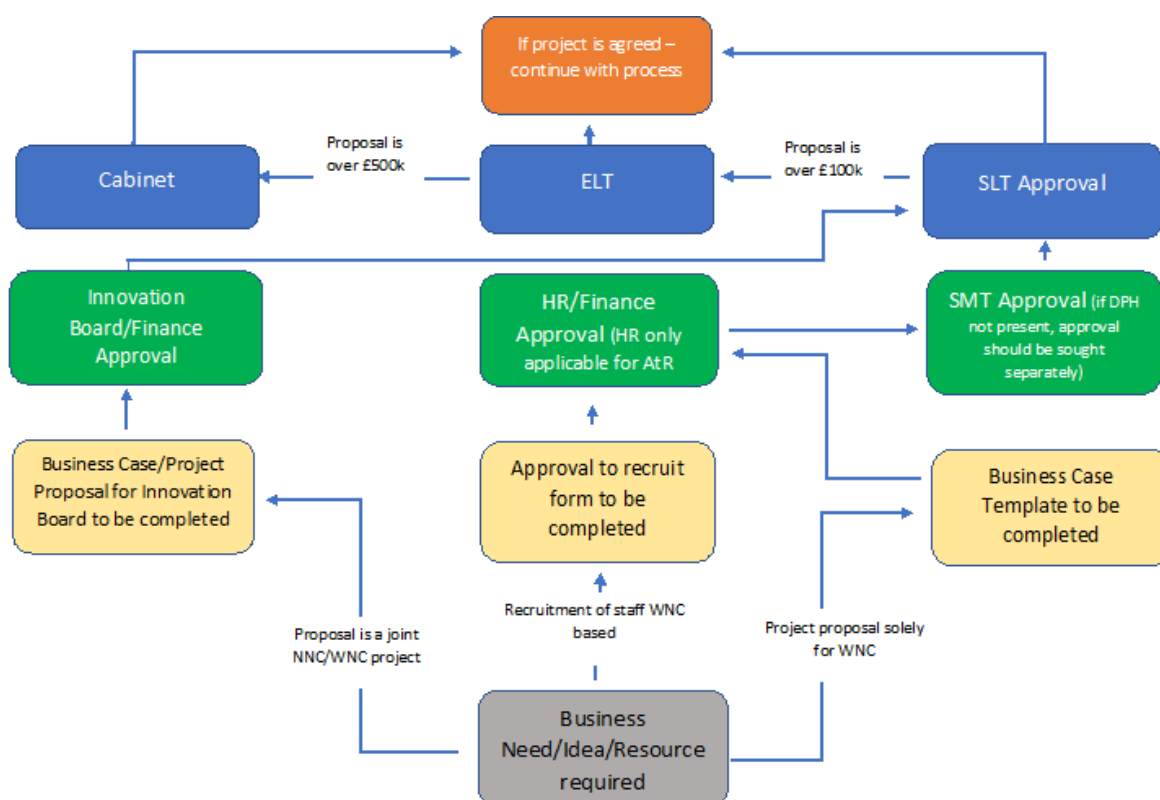


Scheme of Delegation and Approval Hierarchy

Like any other Local Authority, West Northamptonshire Council operates on a scheme of delegation basis which gives officers certain delegated privileges and budgetary discretions as outlined in Section 9 of the West Northants [Constitution](#).

Within those boundaries the DPH has the authority to manage the incoming Public Health Grant, but where necessary approval of spend is escalated accordingly. This hierarchy of decision making and approval for Public Health spending can be seen in the diagram below.

Hierarchy of Approvals



Contracts Management

All expenditure on public health interventions will be subject to suitable contract and performance management. Quality assurance and improvement will be delivered through the regular monitoring of the investment agreements, with responsibilities for oversight held by the Public Health Quality and Performance Board.

The Quality and Performance Board will provide the Council with the oversight of the services, primarily contracted, by both itself and those provided by North Northants Council (NNC) on its behalf and provide the necessary assurance to NNC for the Services it provides for WNC.

Additional Short Term Sources of Public Health Funding

Public Health Reinvestment

In the financial year 2018/19 Public Health England reviewed the Public Health Grant spend for Northamptonshire County Council (NCC), as it was then, and found that some grant spend was not used in accordance with the specified grant conditions. An amount of £7,947,695 was therefore paid back to Public Health in Northamptonshire by NCC. It was agreed that this pot of 'reinvestment' money would specifically be used to fund projects in other services or departments in the wider council that would satisfy the needs of that particular area but that would also fulfil Public Health outcomes. A programme of work was identified across the council and as at the closedown of 2021/22 the outstanding balance of this fund was £3,159,881. Further spend has however been identified for the coming years and the entire fund has now been committed against relevant projects.

Public Health Reserve

Public Health in Northants has historically had quite a large reserve budget which, as a result of issues with delivering planned projects during the pandemic, at the start of the 2022/23 financial year, has now grown to approximately £19.8m which is split between Councils approximately as follows:- £10.2m WNC, £9.6m NNC.

There is a need to review all existing requests for funding made to the reserve and also to develop a three year plan of expenditure to ensure the reserve level is reduced to an acceptable level.

Suggested themes for use of the reserve include working with partners and other services to ensure we invest in early prevention and support residents in their communities to **live their best life**. We need to also recognise the impact that poverty has on the health and wellbeing of residents and invest accordingly to minimise this inequality. Finally, the pandemic has clearly had a huge impact on the mental wellbeing of residents and similarly impacted on inequalities in screening levels and take up of preventative services.

Additional Grant Funding

West Northants Public Health receive additional grants as follows:

- Contain Outbreak Management Fund £2.822m (as at opening balance 2022/23)
- Tier 2 Weight management £0.2m
- Oral Health (county wide) £0.07m
- Life chances one off fund (county wide) £2.769m
- Additional Substance Misuse Funding £ 0.3 m

Additional Current Responsibilities

- Household Support Fund £2.6m

Public Health Innovation Board

In order to commence the review of the reserve and reinvestment funds, a joint Innovation Board has been established by the Directors of Public Health. This board takes initial oversight and considers project proposals/bids to ensure they meet public health outcomes, potentially aide other Council services to meet their own outcomes, help develop the Place and Local Area Partnership agenda and also work with community based organisations to deliver community led initiatives that aim to improve the health outcomes for that area of need.

Bids were initially invited by Public Health team members, other council employees and partners where gaps in provision were identified. Future bids however, will be invited where alignment has been identified to Public Health and wider council priorities.

Each council will be in control of their own reserve envelope and therefore approval of bids will sit within that council. Joint or countywide bids will, however, need sign off by both councils in order to progress. In these cases, if one council is in agreement and the other is not, it may be feasible for the requestor to alter their bid in order to continue on a solely North or West basis.

The board provides a clear and systematic approach to reviewing these proposals ahead of any further corporate sign off.

The ultimate aim of the board is:-

- To provide strategic oversight of projects to ensure strong links to public health outcomes and local priorities.
- To establish an efficient protocol for submission of business cases, ensuring swift and clear review process with means to ratify investment decisions.
- To monitor the performance of any projects or programmes receiving Public Health funding.
- This Board is currently operating across both authorities but will be reviewed after disaggregation
- An overview of the process is shown in Appendix 3

As this will be using a non-recurrent budget, projects will need to clearly set out the financial implications and should be for an initial set up cost or for a project that is for a time limited period. Sustainability of projects that are hoped to be long running therefore needs to be a key factor that is addressed within the business case so that there is not an expectation that Public Health will continue to fund projects past their initial proposal. In addition, business cases will also request that the long term financial and non-financial benefits of the project are outlined as well as detailing a proposed exit strategy.

Key Public Health service pressures 2022/23

- Disaggregation – The disaggregation of the Public Health team means that some areas of the team will be significantly affected by understaffing or gaps in knowledge in some areas of Public Health. Necessary skilling up of staff will be needed and ways of working and service provision will need to be adjusted and reviewed in line with the disaggregation over the next 12 months which could leave to gaps in quality service provision.

- Agenda for Change increases - These will be funded in line with NHS approaches, matching uplift with service efficiencies, using the NHS inflationary efficiency factors.
- Covid recovery - The pandemic has exacerbated some behaviours that contribute to poor health outcomes (e.g. tobacco or alcohol intake) and existing inequalities. Delays have been experienced with the roll out of some projects and services, therefore additional investment is needed.
- Implementation of the public health grant review transition plan - Supporting Commissioning capacity, transformation and reinvestment of reallocated funds
- Economic salary, inflation pressures particularly at tendering or contract extension points.

Key commissioning activities planned 2022-24

Public Health Contracts

Post disaggregation, contracts that have been commissioned on a countywide footprint will be managed by one council, on behalf of the other, until the contract comes to its natural end. After this date, the provision will be reviewed to establish whether it is appropriate to split the service into a North and West footprint. The service will then be retendered on that basis.

Below is a list of the current contracts in place, detailing which council the contract will be managed by and the end date of the contract.

Contracts to be managed by West Northants Council on behalf of North and West Councils

Service	Contract	Timeframe
Healthwatch	Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire	October 31st 2023
Social prescribing	Northamptonshire Better Outcomes Ltd	March 31st 2026
Older People and Falls Prevention	NSport Otago	March 31st 2024
	NSport Active Chats	December 31st 2022
Increasing physical activity levels	Nsport physical activity contract	April 30th 2023
Weight management and community nutrition	Slimming World, Northampton Town Football Club	March 31st 2023
	Digital Service with Solutions for Health	March 31st 2023
Northamptonshire warmth programme	Northamptonshire Energy Saving Service (NESS)	August 31st 2023
Drug and Alcohol Services (including Rough Sleeper Drug and Alcohol Grant and Supplemental Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant)	Adult structured drug and alcohol treatment service	March 31st 2024
	Adult drug and alcohol recovery service	March 31st 2026
	Young people's prevention and treatment service	March 31st 2024
	Family drug and alcohol support service	The procurement process is currently under way for a

		short-term contract to March 31st 2024
	Workforce drug and alcohol training service	The procurement process is currently under way for a short-term contract to March 31st 2024
	Young offenders' substance misuse support service	Annual SLA to March 31st 2023
	Drug and alcohol data portal	31st December 2022

Contracts to be managed by North Northants Council on behalf of North and West Councils

Service	Contract	Timeframe
NHS Health checks	Framework for point of care testing	March 31 st 2026
	NHS Health checks IT system	March 31 st 2025
	NHS Health Checks DPS (Dynamic Purchasing System)	March 31 st 2023
Sexual Health and HIV Service	Integrated Sexual Health and HIV Contract	31st March 2023
0-19 Children & Young People Services	0-19 Children & Young People Services contract	31st March 2023
	Universal Early Years' Service	31st March 2023
	PAUSE	30th September 2025
	Children & Young People Mental Health	31st March 2023
	Dental Epidemiology Survey	31st March 2025
	Oral Health Promotion Services	31st March 2024

Appendix 1

Categories for reporting local authority public health spend in 2021/22

Prescribed functions:	Non-prescribed functions:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Sexual health services - STI testing and treatment 2) Sexual health services – Contraception 3) NHS Health Check programme 4) Local authority role in health protection 5) Public health advice to NHS Commissioners 6) National Child Measurement programme 7) Prescribed Children’s 0-5 services 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8) Sexual health services - Advice, prevention and promotion 9) Obesity – adults 10) Obesity - children 11) Physical activity – adults 12) Physical activity - children 13) Treatment for drug misuse in adults 14) Treatment for alcohol misuse in adults 15) Preventing and reducing harm from drug misuse in adults 16) Preventing and reducing harm from alcohol misuse in adults 17) Specialist drugs and alcohol misuse services for children and young people 18) Stop smoking services and interventions 19) Wider tobacco control 20) Children 5-19 public health programmes 21) Other Children’s 0-5 services non-prescribed 22) Health at work 23) Public mental health 24) Miscellaneous, can include but is not exclusive to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrition initiatives • Accidents Prevention • General prevention • Community safety, violence prevention & social exclusion • Dental public health • Fluoridation • Infectious disease surveillance and control • Environmental hazards protection • Seasonal death reduction initiatives • Birth defect preventions 25) test, track and trace and outbreak planning 26) other public health spend relating to COVID-19

Appendix 2

Roles and responsibilities

Role	Commissioning Responsibility
Portfolio holder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic responsibility for public health, providing political leadership in this area of Council activity. • Accountable for performance and management of public health. • Ensuring that the Executive functions within public health are performed in accordance with approved Council policies and strategies, and to the highest ethical standards. • Below the level of Key Decision, taking strategic decisions in relation to Executive functions within public health • Building relationships with officers and other relevant stakeholders, including in external organisations, working effectively with them and giving consideration to any advice provided. • Speaking and issuing statements on their area of responsibility and representing the Council's views in line with agreed policy. • Supporting open and transparent Overview and Scrutiny, including attending meetings when requested. • Supporting open and transparent Audit processes, included attending Audit Committee meetings when requested. • Responding to questions from the public and Councillors, including those asked at Full Council meetings.
Director of People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directorate responsibility for Public Health, providing corporate leadership in this area. • Ensuring strategic direction is in line with service and wider council agenda. • Ensuring a joined up approach is achieved across areas.

<p>Director of Public Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic leadership of public health agenda • Provision of expert and professional advice to elected members and officers • Ensuring the Council acts lawfully and with financial propriety • Overall Budget Management • Initiating, implementing and managing policy in accordance with the overall framework set by Councillors • Advice on key decisions • Development of a strategic plan
<p>Consultant in Public Health/ Head of Service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operationalisation of strategic plan • Working with system partners to look for integration opportunities • Provision of expert advice • Budget Oversight
<p>Public Health Principal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget oversight • Performance and contract management • Quality improvement • Needs assessment • Service design • Partner engagement • Subject expertise

Appendix 3

Innovation Board Process

A thorough and robust process is being developed to ensure an equitable and fair awards process is followed. This is outlined as follows:

- Availability of funding / Grant Availability will be determined along with bid specification, grant agreement, proposal outline template and application deadline.
- Opportunities for funding by Innovation Board will be promoted through Local Area Partnerships, Local fora, Internal communication within the wider council, the VCSC sector, local advertising and other channels deemed appropriate to support the delivery of Public Health outcomes (this is currently paused temporarily while remaining funding is assessed)
- Bids should be submitted via Public Health.
- Before review at PH Innovation board, all proposals will be pre-scored according to the [PH Prioritisation framework](#)
- Pre-scoring will be performed by a sub-group of members consisting of at least 3 scorers made up from the Principals and the Public Health Practitioner (see Section 5).
- A lead scorer will be assigned who will be responsible for presenting the bid at the Innovation Board, as well as completing and submitting the [Project Recommendation Template](#) to take to the board meeting.
- The project recommendation template will highlight:
 - Public health outcomes the project is addressing:
 - Total value of bid over its full term
 - Project Term
 - Assessment Score
 - Project Geography
 - Population Reach
 - Recommendation from the scoring panel
- Where multiple bids are brought to the innovation board meeting these can be combined in to a Project recommendation Overview document for circulation.
- A low score threshold will be established to indicate proposals set to be rejected by the innovation board. These items will still be tabled for information and presented with the Project Recommendation Template.
- If a bid reaches the Innovation Board and is deemed unsuccessful, the bid can be revised and re-tabled once for reconsideration. At the Innovation Board meeting, the recommendation by the scoring panel will be reviewed by the moderator panel. This moderator panel will consist of three members from the Directors of Public Health and the Public Health Consultants. If a bid is approved by the Innovation Board a project lead will be assigned at this point to oversee completion of project documentation and further development and approval of the business case.
- Innovation board will adhere to council scheme of delegation. Bids in excess of £25k will require an approved business case from CLT/ELT and Portfolio Holder. Bids in excess of £500k will be treated as a key decision and require approval from CLT / ELT, Portfolio Holder and Executive / Cabinet.
- Once a bid is approved via these channels, the project lead will issue an Award Letter, complete a Memorandum of Understanding (Internal Bids) or a Grant Agreement (External Bids), complete a project risk assessment where appropriate, and agree a

monitoring schedule. The project lead will be responsible for continuing oversight of the project.

- Grants in excess of £50,000 will be documented Public Health Quality and Performance board will be responsible for performance monitoring. The project lead will report to Innovation Board at regular intervals to report on progress and performance.
- PH Innovation Board reserves the right to review projects that are underspent after their initial term. Reasons for underspend will be assessed along with project effectiveness. PH Innovation Board can agree the extension of projects and roll forward of underspent funds where appropriate. An amendment of project funding on agreed projects will be tolerated up to 10% of the total value of the projects full term, subject to availability of funds.



WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

17TH JANUARY 2023

CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE & PUBLIC HEALTH - COUNCILLOR MATT GOLBY

Report Title	Care Home Services Commissioning Intentions for Adults Aged 18 and Above
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Report Author	Danielle Frankish Commissioning Quality and Outcomes Manager Older Persons dfrankish@westnorthants.gov.uk
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Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	05/01/2023
Executive Director Finance and S151	Martin Henry	05/01/2023
Executive Director Adults, Communities and Wellbeing	Stuart Lackenby	04/01/2023
Communications	Becky Hutson	04/01/2023

List of Appendices

Appendix A - West Northamptonshire map of all Care Quality Commission (CQC) registered residential and nursing care home services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To outline Adult Social Care intentions to commission and procure contractual arrangements for a sustainable and affordable supply of Care Quality Commission (CQC) registered care home services for people age 18 and above and includes people with a physical disability (PD) and for individuals with a diagnosed Mental Health (MH) condition.
- 1.2 To seek Cabinet approval for the Executive Director of People Services in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health to have delegated authority to tender, procure and award a new Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for CQC registered care homes to commence in May 2023.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) currently operates an interim Care Home Services DPS to purchase residential and nursing care services to meet the needs of older people age 65 and over with 17 care homes currently signed up to this DPS, which is due to expire on 30 April 2023. The current DPS does not include care homes for people under 65 with physical disability and mental health needs and these care homes do not currently sit under a framework or DPS. There are 30 care homes in our market who are registered to provide care for people aged under 65 and a total of 107 care homes within West Northamptonshire for people age 18 and over. WNC has a separate contract in place to meet demand for people with a learning disability (LD) and therefore, LD is not included within this recommissioning project.
- 2.2 During the covid pandemic, WNC, along with most other councils, supported the care home sector with covid grant funding including the Workforce Development Fund. Post pandemic, the enhanced levels of demand linked to the NHS recovery plan, and the associated high hospital discharge activity, combined with a slowdown in ability to recruit care workers, has led to an unstable care home market in many parts of the UK including West Northamptonshire.
- 2.3 The current DPS does not support the market, or the future conditions required to commission care home services in a sustainable, collaborative and people focused manner. This is due to a low number of care homes signed up to the current DPS – 17 out of a total 57 care homes for over 65s within West Northamptonshire, which has resulted in a significant number of placements having to be spot purchased – this has financial implications and the market now needs to be stabilised to manage escalating fee rates. The current DPS is only specific to over 65s and does not meet the changing needs of our population of adults aged 18 and above whose longer-term health conditions are not able to be managed within a community setting.
- 2.4 A recommissioning project is underway to plan, design and procure a new DPS for care homes which meets the needs of individuals and recognises the post covid market conditions for adults age 18 and above.
- 2.5 The recommissioning project aims to consider the requirements of social care reform including Fair Cost of Care and Market sustainability. It is our aspiration to move towards Fair Cost of Care within the new contractual arrangements; however it should be noted that clarity is still required on the requirements of this mandate and additional market engagement is required. It

is the Council's priority to deliver a sustainable fee structure for both the Local Authority and for the independent care market.

- 2.5 The project has involved undertaking substantial engagement and design work during the past several months seeking the views and input of key stakeholders. This has helped shape the model and future contract requirements within an outcome-based delivery model which is the basis for procuring new care home arrangements ready for May 2023.

The stakeholders include:

- Individuals who receive care
- Healthwatch
- local (and national) providers
- Adult Social Care colleagues
- Corporate Services colleagues
- NHS colleagues and health professionals

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended Cabinet approve:

- A new Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for the purchasing of commissioned care home services for adults aged 18 and above and includes people with Physical Disabilities and Mental Health conditions and is introduced from May 2023.
- Duration of the DPS will be indefinite; with no proposed end date.
- Applicants' admission to the DPS will be determined via expressions of interest.
- The Executive Director for People Services in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health is authorised to take all operational decisions necessary to implement the above recommendations.

3.2 The recommendations underpin strategic commissioning intentions to design and procure a new outcome-based delivery model for adult residential and nursing care for the long-term. Purchasing of effective, sustainable, and affordable provision supply will enable West Northamptonshire Council to fulfil its statutory duties to meet care needs and shape the local care market.

4. Reason for Recommendations

4.1 The recommendations seek:

- a) To enable West Northamptonshire Council to meet the latest changes to the statutory requirements originally set out in the Care Act 2014.
- b) To support the development of a sustainable care market as required by the Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund.
- c) To have purchasing arrangements for the supply of residential and nursing care services for adults age 18 and above, not including learning disabilities.
- d) To meet the needs and demands of residents in relation to care and support including people who self-fund their care whilst meeting the Council's strategic vision and values.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 The Care Act 2014 places a statutory duty on West Northamptonshire Council to provide care and support to people that have assessed and eligible social care needs alongside responsibilities to ensure a sufficient supply of residential and nursing care services through effective market development activities. It is important to note that the Care Act also requires the Authority to offer choice so that people have reasonable options in the type and location of care they need when this is arranged and paid for by the Council.
- 5.2 The Council's strategic objective, through the existing Adult Social Care Transformation Programme, is to support people to live independently within the community for as long as possible. While there are a broad range of services to fulfil this objective, including home care and extra care housing, there are a number of people whose care and support needs are such that long-term residential and nursing care services are required.
- 5.3 Permanent residential and nursing care is only considered for those with the most complex needs that cannot be supported within alternative care settings such as home care or independent living with on-site care through extra care housing schemes.
- 5.4 Typically needs may include frailty and mobility, advanced dementia, highly complex physical care needs around PD or the requirement for on-site nursing support, and in a number of cases all of these combined. In line with national trends, there is an increasing need for more complex care within residential and nursing settings. This is partly related to national demographic changes associated with an ageing population living longer with ongoing care needs but also the positive impact of social care strategy to increase the number of people remaining independent at home for longer with more complex conditions, which can mean that when they need residential or nursing care a greater intensity of care and support is required.
- 5.5 Across WNC there is a total supply of 2787 bed places for all forms of residential and nursing care services across 107 Care Quality Commission (CQC) registered care homes.
- 5.6 WNC, along with most other local authorities, supported the care home sector with covid grant funding including the workforce development fund. Despite increased levels of demand the additional grant funding during the pandemic did support short term sustainability in the care

home sector. Post pandemic the enhanced levels of demand linked to the NHS recovery plan and the associated high Discharge to Assess (D2A) activity combined with a slowdown in ability to recruit care workers has led to a more unstable care home market in many parts of the UK including West Northamptonshire

- 5.7 Our Care home market is currently commissioned through a DPS arrangement made up of 17 providers expected to meet 100% of the demand for people aged 65 years and over. There is no framework in place to meet the demand for adults aged under 65 (this does not include LD). Therefore, spot providers are being used to meet the demand and fill the gaps on the market.
- 5.8 WNC has 17 providers on its current interim over 65 care homes DPS but also has packages of care provided by a varying number of, spot providers. Commissioning from such a large and fragmented volume of providers is undesirable and leads to inefficiency, additional quality risks and costs. The volume of providers from which WNC commission also leads to a loss of the opportunity from economies of scale.
- 5.9 On 10 November 2020 Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) Cabinet approved a proposal to extend the Care Home Services Framework until 31 August 2021 to ensure alignment with the DPS and enable a commissioning and procurement exercise that had been originally delayed during 2020 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This sought to ensure that contractual arrangements would be ready for by 1 September 2021 by when all the existing contract arrangements would end.
- 5.10 During June 2021 WNC Cabinet approved a proposal to implement an interim DPS to commence the 1 September 2021 for a period of 12-months. To enable further work and engagement to be completed for residential and nursing care services for the future.
- 5.11 On 14 June 2022 WNC Cabinet approved a proposal to extend the current interim Care Home Service DPS for a period of 8-months until 30 April 2023 and to implement legislative and policy requirements introduced by Government in relation to the Social Care Charging Reforms and Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund.
- 5.12 It should be noted that most changes relating to social care reform have been suspended until 2025, however, there is still a requirement to move towards Fair Cost of Care and market sustainability. The expectation is that new contractual arrangements will be reflected of the governments requirements.

6. Issues and Choices

Commissioning intentions and activity

- 6.1 The strategic commissioning intentions are to:

- Secure a diverse and sustainable supply of care home services through a single contractual arrangement that meets ongoing and changing needs including the growing complexity of care for all adults.
- Develop a standardised fee rate structure in collaboration/consultation with the market that enables both stability of delivery for providers along with an affordable cost budget.
- Develop improved service description and delivery requirements within an outcomes specification through stakeholder/market engagement that enables a good quality of life for adults living in care home services by remaining safe, healthy, and active.
- Stimulate innovation and improvement within care home services through greater focus on technology enabled care, hospital admission prevention and infection prevention control.

- 6.2 During 2022 substantial progress has been made to design a progressive care delivery model ready to procure services. This is principally focused on the enabling adults to live well for longer in a care home setting with good health and wellbeing. It is also realised through an equal focus on stimulating investment in care practice improvement and workforce development initiatives so that care home services can deliver the aspirations of the new model. A central aim is to ensure services have access to effective primary and enhanced healthcare support within the community to better manage frailty and long-term complex needs such as but not limited to dementia and PD within an overall stimulating care environment.
- 6.3 Work to date has resulted in completion of a new draft strengths and outcome-based specification, which is aimed at supporting improved quality of care across West Northamptonshire and the ability of health and social care to better manage demand including avoidable acute hospital admission and treatment. The proposed delivery model has been informed by research into good care practice, standards, and outcomes for people, which has formed the basis for regular market engagement and provider dialogue to enabled consideration and input to future delivery requirements.
- 6.4 The development of a standardised fee rate structure needed to procure affordable and sustainable services has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. A rapidly changing financial environment for care homes during the pandemic has altered provider delivery costs and therefore prevented an accurate understanding to set fee rates for the long-term. This has been affected by a combination of multiple rounds of 'one off' Government funding through the Infection Control Fund (ICF) along with increased operating costs associated with additional staffing, equipment, and insurance/operating requirements. In addition, it is currently unknown whether reduced occupancy levels within care home services has the potential to further affect an increase in fixed operating costs that could further change the cost of care locally.
- 6.5 Barriers to understanding the local cost of care therefore prevented the original intention to procure contractual arrangements ready for 1 September 2022 based on a new model of care and a sustainable fee rate structure. This is vital to the commissioning and procurement exercise and will require time to develop and present to the provider market through consultation.

6.6 Fair Cost of Care (FCoC)

- 6.7 In recognition of the imminent Adult Social Care Reforms ([Proposed reforms to adult social care \(including cap on care costs\) - House of Commons Library \(parliament.uk\)](#)) WNC, alongside several other East Midlands local authorities, commissioned the services of Care Analytics, a specialist in the financial analysis of care markets and the cost of care, to undertake a 'Fair Cost of Care' (FCoC) detailed cost analysis exercise.
- 6.8 All providers operating in the care home market within the area of the local authority were sent a detailed survey designed to capture the necessary operational and contextual detail to draw out the inherent costs of delivering care in the local market.
- 6.9 In compliance with the latest language contained within the guidance and resulting grant conditions for additional funding, WNC is committed only to "moving towards" the calculated FCoC rates (including any future inflationary uplift as negotiated). Guidance is published on the Government website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/market-sustainability-and-fair-cost-of-care-fund-2022-to-2023-guidance/market-sustainability-and-fair-cost-of-care-fund-2022-to-2023-guidance>

6.10 Anti-Poverty Strategy

- 6.11 The project will also link to the objectives and outcomes of the Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy; good, high-quality, sustainable care can be an enabler to help support people out of poverty, for example:-
- 6.12 The Anti-Poverty Strategy states: *"There is still a strong association between unemployment and poverty, along with a significant rise of in-work poverty.*

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."

- 6.13 Better employment conditions and an increase in employment opportunities for care workers can support people to move out of the position of living in poverty whilst in work.

- 6.14 The Anti-Poverty Strategy also states:

"Lone parents, large families, carers and care leavers are more likely to experience poverty than people without children or caring responsibilities."

- 6.15.1 A deliverable of the project is that good, high-quality, sustainable care will support family carers to enjoy more fulfilled and active lives in the knowledge that their relative is safely supported at home.

7 Proposed approach

7.15 The current Care Home Services DPS contract ends on the 30 April 2023 and there are no options to extend arrangements. Therefore, the Council must seek to implement a contractual/purchasing mechanism ready for the 1 May 2023.

Option one (recommended) – Engage in a procurement exercise to secure a new DPS for care homes

The new DPS will be for all care homes within West Northamptonshire for adults age over 18 (not including LD).

All care homes within West Northamptonshire, will have the opportunity to apply and join the new contractual arrangement. This proposal seeks to:

- Implement and agree a funding structure;
- Ensure compliance with the Public Contract Regulations (2015);
- Enable the Council to fulfil its statutory duties thus preventing service disruption;
- Support supplier engagement and consultation to inform a sustainable solution; and
- Secure future application of outcome and strength-based care model

7.15.1 Option two (Not recommended) – Spot Purchase

The current Care Home DPS contract would expire from 1 May 2023 the Council would seek to secure supply of residential and nursing care services on a spot-purchased arrangements. While spot purchasing can be used to secure services, this approach can increase susceptibility to variable pricing and is not the most effective way of managing cost and supply.

8 Implications (including financial implications)

8.1 Resources and Financial

8.1.1 It is not anticipated that the proposed will have any impact on the current resources available.

8.1.2 The Council's annual gross forecast expenditure on commissioned care homes during the 2022/23 financial year for over 65s is 2.3 million and for spot provision is 26.8 million and for under 65s is 3.5m (this figure does not include LD).

8.2 Legal

8.2.1 The Council has a statutory duty to provide care and support for people who meet the eligibility criteria as set out in the Care Act 2014 and supporting legislative framework. This duty sits alongside both Council and NHS strategies and plans. The Council's statutory duty extends to the provision or arrangement of services that could help prevent people developing needs for care and support or delay people deteriorating such that they would need ongoing care and support. The Council may meet that

duty by providing the care and support itself or by arranging for a person other than it to provide a service. The legislation anticipates that needs for care and support can be met in a variety of ways, including Council- funded long-term care and support packages, i.e. community care, residential and nursing care and the provision of homecare.

8.3 The award of the new DPS is subject to the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules in that Cabinet approval to award the DPS would be required. This report is requesting that Cabinet delegate authority to award the DPS to the Executive Director of Adults, Communities and Wellbeing.

8.4 The procurement and contractual provisions for the implementation of the recommended option will be undertaken with the advice and support provided by the Council’s Legal and Procurement services. It is anticipated that the proposed procurement exercise will enable the Council to continue to provide a diversity of service in satisfaction of its statutory duties.

8.15 Risk

8.16 If the recommendations described in the report are not approved, it will result in the Council not having appropriate arrangements in place to purchase care home services. This means the council could fail to meet its statutory duties under the Care Act 2014 when the current DPS expires in April 2023. On all the evidence available and subsequent analysis, it is the professional opinion of all Contributors/Checkers/Approvers that Cabinet should endorse the recommendations.

8.16.1 Should approval of the recommendations not be given the risk to the Council would potentially be a combination of reduced supply for residential and nursing care services through contractual routes and increased costs associated with securing a larger proportion of placements through spot purchasing arrangements.

8.16.2 Risk(s) associated with the proposal:

Risk	Mitigation	Residual Risk
Non-contracted providers within the market raise concern/challenge about the decision to proceed with a new interim DPS under existing delivery requirements.	New providers currently not contracted to the Council will have the opportunity to apply and join the new contractual arrangement through a straightforward process based on mandatory criteria to evidence ability to provide effective care services. The interim DPS will remain open to applications and managed effectively.	Green

8.16.3 Risk(s) associated with not undertaking the proposal

Risk	Mitigation	Residual Risk
Expiry of the DPS on 30 April 2023 results in no access to contracted service supply and therefore solely spot purchasing services at higher fee rates because of market price demands.	Plan for spot-purchasing arrangements using preferred provider agreements on an individual basis to secure supply under an assumption that vacancies across the market, driven by the impact of COVID-19 and reduced demand, create price stability.	Red

8.17 The introduction of a new DPS fill enhance the customers experience by improving providers’ operational and financial viability linked to an improved service specification and suitable contract.

8.18 Providers may choose not to apply, or their application may be unsuccessful. However, extensive, and ongoing engagement has indicated that the majority will wish to continue to deliver to current commissioned customers if successful and until review if they are unsuccessful. Many providers, if unsuccessful, have indicated that they will realign their businesses to focus on providing care home services to people that fund their own care. Therefore, it is doubtful that any significant discontinuity of service provision will occur directly because of the introduction of the framework.

8.19 It should be acknowledged that all recommissioning of care home exercises come with the risk of some potential disruption to individuals and the Council. The risks associated with this project are acknowledged and detailed within an ongoing Risk Register which has been/will be reviewed regularly throughout the project.

8.20 It should be noted that there is a requirement to move towards fair cost of care and the Council aims to reflect this in new contractual arrangements. However, this project does not seek to adjust existing contracts or fee rates and therefore, there is a risk of legal challenge against our fee rates if they do not match the outcome of the Fair Cost of Care Exercise.

8.21 Consultation

8.22 Healthwatch are to be requested to seek the views of people who receive care and families

8.23 Care Home Providers – A Provider Reference Group was established in December 2022 for providers to inform the design of the approach and model.

8.24 All Member Briefing Sessions will be arranged early in 2023 to ensure councillors are kept informed and engaged on the process

8.25 Internal Adult Social Care Operations have been actively involved in all project workstreams along with practitioners and local health partners

8.26 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

8.27 There are no comments made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to this report and its recommendations.

8.28 It is proposed that commissioning and market shaping work to develop new outcome-based delivery models and approaches to residential and nursing care along with responses to support market sustainability for a diverse and sufficient supply of services are future topics for Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider.

8.29 Climate Impact

8.30 There are no climate/environmental implications.

8.31 Community Impact

8.32 There are no community or community safety implications.

8.33 Communications

8.34 Communications activities must effectively inform all those affected by the recommissioning and support and serve to increase further engagement with providers. To achieve this a robust communications and engagement plan is being developed.

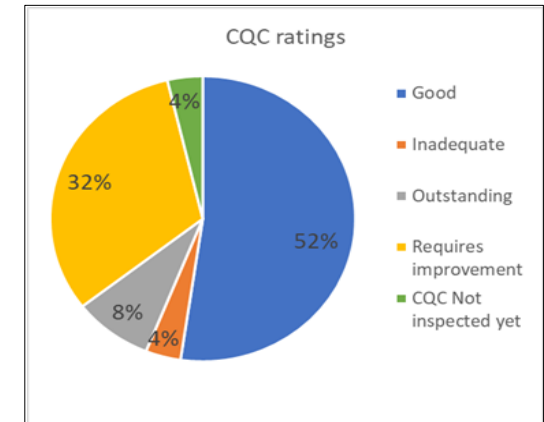
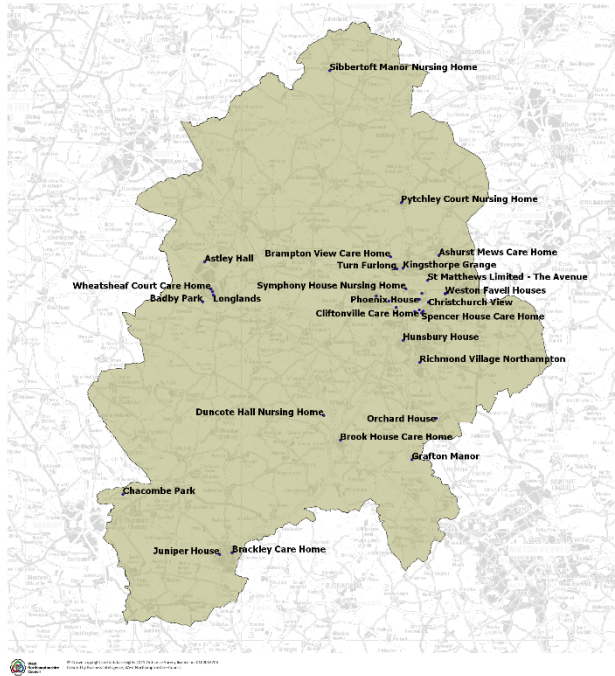
8.35 The communications and engagement plan aligns with key project milestones with a focus on targeted messaging and activities to identified audiences, including current and prospective providers, stakeholders, members of the public, service users and stakeholders.

9 Background Papers

9.15 There are no background papers to be included.

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APPENDIX A – Residential and nursing care home market profile



All age residential and nursing care services (excluding LD) by CQC rating, December 2022

Group size	Residential beds	Nursing beds
Independent	1201	548
Small groups (1 to 4)	347	934
Medium groups (5 to 24)	26	116
Grand Total	1574	1598

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

17th JANUARY 2023

**CABINET MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION AND GROWTH – COUNCILLOR DANIEL
LISTER**

Report Title	Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF)
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List of Appendices

West Northants Rural UKSPF Evidence Base

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To update Cabinet Members of West Northamptonshire Council's submission of an Addendum to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan to draw down the allocation of £1.3m from the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF).

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Rural Fund supports the aims of the Government's Levelling Up White Paper and Future Farming Programme. It funds capital projects for small businesses and community infrastructure. This will help to improve productivity and strengthen the rural economy and rural communities.
- 2.2 The Rural Fund is integrated into the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) which supports productivity and prosperity in places that need it most. For eligible local authorities, the Rural Fund is a rural top-up to UKSPF allocations. It supports activities that specifically address the particular challenges rural areas face. It is complementary to funding used to support rural areas under the UKSPF.
- 2.3 West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) has been allocated £1,367,953 for a two-year period up until March 2025.
- 2.4 WNC has engaged with councillors, organisations across the public, private and third sectors, internal services and MPs to identify the opportunities and challenges for the area, to inform the selection of interventions and the allocation of funding.
- 2.5 WNC has developed and submitted an investment plan addendum outlining how the REPF will be used from a pre-set list set by the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:
- a) Note an investment plan addendum to draw down the REPF was submitted to the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) on 30 November 2022.
 - b) Note the selected interventions and funding allocated within the submission.
 - c) Note that DEFRA will review the WNC REPF Addendum and year one funds are expected to be received in April, following sign off.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- a) To ensure that Cabinet and the wider public are aware of the steps taken in relation to available government funding.
- b) To ensure West Northamptonshire benefits from this grant funding to enhance the community, boost the economy and support residents and businesses.
- c) To maintain ongoing economic growth within the area, particular with the impending loss of EU funding and the need to utilise UKSPF to deliver positive economic development within the community.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 The Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF or the Rural Fund) succeeds EU funding from LEADER and the Growth Programme which were part of the Rural Development Programme for England.
- 5.2 The Rural Fund objectives sit within the UKSPF investment priorities for:
- Supporting Local Business
 - Community and Place.
- 5.3 They also relate to 2 of the Levelling Up White Paper Missions:
- Mission 1 – Living standards
 - Mission 9 – Pride in place.
- 5.4 The Rural Fund provides capital funding to:
- Support new and existing rural businesses to develop new products and facilities that will be of wider benefit to the local economy. This includes farm businesses looking to diversify income streams
 - Support new and improved community infrastructure, providing essential community services and assets for local people and businesses to benefit the local economy.
- 5.5 Projects must be in a rural area. For Rural Fund purposes, rural areas are:
- Towns, villages and hamlets with populations below 10,000 and the wider countryside
 - Market or 'hub towns' with populations of up to 30,000 that serve their surrounding rural areas as centres of employment and in providing services.
- 5.6 DEFRA will provide detailed mapping of eligible rural areas for each local authority, but analysis has shown that the former authority areas of South Northamptonshire and the majority of Daventry are eligible, but the former Northampton borough is not. WNC await confirmation from DEFRA to ensure all eligible areas are recognised for potential delivery of projects.
- 5.7 For eligible local authorities to draw down the funding allocated per area, each authority must develop an addendum to their UKSPF Investment Plan, including expenditure and outcomes of which interventions will be funded through the REPF.
- 5.8 In order to develop a comprehensive narrative around the needs, challenges and opportunities of West Northamptonshire, WNC facilitated a robust consultation far exceeding the requirements set out by Government. This was to ensure that local stakeholders and Councillors had the ability to input into how the REPF would be allocated for this area.
- 5.9 This consultation included the following:
- Early and ongoing engagement with WNC councillors
 - Ongoing attendance at the WNC Executive Leadership Team and Executive Programme Board meetings
 - An online survey sent to all WNC Councillors, all Parish Councils and local stakeholders
 - Two thematic workshops covering each investment priority – communities and place & supporting local business

- One-to-one meetings, including with the former Chair of the LEADER group and Chairman of the SEMLEP Rural Group.
- 5.10 91 delegates attended the two workshops and 32 respondents completed the online survey, providing views on the challenges, opportunities and needs of the area.
- 5.11 Having effectively engaged with Members, the community and stakeholders, as well as analysed the necessary data and strategies, WNC had the tools to establish which of the 11 government-provided interventions should be allocated funding. This was informed through the consultation and a review of the challenges and opportunities in the area, as well as identifying gaps in current and future funding, such as EU funding/LEADER.
- 5.12 The main recommendations from vast strategy/policy review, detailed data analysis and the consultation, were to address rural transport issues which have an impact on the community, the visitor economy, employers and more, as well as to fund grants to businesses. Based on this, the following interventions have been included in the WNC REPF Addendum:

Communities and place

- Funding (capital grants) for impactful volunteering and social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places. This intervention corresponds to the UKSPF intervention E9.

Supporting local business

- Funding (capital grants) for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas. Including capital funding for net zero infrastructure for rural businesses, and diversification of farm businesses outside of agriculture to encourage start up, expansion or scale up of these businesses where this involves converting farm buildings into other commercial or business uses.
- 5.13 The indicative financial breakdown between the two investment priorities, for which each only has one intervention, are as follows:
- Communities and place: 40 per cent = £547,181
 - Supporting local business: 60 per cent = £820,772
- 5.14 In terms of the financial breakdown per annum, DEFRA has advised that pending approval of their REPF addendum to UKSPF Investment Plans, it expects eligible authorities to receive 25% of their allocation in Year 1 and 75% in Year 2.
- 5.15 For the UKSPF, The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) advised that it is important to note that it was looking for high level proposals and outcomes based on local context. The investment plan was not an exhaustive document containing detailed project or intervention planning. The REPF Addendum mirrors this, only allowing for a strategic overview to be included in the submission.
- 5.16 DLUHC has confirmed that it recognises that some priorities may change following investment plan sign-off and will work with the lead local authority should any changes need to be made to the UKSPF investment plan.

5.17 In considering their REPF priorities, local authorities may decide to make changes to their UKSPF expenditure profile and deliverables in future years. This and any subsequent changes to the REPF addendum can be dealt with through the UKSPF change process.

5.18 DEFRA anticipates that approval of Rural Fund Addendums will be provided in January 2023.

6. Issues and Choices

6.1 To note the requirement to develop and submit an addendum to the UKSPF investment plan for the REPF to DEFRA has been completed. This is to develop pride in place and deliver specific interventions within West Northamptonshire, which have been identified based on detailed analysis and engagement with stakeholders within the community.

6.2 To note that not developing and submitting an addendum for the REPF by the deadline would have resulted in a loss of major potential investment into the area, which would be used to support the local community and economy.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

- The REPF is 100 per cent grant funding, meaning there is no financial risk to West Northamptonshire Council's budgets.
- The REPF annual allocations will be monitored along with UKSPF allocations in line with the Expenditure Profile submitted with the UKSPF Investment Plan, though it is possible to reallocate funds from year to year with sufficient justification for doing so.
- Any REPF not delivered internally by WNC will be awarded following a funding competition which will be developed ahead of any funds being paid out. This will align with the existing WNC Community Grants.
- There is a risk that any unspent funds will be returned to DEFRA, however this will be monitored on a regular basis with DEFRA's support to ensure the funds are spent in line with the expected outputs for each intervention receiving funding.
- 4% of the UKSPF can be used for management of the UKSPF and REPF, which will include a Funding Manager to oversee the management and delivery of the fund, mitigating any risks and ensuring both funds achieve the outputs/outcomes of WNC's allocations.

7.2 Legal

- To access REPF funding, the Council as a lead authority for the funding was required to complete an Investment Plan Addendum. The Plan must be agreed by both the Council and by the Government to unlock the allocation.
- The Council will receive the allocation to manage, including assessing and approving applications, processing payments and day-to-day monitoring and will have overall accountability for the funding and how the Fund operates.
- The Fund can be used flexibly to support interventions via:
 - Grant to public or private organisations, following a project competition

- Commissioning third party organisations
- In-house provision
- However, Government has indicated that competitions for projects is the default approach for selecting recipients of public grants.
- The Council has the necessary legal powers under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to deliver the Fund's levelling up objectives. The Council will be required to ensure that the proposed projects are delivered in a legally compliant way in accordance with all relevant legislation in relation to the activities undertaken.
- All spend associated with the Fund must be assessed by the Council in advance to ensure that proposed investment is compliant with the Council's Constitution, including the Public Contracts grant rules, (mechanisms to recover funding where beneficiaries do not comply with fund parameters, legal or any other requirements) processes and procedures as and where relevant.
- Interventions will be required to be delivered within the subsidy control regime. Government has indicated that further guidance on subsidy control and REPF will be issued to assist lead local authorities in carrying out their delegated delivery role.
- The Council is required to meet its statutory public sector equality duty in carrying out their duties related to the REPF.
- In submitting the Investment Plan Addendum, Government required assurance that legal obligations and all minimum standards set by the government will be adhered to.

7.3 Risk

- Risk: Any unspent REPF funds would have to be returned to DEFRA after March 2025.
- Contingency Measure: WNC would develop a Grant Funding Agreement with any external organisation delivering WNC UKSPF and monitor this regularly to ensure funding was being delivered according to the necessary timescales, with the desired outputs/outcomes.
- Risk: The delay of UKSPF Year 1 payment will increase outputs and the delivery required between 2023-25 adding additional resource to manage both UKSPF and REPF accordingly.
- Contingency Measure: A dedicated Funding Manager will monitor spend and outputs/outcomes accordingly to ensure delivery is on schedule and funds will not need to be returned, working with DLUHC and DEFRA to ensure targets are realistic and achievable within the deadlines.

7.4 Consultation

- In order to successfully assess impact, deliverability and strategic fit when analysing the interventions to address using the REPF, WNC has procured a consultant to support the development of the investment plan addendum. Consultation included with stakeholders, partners and internal/external services. This also includes local MPs, WNC councillors, town councils, and both public and private sector organisations, including the third sector.

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

- N/A

7.6 Climate Impact

- Where proposals for projects which align with the interventions set out in the REPF addendum have a climate impact, the council will ensure the provider will undertake the relevant environmental impact assessments.

7.7 Community Impact

- This funding will result in a positive impact on the whole West Northamptonshire community, including the quality of the place, resulting in economic growth and delivery of priorities set out within WNC's vision.

7.8 Communications

- Communications will be developed to inform and engage stakeholders to raise wider awareness of the opportunities the REPF creates for partners, employers and residents once the investment plan addendum has been approved by Government.

8. Background Papers

8.1 8 November 2022 - Cabinet Report – Rural England Prosperity Fund

8.2 Rural England Prosperity Fund: prospectus -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rural-england-prosperity-fund-prospectus/rural-england-prosperity-fund-prospectus>

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Rural England Prosperity Fund

West Northamptonshire



Priority Focus

The Rural Fund sits within the UKSPF priorities of:

SPF Priority	Capital Funding Focus
Community and Place	Support new and improved community infrastructure, providing essential community services and assets for local people and businesses to benefit the local economy
Supporting Local Business	Support new and existing rural businesses to develop new products and facilities that will be of wider benefit to the local economy

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REPF Project Examples

Introduction

This report sets out evidence to inform the development of West Northamptonshire’s response to the Rural England Prosperity Fund (referred to as the ‘Rural Fund’).

West Northamptonshire has been allocated £1,367,953 under the Rural Fund.

This evidence base provides information on the rural economy and draws on a review of existing activity, local data and policies for the area.

The evidence base pinpoints the key needs of the rural economy and identifies opportunities to respond to the Rural Fund objectives. This will support the strategic decision making process to inform the allocation of funding and development of West Northamptonshire’s Rural England Prosperity Fund Investment Plan addendum.

This report includes:

- An introduction to the Rural UK Shared Prosperity Fund and how it will work alongside the UKSPF programme
- Evidence of opportunities and challenges across the Community and Place and Supporting Local Business priority themes
- Emerging implications and approach to West Northamptonshire’s Rural England Prosperity Fund Investment Plan addendum.

The Rural Fund

The Rural Fund is a rural top-up to UKSPF allocations aimed at supporting activities that specifically address the particular challenges that rural areas face such as lower productivity rates, poorer connectivity and poorer access to key services.

The fund will seek to overcome challenges faced in rural areas aimed at improving productivity and strengthening the rural economy and rural communities.

The Rural Fund objectives sit within the UKSPF investment priorities for:

- Supporting Local Business
- Community and Place

The Rural Fund provides capital funding to:

- Support new and existing rural businesses to develop new products and facilities that will be of wider benefit to the local economy
- Support new and improved community infrastructure, providing essential community services and assets for local people and businesses to benefit the local economy

Rural Urban Classifications

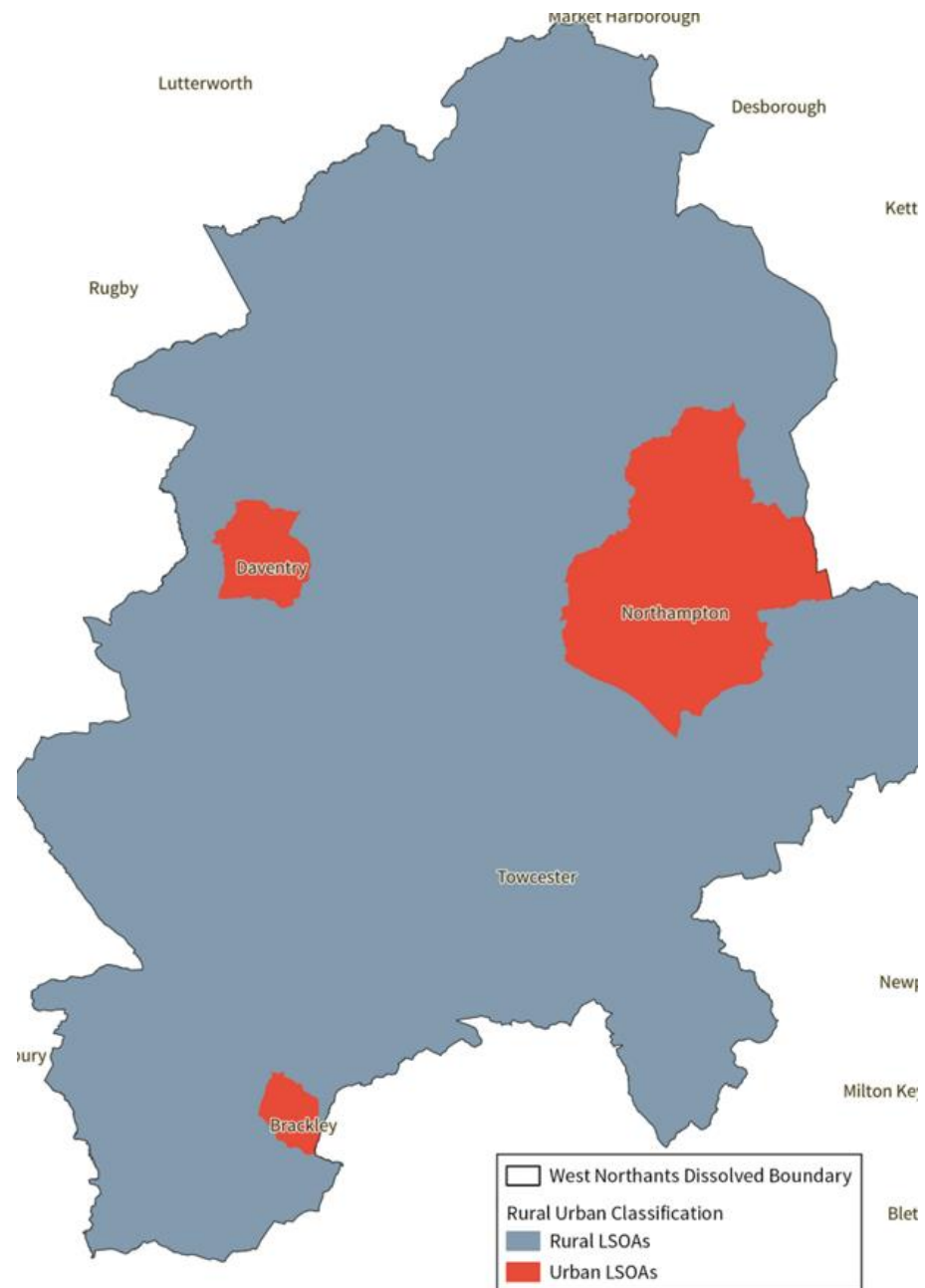
Rural areas are defined using the Census 2011 definition of rural and urban areas. This classifies rural areas as having a population of under 10,000.

To be eligible for funding projects must be in a rural area. This includes:

- Towns, villages and hamlets with populations below 10,000 and the wider countryside
- Market or ‘hub towns’ with populations of up to 30,000 that serve their surrounding rural areas as centres of employment and in providing services.

The map shows the LSOA areas which have been classified by ONS as rural areas and those which have been classified as urban areas

For the REPF the definition of rural for funding purposes is consistent with the LEADER and Local Growth Programmes in the Rural Development Programme for England.



Rural Urban Classifications

According to the Rural-Urban classification, **Daventry** is comprised of urban and rural LSOAs. Rural areas include the villages of Long Buckby Wharf, Norton, Newnham, Braunston and Staverton. These all contain populations of less than 10,000 people. Daventry is classified as a market town and has a population lower than 30,000 and therefore most of Daventry would be eligible for REPF funding.

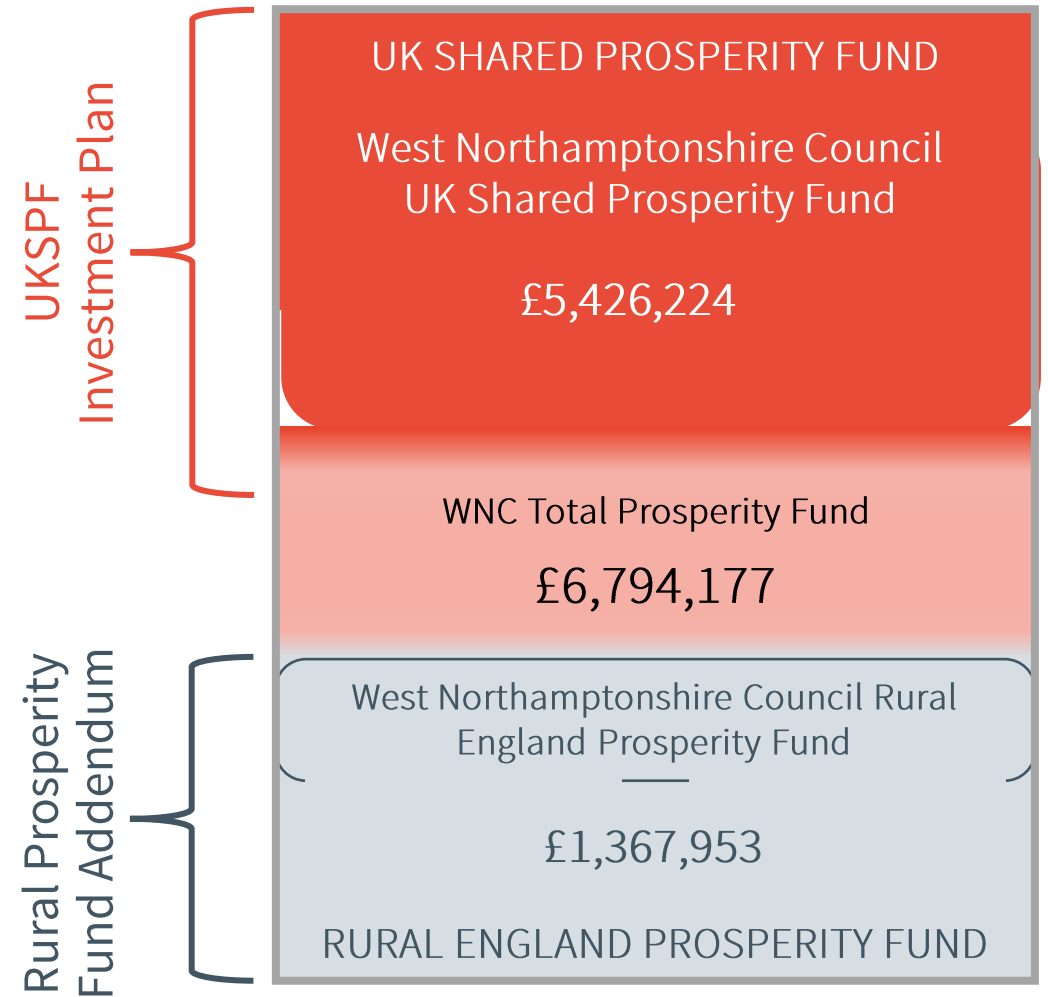
The market town **of Brackley** is also identified as an urban area, but again as it has a population under 30,000 and so it would be eligible for REPF funding

Northampton town is classified as a “major town” by ONS. It has a population which exceeds 30,000 and so this area would **not be eligible for funding**.

DEFRA is currently working on a boundary map to confirm areas which will be eligible for funding. This will not include Northampton borough and some of the area which borders it but the exact boundary will be confirmed.

Funding Breakdown

- Rural Fund Allocation = **£1,367,953**
- Funding period - April 2023 to March 2025
- 100% capital funding
- Not yet clear if Local Authorities can decide the spending profile over two years



Aligning with UKSPF with the Levelling Up Agenda

The Rural Fund aligns with the UKSPF priorities of Community and Place and Supporting Local Businesses.

The Rural Fund also relates specifically to the Levelling Up White Paper Missions:

- Mission 1 – Living Standards
- Mission 9 – Pride in Place

Building Pride in Place and Increasing Life Chances	
Community & Place	Supporting Local Business
Mission 9. By 2030, pride in place, such as people’s satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.	
Mission 7. By 2030, the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will rise by five years	Mission 1. By 2030, pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK, with each containing a globally competitive city, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.
Mission 8. By 2030, well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.	
Mission 11. By 2030, homicide, serious violence, and neighbourhood crime will have fallen, focused on the worst-affected areas.	Mission 2. By 2030, domestic public investment in Research & Development outside the Greater South East will increase by at least 40% and at least one third over the Spending Review period, with that additional government funding seeking to leverage at least twice as much private sector investment over the long term to stimulate innovation and productivity growth.

Key Policies



Local Policy Context

Local Policy	Summary of Policy	Aligned to Rural England Prosperity Fund interventions
<p>West Northamptonshire Corporate Plan 2021-2025</p>	<p>Aspires to make West Northants a great place to live, work, visit and thrive. Aims to create a sustainable recovery, building back better and harnessing the strengths of West Northants’ people, businesses and places to create an inclusive and productive area.</p> <p>There are six priorities underpinning the strategy: green and clean, improved life chances, connected communities, thriving towns and villages, economic development, and robust resource management.</p>	<p>This policy aligns to several interventions including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • capital funding for net zero infrastructure • funding the development and promotion of a visitor economy • investing in digital infrastructure in local community facilities • funding for local arts, culture and heritage activities • funding impactful volunteering and social action projects.
<p>West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan – Spatial Options Consultation - Draft for Cabinet (2021)</p>	<p>The draft spatial vision in consultation is ‘in 2050 West Northamptonshire will have played a leading role in the success of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. We have a thriving economy with increased productivity. There has been significant growth in innovation and high value sectors, but we also have a balanced economy that provides jobs for all our residents’.</p> <p>There are 16 draft spatial objectives which will directly support the 6 Corporate Plan priorities: climate change, green infrastructure and natural capital, landscape, heritage, education and skills, health and wellbeing, infrastructure and development, connections, protecting and balancing urban communities, supporting town centres, housing, supporting rural communities, economic advantage, specialist business development, rural diversification and employment, the visitor economy.</p>	<p>The draft spatial vision aligns closely to the interventions proposed by rural UKSPF including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • capital investment for net zero infrastructure • diversification of farm businesses outside of agriculture • growing the local social economy and supporting innovation including R&D sites, • developing and promoting the visitor economy • creating and improving local rural green spaces • funding improvements to existing cultural, historical and heritage institutions • active travel enhancements • funding volunteering and social action projects.

Local Policy Context

Local Policy	Summary of Policy	Aligned to Rural England Prosperity Fund interventions
<p>A Proposed Plan to Support Northamptonshire’s Rural Land Based Enterprises</p>	<p>Identifies the challenges facing rural businesses including threat to infrastructure from increased flooding, food insecurity amongst the agricultural sector, poor public transport, lack of community infrastructure and planning restrictions around farm diversification and modernisation. There is need for rural businesses to reduce carbon emissions, increase digitisation and make sure communities are self-sustaining and wealth-generating in a globalised world.</p> <p>Priority activities identified include adapting to climate change via land management mitigation techniques and land developed to energy crops; establishing specialist, affordable rural land based business advice and skills training; increased sustainable food production; increased number of tourism businesses and staycations infrastructure; pursuing innovation through digital connectivity, renewable energy and a circular economy</p>	<p>This policy is aligned with interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diversification of farm businesses outside agriculture • investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups • growing the local social economy and supporting innovation including R&D sites. • funding small scale investment in micro and small enterprises for net zero infrastructure • providing digital infrastructure • rural circular economy projects • funding the development and promotion of a visitor economy

Local Policy Context

Local Policy	Summary of Policy	Aligned to Rural England Prosperity Fund interventions
West Northamptonshire Sustainability Strategy	<p>Outlines five strategic milestones: developing a plan around mapping initiatives to sustainable development goals; partnership and collaboration between individuals, businesses and institutions; sustainability pledges; developing indicators for success; reporting and stakeholder engagement.</p>	<p>Supported interventions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • funding small scale investment in micro and small enterprises for net zero infrastructure • funding for growing the local social economy and supporting innovation.
West Northamptonshire Anti-Poverty Strategy 2022-2025	<p>Aspires for West Northamptonshire to be fairer and more inclusive, where everyone is able to live their best life, prosperous and fulfilling, free from poverty and inequality. It focuses on three key priorities: supporting people who are struggling in poverty now, preventing people from falling into poverty in the first place, continuing to use strategic influence to get a better deal for communities in West Northants.</p>	<p>This goal aligns closely to the interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proposing funding for impactful volunteering or social action projects which development social and human capital.
Vision for Northamptonshire Rural Enterprise (2021)	<p>The vision identifies the potential for the rural economy to sustainably grow, and add value to the wider local, regional and national economy. Key rural sectors that act as the focus for the Vision include farming, forestry, food and tourism.</p> <p>Aspired strategic goals of the Vision are defined as the growth of business within the rural economy, strengthening the rural communities, as well as the safeguarding, and protection, of native assets to promote a sustainable, healthy, natural and green economy. To achieve these goals, and to create a vibrant future, five priority areas that need to be tackled are highlighted as: the climate crisis, business support and skills, local food systems, rural tourism and innovation.</p>	<p>This policy is aligned with interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diversification of farm businesses outside agriculture • developing and promoting the visitor economy • investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups • growing the local social economy and supporting innovation including R&D sites.

Local Policy Context

Local Policy	Summary of Policy	Aligned to Rural England Prosperity Fund interventions
<p>A proposed plan to support Northamptonshire’s Rural Land-Based Enterprise (2021)</p>	<p>Designed to ensure opportunities for future rural development activities are not missed in the county, by outlining targeted support for businesses which produce food, and manage Northamptonshire’s land-based environment. This strategy is presented over three separate documents:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A Proposed plan to support Northamptonshire’s rural land-based enterprises. 2) Vision for Northamptonshire’s Rural Enterprises 3) Northamptonshire's Rural Development Strategy Evidence Base Document 	<p>This policy is align to interventions including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • capital investment in micro and small enterprises for net zero infrastructure and diversification of farm businesses outside of agriculture • growing the local social economy and supporting innovation.
<p>Rural Northamptonshire- A Plan (September 2016)</p>	<p>Developed in partnership with key representatives of sectors important to the rural economy, the forward thinking Rural Plan addresses four key themes. These include: improved and efficient infrastructure and housing, economic growth through dynamic and innovative rural business, promoting and supporting the social environment including skills and jobs, and finally, protecting the natural environment and enhancing the support of sustainable development.</p> <p>From these themes, a number of priorities have been identified for rural areas, whereby intervention and support would aid further sustainable growth.</p>	<p>This policy aligns with interventions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • growing the local social economy and supporting innovation including community businesses and R&D sites, • providing digital infrastructure • rural circular economy projects • capital finding for net zero and diversification of farm businesses outside of agriculture.

LEADER

The LEADER scheme was part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE), funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

Money from the programme was given to Local Action Groups (LAGs) so that they can award grants locally to businesses and organisations that apply for it. The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) managed the LEADER scheme nationally on behalf of Defra and made payments to successful applicants.

LEADER funded farmers, growers, foresters, other local rural businesses and rural community organisations to help:

- create jobs;
- develop and grow rural businesses; and
- support the rural economy.

Grants were typically limited to a maximum of 40% of the project's total eligible costs. However, some types of projects could get higher rates.

The minimum grant that could be applied for is £5,000. The maximum grant amount was typically up to £100,000.

To be successful, applications had to contribute to one or more of Defra's 6 priorities for LEADER, which were to:

- increase farm productivity;
 - support micro and small businesses and farm diversification;
 - boost rural tourism;
 - provide rural services;
 - provide cultural and heritage activities; and
 - increase forestry productivity
- The grant amount depended on:
- the type of project;
 - the size of the business; and
 - the costs involved

LEADER Programme Evaluation

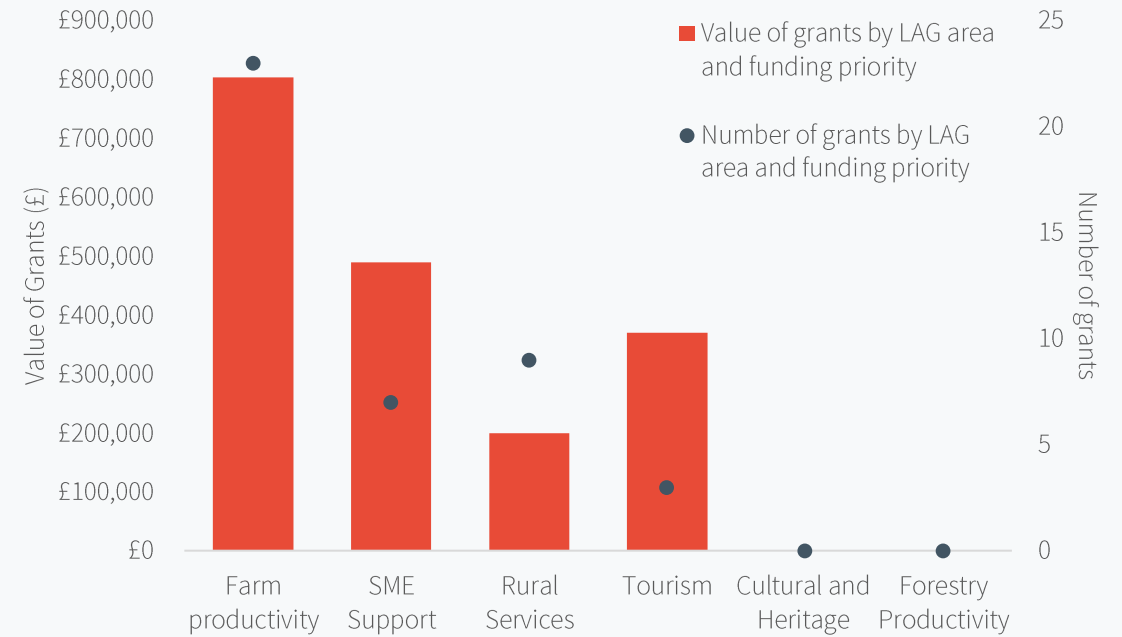
42 grants were given in the North and West Northamptonshire area in total. With a total of £1,864,135 given in grant funding.

The majority of this was given to farm productivity projects, where £804,332 was administered to 23 projects.

Tourism projects were given a relatively larger amount per project with £370,134 administered to 3 projects.

Cultural and Heritage, and Forestry productivity projects were not provided with any grant funding.

Value and Number of grants by funding priority



Performance against programme aims by LAG area

Priority	Northants
Number of projects	42
Number of businesses benefitting in total (this includes those directly receiving a grant, those benefitting from equipment supported via a grant via a grant via contracting services and those benefitting as a supplier to businesses receiving a grant)	193
Total number of FTE jobs (achieved and expected to be created in the future)	84

Source: LEADER Programme Evaluation 2021, Ngage Solutions

Community & place



Demographics

In 2020, there were 407,000 people living in West Northamptonshire, of these 176,400 (43%) live in the rural area. This total population has increased by 4% since 2015 and **the rural population has increased by 7%**. The trend reflects the growth seen across each of the following age groups:

- **0-15** (+7% at District Level, 6% at rural level)
- **16-64** (+6% at District Level, 5% at rural level)
- **65+** (+12% at District Level, 12% at rural level)

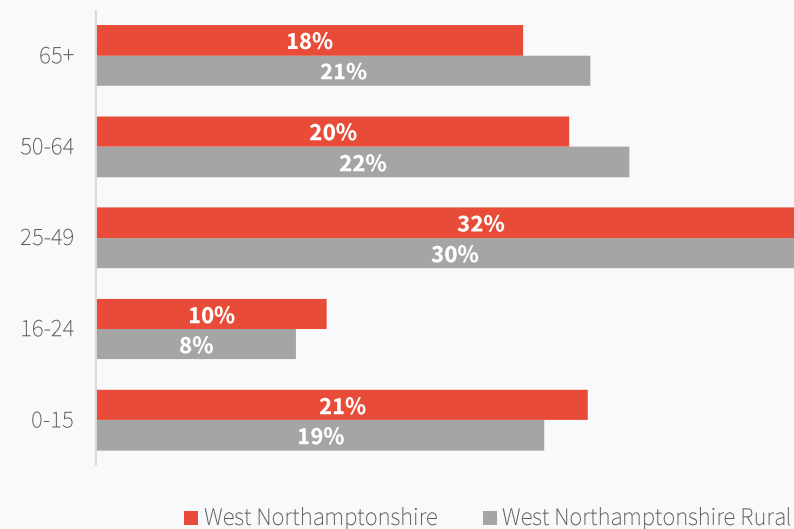
East Northants, South Northants and Daventry, the most rural districts in the county, made up 37% of the districts total population which was significantly higher than the national average. Rural areas only made up a total of 17% of the national population.

To 2043, West Northamptonshire is expected to experience faster population growth (11%) than England (9%). Broken down by age group, this reveals:

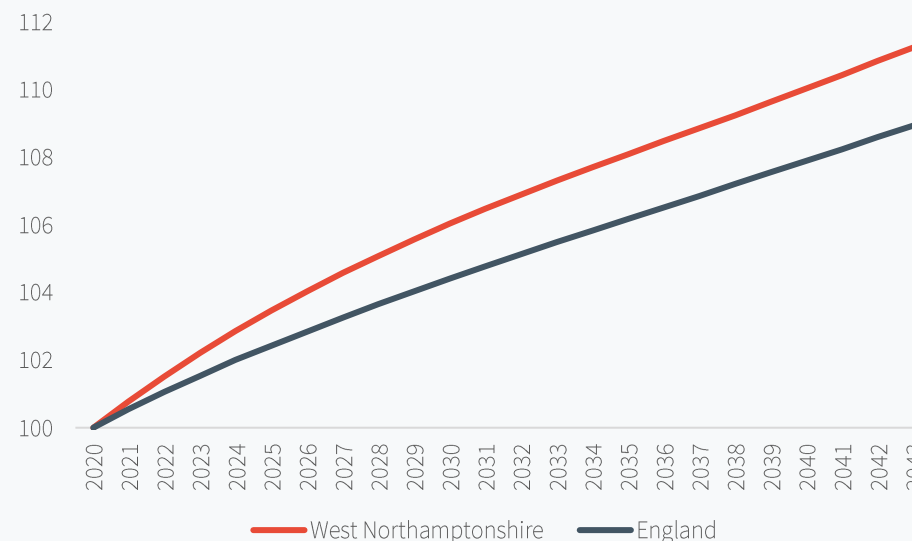
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- **0-15** will stagnate at 0% (versus -2% nationally)
- **16-64** will increase by 5% (versus 3% nationally)
- **65+** will increase by 45% (versus 40% nationally)

Demographic split



Population change (2020-2043)



7%
pop. Growth
2015-2020

107k
Working age pop.
2020

61%
Working age pop.
2020

10%
BAME compared to 15% nationally

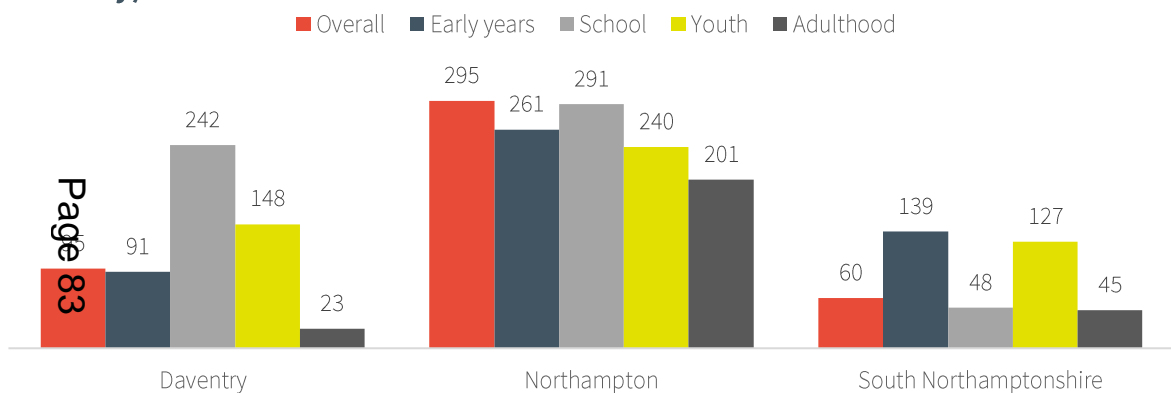
Source: Northamptonshire’s Rural Development Strategy Evidence Base, 2021; ONS Population Estimates, 2020; ONS Population Projections, 2020-2040; Annual Population Survey, 2020

Deprivation and Mobility

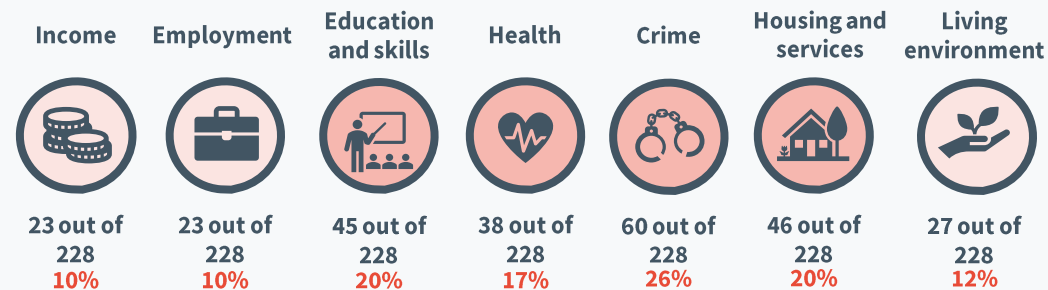
29% of LSOAs in West Northamptonshire are in the top 40% most deprived nationally, with pockets of deprivation seen around Daventry and Northampton. Overall deprivation is concentrated in Northamptonshire and parts of Daventry. Looking at individual domains of deprivation, barriers to housing and services is a significant driver of deprivation in West Northamptonshire with 52% of LSOAs among the 40% most deprived nationally.

Northampton has low overall social mobility, ranking at 295 out of 324 local authorities. On the other hand, Daventry and South Northamptonshire have above average social mobility overall, ranking at 95 and 60 out of 324 local authorities respectively. However, in Daventry, social mobility is relatively poor for those at the school life stage (242 out of 324 local authorities).

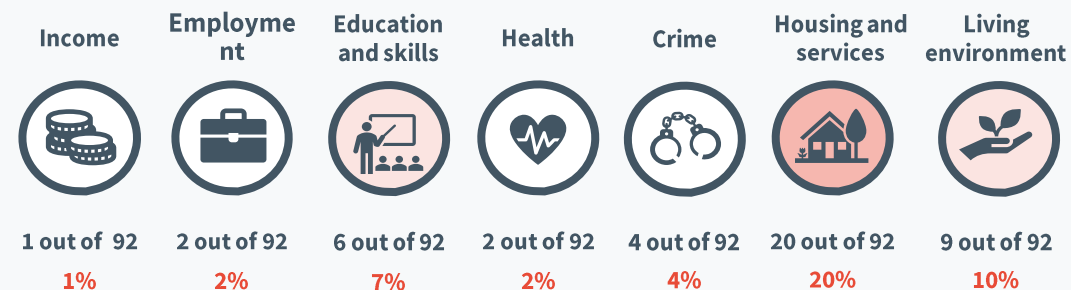
Social mobility ranking in West Northamptonshire (higher value indicates lower social mobility)



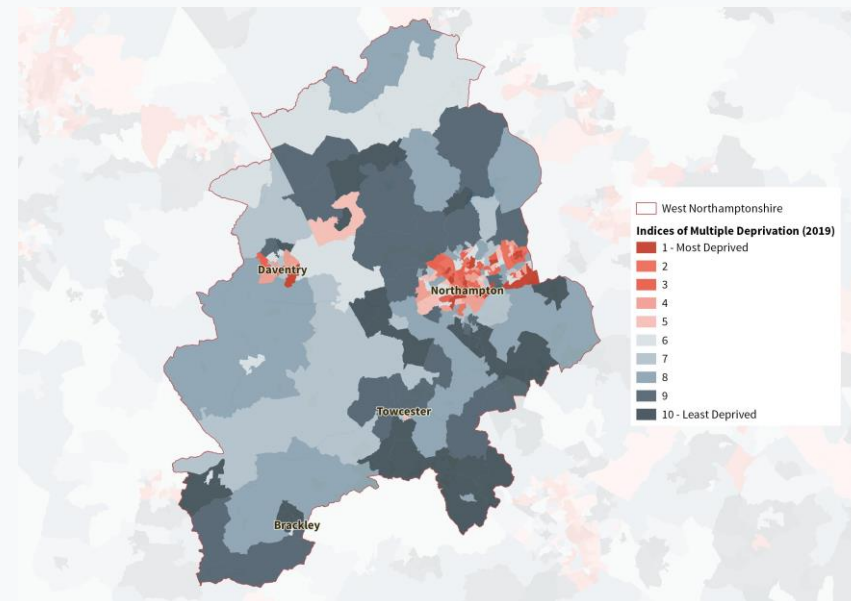
LSOAs in the top 20% most deprived nationally in West Northamptonshire (2019)



LSOAs in the top 20% most deprived nationally in Rural West Northamptonshire (2019)



Overall deprivation in West Northamptonshire, 2019





Cost of Living Crisis

The Centre for progressive policy has created the Cost of Living Crisis Vulnerability Index to gain a greater understanding of which places will be worst hit without further government support.

Indicators include: food insecurity, fuel poverty, child poverty, universal credit claimant count, economic inactivity (working age population), low pay, median earnings and housing affordability ratio.

This is highly relevant given that rising energy, food, and housing costs have emerged as some of the most significant drivers of general inflation at this point of the crisis.

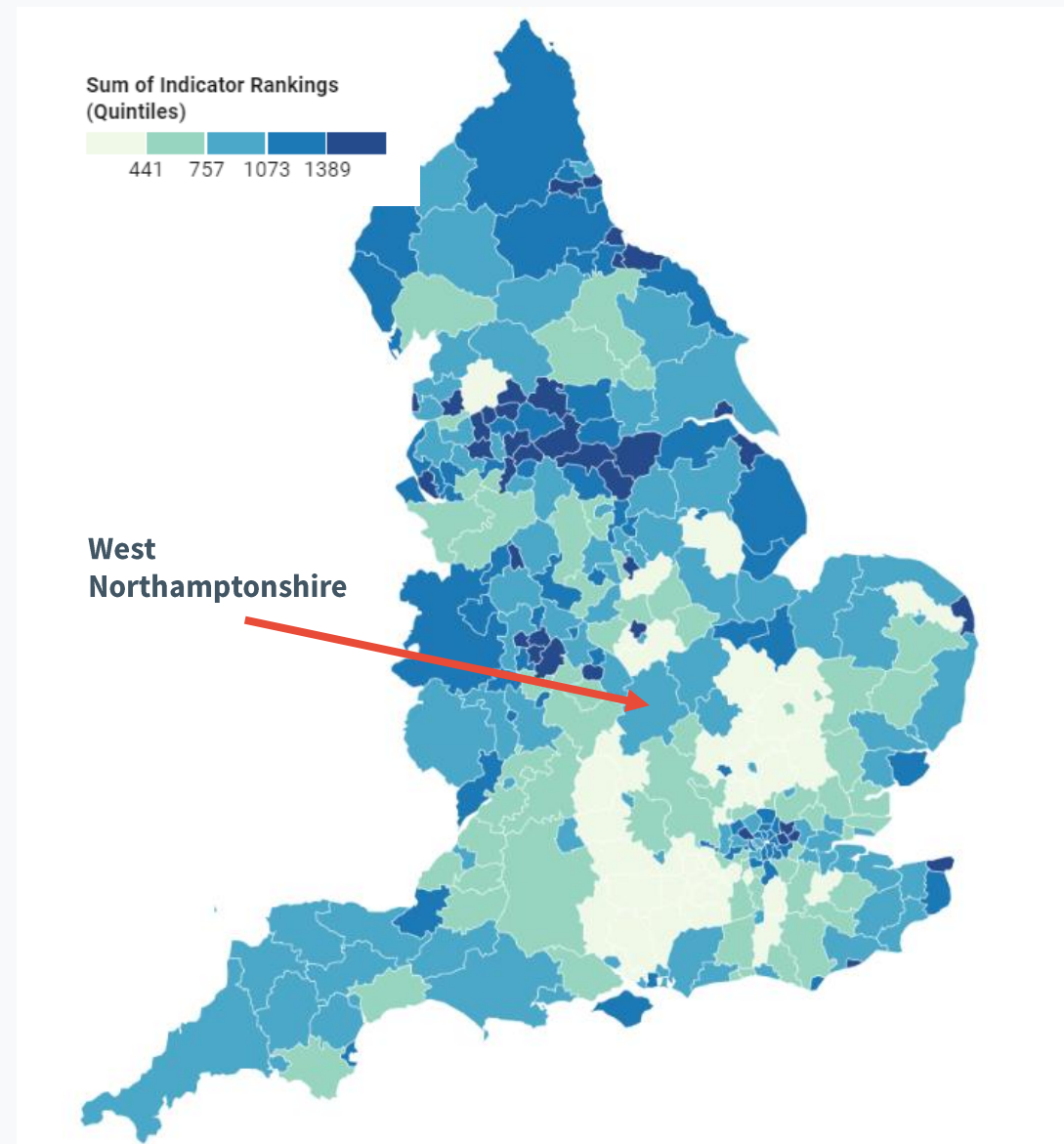
The index takes into account:

- a place’s relative risk of more people being pulled into poverty; and
- the relative risk of those who were already hard up being pushed into destitution.

West Northamptonshire has a score of 818 which puts it in the middle of the rankings compared to the UK (161st position out of

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307)

In rural West Northamptonshire there are higher levels of existing levels of deprivation relative to work-based vulnerability.



Source: Centre for Progressive Policy

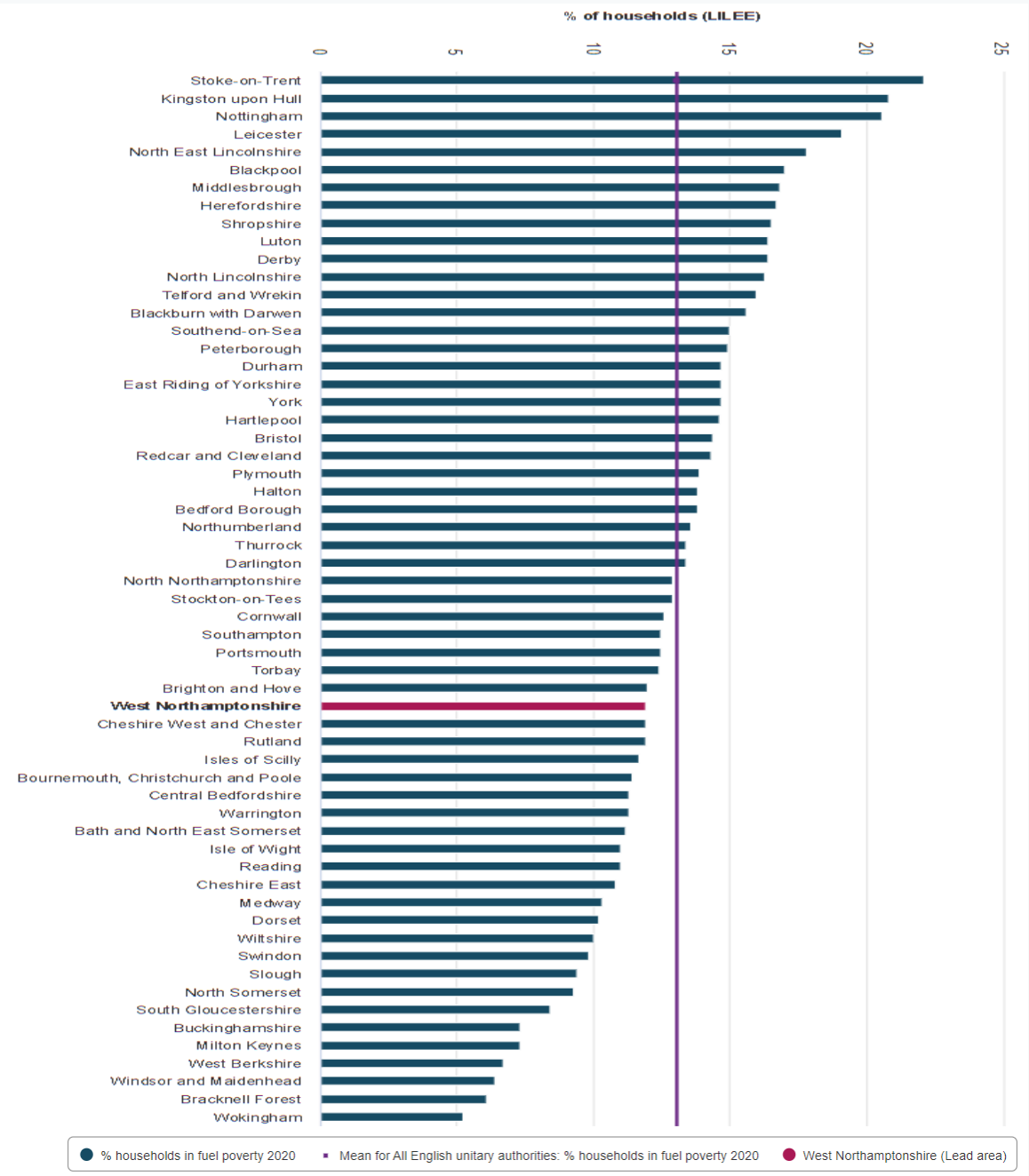
Fuel Poverty

Since 2021 (2019 data) the Low Income Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE) indicator considers a household to be fuel poor if: (i) it is living in a property with an energy efficiency rating of band D, E, F or G as determined by the most up-to-date Fuel Poverty Energy Efficiency Rating (FPEER) methodology; and (ii) its disposable income (income after housing costs (AHC) and energy needs) would be below the poverty line.

The Government is interested in the amount of energy people need to consume to have a warm, well-lit home, with hot water for everyday use, and the running of appliances. Therefore, fuel poverty is measured based on required energy bills rather than actual spending. This ensures that those households who have low energy bills simply because they actively limit their use of energy at home,

Fuel poverty statistics are based on data from the English Housing Survey (EHS).

In 2020, 11.9% of households in West Northamptonshire were experiencing fuel poverty. This is at a similar level to the national average of 12%.



Health and Wellbeing

West Northamptonshire residents' life expectancy is broadly in line with the national average:

- Male (80 versus 79 nationally)
- Female (83 versus 83 nationally)

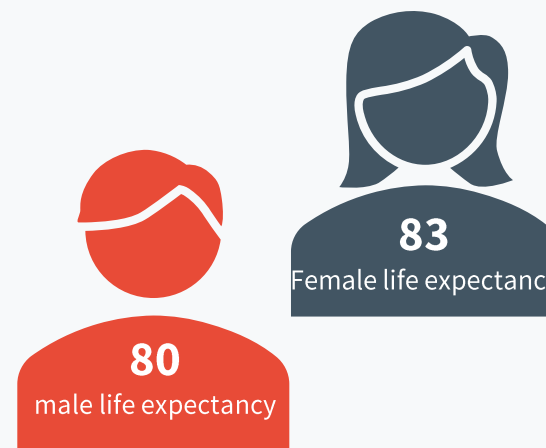
The Northamptonshire CCG is in line with the national average for the prevalence of heart disease, stroke and diabetes.

Each wellbeing measure is graded on a ten-point scale, so an improvement of 1 point would be equivalent to a 10% improvement. Daventry, Northampton and South Northamptonshire performed better than the national average across wellbeing measures in 2020.

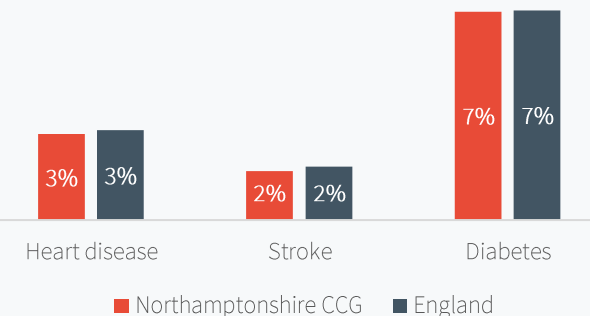
Over the last five years, Daventry saw improvements in happiness and life satisfaction levels, despite them falling nationally, while anxiety increased at a slower pace.

The Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (IDAOP) for 2019, shows that 10.8% of older people living in West Northamptonshire were living in poverty, this is lower than the national average of 14.2%

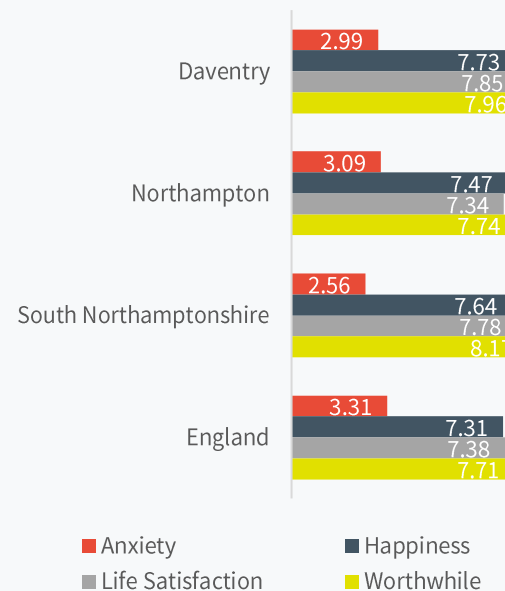
2011 data for the proportion of people aged 65 and over who are living alone in West Northamptonshire is 29.4% which is lower than the national average of 31.5%



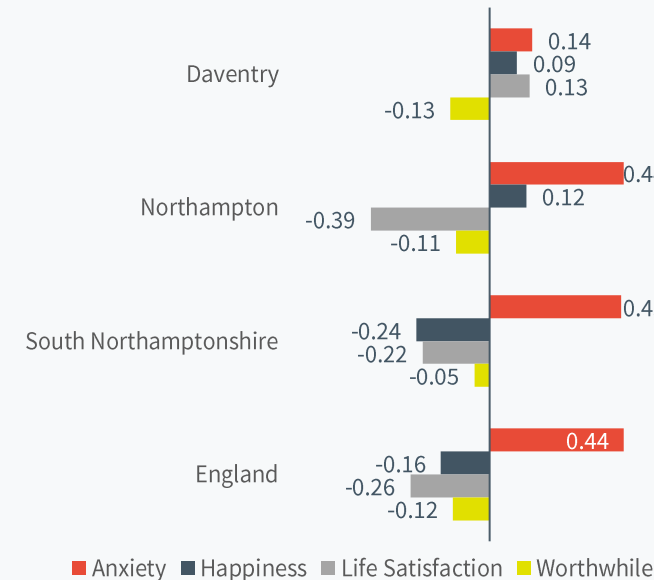
Prevalence of Disease, 2020/21



Levels of Wellbeing, 2020



Changes in Levels of Wellbeing, 2015-2020



Source: Life Expectancy Estimates, ONS, 2019/20; NHS Digital, 2020/21; ONS Personal Well-being Estimates, 2020

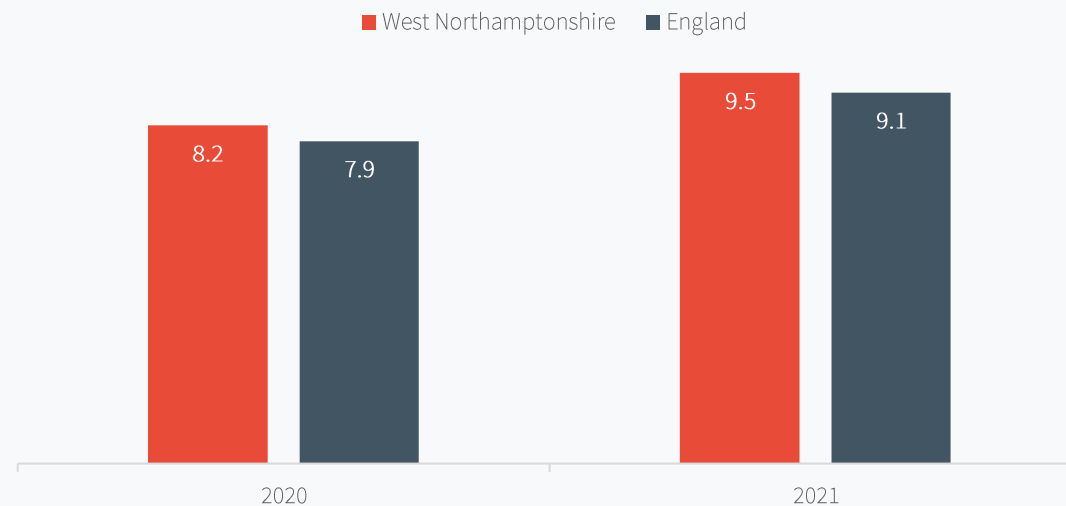
Housing

The average house price in West Northamptonshire in 2021 was £275k, which is 3.5% lower than the national average. Relative to earnings, housing affordability tracks above the national average, with a house price ratio (income relative to local house price) of 9.5 (compared to 10 nationally).

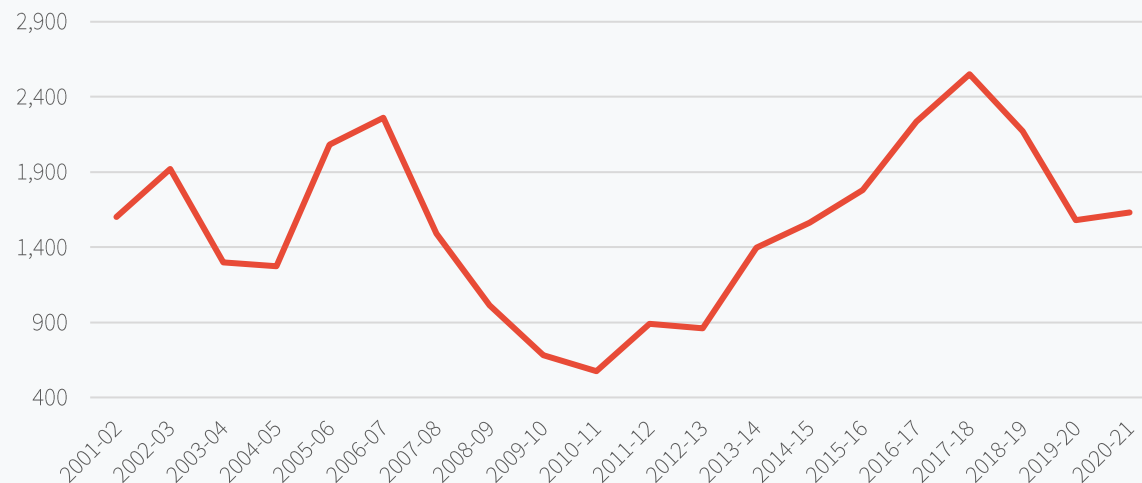
There has been a decline in the net additional housing stock over the past few years, peaking in 2017/18 with an additional 2,552 new houses compared to 1,632 in 2020/21.



Housing Affordability Ratio



Net Additional Housing Stock, West Northamptonshire



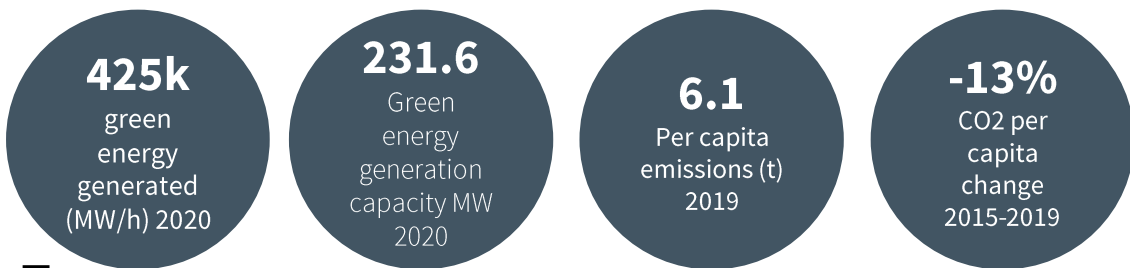
Source: DLUHC, Annual Net Additional Dwellings, 2021; ONS, Median House Price, 2022; Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2020; Ofcom Connected Nations, 2022

Sustainability

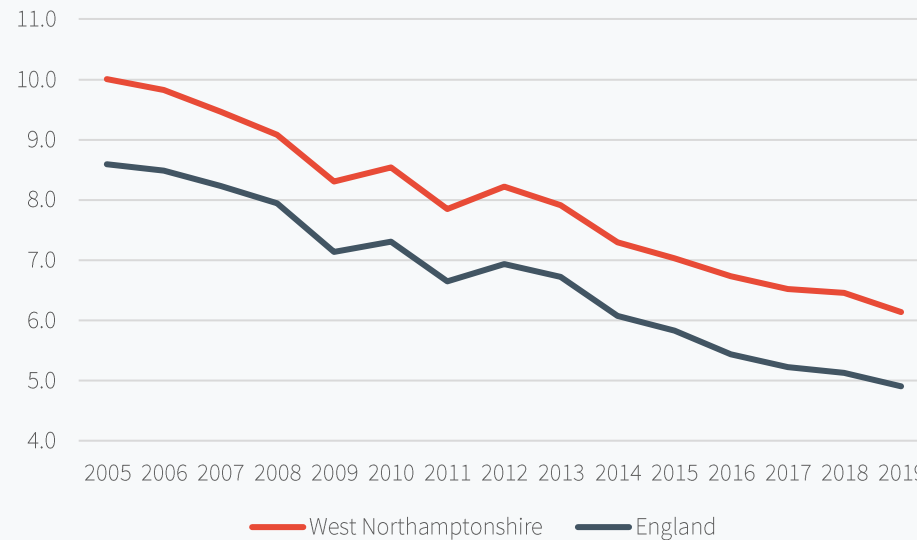
West Northamptonshire currently produces more CO2 emissions per capita (6.1) than the national average (4.9).

It has experienced a slow decline in CO2 emissions per capita over the past 5 years (-13% versus -16% nationally).

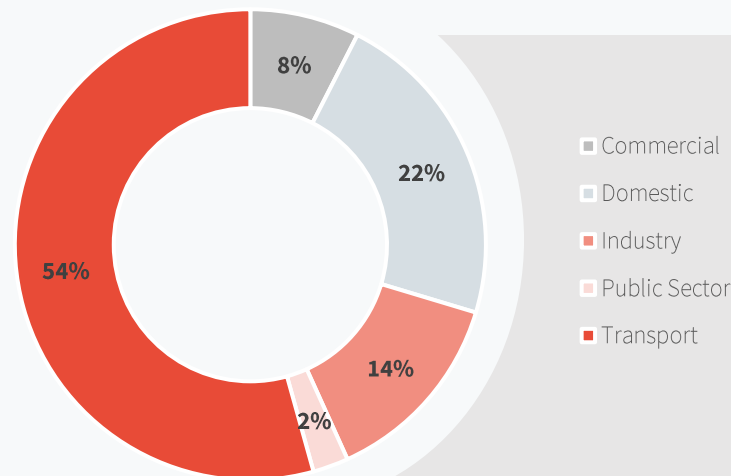
Domestic emissions make up 22% of total emissions and 54% is due to transport.



CO2 per capita



CO2 emissions (t) by source in West Northamptonshire



Source: BEIS, Local and Regional CO2 emissions

Climate Action

c1,500 typical homes could be powered each year by the renewable energy produced in West Northamptonshire.

419.6 GWh of renewable energy is currently generated in West Northamptonshire each year. This is below the target set by the government advisors – the Climate Change committee and also lower than the Friends of the Earth’s target for West Northamptonshire.

A 2021 poll by YouGov showed that 62% of 764 people surveyed in West Northamptonshire wouldn’t mind a wind turbine in their area. Onshore wind produces the cheapest electricity, so wind farms will lead to reduced energy bills, greatest energy security, and cut carbon emissions.

Heat pumps are green alternatives to the climate-wrecking oil and gas traditionally used to heat our homes.

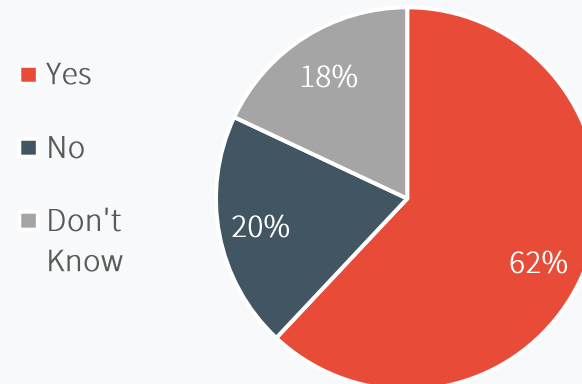
There are currently 1,748 heat pumps in West Northamptonshire. To meet the 2030 target of the Climate Change Committee, 3,434 heat pumps should be installed per year in West Northamptonshire. Friends of the Earth believes West Northamptonshire could install 6,403 heat pumps per year to help keep homes warm and lower emissions.

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Renewable Energy Generation



Do people in West Northamptonshire want a wind turbine in the area?



Heat pumps in West /Northamptonshire



Digital Infrastructure

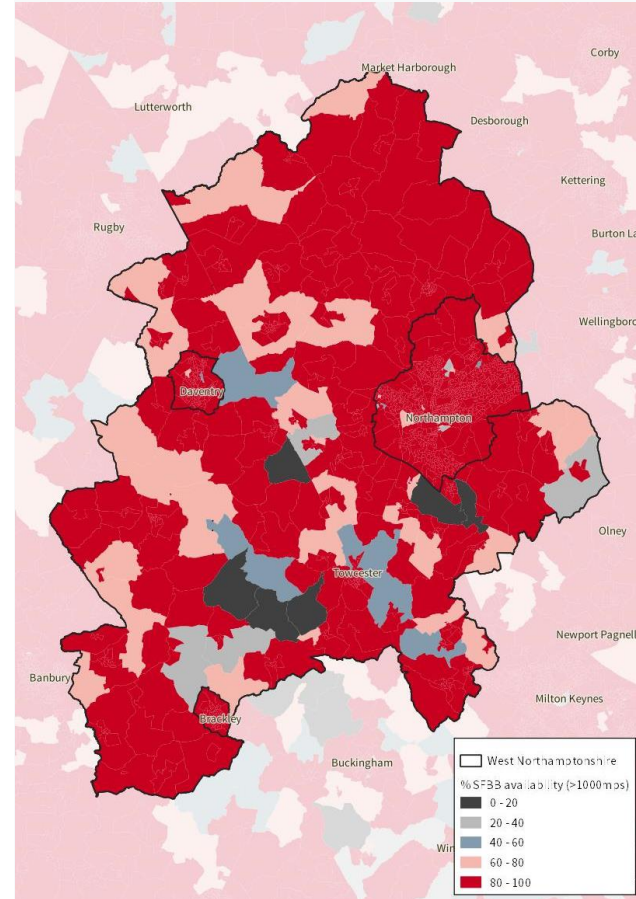
96% of premises in West Northamptonshire have access to superfast broadband (>30mbps) versus 95% nationally. However, outside the urban areas there are pockets of rural areas, including Towcester and rural Daventry, where premise coverage falls to less than 60%.

Only 23% of premises in West Northamptonshire have access to Gigabit available broadband (>1000 mbps) versus 37% nationally. However, coverage across the district markedly differs with pockets of urban areas with 60-80% coverage whilst rural areas such as Towcester and Daventry have less than 10% coverage. Improving broadband coverage is key to achieving the UK Government’s goal of 99% Gigabit coverage by 2030.

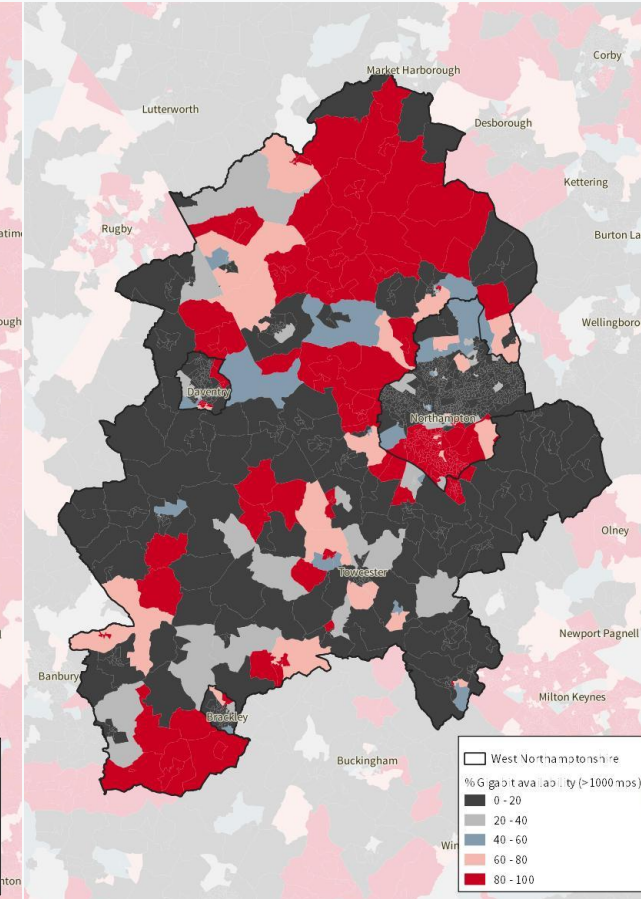
Northamptonshire’s Rural Evidence base acknowledges that Covid-19 has made more people likely to move to the countryside due to better air quality, work-life balance and the flexibility opened up by increased home-working. However, digital connectivity is an important factor underpinning this decision. Northamptonshire’s proximity to London and Oxford positions its to see increased migration from major cities but this will place greater pressure on increased housing stock and fast internet connections.

Improving digital infrastructure is important for businesses to operate, embrace digital technologies, respond to increasing home-working, and help attract and retain a working-age population.

Superfast Broadband Availability (2021)



Gigabit Broadband Availability (2021)



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Circular Economy

Currently, 47% of waste in West Northamptonshire is reused, recycled or composted.

Friends of the Earth believes West Northamptonshire should be more ambitious and aim to reuse, recycle or compost 100% of its household waste by 2030.

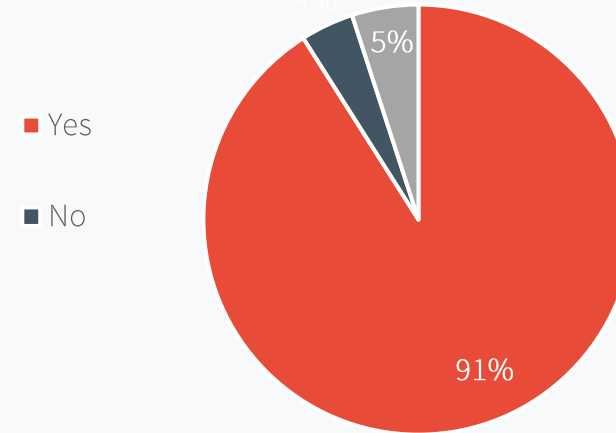
In 2021, YouGov polling showed that of 765 people surveyed in West Northamptonshire, 91% said they make an effort to recycle

Organisations such as TerraCycle offer free recycling programmes for hard to recycle waste. There are a number of recycling drop off points in West Northamptonshire.

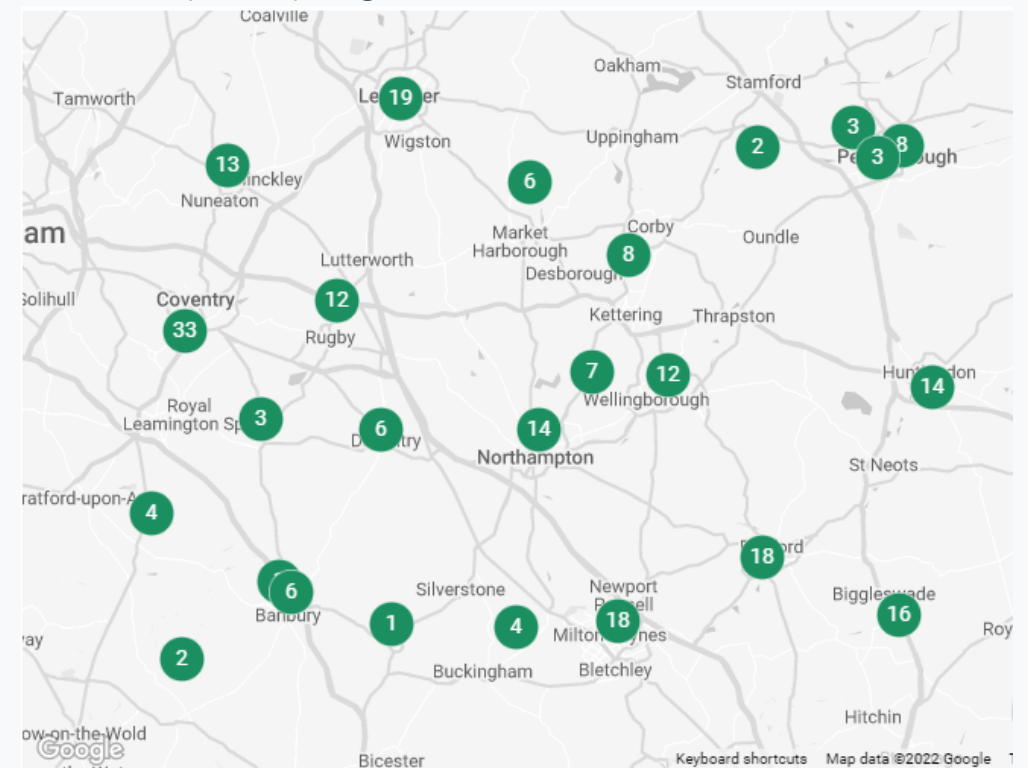
The Council also has a number of Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) in; Brixworth, Daventry, Farthinghoe and Towcester

There is an opportunity to build on the provision of circular economy spaces for rural communities. For instance, “Mend and Repair café’s” provide opportunities, particularly for retired skilled individuals and the ageing population to upskill the younger generation and help the community become more sustainable.

Do people in West Northamptonshire make an effort to recycle?



Map of TerraCycle recycling drop off points in West Northamptonshire



Source: Data on the overall proportion on all household waste that was recycled, reused or composted in 2021 was sourced from DEFRA (2022) and the Welsh Government (2022)

Active Travel

Commuting by cycle is rare in West Northamptonshire. Census data from 2011 shows that 2% of people in West Northamptonshire commute to work by cycling.

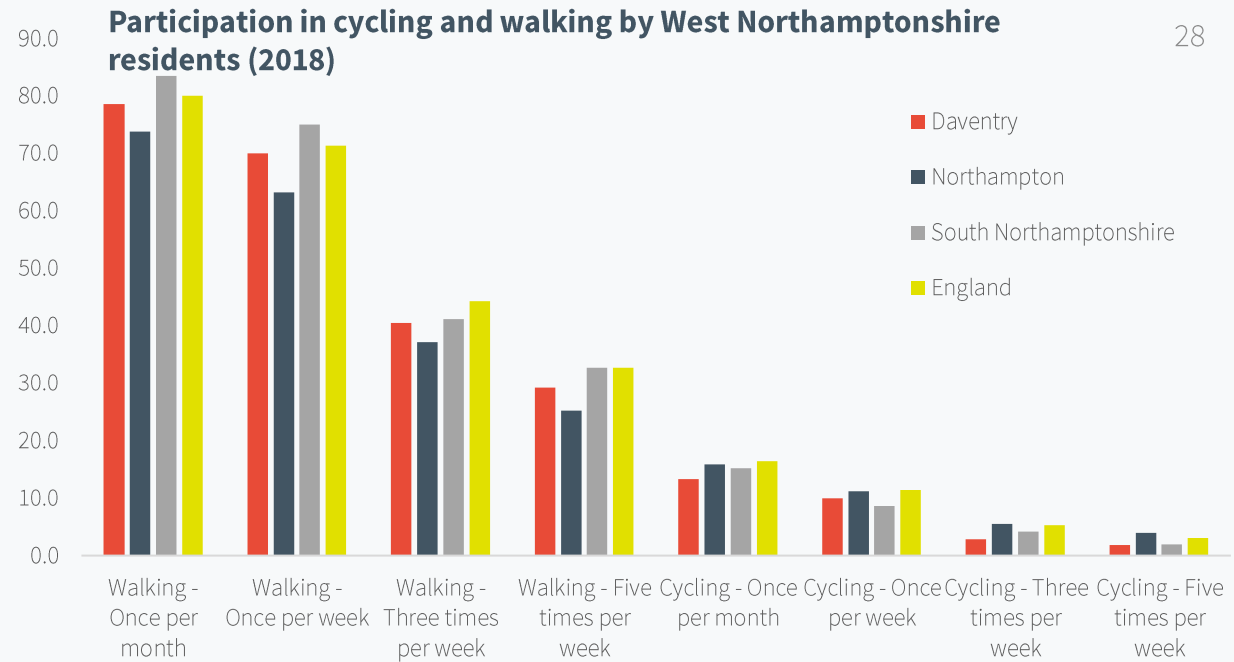
Data by Climate Action shows that 24% of commuter journeys could be by bike, as long as there's decent cycling infrastructure and an uptake in the use of e-bikes.

Green commute means travelling to work via low-carbon options, such as public transport, cycling or walking. 19% of people in West Northamptonshire currently choose greener ways to commute. Of those, 10% walk to work, 2% travel by bike and 7% use public transport.

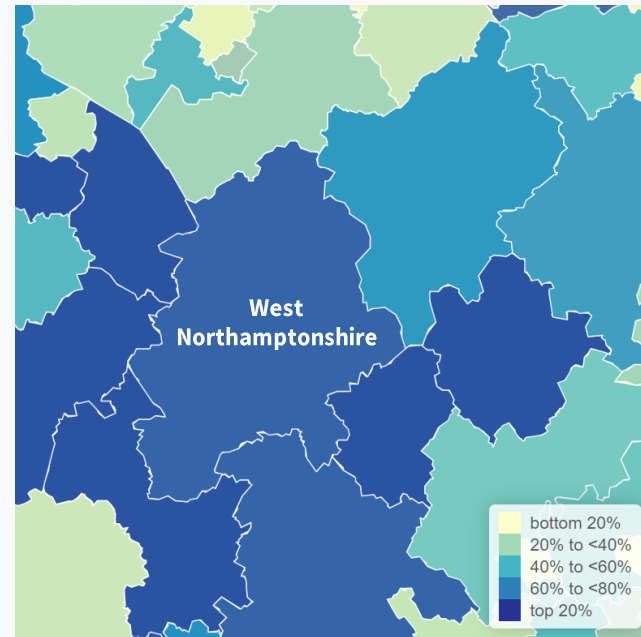
The Climate Change Committee (which advises government) has set West Northamptonshire and other similar local authorities a target of 40% of travel to be made by greener methods. Friends of the Earth set an aim for 60% of all travel for West Northamptonshire

Electric cars and vans help lower fuel costs and noise pollution, and avoid pumping out harmful pollutants. Local authorities can help make electric vehicles (EV) a more attractive choice for their residents by installing public charging points.

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There are currently 157 public EV charging points in West Northamptonshire. This ranks it in the top 40% local authorities with an EV density of 39 per 100,000 people. According to government targets, West Northamptonshire should aim to install 2,046 EV charging points by 2030.



EV charging points per 100,000 people, October 2022



Source: Department for Transport, 2022; The Health Foundation National Travel Survey and Active Lives Survey, Department for Transport, 2018, Method of Transport to work Census 2011

Arts and Cultural Participation

Data from the Active Lives survey shows the participation of adults (aged 16+) in a number of activities over the last 12 months.

Participation in arts and cultural activities in West Northamptonshire varies across Daventry, Northampton and South Northamptonshire.

In particular, there is below national average participation in the majority of arts and cultural activities in Northampton.

Use of public libraries and participation in dance related activities are below the national average in Daventry and South Northamptonshire.

Participation in the last 12 months	Daventry	Northampton	South Northamptonshire	National Average
Spent time doing a creative, artistic, theatrical or music activity or a craft	36.38%	32.95%	36.51%	34.67%
Attended an event, performance or festival involving creative, artistic, dance, theatrical or music activity	54.49%	48.14%	56.11%	52.22%
Used a public library service	28.11%	36.93%	31.59%	35.01%
Attended a museum or gallery	44.33%	43.09%	49.35%	46.50%
Dance	16.91%	18.66%	20.72%	21.15%
Creative or artistic dance	3.94%	4.70%	5.66%	4.70%

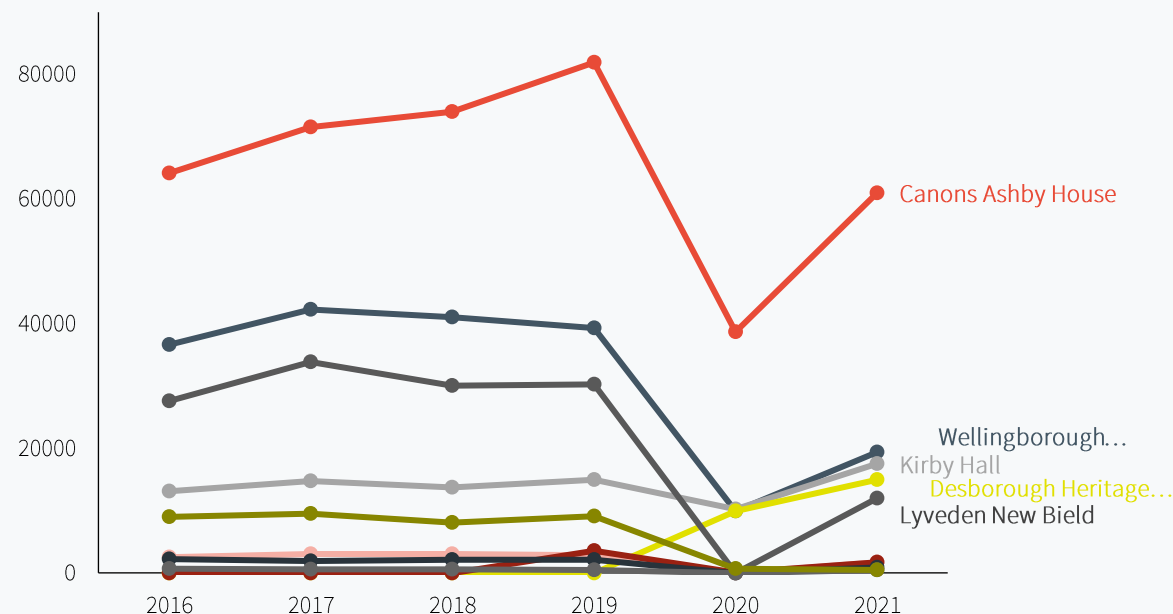
Visitor Attractions

Data from Visit Britain shows that the most visited attraction in West Northamptonshire is the Canons Ashby House in Daventry, which received 60,982 visits in 2021. This is followed by Wellingborough Museum with 19,434 visits and Kirby Hall which received 17,510 visits.

Each of the visitor attractions which reported their data experienced a decline in visitors due to COVID-19 and the impact of the national lockdowns.

The provision of “visitor attractions” in an area not only benefits local residents, who have a pride in place and engagement with their area. It benefits children and young people who visit with school or family members for educational purposes.

These attractions also bring non-residents to West Northamptonshire for leisure and tourism purposes, with the spend of the “purple pound” benefitting local businesses.



Attractions	District	2021	% change in 2018 to 2019	Charging
Canons Ashby House	Daventry	60,982	11%	Yes
Wellingborough Museum	Wellingborough	19,434	-4%	No
Kirby Hall	Northampton	17,510	9%	Yes
Desborough Heritage Centre	Kettering	15,000	-	No
Lyveden New Bield	Peterborough	11,995	1%	Yes
Kirby Muxloe Castle	Northampton	1,742	-8%	Yes
Lampport Hall and Gardens	Northampton	1,704	-	Yes
Harrington Aviation Museum	Northampton	962	-2%	Yes
Wollaston Museum	Wellingborough	492	-8%	No
78 Derngate	Northampton	470	12%	Yes

Data Analysis Summary: Community and Place

Challenges



Ageing population. A rapidly growing ageing population will bring challenges of health and social care needs. This is more acute in the rural parts of West Northamptonshire



Housing supply and affordability issues limit West Northamptonshire's ability to attract and retain working age residents. Housing and services deprivation is particularly acute in rural West Northamptonshire



Low social mobility among adults and young people will limit life chances and progression opportunities. Rural areas show deprivation in education and skills.



Above average CO2 emissions will present a challenge to achieving net zero by 2050. This can be improved through active travel measures.



Access to digital infrastructure. Rural areas have low broadband coverage, especially in Towcester and Daventry. There is a need to improve digital infrastructure

Opportunities



High life expectancy and positive health outcomes will support quality of life and presents an opportunity to capitalise on a large population of older residents to support activity, i.e. volunteering



Large capacity for green energy generation will be key to tackling the climate challenge and encouraging innovation and investment in clean energy.









Need for youth clubs and investment in children's facilities. Including sports pitches and volunteering opportunities. This will help the youth stay out of crime, raise aspirations and improve youth social mobility.



Utilising and promoting rural greenspaces. The abundance of green and open space in rural West Northamptonshire provides an opportunity to use this natural capital as a promotional incentive for attracting visitors and tourists to the area.

Implications for the Rural Fund

Community and Place Interventions	Identified through the Data	Rationale for including
Funding (capital grants) for investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities. Corresponding with E15		There is low coverage of digital infrastructure in rural areas, including Towcester and rural Daventry. Speed of broadband can be improved across all areas
Funding (capital grants) for investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups. Corresponding with E11		The data shows a need for increased EV charging points and community energy schemes. It would improve net zero infrastructure for rural communities (village halls etc.) and support rural tourism activity.
Funding (capital grants) for creation of and improvements to local rural green spaces. Corresponding with E3		There are an abundance of green spaces in rural West Northamptonshire. These can be better utilised and promoted for festivals and activities creating pride in place and increasing tourism
Funding (capital grants) for existing cultural, historic and heritage institutions that make up the local cultural heritage offer Corresponding with E4		
Funding (capital grants) for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities. Corresponding with E6		
Funding (capital grants) for active travel enhancements in the local area. Corresponding with E7		Improvements can be made to increase cycle usage and commute to work through greener methods. There are few EV charging points at present.
Funding (capital grants) for rural circular economy projects.		Recycling rates can be increased. Mend and repair café's would help improve the circular economy and sustainability for West Northamptonshire
Funding (capital grants) for impactful volunteering and social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places. Corresponding with E9		This would help to increase social mobility amongst youth groups, increasing and improving aspirations and prospects and strengthening the employment sector for West Northamptonshire going forward, providing reason for the younger demographic to stay in West Northamptonshire for the longer term.

Community and Place Workshop

A workshop was held on the 3rd October to discuss the Rural England Prosperity Fund and the Community and Place theme.

54 stakeholders attended the workshop.

Hatch presented the challenges and opportunities emerging from the data analysis.

Attendees provided feedback on the needs, opportunities and interventions to be selected under the Community and Place theme. Individual comments were captured via virtual “post it notes” which are presented in the following slides.

Community and Place Workshop

+ What are the main **needs** in rural areas of West Northamptonshire to meet the objectives of the Community and Place priority?

Transport is a major issue - making it difficult for the ageing population to access key services
Boddington

Food poverty - compounded by poor transport, higher prices in local shops (if they exist)

Transport poverty in all rural areas, cost of access to supermarkets and shops is higher than cost of shopping

Transport issues can impact access to work opportunities

Food security is a huge issue and impact the cost of living crisis

Rural broadband is an issue - but may be difficult to support with the amount of funding available

Lack of infrastructure for cycling - and other active travel measures - this will help to reduce CO2 emissions

Need to retain younger / working age population - can an overall strategy be considered for this?

Rural strategy / vision document - can these be shared more widely to all

Community and Place Workshop

+ What are the main **opportunities** in rural West Northamptonshire to address the objectives of the Community and Place priority?

community hub for EV charging points as homeowners in the area have challenges to access this at home

Establishing rural hubs for jobs for the younger demographic



Community and Place Workshop

+ Which other types of interventions might be relevant in addressing identified needs and opportunities?

**support for
cultural/historic/
heritage
institutions -
visitors to the
rural area**

There is an opportunity for some of this funding to be used as match funding towards improving community sports pitches. This funding can help bring in significant partnership funding through the Football Foundation. There's a significant shortfall in the former South Northants LA area

**Rural circular
economy -
especially given
food poverty -
opportunity for
composing etc.
local community
hubs**

Survey: Community and Place

- + There were 33 responses to the survey
- + Survey suggested that 42% of funding should be spent on the Community and Place theme
- + 3 survey respondents felt that 100% of the funding should be given to the Community and Place theme
- + 21 responses provided information on how they thought the funding should be split between the community and place interventions (see average proposed split column)
- + There were 12 projects submitted for the Community and Place theme

Intervention	Average Proposed Split %	Number of projects
Funding (capital grants) for investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities. Corresponding with E15	13%	2
Funding (capital grants) for investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups. Corresponding with E11	20%	8
Funding (capital grants) for creation of and improvements to local rural green spaces. Corresponding with E3	14%	5
Funding (capital grants) for existing cultural, historic and heritage institutions that make up the local cultural heritage offer. Corresponding with E4	8%	3
Funding (capital grants) for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities. Corresponding with E6	4%	2
Funding (capital grants) for active travel enhancements in the local area. Corresponding with E7	16%	7
Funding (capital grants) for rural circular economy projects. New Intervention	14%	5
Funding (capital grants) for impactful volunteering and social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places. Corresponding with E9	10%	8

Survey: Community and Place

Challenges

Improve transport and infrastructure connectivity to connect new generations to education and work opportunities

Improve bus frequency, connectivity and reliability

Better promotion of historic locations - better signage which will lead to more tourism

Lack of investment into high quality community sports facilities Poor availability of community sports facilities available daytime, evenings and weekends Poor quality of current Council facilities, especially grass football pitches

Climate change

Make better use of green spaces to attract people to the area

Social isolation caused by poor travel infrastructure, dependence on use of private motorized transport contributing to CO2 emissions

Poor digital connectivity and broadband affordability

High rural poverty and need to improve quality and type of housing stock, as well as energy efficiency of homes

Poor active travel infrastructure

Better education and work opportunities to allow the new generation to stay in the county

Access to employment and skills development

Climate Change - Implementing change that protects and enhances our green and natural environment for the long term and not taking decisions for short term economic gain that lead to irrevocable damage to the planet and a deterioration in wellbeing of residents.

Rural tourism in West Northamptonshire is absent. There is no public awareness of what is on offer in rural Northamptonshire and the focus is entirely focused upon major attractions in Northampton

Survey: Community and Place

Opportunities

Using community hubs to facilitate start-ups, upgrade community buildings and encourage co-working

Use strong food and drink offer to support tourism

Use heritage and provision of green space to strengthen tourism, leisure (visitor economy) and health outcomes

Encourage people to shop locally and convey the impact of doing so

Communal wind turbines

Strengthen small communities by giving small grant to rural start up to connect our school children with the work place by giving employers incentives to ensure that our towns thrive

The Provision of Active Travel Routes to enable residents of hamlets and villages to safely access the facilities available to residents of towns and major centres without having to rely on motorised transport. Reducing CO2 emissions from motorised transport, oil and gas fired heating.

Upgrade to village halls to encourage users of all abilities – indoor facilities and ramps

Solar panels and broadband access for community buildings

EV charging points in community hub locations

Capital equipment for sports facilities e.g. multi-use fenced area for sports

Building on thriving training providers such as Northampton and Tresham Colleges and UoN

Natural capital - green and rural areas, unspoilt countryside, canal network - an opportunity to improve well-being and promote visitor economy Heritage assets - protect and promote attractive network of historic buildings in rural village centres - an opportunity to regenerate and create sense of pride, local identity and belonging

Hybrid working - fewer commutes from rural WNC rural villages to Birmingham/MK/London - an opportunity for local businesses to meet the needs of homeworkers, providing hubs for working, lunching and meeting within rural village centres, increasing sense of community amongst those previously unable to contribute due to commuting lifestyle.

Better use of village halls and community spaces – providing activities. Funding for volunteer run community spaces, to enhance the space, better infrastructure both physical and digital

Alignment with Selected SPF Interventions

Interventions		Identified through the Data	Identified through workshops	Identified through the survey	UKSPF funding for WNC	
					Capital	Revenue
Community and Place	Funding (capital grants) for investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities. Corresponding with E15	✓	✓	13%	£0	£0
	Funding (capital grants) for investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups. Corresponding with E11	✓	✓	20%	£0	£134,971
	Funding (capital grants) for creation of and improvements to local rural green spaces. Corresponding with E3	✓		14%	£0	£0
	Funding (capital grants) for existing cultural, historic and heritage institutions that make up the local cultural heritage offer Corresponding with E4		✓	8%	£0	£0
	Funding (capital grants) for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities. Corresponding with E6			4%	£0	£0
	Funding (capital grants) for active travel enhancements in the local area. Corresponding with E7	✓	✓	16%	£927,199	£0
	Funding (capital grants) for rural circular economy projects.	✓	✓	14%	N/A	N/A
	Funding (capital grants) for impactful volunteering and social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places. Corresponding with E9	✓		10%	£0	£134,971

Supporting local business



Economic output

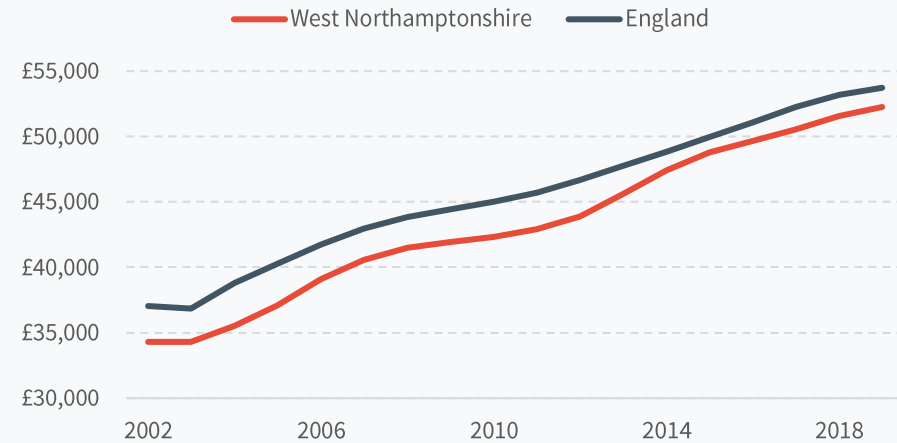
West Northamptonshire has historically faced a productivity challenge compared to the national average, with the gap for GVA per job filled staying constant over the past 5 years.

Productivity is lower compared to England, with GVA per job filled at £52k in 2019 compared to £53k nationally.

West Northamptonshire contributed £12.5bn to the UK economy in 2019, rising by 126% since 1998 compared to a 123% increase nationally. Of this, rural areas contributed £4.6bn (37%), rising by 107% since 1998. Since 2010, the gap between Rural GVA output, West Northamptonshire and England has widened.

The UK Competitiveness Index forecasts that West Northamptonshire will experience a GVA growth rate of 1.85 over the next 20 years, ranking 120th out of 360 localities and 1st out of the Northamptonshire local authorities.

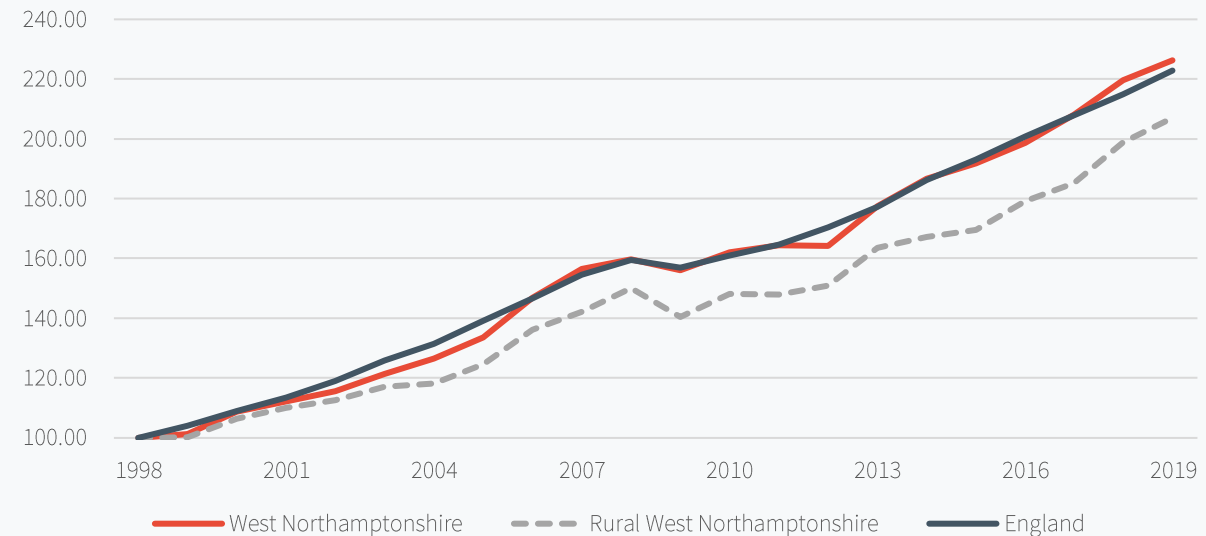
GVA per job filled, 2019



£52k
GVA per job filled 2019

£5.4m
GVA 2019

GVA index change (1998-2019)



Source: ONS, Gross Value Added (Balanced), 2019



Business Base

There are 21,000 businesses in West Northamptonshire with 10,200 in the rural area (48%). The business base in West Northamptonshire has increased by 11% since 2017 whilst rural West Northamptonshire has only witnessed 1% growth compared to 4% increase nationally.

There are a number of business specialisms including:

- Public administration (LQ of 3.0)
- Agriculture and forestry (LQ of 2.4)
- Professional, scientific and technical (LQ of 1.1)

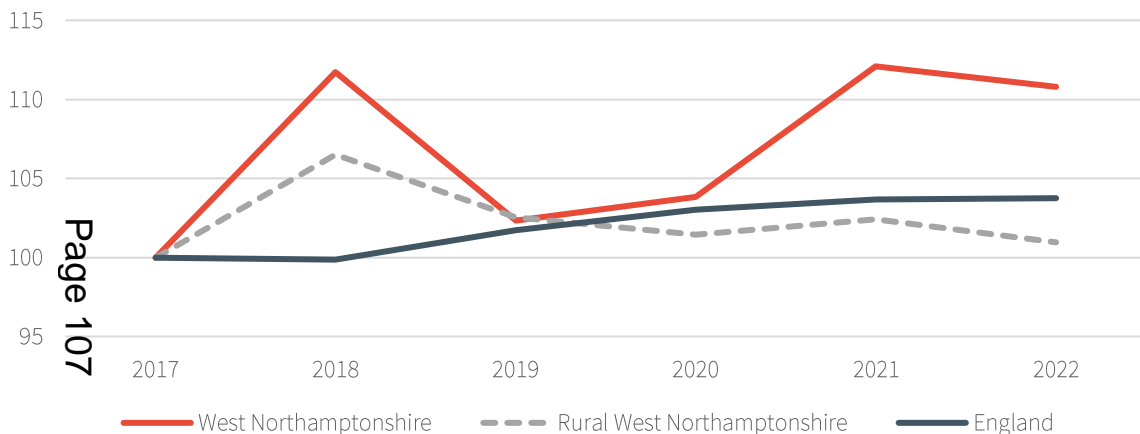
Despite low business growth, there are notably more businesses per 1,000 working aged adults in rural West Northamptonshire (95) compared to West Northamptonshire (84) and the national rate (76).

84
business density in West Northants

95
business density in rural West Northants

76
Business density in England

Business count index change (2016-2022)



Business specialism in West Northamptonshire (2017-2022)

Sector	West Northamptonshire			West Northamptonshire Rural		
	Total 2022	Change (%)	LQ ¹	Total 2022	Change (%)	LQ ¹
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	955	-1%	1.2	930	-1%	2.4
Mining, quarrying & utilities	95	6%	0.8	55	10%	1.0
Manufacturing	1,010	4%	1.0	575	0%	1.1
Construction	2,920	30%	1.0	1,380	21%	1.0
Motor trades	640	2%	1.1	360	1%	1.2
Wholesale	750	1%	0.9	405	-7%	1.0
Retail	2,160	120%	1.3	510	13%	0.6
Transport & storage (inc postal)	2,010	23%	1.9	510	7%	1.0
Accommodation & food services	915	21%	0.7	410	14%	0.7
Information & communication	1,160	-14%	0.7	645	-10%	0.8
Financial & insurance	335	5%	0.7	170	26%	0.7
Property	660	18%	0.8	385	15%	0.9
Professional, scientific & technical	2,890	-20%	0.9	1,770	-10%	1.1
Business administration & support services	2,270	34%	1.3	890	-4%	1.0
Public administration & defence	120	9%	1.9	90	-10%	3.0
Education	360	-9%	1.0	195	-7%	1.1
Health	660	-20%	0.8	265	-10%	0.7
Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services	1,150	4%	0.8	635	6%	1.0
Total	21,060	11%	1.0	10,170	1%	1.0

¹LQ refers to Location Quotient, a measure of how specialized/concentrated activity is in an area. It is based on the relative share of employment in an industry within an area compared to the share nationally. An LQ greater than 1 indicates relative specialization/concentration.

Business and Enterprise

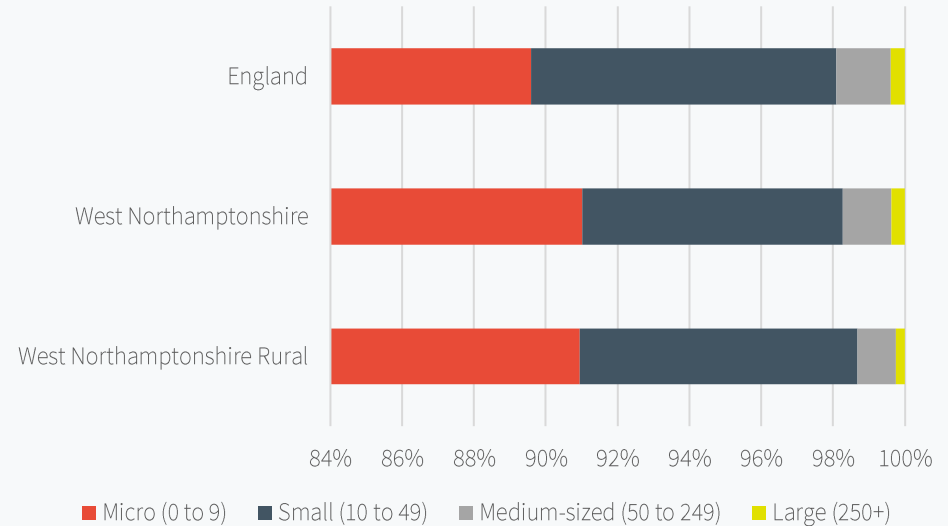
The majority of businesses in West Northamptonshire’s rural areas are micro businesses (91%) which is the same as the wider district. There are fewer small and medium businesses (8%) than the national average (10%).

West Northamptonshire has a level of entrepreneurship that is in line with the national average, at 10 business births per 1,000 working age people. Since 2016, self-employment has decreased faster than regional and national trends, with a 12% drop in self-employment compared to a 1% increase nationally.

There were 4,003 business incorporations in 2021 in West Northamptonshire compared to 3,320 during 2020. The largest incorporations were:

- Construction (270 business incorporations)
- Financial and professional services (267 business incorporations)

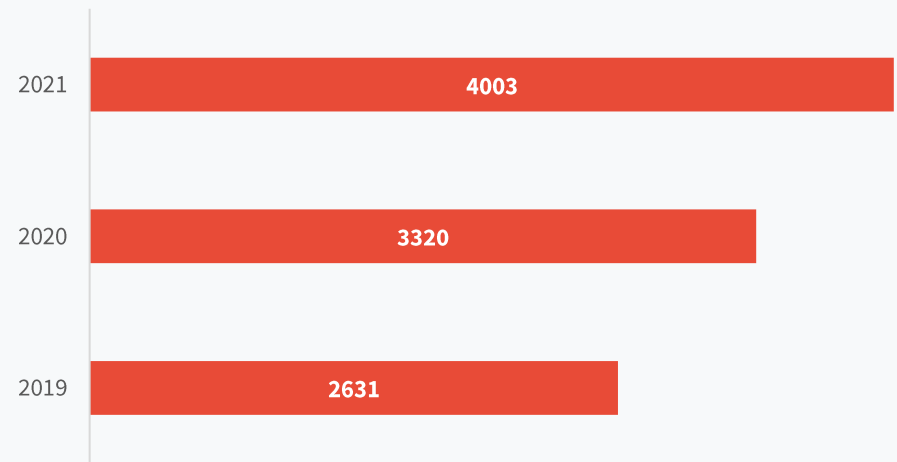
Business size



115 net births minus deaths (2020)

-12% change in self-employed

Business incorporations, 2019-2022



548 Business inc. 2022 (to date)

42.8% 5 year business survival rate

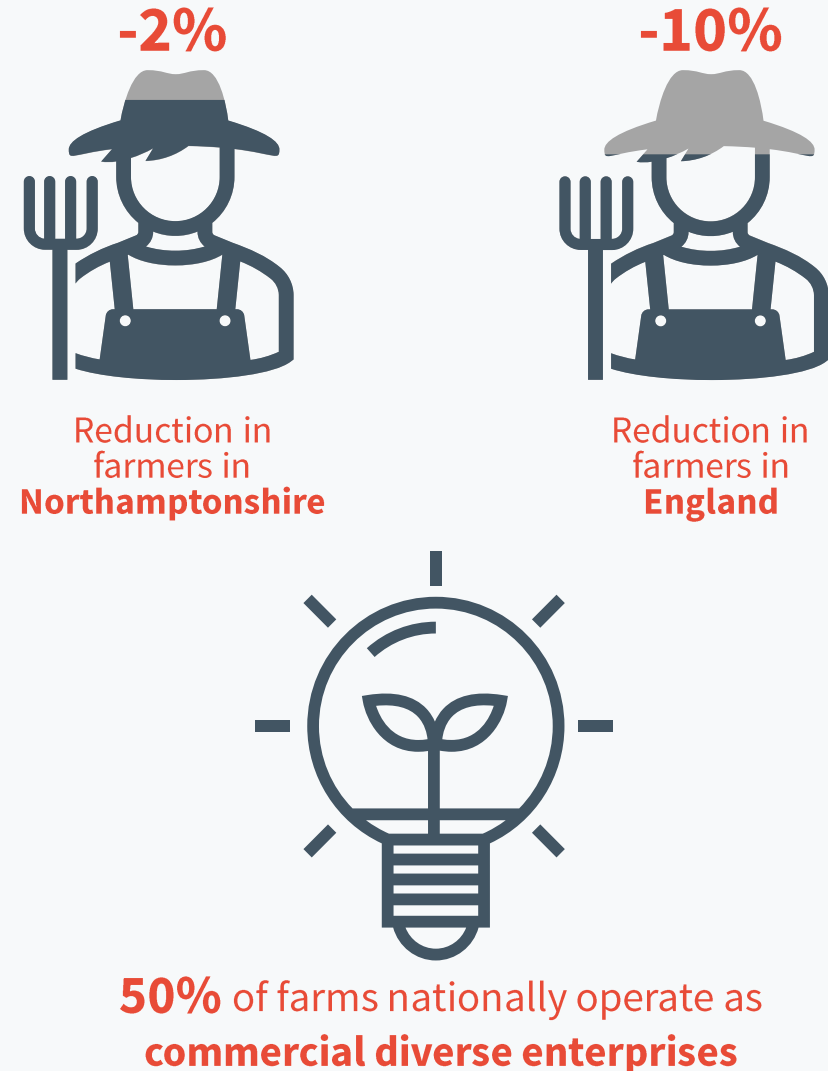
Source: ONS Business Count, 2021; Companies House, 2019-2022; ONS Business Demography, 2021

Farming

The Northamptonshire Evidence Base acknowledges that farming has a long history in Northamptonshire. However, over the last 20 years the industry has experienced changes in the district, including:

- 37% reduction in dairying as a farm type, allied with a 70% decrease in total dairy cattle since 2010 (versus 45% nationally)
- Farmed woodland has doubled and is 4% of the land area, comparable to England as a whole
- Farmers as a proportion of the labour force has fallen by 2% since 2000 compared to 10% nationally
- Nationally, 50% of farms now operate at some level of commercial diversification enterprise such as alternative energy generation or using soil for carbon sinks (absorption)

These changes indicate the shift in how farming and the agriculture sector operates in West Northamptonshire. With the loss of Basic Payment by 2027 and the growing shift towards carbon reduction, supporting rural businesses through farm diversification and investing in equipment, technology and infrastructure is key to protecting this important industry.





Innovation

Since 2004, approximately 169 R&D, smart and innovation, and knowledge transfer projects have been funded in West Northamptonshire.

Of these, over 90% have been funded in the top 3 sectors:

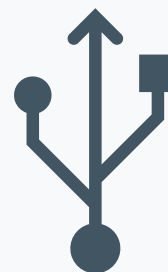
- Manufacturing, Materials & Mobility (40%)
- Responsive Technology (33%)
- Clean growth and infrastructure (12%)

As a proportion of the 248 Innovate UK projects funded in Northamptonshire since 2004, West Northamptonshire makes up 68% of total projects. This is higher than the proportion of businesses in West Northamptonshire compared to the total business base across the Northamptonshire region (56%).

Projects funded by Innovate UK since 2004, West Northamptonshire

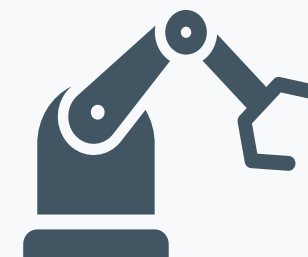
Sector	Total projects	%	Funding (£)
Manufacturing, Materials & Mobility	68	40%	13,335,302
Responsive Technology	56	33%	3,838,678
Clean Growth & Infrastructure	21	12%	2,464,864
Ageing Society, Health & Nutrition	9	5%	967,866
AI & Data Economy	8	5%	1,265,823
Connect	3	2%	2,100
Global	3	2%	505,346
Strategy	1	1%	50,010
Total	169	100%	22,429,989

40%



Responsive
technology

33%



Manufacturing

12%



Clean growth &
infrastructure

Labour market stock

In 2021, there were 226,000 people employed in West Northamptonshire, an employment increase of 12% since 2016 compared to a 4% growth in England.

Of these, 76,000 were employed in the rural area (34%). Rural employment has increased at a slightly slower rate of 8% since 2016 but still exceeds England.

Sector specialisms in the rural area include:

- Transport & Storage (LQ of 2.3)
- Motor trades (LQ of 1.7)
- Arts, entertainment and recreation (LQ of 1.5)

West Northamptonshire’s rural area has a job density of 0.71 per working aged resident compared to 0.90 in West Northamptonshire and 0.84 nationally, indicating a lower level of employment opportunity whilst highlighting the labour supply imperative.

0.71

job density per working-age adult

76k

People are employed

8%

Increase in employment since 2016

Employment count (2016-2021)

Sector	West Northamptonshire			West Northamptonshire Rural		
	2021 Total	Change (%)	LQ	2021 Total	Change (%)	LQ
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	900	-10%	0.3	125	67%	0.1
Mining, quarrying & utilities	1,500	20%	0.6	450	50%	0.5
Manufacturing	18,000	0%	1.1	8,000	0%	1.4
Construction	9,000	0%	0.8	4,000	14%	1.1
Motor trades	6,000	33%	1.5	2,250	29%	1.7
Wholesale	12,000	-8%	1.5	2,500	-38%	0.9
Retail	19,000	19%	0.9	7,000	40%	1.0
Transport & storage (inc postal)	22,000	16%	1.9	9,000	13%	2.3
Accommodation & food services	11,000	-15%	0.7	5,000	-17%	0.9
Information & communication	6,000	33%	0.6	3,000	50%	0.9
Financial & insurance	10,000	25%	1.2	700	75%	0.3
Property	2,500	11%	0.6	1,250	25%	0.8
Professional, scientific & technical	15,000	-6%	0.7	8,000	14%	1.1
Business administration & support services	29,000	38%	1.4	7,000	-13%	1.0
Public administration & defence	9,000	29%	1.0	1,750	40%	0.6
Education	16,000	14%	0.8	6,000	20%	0.9
Health	28,000	12%	0.9	5,000	0%	0.5
Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services	11,000	10%	1.1	5,000	25%	1.5
Total	225,900	12%	1.0	76,025	8%	1.0

Source: Business Register and Employment Survey, 2021; Annual Population Survey, 2020

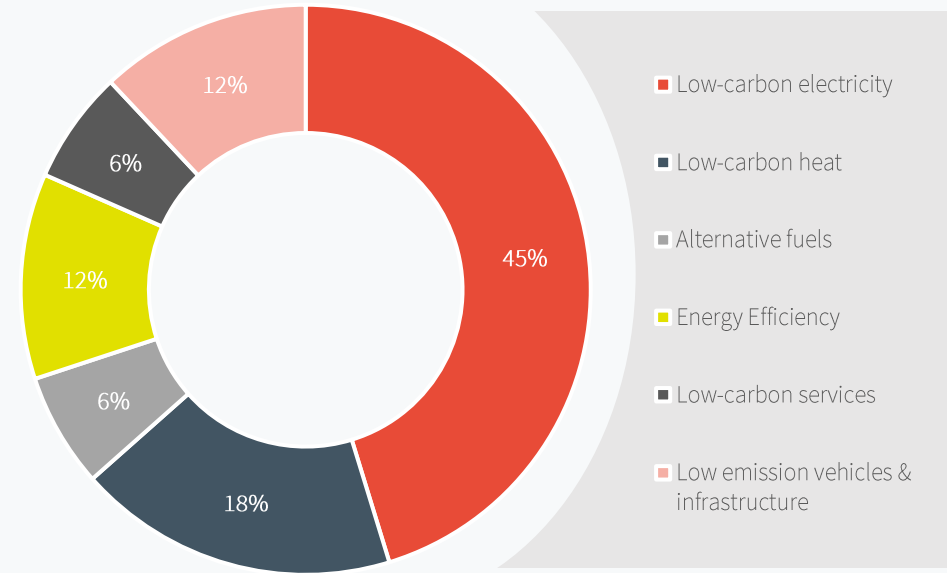
Low Carbon employment

The Local Government Association estimates that by 2050 there will be 1.2m total jobs in the low carbon and renewable energy sector.

The East Midlands will be home to 8% of these jobs. Of this, West Northamptonshire is estimated to host 10% (9,372). These green jobs are expected to be predominantly within the low carbon electricity sector (45%).

This will have implications for green skills and business support to enable residents and businesses to access the opportunities presented by low carbon in West Northamptonshire.

Employment by Low Carbon Sectors in West Northamptonshire, 2050



Source: Local Government Association

Data Analysis Summary: Supporting Local Business

Challenges



Low business growth. Whilst West Northamptonshire has experienced above national average growth in its business base, rural areas have lagged behind and not been able to benefit from the boost in business attraction.



Digital cold spots in rural areas threatens future business investment and deters people from living and working in areas such as Towcester and Daventry.



Declining self-employment. This reflects increased presence of PAYE opportunities and their associated job security, as well as low levels of entrepreneurialism linked to business and skills support.



Low job density. There are fewer job opportunities for working-aged residents in rural areas than wider West Northamptonshire. This creates challenges for attracting and retaining working aged people. There are also issues around travel to access jobs.

Opportunities



Business Support provision. A strong business support ecosystem will help grow rural area's business base by providing knowledge exchange, networking and access to new markets e.g. newly launched ExploreWN app will support businesses across West Northamptonshire to reach customers.



Create an entrepreneurial ecosystem. Supporting entrepreneurship through tapping into rural areas' high business density will grow the business base whilst boosting high quality local employment and counteracting the decline in self-employment.





Recently announced cost of living support programme will work with local people and partner organisations in an effort to counteract external pressures of inflation and the rising cost of living for vulnerable people.



Strengthening green innovation through farm diversification will capitalise on West Northamptonshire's high capacity for green energy generation and high projected growth in low-carbon jobs.

Implications for the Rural Fund

Supporting Local Business Interventions	Identified through the Data	Rationale for Including
<p>Funding (capital grants) for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas. Including capital funding for net zero infrastructure for rural businesses, and diversification of farm businesses outside of agriculture to encourage start up, expansion or scale up of these businesses where this involves converting farm buildings into other commercial or business uses</p>		<p>This is a highly important business and employment sector for Rural West Northamptonshire. With the loss of Basic Payment by 2027 and the growing shift towards carbon reduction, supporting rural businesses through farm diversification and investing in equipment, technology and infrastructure is key to protecting this important industry.</p>
<p>Funding (capital grants) for growing the local social economy and supporting innovation. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community businesses • cooperatives and social enterprises • research and development sites <p>Corresponding with E26</p>		<p>Creation of multi-functional rural business hubs providing shared workspace and networking opportunities for rural businesses would help to revitalize key areas of West Northamptonshire and support the local high street. This intervention also aligns strongly with enhancing the rural visitor economy and providing EV charging points for businesses.</p>
<p>Funding (capital grants) for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local attractions • trails • tourism products more generally <p>Corresponding with E17</p>		

Supporting Local Business Workshop

A workshop was held on the 3rd October to discuss the Rural England Prosperity Fund and the Supporting Local Business theme.

37 stakeholders attended the workshop.

Hatch presented the challenges and opportunities emerging from the data analysis.

Attendees provided feedback on the needs, opportunities and interventions to be selected under the Supporting Local Business theme. Individual comments were captured via virtual “post it notes” which are presented in the following slides.

Supporting Local Business Workshop

+ What are the main **needs** to address in West Northamptonshire to meet the objectives of the Supporting Local Business priority?

Availability of labour is an issue - poor transport links, especially with national networks

Businesses struggling with energy price increases

Useful to review examples of rural development schemes - ERDP, RDPE, LEADER, RDAs - includes examples of Farm regeneration and diversification

<https://www.leader-programme.org.uk/>

farmers have to play a part in villages - it is a very important sector. The county and farming sector is known for producing sheep products

Transport - is key for farm diversification (tourism etc) - and struggle for people to work in the sector due to access

Incidence of rural stress, particularly suicide in the farming sector is particularly high - is this something that can be considered here?

How will this fund be delivered going forward - how to collaborate and work together to ensure the fund

Supporting Local Business Workshop

+ What are the main **opportunities** in West Northamptonshire to address the objectives of the Supporting Local Business priority?

Leather industry + food production is known for the area

On the farming side, would be good if we have examples of digital innovation that we could promote through our Digital Northants channels.

There are good models of managing and governance on RDPE and LEADER programmes many of the people on this call have this experience - Will , helen, Ken Emma and SEM - the Management and Administration is an important point that has been made

Supporting Local Business Workshop

+ Which other types of interventions might be relevant in addressing identified needs and opportunities?

Farming - does it need diversification? or is it a matter of better promotion?

Farmers need to diversify to survive

Visitor economy - tick this! This sector is important for West Northants

Leisure can support farming and they work in tandem - but transport also needs to support this for visitors and workers

Small industries that are not farming in the rural area - they need to be supported too

LEADER evaluation - social enterprise measures never came forward, low uptake on this. Farm diversification and supporting SMEs projects came through more - intervention 1 and 3 are more suited. LEADER case studies can provide more information on this - production processing and local retail

Active travel will not help the ageing population and their access to key services

I would keep the options open so grant applications can be developed to cover a number of the areas. Don't be overly precise so businesses can develop business plans for investment. Inclusive of many sectors would be sensible

Transport is key - but active travel may not be the right intervention - or this may not be the right pot

Focus on 1 & 3

Social enterprise in rural areas will be difficult to support without a wider regional or national support programme encouraging and supporting this - context is important

digital infrastructure is important

Transport impacting rural Daventry and south Northamptonshire

Survey: Supporting Local Business

- + There were 33 responses to the survey
- + Survey suggested that 58% of funding should be spent on the Supporting Local Business theme
- + 8 survey respondents felt that 100% of the funding should be given to the Supporting Local Business theme
- + 17 responses provided information on how they thought the funding should be split between the supporting local business interventions (see average proposed split column)
- + There were 12 projects submitted for the Supporting Local Business theme

Intervention	Average Proposed Split %	Number of projects
<p>Funding (capital grants) for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas. Including capital funding for net zero infrastructure for rural businesses, and diversification of farm businesses outside of agriculture to encourage start up, expansion or scale up of these businesses where this involves converting farm buildings into other commercial or business uses.</p> <p>New intervention</p>	45%	8
<p>Funding (capital grants) for growing the local social economy and supporting innovation. This includes; (1) community businesses, (2) cooperatives and social enterprises, (3) research and development sites</p> <p>Corresponding with E26</p>	26%	4
<p>Funding (capital grants) for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy, such as; (1) local attractions, (2) trails, (3) tourism products more generally</p> <p>Corresponding with E17</p>	29%	6

Survey: Supporting Local Business

Challenges

- Provision of business mentors and people who can support those who want to start or grow their business
- Access to finance to enable risk reduction, awareness of what funding and support is available locally/nationally. There is a lack of coherent support in the region.
- Access to shared spaces and shared resources
- Rising energy costs are creating uncertainty for businesses
- Lack of draw and footfall on high street
- The need to support diversification of farming and encourage aspects like AI
- Sustainable growth
- Transport links to areas of employment – need for better transport links between businesses, schools/education providers
- Matching skills of labour force to needs of business
- Availability of labour; both skilled and unskilled
- Food sustainability
- Digital connectivity
- Over-reliance on distribution warehousing and logistics sector stifling social mobility and opportunities for growth due to overreliance on low skilled jobs and labour. Lack of opportunities in creating technology and engineering careers that support the education sector.
- A lack of services in the rural areas such as shops, cafes, and even pubs.
- West Northamptonshire is already an area of low unemployment. Therefore, developments that cause damage to both the environment and quality of life of residents, are bringing no balancing value to the local community as labour has to come from outside of the West Northamptonshire area
- Accessibility to skills and building skills for the future in West Northamptonshire. As there are no local business investment in different careers there is no attraction for local young people to train in careers that keep them local to the community. Local people travel beyond the county to access jobs and careers adding to the transport infrastructure issues
- enhancing enterprise and innovation support services and delivery & stimulating community enterprise and improved service delivery
- realising the value of natural capital and ecosystem management
- harnessing mobility and digitalisation for goods, services and people
- enabling uptake of new technologies or improved use of data
- Decarbonisation
- connecting rural enterprise and the wider innovation system through new ways of collaborating

Survey: Supporting Local Business

Opportunities

- Look to Local Food Hubs to encourage sustainability and local food production and shortening food supply chains to meet net zero aims
- Creating new jobs in rural areas through R&D, digital and green jobs through broadband and technology, and support businesses, particular micro businesses, to go green.
- Supporting the development of a circular economy
- Supporting specific sectors e.g. food production, processing and retail
- Encourage AI in farming and use farm diversification into markets like staycation and holiday lets
- Promote sensitive regeneration of heritage and historic assets to celebrate attractiveness
- Building on thriving businesses and innovation including low carbon and visitor economy businesses
- Capitalise on proximity to other areas such as London, Milton Keynes, Cotswolds – potential for visitor economy
- Getting local retailers to work together, promotion of local businesses and town centres
- Supporting local food production, shortening food supply chains, assisting with net zero aims. Opportunities for local producer retail units and export opportunities (Made in Northamptonshire)
- Strong skills provision by colleges and University of Nottingham
- Promoting shop local
- The abundance of byways, bridleways and footpaths in this attractive rural area lend themselves to tourism, and more farm to fork food products, More local food production is vital to help with climate change.
- perception of "made in Northamptonshire" is very weak
- There needs to be a plan to attract other businesses than distribution to West Northamptonshire. West Northamptonshire needs to attract science, technology and engineering investment into the unitary authority and work with schools and colleagues to increase awareness of the skills base
- There is an opportunity to build awareness of what is on offer in West Northamptonshire to attract investment in our rural communities building on assets in West Northamptonshire such as the canal and other rural assets
- Improving business models, capabilities and networks, whilst enhancing enterprise and innovation support services and delivery
- Promoting a circular economy in rural products including food, hospitality and manufacturing outputs
- harnessing the opportunities of an ageing society and the need for clean growth
- strengthening supply chains and logistics or unlocking export potential
- Stimulating community enterprises and improved service delivery

Alignment with Selected SPF Interventions

Interventions		Identified through the Data	Identified through workshops	Identified through the survey	UKSPF Allocation for WNC
Supporting Local Businesses	Funding (capital grants) for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas. Including capital funding for net zero infrastructure for rural businesses, and diversification of farm businesses outside of agriculture to encourage start up, expansion or scale up of these businesses where this involves converting farm buildings into other commercial or business uses	✓	✓	45%	N/A
	Funding (capital grants) for growing the local social economy and supporting innovation. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community businesses • cooperatives and social enterprises • research and development sites Corresponding with E26	✓		26%	£0
	Funding (capital grants) for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local attractions • trails • tourism products more generally Corresponding with E17		✓	29%	£0

Implications Arising & Emerging Recommendations



Intervention Selection

The next two tables bring together all of our analysis to date to help select relevant interventions.

Our thinking is that the funding pot is relatively small and as a result funding should be targeted at a few interventions which will have the greatest impact.

Interventions shaded in **green**, we feel should be taken forward and these have been selected for the following reasons:

- The data review suggested that there was a specific need which should be addressed
- The priority was selected at the thematic workshops
- The intervention achieved a scoring of 16% or over in the survey

Interventions shaded in **red**, we feel should not be taken forward.



Interventions: Community and Place

Intervention	UKSPF Funding	Data Review	Thematic Workshops	Survey	Comment
Funding (capital grants) for investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities. Corresponding with E15	£0	✓	✓	13%	96% of premises have access to superfast broadband. Large amounts of funding have gone into this and a small amount of additional funding will make a relatively small difference
Funding (capital grants) for investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups. Corresponding with E11	£134,971 revenue	✓	✓	20%	Yes- came across strongly throughout all stages of analysis
Funding (capital grants) for creation of and improvements to local rural green spaces. Corresponding with E3	£0	✓		14%	Did not come across strongly at workshops.
Funding (capital grants) for existing cultural, historic and heritage institutions that make up the local cultural heritage offer. Corresponding with E4	£0		✓	8%	Did not come across strongly through data analysis or survey.
Funding (capital grants) for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities. Corresponding with E6	£0			4%	Did not come across strongly at any stage.
Funding (capital grants) for active travel enhancements in the local area. Corresponding with E7	£927,199 capital	✓	✓	16%	Yes – came across strongly throughout all stages
Funding (capital grants) for rural circular economy projects. New Intervention	n/a		✓	14%	Not identified through data analysis but did come across strongly elsewhere.
Funding (capital grants) for impactful volunteering and social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places. Corresponding with E9	£134,971 revenue	✓		10%	Did not across strongly through workshops or survey

Interventions: Supporting Local Business

Intervention	UKSPF Funding	Data Review	Thematic Workshops	Survey	Comment
Funding (capital grants) for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas. Including capital funding for net zero infrastructure for rural businesses, and diversification of farm businesses outside of agriculture to encourage start up, expansion or scale up of these businesses where this involves converting farm buildings into other commercial or business uses. New intervention	n/a	✓	✓ ✓	45%	Yes – came across strongly at all stages, including the workshops and survey.
Funding (capital grants) for growing the local social economy and supporting innovation. This includes; (1) community businesses, (2) cooperatives and social enterprises, (3) research and development sites Corresponding with E26	£0	✓		26%	There seemed to be a consensus during the workshops and consultations that there was less demand for funding in this area under LEADER.
Funding (capital grants) for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy, such as; (1) local attractions, (2) trails, (3) tourism products more generally Corresponding with E17	£0		✓	29%	There are other funds being spent on this nationally and therefore it may be less of a priority.

Recommendations on Funding

Annual spending profile – DEFRA has confirmed the annual split for the funding as tabled below. The benefit of more money being spent in Year 2 is that it allow time to plan for and deliver the funding.

Year 1	Year 2
25%	75%
£341,988	£1,025,965

Priority Spend: the survey suggested 58% should be spent on SLB and 42% C&P and consultations agree. The economy is fragile even at a national level and therefore investing in business support can help to boost the economy.

Supporting Local Business (SLB)	Community and Place (C&P)
60%	40%
£820,772	£547,181

Recommendation on Funding

Community and Place

We would advise that an equal split of funding is made to the following two interventions. If 40% of funding is directed towards this priority, this would amount to the following:

- Funding (capital grants) for active travel enhancements in the local area. Corresponding with E7 - **£273,591** (this would be on top of £927,199 UKSPF capital funding)
- Funding (capital grants) for investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups (Corresponding with E11) - **£273,591** (on top of £134,972 UKSPF revenue funding)

Supporting Local Business

If 60% of funding is directed towards this priority, this would amount to the following:

- Funding (capital grants) for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas (see full description) – **£820,772**

REPF Project Examples



REPF Project Ideas

As part of the REPF Survey, stakeholders were given the opportunity to submit any project ideas that could be funded through REPF.

The stakeholders were asked to submit a project description, information on which REPF theme(s) and intervention(s) the project would align with, any information they could provide on potential outputs and outcomes and the cost and funding required.

20 projects were submitted by stakeholders, none of which provided information about costs or funding required.

More information about these projects is provided as follows. This only provides an indication of the supply side and types of projects which could be selected by West Northamptonshire Council for REPF funding.

Projects which align with the recommended interventions have been shaded in **green**.

REPF Project Ideas

Organisation Name	Project description	REPF Intervention
Northamptonshire Football Association	Improvement to grass football pitches and multi-sport facilities	E3
Ngage Solutions/Bucks Business First	With my current role being LEADER programme manager and land-based business specialist working across the Northamptonshire area, I am often the go to person for many business and community groups looking at Rural Capital grants. As such, I know of 12 or so different projects/businesses looking to invest in developing their offer to customers and communities. Projects generally evolve around diversification of farm businesses into food and drink related activities, tourism destination development and also a green travel corridor. Various Supporting Local Business projects which have come forward to Ngage solutions over the past few weeks/months	E15, E3, E7, circular economy, E9, SLB1
JELLEY Distilleries Limited	A community hub and sustainably lead green space nestled in the heart of the beautiful Northamptonshire countryside, The Old Wood Yard is a truly hidden gem. With breath-taking views across our vineyard to the stunning Pitsford Reservoir beyond, this is a venue like no other which reflects the diverse, rich community and history that now makes up the modern West Northamptonshire area.	E15, E11, E3, E4, E6, E7, circular economy, E9, SLB1, SLB2, SLB3
Northamptonshire Britain's Best Surprise	Capacity. build for the sector via new DMO structure, better App / technology, online booking, county rebrand	SLB3
Tod Booth	Local museum and tourist information in Brackley	SLB3
Cecile Irvingswift	the renewal of the Brampton Valley Way. By making thebv w a proper cyclable route with all new signages for rural business, visitors attractions, wellbeing hub, volunteering group, school, social prescribing ...	E11, E3, E4,, E6, E7, circular economy, E9
Daventry Town Council	Investigate active transport to make transport focussed on need rather than timetables and investment in digital connectivity, so that poor connectivity (transport and digital) doesn't restrict businesses operating or growing.	SLB1
South Northants Active Travel Route Association (SNATRA)	An active travel route/shared use path between Crowfield and High Cross (Syresham) to provide safe access from the hamlet to the village, avoiding hazardous travel along the undersized B4525 and also to provide access to the proposed active travel route/shared use path between Brackley and Silverstone following the line of the A43.	E7
SEMLEPP	Green Recovery and Innovation Programme https://www.semlepgrowthhub.com/grip/	SLB1, SLB2, SLB3
Geoff Snell	On our farm we would like to expand our holiday cottage business To add three more eco friendly holiday cottages on the farm. Plus communal area, for meetings and parties etc.	E11, circular economy, E9, SLB1, SLB2, SLB3

REPF Project Ideas

Organisation Name	Project description	REPF Intervention
The Kelmarsh Trust	The Kelmarsh Hall would be interested in funding to assist with having EV Charging stations available to visitors to the Hall and Gardens	SLB1
Syresham Parish Council	Our parish is presently divided and it is impossible to gain access between the two parts except by car or a public footpath across fields. The footpath, however, can not be used during certain parts of the year, during periods of heavy rainfall and when the farmer has cattle with calves in the field.	E7
Crick Parish Council	Regeneration of Community Hub Crick Old School to include better insulation, refurbishment and modernisation of kitchen position and equipment so that it would be capable of supporting a social enterprise and/or food and drink entrepreneurs looking to get accreditation for food production. Equipping kitchen/modernising kitchen equipment for increased energy efficiency. Creation of a co-working space alongside the fledgling community hub, which supports third agers and vulnerable members of the community.	E11, E4, E9
Hartwell Community Centre	Renewal of the Hartwell Community Centre (Replacement of the building) The building is now 32 years old - build in 1990 to a basic steel frame/breeze block construction. Anticipated life was 25-30yrs, therefore certainly by end of this decade, the building will not be fit for purpose The Hartwell Community Centre is the only community space in Hartwell/Salcey, and therefore provides VITAL facilities to the parish (onsite preschool, 7 youth clubs, 2 adult clubs) along with a significant playground. The building is starting to fail, and requires continuous investment to keep it operational - if the building was to become not fit for purpose, the preschool, and other offerings would immediately cease, creating a significant impact to the parish (employment and social/wellbeing/childcare) The community centre is more than just a social space. During the Covid19 pandemic, it was at the forefront in offering support to the parish - food bank / food parcels / meals on wheels etc). This was possibility the largest volunteer led effort in West Northants, and was recognised by Andrea Leadsome with a Community Champion award + Boris Johnson with a point of light award Any replacement building would strongly push the community support message . We would build upon the successes during covid, and provide a permanent "wellbeing focused" initiative (eg food bank) We intend to offer a library space / social cafe (not currently available in the parish), which would in turn offer employment possibility to the parish/beyond	E11, E3, E9
Elizabeth Bowen	Work with Moulton Agric College on farm machinery automation Open up the grant to farmers in WNC ...by application with specific measurable criteria. There are lots of small farm business's with discussed buildings ripe for capital investment. Do a bid PR campaign to attract applicants. Provide support by Louis and Econ team to help fill in the application form. Do not make complicated and offer on line and in paper as many farmers are not very technologically minded. (not another RPA digitalisation of forms gone wrong!)	SLB1, SLB2
Kevin Jeffery	Wind turbine(s) for villages	E11

REPF Project Ideas

Organisation Name	Project description	REPF Intervention
Blisworth Parish Council	<p>Transport infrastructure review along with understanding the HGV and traffic demands on rural road networks at peak transport times. This to support investment in the rural road networks, cycle ways and footpaths to which there is no a cohesive plan to address the increasing demands. Good example of a traffic infrastructure improvement project would be provision of pavements where none currently exist in rural areas. In Blisworth, we really need a pavement from the exit from the car park above the tunnel portal to the allotments. Lots of people walk this and I fear that one of these days there will be a nasty accident. Another project idea is much greater provision of public electric car charging points. For example there are none at all in Blisworth.</p> <p>With HMG policy to phase out petrol and diesel cars in relatively short order, there will be increasing demand for public car charging, particularly for people who do not have driveways and have to park their cars on the road</p>	E11, E7, E9
Stephen Clarke	<p>I would like to see the creation of an unbroken STN through: Northampton and its rural hinterland and back. The project elements: route development, transport hubs, low carbon vehicle development; feasibility study and demonstrators for EV and micro-mobility together with greater use of community transport, improved cycle paths and walking routes to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help local people access services • Support the growth of the rural economy • Benefit physical and mental health via their rural economic regeneration and their unbroken sustainable transport network. 	E11, E7, circular economy, E9
Blisworth Parish Council	<p>A mapping of skills need across the county through local business infrastructure to understand the demands on education beyond warehousing and distribution. Also a plan to ensure that the county attracts other business into the county based on some of the key rural attributes that we have.</p> <p>Another possible project might be to review and improve the co-ordination/cooperation between Highways and the Council when developing road/traffic management plans to ensure that the views of, and impact on, rural communities and surrounding villages are better considered and represented.</p>	SLB3
The Mallows Company	<p>A reworking of the successful FEAST2 programme with a focus on rural Food and Drink businesses or Farm Diversification with access to capital funding (part matched), assessed by jobs created and safeguarded, new product development and business growth. Taking the lessons from FEAST2 and offering specific support to those businesses that will both enhance the local area (many farm diversifications with food and drink offer visitor opportunities) and reinvigorating local economies. The tailored support provides connections to learning (Northampton and Moulton Colleges, UoN, etc) and alerts to potential planning and development (growth) enquiries. In the West Northamptonshire area there is the opportunity to get a deeper understanding of gaps in the market and enhance the commercial offer across public and large organisation food and drink procurement. Some of this work is happening already but a commissioned project could be tailored to provide valuable information for WN officers about the sector and its impact. FEAST2 brings in voluntary mentors from the sector who are trained to model and encourage sustainable growth. We are negotiating with a Sustainability platform for free provision for West Northamptonshire food and drink businesses to access to demonstrate their journey towards sustainability.</p>	SLB1



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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

TUESDAY 17 JANUARY 2023

CABINET MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION – COUNCILLOR FIONA BAKER

Report Title	Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled West Northamptonshire schools for 2024 intakes
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Report Author	Shazia Umer shazia.umer@westnorthants.gov.uk
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Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

West MO	Catherine Whitehead	05/01/2023
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Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	04/01/2023

List of Appendices

Appendix A - "Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in West Northamptonshire for 2024 intakes"

Appendix B – EQIA screening assessment

1. Purpose of Report

The local authority (LA) has a duty to act in accordance with the statutory provisions of the School Admissions Code (2021) and with laws relating to school admissions. School admission arrangements for all schools must be agreed annually and it is the duty of admission authorities to ensure that admission arrangements are compliant with the School Admissions Code. The purpose of this report is to provide the necessary information to allow the Council to determine

the admission arrangements for its schools (Community and Voluntary Controlled schools) for the 2024 intakes.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 Admission Arrangements:

There are no other proposed changes to the admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools. No consultation was required.

- **Appendix A** “Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in West Northamptonshire for 2024 intakes”.

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet/Committee:

- a) approve the admission arrangements as detailed in Appendix A

4. Reason for Recommendations

4.1 The above is a statutory requirement

5. Report Background

5.1 All admission authorities must determine admission arrangements every year, even if they have not changed from the previous year and no consultation has been required. This is a statutory requirement that must be carried out by 28 February in the determination year.

6. Issues and Choices

6.1 The admission arrangements remain unchanged from the previous year.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

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

7.2 Legal

The legal implications are set out below in the risk section. In essence the Council must fulfil its statutory obligations in relation to its admission arrangements.

7.3 Risks

1) Risk – That West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) does not fulfil statutory obligations as required by the School Admissions Code (2021). Mitigation – WNC must determine the admission arrangements for 2024 for its Community and Voluntary Controlled schools by 28 February 2023.

2) Risk - Admission arrangements may be considered to be unfair or not compliant with the School Admissions Code. A consequence of this could be that WNC would be reported to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator. Mitigation – admission policies have been checked for compliance with the School Admissions Code (2021).

7.4 Consultation

Consultation was not necessary as per the School Admissions Code (2021) as no changes have been proposed to the admission arrangements for 2024 intakes.

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

There are no proposals for Overview and Scrutiny to consider this report.

7.6 Climate Impact

No implications arising from any recommendations that are being proposed.

7.7 Community Impact

No implications arise

7.8 Communications

No implications

8. Background Papers

8.1 School Admissions Code (2021) [School admissions code 2021 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/102122/school-admissions-code-2021.pdf)

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Admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools in West Northamptonshire (2024 intakes)

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1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Explain **how to apply** for a place at community and voluntary controlled schools in West Northamptonshire
- Set out the schools' arrangements for allocating places to those who apply
- Explain **how to appeal** against a decision not to offer your child a place

2. Admission Authorities

The admission authority of a school varies according to the type of school. As shown below in Table 1, the local authority (WNC) is responsible for determining the admission arrangements of community and voluntary controlled schools.

Table 1: Admission authorities and school type (governance)

Type of school	Admission Authority
Academies/Free Schools/UTCs	Academy Trust
Community Schools	Local Authority
Foundation Schools	Governing Body
Voluntary Aided (VA) Schools	Governing Body
Voluntary Controlled (VC) Schools	Local Authority

3. How to apply for a place in the Normal Admissions Round

The **normal admissions round** is the period during which parents/carers can apply for state-funded school places at a school's normal point of entry (reception for primary and infant schools and year 3 for junior schools), using the Common Application Form (CAF) provided by their home local authority.

Parents/carers should use the application form provided by their home local authority (regardless of which local authority the schools are in) to express a preference for a minimum of 3 state-funded schools, in rank order.

All parents/carers who submit an on-time application (i.e., by midnight on 15 January) will receive an offer for a school place directly from their local authority on National Offer Day (16 April or the next working day).

Parents/carers living in the West Northamptonshire Council area should visit the [WNC School Admissions website](#).

Please note: attendance at a particular nursery that may be attached to or run by a school, does not guarantee admission at that school. An application must be made for any transfer from nursery to primary/infant school, and from infant to junior school.

4. Allocation of places at community and voluntary controlled schools in West Northamptonshire

Community and voluntary controlled schools in West Northamptonshire are mostly organised into two generic groups. The schools in each of these groups generally share the same oversubscription criteria, although certain features of a school's admission arrangements may vary from school to school (e.g., the Published Admission Number (PAN) and linked area). The groups are as follows:

- Primary and infant schools – rural
- Primary schools – urban

The oversubscription criteria for each of these groups are listed below, along with specific details of each school within the group. The community and voluntary controlled schools which have over-subscription criteria unique to their school are lists separately.

Abbreviations:

CE = Church of England (a voluntary controlled school)

CEVC = Church of England Voluntary Controlled

PAN = Published Admission Number

2.1 Primary schools – rural

School	PAN	Linked Area
Ashton CE Primary School	8	Ashton
Blisworth Community Primary School	30	Blisworth
Bramptons Primary School, The	14	Chapel Brampton, Church Brampton
Brington Primary School	10	Brington, Nobottle, Whilton, Whilton Locks
Brixworth CEVC Primary School	75	Brixworth, Scaldwell
Bugbrooke Community Primary School	30	Bugbrooke
Clipston Endowed VC Primary School	15	Arthingworth, Clipston, Great Oxendon, East Farndon, Hothorpe, Kelmarsh, Marston Trussel, Thorpe Lubenham
Cosgrove Village Primary School	9	Cosgrove
Crick Primary School	30	Crick
Croughton All Saints CE Primary School	20	Croughton
Denton Primary School	15	Brafield-on-the-Green, Denton
East Haddon CE Primary School	10	East Haddon, Holdenby
Flore CE Primary School	20	Brockhall, Flore
Gayton CE Primary School	12	Gayton
Greatworth Primary School	15	Greatworth, Marston St. Lawrence
Harlestone Primary School	8	Althorp, Harlestone
Harpole Primary School	30	Harpole
Helmdon Primary School	18	Astwell, Falcutt, Helmdon
John Hellins Primary School	30	Furtho, Potterspury
Long Buckby Infant School	54	Long Buckby, Buckby Wharf, Watford
Maidwell Primary School	10	Draughton, Faxton, Lamport, Hanging Houghton, Maidwell
Overstone Primary School	30	Overstone
Pattishall CE Primary School	27	Astcote, Cold Higham, Dalscote, Eastcote, Fosters Booth, Grimscote, Pattishall
Pitsford Primary School	10	Pitsford
Roade Primary School	60	Roade
Stoke Bruerne CE Primary School	12	Shutlanger, Stoke Bruerne
Syresham St. James CE Primary School	15	Crowfield, Syresham
Walgrave Primary School	24	Hannington, Holcot, Old, Walgrave

School	PAN	Linked Area
West Haddon Endowed CE Primary School	30	West Haddon, Winwick
Whittlebury CE Primary School	12	Whittlebury
Yardley Gobion CE Primary School	20	Grafton Regis, Yardley Gobion
Yardley Hastings Primary School	15	Yardley Hastings
Yelvertoft Primary School	20	Clay Coton, Lilbourne, Stanford, Yelvertoft

Table 2: Primary Schools (Rural)

How places are allocated

Places will first be allocated to children who have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan that names the school as appropriate provision.

Oversubscription Criteria

When there are more applications for the school than there are places available, priority will be given in the following order:

1. Looked after children and all previously looked after children
2. Children who live in the linked area for the school
3. Children with a sibling continuing at the school at the time of admission of the child
4. Other children

Allocation of places up to Published Admission Number (PAN)

If the PAN is exceeded within any criterion, priority will be given to applicants whose home address is closest to the school.

Tie-breaker

Where two or more applications cannot otherwise be separated, random allocation will be used to decide who is allocated a place.

2.2 Primary schools – urban

School	PAN
Barry Primary School	60
Boothville Primary School	90
Bridgewater Primary School	90
Chiltern Primary School	30
Delapre Primary School	90
Duston Eldean Primary School	60
Earl Spencer Primary School	60
Hopping Hill Primary School	60

School	PAN
Hunsbury Park Primary School	45
Kingsthorpe Grove Primary School	60
Kingsthorpe Village Primary School	30
Lyncrest Primary School	30
Millway Primary School	60
Vernon Terrace Primary School	30
Whitehills Primary School	60

Table 3: Primary Schools (Urban)

How places are allocated

Places will first be allocated to children who have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan that names the school as appropriate provision.

Oversubscription Criteria

When there are more applications for the school than there are places available, priority will be given in the following order:

1. Looked after children and all previously looked after children
2. Children with a sibling continuing at the school at the time of admission of the child
3. Children whose home address is closer to the preferred school than any other school
4. Other children

Allocation of places up to Published Admission Number (PAN)

If the PAN is exceeded within any criterion, priority will be given to applicants whose home address is closest to the school.

Tie-breaker

Where two or more applications cannot otherwise be separated, random allocation will be used to decide who is allocated a place.

2.3 Schools with unique oversubscription criteria

Brackley Junior School

The Published Admission Number (PAN) for the normal point of entry (year 3) is **60**.

Places will be allocated to children who have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan that names the school as appropriate provision.

Oversubscription Criteria

Where there are more applications for the school than there are places available, priority will be given in the following order:

1. Looked after children and all previously looked after children
2. Children who live in the linked area for the school: Halse, Radstone, Steane and Whitfield
3. Children with a sibling continuing at the school or Waynflete Infants' School at the time of admission of the child
4. Children who attend Waynflete Infants' School
5. Children whose home address is closer to the preferred school than any other school
6. Other children

Allocation of places up to Published Admission Number (PAN)

If the PAN is exceeded within any criterion, priority will be given to applicants whose home address is closest to the school.

Tie-breaker

Where two or more applications cannot otherwise be separated, random allocation will be used to decide who is allocated a place.

Grange School, The

The Published Admission Number (PAN) for the normal point of entry (reception) is **60**.

Places will be allocated to children who have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan that names the school as appropriate provision.

Oversubscription Criteria

Where there are more applications for the school than there are places available, priority will be given in the following order:

1. Looked after children and all previously looked after children
2. Children who live in the linked area for the school
3. Children with a sibling continuing at the school at the time of admission of the child
4. Children whose home address is closer to the preferred school than any other school
5. Other children

Allocation of places up to Published Admission Number (PAN)

If the PAN is exceeded within any criterion, priority will be given to applicants whose home address is closest to the school.

Tie-breaker

Where two or more applications cannot otherwise be separated, random allocation will be used to decide who is allocated a place.

Linked Area

Drayton and the Middlemore Development

Long Buckby Infant School

The Published Admission Number (PAN) for the normal point of entry (reception) is **54**.

Places will be allocated to children who have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan that names the school as appropriate provision.

Oversubscription Criteria

Where there are more applications for the school than there are places available, priority will be given in the following order:

- 1.** Looked after children and all previously looked after children
- 2.** Children who live in Long Buckby, Buckby Wharf or Watford
- 3.** Children who have a sibling continuing at the school or Long Buckby Junior School at the time of admission of the child
- 4.** Other children

Allocation of places up to Published Admission Number (PAN)

If the PAN is exceeded within any criterion, priority will be given to applicants whose home address is closest to the school.

Tie-breaker

Where two or more applications cannot otherwise be separated, random allocation will be used to decide who is allocated a place.

Long Buckby Junior School

The Published Admission Number (PAN) for the normal year of entry (year 3) is **54**.

Places will be allocated to children who have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan that names the school as appropriate provision.

Oversubscription Criteria

Where there are more applications for the school than there are places available, priority will be given in the following order:

- 1.** Looked after children and all previously looked after children
- 2.** Children who live in Long Buckby, Buckby Wharf or Watford
- 3.** Children who have a sibling continuing at the school or Long Buckby Infant School at the time of admission of the child
- 4.** Children who attend Long Buckby Infant School
- 5.** Other children

Allocation of places up to Published Admission Number (PAN)

If the PAN is exceeded within any criterion, priority will be given to applicants whose home address is closest to the school.

Tie-breaker

Where two or more applications cannot otherwise be separated, random allocation will be used to decide who is allocated a place.

5. Definitions

5.1 Looked After Children (LAC)

A 'looked after child' is a child who, at the time of making an application to a school, is:

- a) In the care of a local authority, or
- b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in exercise of its social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989)

5.2 Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)

Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they:

- a) were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see Section 12 adoption orders) or the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see Section 46 adoption orders), or
- b) became subject to a child arrangements order (as defined in Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 and as amended by Section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014), or
- c) became subject to a special guardianship order (see Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 which defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians)).

This includes children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

5.3 Sibling

A sibling is defined as a child's brother or sister. A sibling must be living at the same permanent address and as part of the same family unit (one or two parents plus children) to qualify for a sibling link. For School Admissions purposes, the term sibling includes:

- half-brothers and half-sisters
- step-brothers and step-sisters
- adopted children
- children in foster care
- children living in the same family unit, even if they are not biological brothers and sisters – for example when the parents are not married/in a civil relationship.

Cousins are not regarded as siblings.

Please note: for infant schools, the sibling link will also exist if the sibling is attending the linked junior school.

5.4 Home Address (child's)

The child's home address is defined as the address at which the child normally resides with their parent/carer on the closing date for applications (15 January).

When we refer to a child's home address, we mean the permanent residence of the child. This address should be the child's only or main residence which is;

- owned by the child's parents/carers, or
- leased to or rented by the child's parents/carers under a lease or written rental agreement of not less than six months' duration.

When parents live separately and the child spends time with each parent, the home address will be treated as the place where the child sleeps for most of the school week (i.e., Sunday night – Thursday night inclusive).

If the child spends equal amounts of time at two addresses, the parents must agree which address they wish to be the child's main address.

Places cannot be allocated on the basis of an intended future change of address unless house moves have been confirmed through the exchange of contracts or signing of a formal lease.

Documentary evidence of ownership or rental agreement may be required together with proof of actual permanent residence at the property concerned.

6. Multiple Birth Groups

In the case of twins or other siblings from a multiple birth, if the last child to be admitted to a particular school is from a multiple birth group, all other children in the group will be offered places at the school, even if it means exceeding the Published Admission Number.

In the case of siblings (see definition above) in the same year group, where there is only one place remaining, these too will be considered as one application.

7. Distance Measurements

Distances are measured on a straight-line basis from the address point of the child's home to the address point of the school, using a geographical information system. Each address has a unique address point established by the most valuable elements from the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NPLG), Ordnance Survey Master Map, Royal Mail Postal Address File and The Valuation Office Agency. The address point for a property does not change.

In the case where there are multiple applications from the same shared dwelling (e.g., flats) or where the distance between two or more children's homes to the school (using the system referred to above) is identical, random allocation will be used to decide which child gets priority. Random allocation will be carried out by someone independent of the school.

8. Children below Compulsory School Age

Where children below compulsory school age are offered a place at the school, they will be entitled to attend the school full-time in the September following their fourth birthday.

Parents/carers may defer their child's entry to the allocated school until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which the child reaches compulsory school age, and not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the offer was made when the place will cease to be available for the child.

Where parents/carers wish, children may attend part-time until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age.

9. Admission outside the normal age group

Parents may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. In addition, the parents of a summer born child may choose not to send that child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group – to reception rather than year 1.

7.1 Requests for admission to reception outside the normal age group (summer born children)

All children are entitled to a full-time school place in the September following their 4th birthday and most parents are happy for their child to start school at this point. However, parents/carers of summer born children (those born between 1 April and 31 August) who do not reach compulsory school age until a full year after they would normally start school, may wish to delay their child's start to school until the September following the child's 5th birthday.

If parents wish to delay their summer born child's start at school until the September after their 5th birthday, there are 2 options:

1. Parents can make an in-year application for a **year 1** place for the September following their child's 5th birthday as other children in the child's age group already attending school will be moving from reception to year 1 at this point. It is important to remember that some schools are likely to be full in year 1 and unable to offer a place
2. If parents do not want their child to miss their reception year, they may request that their child is admitted out of their normal age group i.e., into reception instead of year 1. Please note, this is a 'request' and parents do not have the right to insist that their child is admitted to a particular age group. The school's admission authority is responsible for making the decision about which year group a child should be admitted to.

Parents/carers of summer born children who wish to delay their child's school start by a full year but would like them to start in Reception, should still make their application for a Reception place for their child's normal year of entry before the primary application deadline of **15 January** in the offer year (the academic year in which the child turns 4). If a delay is agreed, this application can be withdrawn.

Parent/carers should also, if possible, make their request for admission out of the normal age group to the admission authority (WNC) by the same date - **15 January**. This is to enable sufficient time for requests to be processed prior to National Offer Day (16 April or the next working day). Requests will however still be considered after this date.

Parents/carers requests to apply for a Reception place at a WNC community or voluntary controlled school for the September following their child's 5th birthday should be made in writing to admissions@westnorthants.gov.uk. In their request, parents/carers should identify which school they would like to make their request for and provide some information about their child to explain why they think that their child should be educated out of their normal age group and start school in Reception rather than year 1. It is important for parents/carers to provide any additional evidence to support their request if they have any as this information will help the admission authority to make their decision on

the appropriate year group for the child, e.g., parents/carers may be able to provide a report from the child's Early Years setting or evidence from a health or social care professional.

The request will then be considered by WNC who have to decide on the appropriate year group for the child. The decision will be made on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. This will include taking account of:

- the parent's/carer's views
- information about the child's academic, social and emotional development
- where relevant, the child's medical history and the views of a medical professional
- whether the child may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely
- the head teacher's views

What happens next?

Parents/carers will be informed of WNC's decision on which year group the child should be admitted to when they start school (i.e., reception or year 1).

What happens if the request is approved?

If the request to be admitted outside normal age group is approved by WNC, parents/carers will need to make an application for a place in Reception in the normal round of admissions in the following academic year and if an application for the normal reception year has been submitted, this can be withdrawn.

Please note – this does not mean that a child has been, or will be, offered a place in the reception year at their chosen school. If, in the following normal admissions round, the school is oversubscribed, all applications (including applications for children who are starting reception out of the normal age group) for the school will be ranked in accordance with the school's oversubscription admission criteria and places offered up to the school's published admission number.

What happens if the request is refused?

If the request to be admitted outside normal age group is rejected by WNC and it is decided that the appropriate year for the children to start school at compulsory school age is year 1, parents/carers have to decide whether to accept a reception place in the normal year of entry, delay their child's start until the September after their 5th birthday and apply for a Year 1 place, or make a request to the admission authorities of other schools to see if they will accept an application for Reception outside the normal age group..

Parents/carers who are unhappy with WNC's decision on the appropriate year group for their child to start school at compulsory school age, should put their complaint in writing.

Parents/carers whose requests for delayed entry into Reception are refused (i.e., WNC has decided that the appropriate year group in which a child should start school is year 1), do not have the right to appeal this decision. They have the right to appeal against the refusal of a place at a school for which they have applied but this right does not apply if they are offered a place at the school, but it is not in their preferred age group.

7.2 General requests for admission outside the normal age group

Parents/carers wishing to seek a place for their child out of their normal age group at a community or voluntary controlled school, must put their request in writing to the School Admissions team at admissions@westnorthants.gov.uk giving reasons why they are requesting a place out of the normal age group and supplying any evidence they feel is relevant as well as submitting an in-year application to the local authority.

The LA (WNC), as the admission authority of the school, will consider the request and make a decision on the appropriate year group for the child on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned which will include taking account of:

- the parent's/carer's views

- information about the child's academic, social and emotional development
- where relevant, the child's medical history and the views of a medical professional
- whether the child has previously been educated out of their normal age group
- whether the child may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely
- the views of the Head teacher at the school concerned

WNC will set out clearly for parents the reasons for their decision about the year group a child should be admitted to prior to the application being processed.

Parents and carers do not have a right to appeal if they are offered a place at the school but it is not in their preferred age group.

10. Children moving to the UK from overseas

Documentary evidence to verify an address may be required if an application is made following a move to the UK or as a result of an impending move to the UK. A copy of the rental agreement or an exchange of contract letter is usually sufficient. WNC reserves the right to seek further documentary evidence as necessary.

11. Children of UK Service Personnel (UK Armed Forces) and Crown Servants

Special conditions apply to applications from UK Armed Service Personnel and Crown Servants. For families of service personnel with confirmed posting to their area, or crown servants returning from overseas to live in that area, the admission authority will endeavour to allocate a place in advance of the family arriving in the area, provided the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date and a Unit postal address or quartering area address.

12. Late Applications

Late applications are any common application forms (for the normal point of entry) received by the local authority after its statutory deadline of 15 January. Late applicants will not receive an offer of a school place by the local authority on National Offer Day (16 April or the next working day).

Late applications will be processed in the subsequent rounds of allocations between May and July (for more details, refer to the local authority's composite prospectus on the WNC website).

13. In year applications

An in-year admission refers to an application for a school place made during the school year or an application for admission to a school made at the start of the school year for any year group other than the normal year of entry. The normal years of entry are: Reception for entry to primary schools and year 3 for entry to junior schools.

Applications for in-year admissions to voluntary controlled and community schools in West Northamptonshire, should be made online to the local authority on WNC's website and places will be allocated according to the school's oversubscription criteria.

14. Waiting Lists

Following an unsuccessful application, parents/carers can request that their child's name be placed on the waiting list.

Waiting lists for all community and voluntary controlled schools are held for all year groups by the LA and will be ranked according to the school's oversubscription criteria. Priority will not be given to children on the basis that they have been on the waiting list the longest.

Waiting lists will be held until 31 December. If you wish your child's name to remain on the waiting list for the remainder of the academic year, you will need to inform the School Admissions team, in writing via email, by the start of each subsequent term (i.e., during the Christmas and Easter breaks) to renew your interest. A new application will be required for a new academic year.

15. Appeals

If a parent/carer's application for a place at the school is unsuccessful, they will be informed why admission was refused and have the right of appeal against the decision not to offer their child a place at the school.

Parents or carers wishing to appeal should complete the online appeal form on the WNC website. Please visit [the Appeals page](#) for more information and to complete the form.

If parents or carers wish to submit supporting evidence after lodging their appeal, it should be e-mailed to appealsteam.NCC@westnorthants.gov.uk within 10 working days of the submission of the appeal.

Appeals against decisions not to offer a place at a school in the normal admissions round, must be lodged in writing, giving the reasons for appeal, by the date published on the Appeals website. Appeals submitted after this deadline will still be heard, but there is no guarantee they will be heard before the end of the school year in which the application is made.

NB: For appeals concerning places not offered during the normal admissions round, i.e., in-year places, appeals should be submitted within 30 school days of refusal of a place.

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Equality Screening Assessment

The Equality Screening Assessment form must be completed to evidence what impact the proposal may have on equality groups within our community or workforce. Any proposal that identifies a negative impact must have a full Equality Impact Assessment completed before the proposal progresses further.

1: Proposal

Requirement	Detail
Title of proposal	School admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for 2024 intakes.
Type of proposal: new policy / change to policy / new service / change to service / removal of service / project / event/ budget	Annual determination of school admission arrangements – this is for the 2024 intakes. No changes to admission arrangements from 2023.
What is the objective of this proposal?	Statutory requirement to determine admission arrangements by 28 Feb each year for the next academic year (admission arrangements are set annually)
Has there been/when will there be consultation on this proposal? (List all the groups / communities, including dates)	None required
Did the consultation on this proposal highlight any positive or negative impact on protected groups? (If yes, give details)	N/A
What processes are in place to monitor and review the impact of this proposal?	Admission arrangements are reviewed annually and are set for a single academic year – any proposed changes must be consulted on prior to determination.

Requirement	Detail
Who will approve this proposal? (Committee, SLT)	Cabinet

2: Equality Consideration

In turn, consider each protected group to ensure we meet our legal obligations of the Equality Act (2010).

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations	Changes	Impact
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include factual evidence of how people in this group may be affected. • Consider the outcomes and processes. • Does this seek to eliminate discrimination? • Does this promote fostering good relations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes can be made to mitigate any negative impact? • Are there opportunities to remove possible barriers or disadvantages that a group may face? 	Delete as appropriate. There can be more than one answer per protected group.
Age Different age groups that may be affected by the proposal in different ways.	Not affected – The School Admissions Code (2021) to which local authorities and admission authorities must adhere, in itself seeks to eliminate any discrimination to any of the protected groups. By remaining compliant with the “Code” we are ensuring these groups are not affected.		Neutral
Sex Is one sex affected more than another or are they affected the same?	Not affected		Neutral
Disability It is likely to have an effect on a particular type of disability? Why?	Not affected		Neutral

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations	Changes	Impact
<p>Gender Reassignment</p> <p>Will there be an impact on trans males and/or trans females?</p>	<p>Not affected</p>		<p>Neutral</p>
<p>Race</p> <p>Are people from one ethnic group affected more than people from another ethnic group?</p>	<p>Not affected</p>		<p>Neutral</p>
<p>Sexual Orientation</p> <p>Are people of one sexual orientation affected differently to people of another sexual orientation?</p>	<p>Not affected</p>		<p>Neutral</p>
<p>Marriage & Civil Partnership</p> <p>Are people in a Marriage or Civil Partnership treated less favourably?</p>	<p>Not affected</p>		<p>Neutral</p>
<p>Pregnancy & Maternity</p> <p>Are people who are pregnant, or have a baby of 6 months old or younger, effected by this proposal?</p>	<p>Not affected</p>		<p>Neutral</p>
<p>Religion or Belief</p> <p>Does the proposal effect people differently depending on whether they</p>	<p>Not affected</p>		<p>Neutral</p>

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations	Changes	Impact
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include factual evidence of how people in this group may be affected. • Consider the outcomes and processes. • Does this seek to eliminate discrimination? • Does this promote fostering good relations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes can be made to mitigate any negative impact? • Are there opportunities to remove possible barriers or disadvantages that a group may face? 	Delete as appropriate. There can be more than one answer per protected group.
have or do not have a religion or a belief?			
Health & Wellbeing 1. Health behaviours (E.g. diet, exercise, alcohol, smoking) 2. Support (E.g. community cohesion, rural isolation) 3. Socio economic (E.g. income, education). 4. Environment (E.g., green spaces, fuel poverty, housing standards).	Not affected		Neutral

3: Equality Impact

Question	Response
What overall impact does the proposal have on the protected groups? If a negative impact is identified anywhere in section 2, the response will be Negative Impact.	No impact
Does an Equality Impact Assessment need to be completed? (Yes, if any negative impact is found.)	No
Copy attached to relevant report?	Yes
Is this document going to be published with the relevant report?	No

4: Ownership

Question	Response
Directorate	Education
Service area	School Admissions
Lead officer's name	Jo Savage
Lead officer's job title	Team Leader
Lead officer's contact details	Jo.savage@westnorthants.gov.uk
Lead officer's signature	<i>Jo Savage</i>
Date completed	08.12.2022

Completed forms must be sent to equalities@westnorthants.gov.uk

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

17th JANUARY 2023

CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR HOUSING, CULTURE AND LEISURE - COUNCILLOR ADAM BROWN

Report Title	West Northamptonshire Council-Northamptonshire Partnership Homes Governance Framework
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List of Appendices

Appendix A – WNC – NPH Governance Framework

Appendix B – WNC – NPH Governance Framework – Implementation Approach and Plan

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To note the governance arrangement framework in place with West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) and Northamptonshire Partnership Homes (NPH) and the subsequent implementation of these arrangements.

2. Executive Summary

1.1. Northamptonshire Partnership Homes (formally Northampton Partnership Homes) was formed in 2015 to take on the management of housing stock for Northampton Borough Council, now West Northamptonshire Council. The company was formed as an ALMO (arms-length management organisation) and remains a subsidiary and provider of essential services for West Northamptonshire Council.

1.2. The key services that NPH currently provide are:

- Housing Management
- Repairs and Maintenance
- Allocations and lettings
- Tenancy support
- Tenant engagement
- New build housing and development
- Management of Ecton Lane traveller site
- Investment of existing stock

1.3 With the establishment of West Northamptonshire Council in April 2021, it was acknowledged that there was a requirement to create a framework to give better structure to the relationship between WNC and NPH. This needed to be supported by clear reporting, improved governance and effective performance management, whilst recognising the need for flexibility in delivery.

1.4 Although there is a Management Agreement in place, which sets out the responsibilities of the Council and NPH to manage the Council's housing stock, it was recognised that this needs to be improved and is not deemed to be providing a suitable framework in which to manage the relationship.

1.5 The WNC/NPH Governance framework purpose is to:

- Establish and inform a robust governance structure and partnership approach through WNC-NPH activities,
- Establish and maintain inter-organisational cultural values of transparency, openness, and joint-partnership within all levels of the WNC-NPH relationship,

- Establish and ensure clarity in decision-making, intelligence sharing, and assurance activities,
- Facilitate appropriate levels of assurance and compliance between organisations pertaining to the statutory and regulatory requirements,
- Formulise and treat shared risks and issues pertaining to the WNC-NPH relationship, and
- Establish clear lines of accountability, roles, and responsibilities between the organisations and further support collaboration and co-creation within the WNC-NPH relationship.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 3.1 Note the contents of the WNC-NPH Governance Framework and Implementation Plan

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 To ensure that there is a robust oversight and assurance in delivering landlord services.

5. Issues and choices

- 5.1 Background to the report

5.2 The need for more robust governance arrangements is set against a wider context of key changes to legislation and regulation which resets the relationship between social housing tenants and their landlords. The Regulator of Social Housing and the new Building Safety Regulator will hold the landlord (WNC) as responsible for meeting the regulatory standards and will be held to account for the performance and the impact on tenants of how their homes are managed. These accountabilities cannot be passed on to NPH (the ALMO). It is incumbent on the LA as the landlord to ensure the homes it owns are safe.

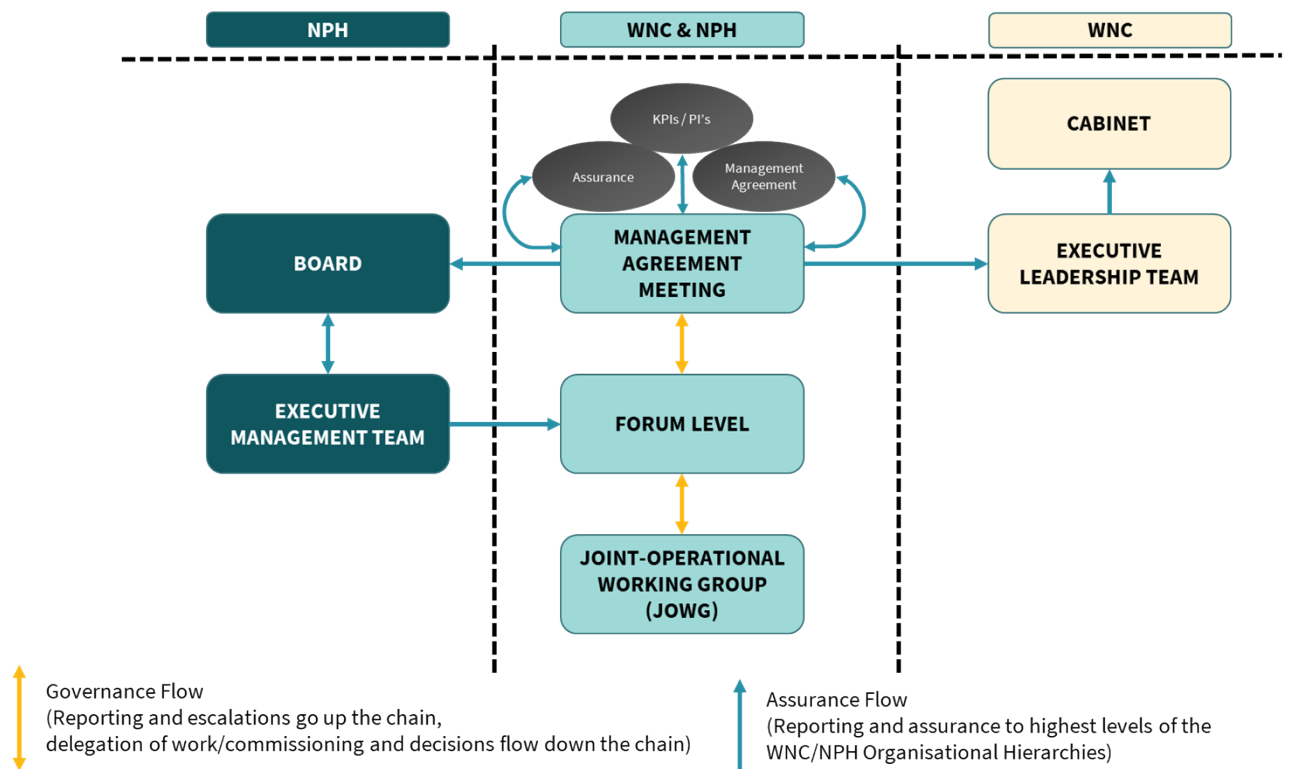
- 5.3 Some of the key changes are:

- Introduction of tenant satisfaction measures to monitor performance (need to be implemented by April 2023)
- A strengthened and more proactive Housing Ombudsman whose role supports the work of the Regulator of Social Housing
- New Building Safety Act 2022 – safety requirements for landlords of higher-risk buildings.

- 5.4 This governance framework is key to the WNC-NPH relationship. It supports the delivery of WNC and NPH strategies and drives accountability, addressing statutory and regulatory assurance.

5.5 A good practice document produced by Councils with ALMOs Group (CWAG) was comprehensively used to develop the framework. This report highlighted that a strong relationship between the local authority and ALMO has to be underpinned by explicit structures that set out clearly defined roles and responsibilities for both organisations and individuals. A fundamental principle underpinning governance framework is openness and transparency, which is a two-way relationship between WNC and NPH to allow the relationship to mature and develop.

5.6 The Governance Framework will be structured through three areas of the WNC /NPH relationship. The table below outlines the function at each level, including key responsibilities and roles.



5.7 As illustrated, by the table above, there are three key governance levels, each with a distinct purpose:

1) Joint operational working groups

Groups that are structured around the day-to-day management of service areas within the WNC/NPH relationship. They allow NPH and WNC representatives to discuss specific problems, day-to-day risk and issues, and progress joint operational activities.

2) Forum meeting

There are three Forum level meetings pertaining to People, Place and Finance and Resources. The Forums are the formal elements of the governance framework and cover high level discussions, assurance monitoring and where appropriate, approvals and escalations on the relevant areas. The Place and the Finance and Resource Forums will take place monthly, and the People Forum will take place on a weekly basis.

5.8 The table below represents the areas that each Forum will discuss:

Place Forum	People Forum	Finance and Resource Forum
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ WNC Housing Strategy ▪ NPH Development Strategy ▪ Development Programmes ▪ NPH Asset Strategy ▪ Health and Safety ▪ Building Safety ▪ Affordable Housing Development ▪ Sustainability Strategy/Policies ▪ Regeneration Activities ▪ Traveller Site Investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Customer and Resident experience ▪ Tenant Engagement ▪ Complaints ▪ Cases & Severe Casework ▪ Allocation services ▪ Public Health Strategies ▪ Income & Rental collection impact ▪ Traveller Site Activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Financial Performance ▪ HRA Fund ▪ Capital Fund ▪ General Fund ▪ Budget Variances ▪ Aids and Adaption Budgets ▪ Disaster Recovery & Business Continuity Plans ▪ Rental Increases ▪ Income & Rental collection ▪ Right-to-Buy ▪ Service Charges

3) Management Agreement meeting

This will have a specific remit around the oversight and development of the WNC-NPH Management agreement and enable monitoring of NPH's performance against the Management agreement. These meetings will take place on a quarterly basis.

5.9 The implementation of the governance arrangements has begun, with the first Place Forum being held in November, with the 2nd meeting scheduled for January. Meetings for the People and Finance and Resources Forum have been scheduled in diaries 2023/2024.

5.10 In addition to the implementation of the forums, to ensure that these new governance arrangements are embedded across the organisation meetings will be taking place with directorate teams.

6. Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Resources and Financial

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

6.2 Legal

There are no legal implications arising from the proposals.

6.3 Risk

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

6.4 Consultation

Staff from WNC and NPH have been fully involved in co-designing and co-creating the governance framework

6.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

None

6.6 Climate Impact

WNC and NPH are working together in line with the WNC Sustainability Strategy and the NPH Sustainability Strategy to proactively monitor our climate impact and make progress towards our commitment to Net Zero.

6.7 Community Impact

None

6.8 Communications

Further communications and engagement work will take place with directorates to ensure that the new governance arrangements are embedded across the organisation.



WNC-NPH Governance Framework

22 September 2022

4OC

Prepared for

West Northamptonshire Council and Northampton Partnership Homes

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Section 1: Governance Framework Overview

Governance Framework

Introduction

This document outlines how West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) effectively work together with their Housing ALMO, Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH).

It explains the WNC-NPH Governance Framework model, reflecting good governance standards that support the delivery of the WNC Corporate Strategy and NPH's Corporate Plan.

Overview to the Governance Framework

The WNC-NPH Governance Framework has been co-designed and co-created by WNC and NPH representatives. It includes structures and processes to drive accountability, joint-organisational alignment, risk, and issue management, provide regulatory assurance, and opportunity exploitation.

Its purpose is to:

- Establish and inform a robust governance structure and partnership approach through WNC-NPH activities,
- Establish and maintain inter-organisational cultural values of transparency, openness, and joint-partnership within all levels of the WNC-NPH relationship levels,
- Establish and ensure clarity in decision-making, intelligence sharing, and assurance activities,
- Facilitate appropriate levels of assurance and compliance between organisations pertaining to the statutory and regulatory requirements,
- Formulise and treat shared risks and issues pertaining to the WNC-NPH relationship, and
- Establish clear lines of accountability, roles, and responsibilities between the organisations and further support collaboration and co-creation within the WNC-NPH relationship.

WNC-NPH Governance Design Principles

The following design principles have been implemented through the framework and will support good governance:

1. Partnership Approach

The partnership approach throughout the WNC-NPH framework (and relationship) emphasises a culture of collaboration, co-creation, communication, and inter-organisational development. Through these principles, it is seen that both organisations offer unique and critical insights on technical and operational areas, which allow overall business effectiveness, innovation, and delivery. The partnership approach, as depicted within figure 1, builds on the following areas:

Partnership Approach

Good Communication and Relationship

Good communication and effective relationships between NPH and WNC is critical. Clear communication and relationship nodes are essential for developing a mature relationship, trust and empowerment.

WNC-NPH Governance Framework

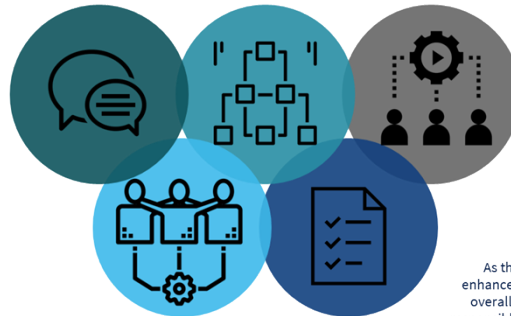
The Framework will be underpinned by explicit structures that set out clearly defined roles and responsibilities for both organisations and individuals. This will set out clear performance monitoring, reporting and parameters for reviewing arrangements as the relationship evolves.

NPH and WNC Strategic Alignment

Clearly alignment between WNC objectives and those of NPH are essential. This includes core housing management services and the wider portfolio of services delivered by NPH on behalf of WNC. It includes risks appetites, direction of travel and priorities.

Resourcing and Valuing Clienting Function

WNC will ensure that sufficient resources are in place for effective clienting relationship. This will both support and challenge the NPH, and commitments within WNC.



Setting Roles and Responsibilities

As the relationship continues to evolve, this will come with enhancements and ambitious delivery of services. WNC will set its overall housing strategy and wider corporate strategies. NPH is responsible for setting its own strategic priorities to support WNC and tenants needs. WNC will need to be responsible for agreeing outcomes, setting budgets to achieve outcomes, and monitoring performance. Establishing roles and responsibilities is therefore critical.

Figure 1: WNC-NPH Partnership Approach

2. 'No Surprises' and 'No Judgement'

A fundamental principle underpinning the WNC-NPH Framework is openness and transparency in intelligence sharing, reporting assurance, and risks/issues/opportunities reporting. This principle is a two-way relationship between both WNC and NPH to allow the relationship to maturely develop and help manage potential difficult conversations.

At the heart of this principle is the emphasis on **co-regulatory** approach to regulatory and statutory requirements. Both WNC and NPH self-police and self-report data and issues and risks within or between the organisations. The co-regulation emphasis of 'no surprises' and 'no judgement' reflects the Regulator of Social Housing's co-regulatory approach to assurance and compliance.

3. Accountabilities, Roles, and Responsibilities

Fundamental to all effective governance models is the principle of clear accountability, roles, and responsibilities. Within the WNC-NPH relationship and Governance Framework, accountability is referenced both within and across both organisations.

4. Assurance, Actions and Activities

Through the partnership approach, both WNC and NPH are expected to promote two-way assurance actions and activities within Governance Forums to ensure the development of a mature relationship. This reflects the partnership approach, whilst respecting the 'arms-length' nature of NPH, and WNC's need for assurance in its landlord and stock-holding role.

This is fundamental to the good governance procedures and established through National Federation of ALMOs (NFA) /Councils with ALMOs Group (CWAG) best practice Governance Report.

Activities and actions may vary, but in general this includes the following:



Figure 2: WNC-NPH Assurance Activities & Actions

Assurance activities and actions are a positive mechanism and ensure value-added work, validate evidence-based decision-making, and provide a greater holistic view of planned improvements and products.

5. Business Intelligence and Information Sharing

Interlinked with the previous good governance principles is the critical importance and need for accurate and timely business intelligence and information sharing. This ensures that decision making is evidence-based, supports risk and issue management, and supports both organisations with assurance against legislative and regulatory requirements.

For the WNC-NPH Governance Framework to be effective, each Forum should determine the appropriate topics that require business intelligence and information.

Section 2: WNC-NPH Governance Framework

WNC-NPH Governance Framework

The following sections establish the WNC-NPH Governance Framework purpose, principles, processes, and procedures.

WNC-NPH Governance Purpose

An effective Governance Framework is paramount to the WNC-NPH relationship. It supports the delivery of WNC and NPH strategies and drives accountability, addressing statutory and regulatory assurance. In this light, the WNC-NPH Governance Framework purpose is to:

- Establish and inform a robust governance structure and partnership approach through WNC-NPH activities.
- Establish and create inter-organisational cultural values of transparency, openness, joint-partnership, and accountability within all levels of the WNC-NPH relationship levels.
- Establish and ensure accountability in decision-making, intelligence sharing, and assurance activities which will provide an infrastructure for greater timeliness approval.

Overview of WNC-NPH Governance Framework

The WNC-NPH Governance Framework will be structured through three areas of the WNC-NPH relationship, as outline in Figure 3. The following section outlines the function of each level, including key responsibilities and roles.

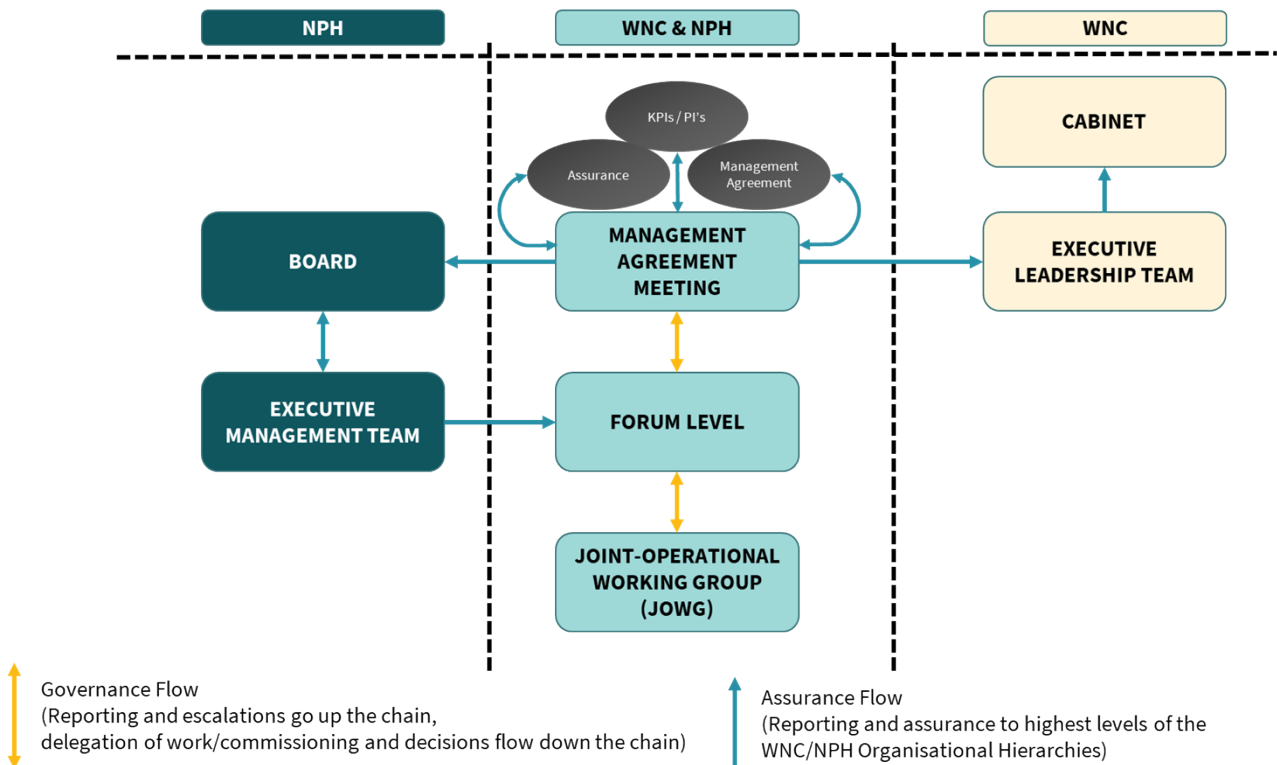


Figure 3: WNC-NPH Governance Framework Structured Areas

1. Joint-Operational Working Groups (JOWG)

The JOWG refers to NPH and WNC groups that are structured around the day-to-day management of service areas within the WNC-NPH relationship e.g., customer service engagement working group. They allow NPH and WNC representatives to discuss specific problems, day-to-day risk and issues, and progress joint operational activities.

The groups support timely and effective operational management between WNC and NPH but are not formally included in the WNC-NPH Governance Framework. Reporting and escalations from the groups may be included in the Forum meetings if required, and delegation, work and decisions may flow down from the Forums to the groups if necessary. The Forums may wish to periodically review the JOWGs to ensure that they are working effectively.

2. Forum Level

The Place/People/Finance and Resource Forums are formal elements of the WNC-NPH Governance Framework for sharing information. They allow the strategic alignment between the organisations and cover high-level discussions, assurance monitoring and, where appropriate, approvals and escalations on the relevant areas.

The Forums will have a specific focus on the following areas of the WNC-NPH Relationship:

- Assurance and compliance oversight (e.g., pertaining to Regulatory and Statutory requirements),
- Assurance pertaining to specific Management Agreement PIs
- Risks and issue management, monitoring and escalations,
- Opportunity discussions, action plans and strategies,
- Activities pertaining to assurance, compliance, policies, strategies, and business improvement mechanisms,
- Providing the Management Agreement Meeting with quarterly highlight report on the points above

In principle, the above focus areas may vary between the Forums and can be flexible throughout the gained maturity and assurances demonstrated within the WNC-NPH relationship.

There will be three Forums. The Place Forum's scope is homes, properties, and the built environment. The People Forum's scope is residents and tenants. The Finance and Resource forum scope is the financial and resource management between WNC and NPH.

Where there are topics that impact on more than one area – for example, responsive repairs affects both residents and homes – the Forums will work together to decide under which remit it sits. The below table represents the topics each Forum will discuss:

Place Forum	People Forum	Finance and Resource Forum
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ WNC Housing Strategy ▪ NPH Development Strategy ▪ Development Programmes ▪ NPH Asset Strategy ▪ Health and Safety ▪ Building Safety ▪ Affordable Housing Development ▪ Sustainability Strategy/Policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Customer and Resident experience ▪ Tenant Engagement ▪ Complaints ▪ Cases & Severe Casework ▪ Allocation services ▪ Public Health Strategies ▪ Income & Rental collection impact ▪ Traveller Site Activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Financial Performance ▪ HRA Fund ▪ Capital Fund ▪ General Fund ▪ Budget Variances ▪ Aids and Adaption Budgets ▪ Disaster Recovery & Business Continuity Plans ▪ Rental Increases ▪ Income & Rental collection ▪ Right-to-Buy ▪ Service Charges

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regeneration Activities ▪ Traveller Site Investment | | |
|--|--|--|

3. Management Agreement Meeting

The Management Agreement Meetings of the WNC-NPH Governance Framework have a specific, long-standing remit surrounding the oversight and development of the WNC-NPH Management Agreement. They are quarterly meetings to enable monitoring of NPH's performance against the Management Agreement, including its regulatory and legal requirements.

The meetings consist of the following specific focal points:

- Performance Monitoring and Analysis through Management Agreement PIs including key deliverables in WNC and NPH corporate plans and against regulatory and legal requirements¹
- Financial performance and income and rent collection performance
- Complaints
- RSH requirements
- Quarterly highlight report reflecting the high-level risks and issues that have a material impact on either the Management Agreement or Management Agreement PIs from the Forums².

Other strategic topics covered include:

- Key priorities for members
- Development of, and changes to, relevant WNC or NPH strategies and Corporate / Delivery Plans
- Feedback from the WNC Officer representative on the NPH Board

To ensure the meetings are effective, the meeting may be split in two, with the performance and highlight reports covered by the following:

- WNC Lead Officer for the NPH relationship
- WNC Asst Dir (Jo's role)
- NPH Chief Executive
- Chairs of the Forums

with a wider group of attendees who have responsibility for the areas being covered as required.

The strategic discussions should include the following:

- WNC Cabinet Member for Housing
- WNC Lead Officer for the NPH relationship
- NPH Chair
- NPH Chief Executive

¹ Detailed reports are presented by NPH specifying their performance against the KPIs that are agreed with the Council at the beginning of each year.

² Issues and risks may first be highlighted in the Forum(s) and then reported to the Management Agreement through the Quarterly Highlight Report.

Inputs, Activities, and Outputs of the Forums

The WNC-NPH Governance Framework is built on shared information (e.g., reports, business intelligence data, etc), communication, and assurance between WNC and NPH. The information requirements will be determined by each Forum and should be aligned with the remit and responsibilities. The following is a brief description of the inputs and outputs of each Forum.

Associated Inputs to the Forums

The Forums will determine the frequency and level required for the associated inputs. The 'inputs' into the Forums will include, but not limited to:

- Forum Agenda
- Forum Papers, which may include:
 - Assurance data as required for KPIs and PIs (e.g., regulatory measures)
 - Associated evidence and/or information to address agenda items, (e.g., Internal audit findings and/or external audit findings).
 - Proposed, emerging and/or new organisational strategies,
 - Escalations of risks and issues from Joint-Operational Working Groups, and
 - Delegation of Management Agreement Meeting activities and investigations.

Associated activities within the Forums

The Forums will conduct the following activities. This may vary between Management Forums as required.

- Address issues, risks, and opportunities which may include use of action plans.
- Review and provide assurance for both WNC and NPH based on their contractual and legal responsibilities
- Agree actions and activities that reflect the existing decision-making authorities of WNC and NPH and the arms-length nature of the relationship.
- Use business intelligence and insight to help meet WNC and NPH strategies and objectives

Associated outputs from the Forums

The Forums are required to record and maintain accurate records and decisions, to confirm with best practice and audit requirements. This may include:

- Forum RAID Log (Risks, Assumptions, Issues, and Dependencies)
- Opportunity/Priorities Log
- Actions, Decision Making and Approval Records
- Delegation and Commission logs and activities
- Quarterly Highlight Report (to Management Agreement Meeting) including Forum highlight activities, Forum lessons learnt and redressing, Risk and Issues Register, and KPIs/PIs assurance and issues.

Associated outcomes of the Forums

The Forums will have outcomes which will be interconnected with the other Forums, Management Agreement Meeting, and Joint-Operational Level. Through the consolidation of inputs, activities, and outputs, the outcome of the Management Forum will be:

Forum Organisation, Delegation & Risk Management

Forum Organisation

This section sets out how the People, Place and Finance and Resource Forums will work. The Forums will operate and enforce the principles of good governance.

Purpose and Scope

All Forums will have a clear, functional purpose in relation to a specific portfolio area – Place, People and Finance and Resources. The purpose and scope should be periodically assessed within the WNC-NPH Governance Framework to ensure they are working effectively.

Responsibilities

Best practice in governance requires clear responsibilities and accountabilities across the Forums. Each Forum's scope, responsibilities, and remit will be set corporately ensuring that all relevant topics are included and there is limited duplication of discussion points. I.e., Terms of Reference

Forum members will be responsible for their respective governed area and responsible for providing timely, accurate business intelligence to the Forum and enable appropriate levels of assurance.

Forums will oversee the assurance that WNC and NPH need to meet regulatory, legal, and contractual requirements.

Membership Principles and Roles

As a core principle of the Governance Framework, Forum members shall generally comprise of WNC and NPH staff members who are equivalent in roles, authority powers, and decision-making authority within and between organisations. This principle has been established as best practice and will ensure that Forums have appropriate and broadly equivalent delegated power and authority for decision-making.

The Forum's Terms of Reference (ToR) will include the roles and responsibilities of each Forum member. Despite Forum's membership varying in membership type, membership size and membership responsibilities, the following roles (Forum Chair, Forum Vice Chair, and Forum Secretary) will be identified for each Forum.

Forum Chair

The Forum Chair will be established within each Forum. This position will hold the delegated power and authority of the Forum to ensure that duties, tasks, and scope are adhered to and achieved. The Forum Chair will also be critical for providing leadership over contentious or novel discussions the Forum will discuss. The following responsibilities will include:

- Establish the Forums Annual agenda through direct discussion and collaboration with Forum members.
- Own the discussion of agenda items and ensure the agenda is accurate, timely and required information is available to appropriately inform evidence-based decision-making.
- Ensure that sufficient time is allowed for complex or contentious issues to be discussed and encourage engagement of all Forum members.
- Ensure and facilitate upwards escalation of decision-making, risks, and issues to the Management Agreement, and/or Director (WNC)-CEO (NPH) discussions.

- Ensure and inform appropriate delegation of commissioned activities between Forums or JWOG to address, investigate, and resolve various ongoing development needs.
- Ensure the Forum's decision-making, approvals and associated outputs are communicated within and outside of the Forum to relevant stakeholders.
- Periodically evaluate the Forums membership, Forums remit and Forum responsibilities to ensure that the Forum has the appropriate skills and experience, accountability, and scope to achieve effective assurance and decision-making.
- Hold ultimate responsibility for coordination, planning and conducting the Quarterly Highlight Report for the Management Agreement Meeting.
- Hold ultimate decision-making authority over the forward annual planning of the Forum's Agenda.
- Hold ultimate responsibility for the assessment and evaluation of the Forum's performance, and coordinating with other Forum members the lessons learnt, proposed responsibility changes, and improvement action plans.
- Oversees the decision-making process of the Forum and assess decision-making parameters and processes are appropriate.
- To seek and establish Command Meetings for significant and urgent risks and issues outside of the Forum's cascading events.

Forum Administration

The Forum administration will need the following activities:

- Schedule Forum meetings, venues, and equipment which may be required.
- Develop agenda and Forum paper items within the given timeframe
- Record keeping of key risks, issues, actions, and opportunities
- Circulate outputs of the Forums to key stakeholders

All other responsibilities pertaining to the individual Forums will be delegated within the respective Terms of Reference.

Membership Conduct

It is the requirement of all Forum members to comply with their respected organisations policies relating to business conduct, misconduct procedures, business ethics policies, and contractual obligations. The membership conduct pertaining to the Management Forum will not interfere or supersede these policies, but rather outline the general relationship principles that shall exist to inform good practice. This will include:

- All members should conduct themselves with professionalism and aim for the highest standards within the administration and performance as a Forum Member.
- All members shall act with transparency, openness, and partnership principles to ensure the effectiveness in addressing the Forums remit.
- All members are expected to represent and be in attendance (virtually or face to face) for each meeting unless exceptional circumstances are represented. In the event of an individual's unavailability, the members can send a deputy to the Forum and may have appropriate level of thematic oversight, delegated authority, and has approval for decision-making for the organisation in the management meeting.
- In the event of a disagreement, complaint or dissatisfaction pertaining to the Forums functioning, decision-making and/or administration, the Forum member should escalate the query within the Forum. If this is not appropriate and/or possible, the Forum member should approach the Vice Chair and Chair of the Forum for a discussion and potential improvements. If further escalation is required, this can be escalated to the organisations focal point (e.g., relationship manager, NPH CEO or WNC Director) for discussion.

Contributors and Guests

All Forums can invite organisational representatives as observers, subject matter experts and appropriate project managers which can appropriately support discussions of activities,

planned programmes, and risks or issues pertaining to the scope of the Forum. Prior to guest members attendance, the Forum Secretary should be informed to allow the appropriate notification and agenda planning of the Forum meeting. Guest contributors will have no delegated authorities or power during these sessions.

Frequency

Through the delegated authority of the Forums, the Forum members will be able to determine the frequency and scheduling of the Forums. Each Forum will establish a forward planned annual agenda for the Forum, which will include number and frequency in accordance with the effective monitoring and assurance required by the WNC-NPH relationship.

As a principle however, the Forums should demonstrate the following mechanisms to obtain to a Good Governance structure:

1. The Forum shall meet:
 - a. People Forum will be established as a quarterly session
 - b. Place Forum will be established as a monthly session
 - c. Finance and Resource Forum will be established as a monthly session
2. The Forum should establish a higher frequency of meetings should Legislative and Regulatory requirements fall under its remit.
3. The Forum will have standing items (e.g., monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly) and ad-hoc items, which can allow flexibility in forum attendance and monitoring.
4. New Forums should first establish monthly scheduling until the Forum has determined a baseline level of assurance, information standards, and shared organisational standards have been established at the Joint-Operational Level.

Information Requirements

It is critical that all Forums continuously review sources of information which are required to inform business intelligence sharing, assurance information, compliance, and upwards reporting. It is the responsibility of each Forum to demonstrate effective accountability through this mechanism.

The principles and procedures for Forum's information requirements will be demonstrated in the 'Inputs and Outputs of the Forum'.

Reporting Requirements

A critical function of the Forum is the requirement for upwards Quarterly reporting to the Management Agreement Meeting in the Highlight report - pertaining to the suite of KPIs and PIs assured, assurance/compliance, and key highlights relating to actions/improvements made. The principles and procedures for the reporting requirements will be further illustrated in the 'Inputs and Outputs of the Forum.'

Forum Evaluation

The Forum will conduct a periodic self-evaluation of its processes, scope/remit, and responsibilities to help establish the Forum to critical review its capacities, effectiveness, and ability to address specific focus areas. Within the best practises of the Framework, the Forums should establish and look to continuously improve.

Governance Delegation and Commissioning

The Management Agreement Meeting and Forums have delegated authority to commission specific duties, tasks or reporting either within other Forums or to the Joint-Operational

Working Group(s). The Forums should use their commissioning authority to, but not limited to:

- Investigate risks and issues impacts, mitigation/treatment measures, present recommendations, and implementation activities,
- Investigate and report business opportunities, present implementation activities planning, and/or monitoring action plans, and
- Investigate planned activities, policies, and strategies through NPH's Tenant Engagement focus groups.

The outputs of this commission work will need to be re-examined by the appropriate delegating Management Forum for evidence-based decision-making, potential further recommendations, or monitoring mechanisms, and/or upwards escalation as deemed appropriate.

If delegated authority is provided for non-financial items of investigation, the delegated Forum/group will be responsible for reporting in decision-making, progress undertaken, and monitoring mechanisms to prevent scope creep or escalation requirements.

As a rule, all initiatives with financial impacts must be reviewed and agreed by the Finance Forum before going through the existing financial approval processes.

Risk and Issues Management: Key Principles

The WNC-NPH Governance Framework provides clear roles and responsibilities for the Forums to provide and review assurance over risks and issues within their scope and remit.

The Governance Framework includes how the Forums will report risks (e.g., RAID log), monitor risk (e.g., standing agenda items), and escalate risk (e.g., risk/issue escalation process). The following are the Risk Management principles through the WNC-NPH Governance Framework:

1. JWOGs and each organisation will have authority to resolve day-to-day risks and issues which do not have wider strategic level impacts.
2. JWOG will escalate risks and issues which impacts on the wider WNC-NPH relationship, or urgent/significant risks to the appropriate Forum.
3. Forums will have delegated authority to explore options, recommend solutions and commission work to address issues, risks, and opportunities that are either escalated to them or identified by them.
4. Risks and issues with a material impact pertaining to the Management Agreement, and/or Management Agreement KPIs/PIs will need to be addressed within the Forums and reported within the Quarterly Highlight Report to the Management Agreement Meeting, and mechanisms deployed if appropriate to resolve this.
5. Urgent or significant risks and issues identified outside of the cadence of Forum meetings can be escalated to a Forum Command Meeting. Should quorum be achieved, the risks and issues can be assessed, and mitigation actions can commence without delay.
6. Urgent or significant risks and issues which cannot achieve quorum within a Management Forum will be escalated through the Forum Chair to the Director (WNC)-CEO(NPH) for assessment, and mitigation actions without delays.
7. The exemption to the principle is risks and issues which will have a financial impact or require significant financial resources for mitigation. These categorises of risks can be reported to the appropriate Forum for recommendations, but the Finance and Resource Forum must approve before escalation through the financial approval chain within NPH (e.g., through virements) or WNC.

An important clarification made within the WNC-NPH Governance Framework is WNC and NPH Corporate Risk and Issues Registers will not be managed or owned by the Forums, just that actions to address risks and issues may be worked on through them.

WNC / NPH Governance Framework

Implementation Approach & Plan

September 2022

Purpose of this document

This planning document is designed to:

1. Set the context within which implementation activity is required
2. Confirm the assumptions & principles which underpin the approach
3. Determine the activities required to implement the Governance Framework
4. Provide a sequenced view of those activities



Context

- Through a series of co-design workshops, a governance approach has been designed to determine assurance activity and collaborative working opportunities between WNC & NPH
- The approach has been formalised through the creation of a Governance Framework and associated appendices (e.g. Terms of Reference documents)
- The elements of the Governance Framework (the various meetings and forums) are currently at different levels of maturity
- An approach and plan for implementation is required to ensure that:
 - The differing requirements for implementing various elements of the Framework are considered
 - Implementation activity is engaging and ensures the successful initiation of the Forums
 - The requirement to ‘test and learn’ is built into the implementation approach to ensure fine-tuning of the framework over time



Principles of Partnership Working

Good Communication and Relationship

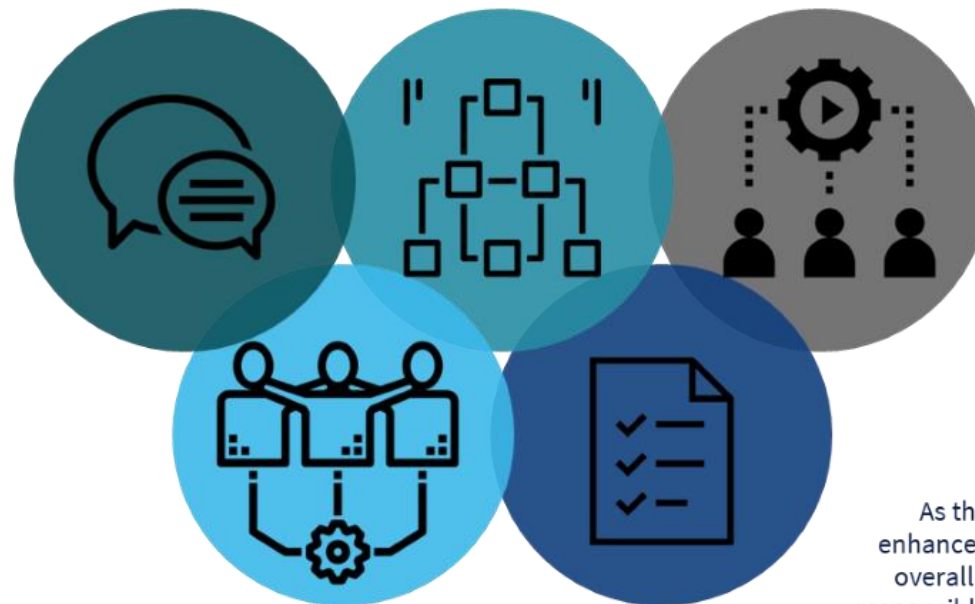
Good communication and effective relationships between NPH and WNC is critical. Clear communication and relationship nodes are essential for developing a mature relationship, trust and empowerment.

WNC-NPH Governance Framework

The Framework will be underpinned by explicit structures that set out clearly defined roles and responsibilities for both organisations and individuals. This will set out clear performance monitoring, reporting and parameters for reviewing arrangements as the relationship evolves.

NPH and WNC Strategic Alignment

Clearly alignment between WNC objectives and those of NPH are essential. This includes core housing management services and the wider portfolio of services delivered by NPH on behalf of WNC. It includes risks appetites, direction of travel and priorities.



Resourcing and Valuing Clienting Function

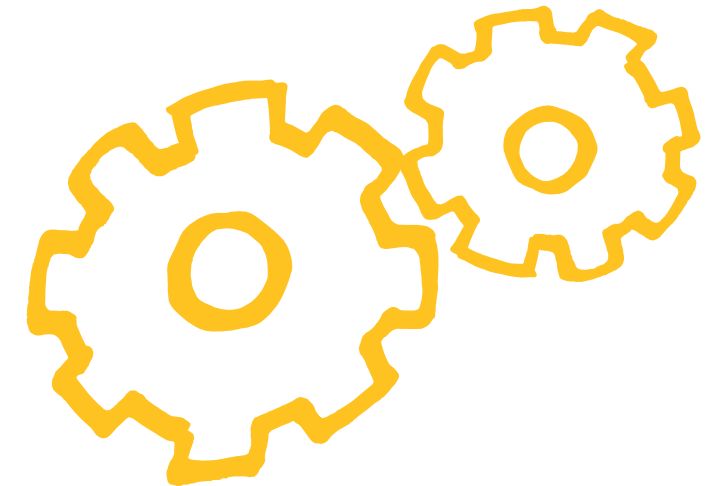
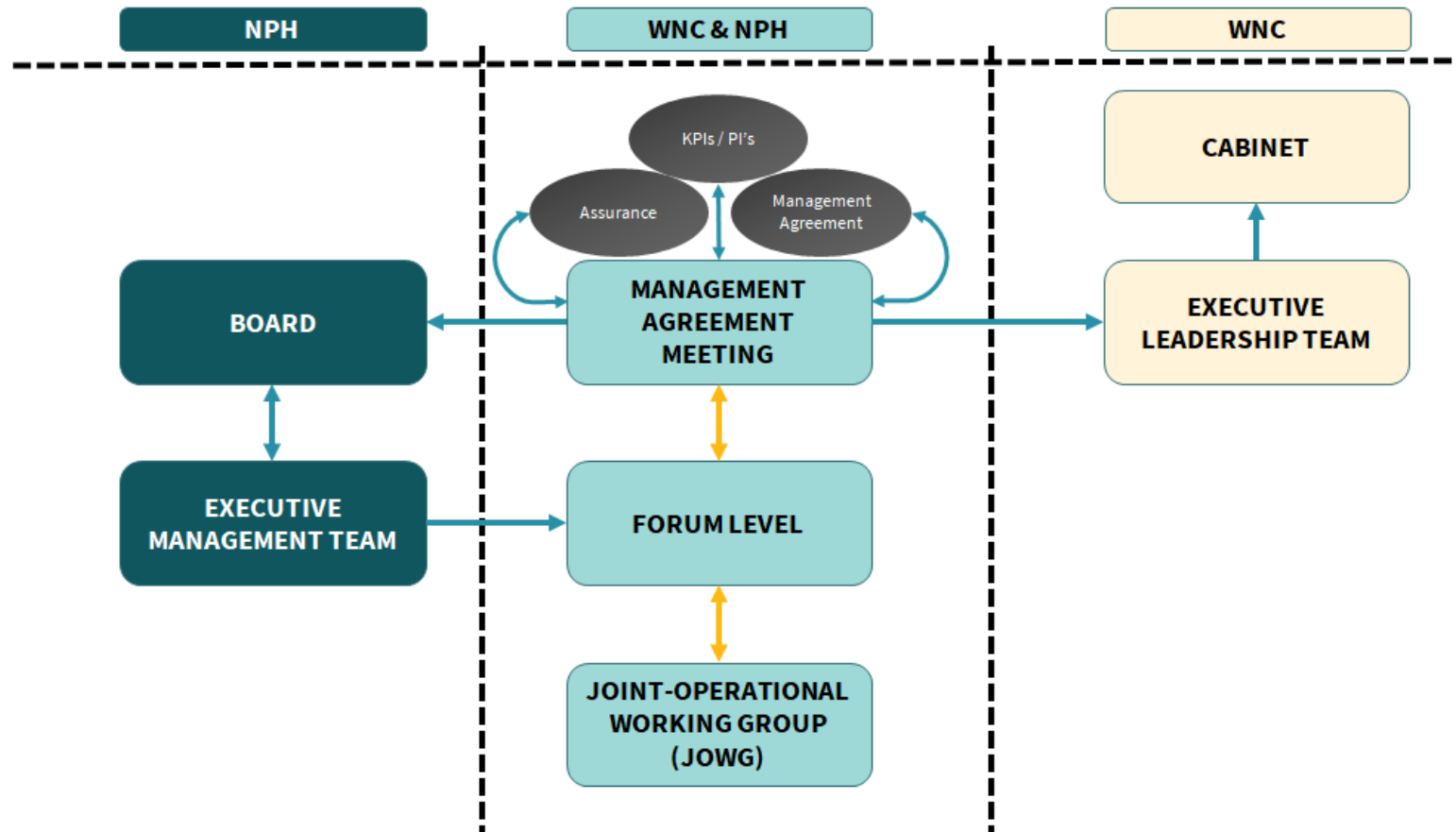
WNC will ensure that sufficient resources are in place for effective clienting relationship. This will both support and challenge the NPH, and commitments within WNC.

Setting Roles and Responsibilities

As the relationship continues to evolve, this will come with enhancements and ambitious delivery of services. WNC will set its overall housing strategy and wider corporate strategies. NPH is responsible for setting its own strategic priorities to support WNC and tenants needs. WNC will need to be responsible for agreeing outcomes, setting budgets to achieve outcomes, and monitoring performance. Establishing roles and responsibilities is therefore critical.

High-Level Governance Model

Governance will be split into three main levels, with strong interaction between the levels:



High-Level Governance Model

Each level has a distinct purpose:

Joint-Operational Working Groups (JOWG)

NPH and WNC groups that are structured around the day-to-day management of service areas within the WNC-NPH relationship e.g., customer service engagement working group.

They allow NPH and WNC representatives to discuss specific problems, day-to-day risk and issues, and progress joint operational activities.

Forum Level (People, Place, Finance and Resource Forums)

Formal elements of the WNC-NPH Governance Framework.

They allow the strategic alignment between the organisations and cover high-level discussions, decision-making, assurance monitoring and, where appropriate, approvals and escalations on the relevant areas.

Management Agreement Meeting

Meetings with a specific, long-standing remit surrounding the oversight and development of the WNC-NPH Management Agreement.

They are quarterly meetings to enable monitoring of NPH's performance against the Management Agreement.



Current Maturity

The individual components of the Governance Framework are at differing levels of maturity:

Joint-Operational Working Groups (JOWG)

Many of these conversations already take place, with varying degrees of regularity and standardisation. Gaps have been identified, and it will be part of the role of the Forums to ensure the relevant operational groups are engaged and meeting regularly.

People Forum

There has not been a People Forum to date, and so this will be newly established as part of implementation.

Place Forum

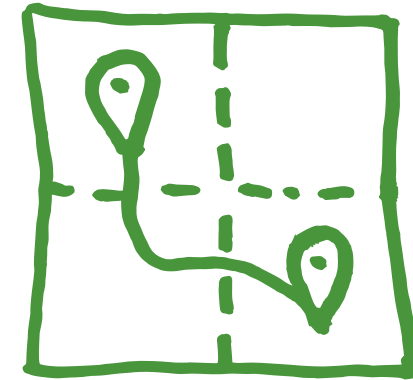
A Place Forum has previously been in place, but has not met for some time, and so will need to be re-established as part of implementation.

Finance and Resource Forum

A Finance Forum is already established and meets currently. It will need to be adjusted in line with the new Terms Of Reference contained within the Governance Framework.

Management Agreement Meeting

The Management Agreement Meeting is a long-standing governance mechanism. It will be re-established as part of implementation.





Assumptions & Principles

Implementation Assumptions

- All elements of the Governance Framework should be in place and fully functional by Feb 2023, with the Place and Finance & Resource forums starting in October 2022.
- WNC & NPH will resource and complete all engagement and implementation activity internally.
- As implementation will be resourced internally, there is no requirement for an implementation cost model.
- The current Finance forum will be repurposed as the Finance & Resource forum as per the Framework & Terms of Reference.



Implementation Principles

- Implementation activity will be collaborative and shared between WNC & NPH.
- Implementation activity will be tailored depending on the current status of each forum / meeting.
- Implementation will include opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback and for the approach to be refined and improved over time to ensure all elements of the Governance Framework are fit for purpose.
- Implementation activity will be phased / staggered to reduce the impact on internal resources.
- The Partnership Manager & Officer will lead on implementation. If they are not in post in a timely manner then another dedicated resource will be identified to take ownership of delivery.
- Senior responsible people for implementation from each organisation will be assigned to the implementation project (Dale Robertson on behalf of NPH, and Jacqueline Brooks on behalf of WNC).





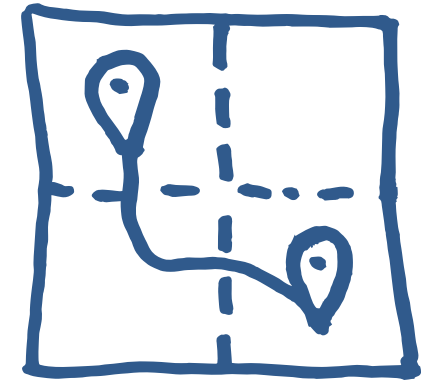
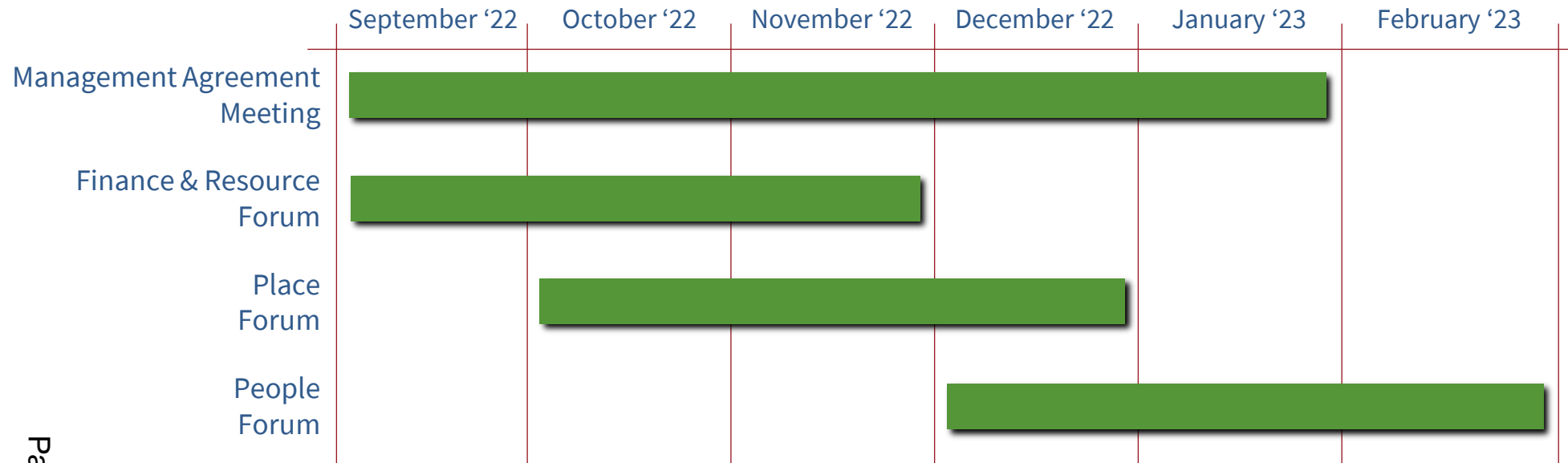
Implementation Approach

Implementation Approach

Priorities have been set as follows:

- P1: Contractual requirement, and / or is currently already in place & requires minimal effort to implement
- P2: A pre-existing governance forum, but needs to be re-established
- P3: A new governance forum which needs to be initiated from scratch

Indicative Implementation Roadmap



Implementation Activities (Monthly Forums)

Plan

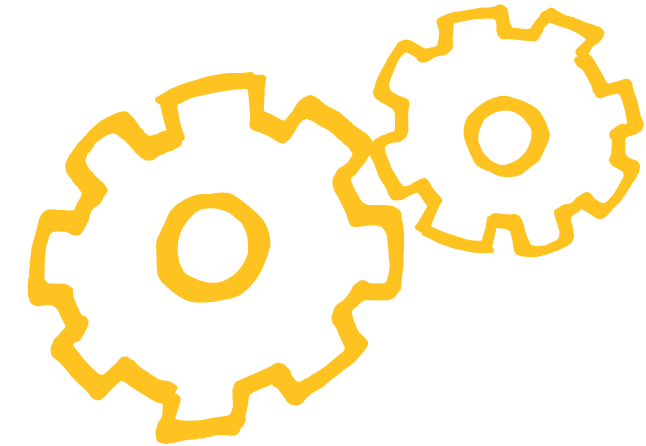
- Initial Comms from Chair to all attendees / stakeholders introducing new forum
- Standard templates (reports, papers, presentations etc.) drafted & circulated
 - Logistics (agenda, location etc.) confirmed
- Forum Invitation sent out to attendees
- Deadline & requirements for papers / reports confirmed

Do

- Receive papers / reports etc
 - Distribute papers / reports etc to attendees
- Run 1st Forum meeting
- Complete follow-up activities (minutes, updated RAID log, commissioning of work etc.) and distribute

Review

- Design & distribute post-forum feedback form to all attendees
 - Collate & review feedback responses
- Determine refinements / adaptations to the forum
 - Make changes (e.g. amended forward agenda, changes to templates etc.)
- Plan & run 2nd Forum Meeting

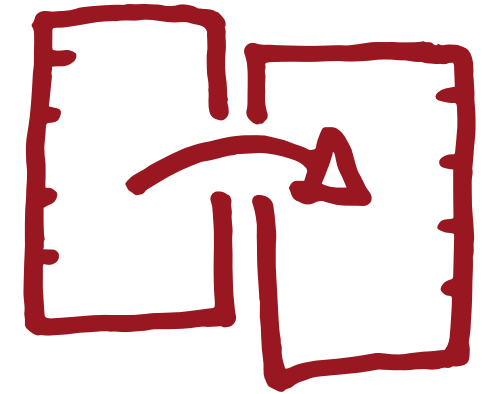




Activity Sequencing

Activity Sequencing (Monthly Forums)

Week -5	Week -4	Week -3	Week -2	Week -1
Initial Comms from Chair to all attendees / stakeholders introducing new forum / new version of forum	Standard templates (reports, papers, presentations etc.) drafted & circulated	Logistics (agenda, location etc.) confirmed Forum Invitation sent out to attendees Deadline & requirements for papers / reports confirmed	Design post-forum feedback form	Receive papers / reports etc Distribute papers / reports etc to attendees
Week 0	Week +1	Week +2	Week +3	Week +4
Run 1st Forum meeting Complete follow-up activities (minutes, updated RAID log, commissioning of work etc.) and distribute Distribute post-forum feedback form to all attendees	Logistics (agenda, location etc.) confirmed Forum Invitation sent out to attendees Deadline & requirements for papers / reports confirmed Collate & review feedback responses	Determine refinements / adaptations to the forum from feedback received Make changes (e.g. amended forward agenda, changes to templates etc.)	Receive papers / reports etc Distribute papers / reports etc to attendees	Run 2nd Forum meeting Complete follow-up activities (minutes, updated RAID log, commissioning of work etc.) and distribute



Activity Sequencing: Challenges

Challenge	Suggested Mitigation
<p>Based on the 5-week lead time for implementing a new or reconfigured monthly forum, time is already extremely tight to successfully launch a forum under the new format in October.</p>	<p>Condense the pre-launch activity for the Finance & Resource forum to a period of 3 weeks (from 5 weeks) to allow the first monthly meeting to take place in October</p>
<p>Engagement activity (via the EMT & ELT) is scheduled to take place in the first week of October. This presents additional challenges for launching a forum in the new format in October.</p>	<p>Ensure that the first Finance & Resource meeting is scheduled at least 2 weeks after the engagement sessions to allow pre-launch activity to take place immediately following the engagement sessions.</p>
<p>The implementation period includes the Christmas break, where all project activity becomes more challenging to deliver.</p>	<p>The plan has been adjusted so that none of the forums will have their first monthly meeting scheduled in December.</p>
<p>Recruitment activity to fill the positions of Partnership Manager & Partnership Officer have not been successful to date. These roles were presumed to be lead resources for implementation activity.</p>	<p>Request to secure Seb Greene as a resource for the duration of the implementation period to operate as implementation lead.</p>





WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

17TH JANUARY 2023

**CABINET MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR FINANCE – COUNCILLOR MALCOLM
LONGLEY**

Report Title	Purchase of the long leasehold interest in six houses in Brackley
Report Author	Lauren Humber, Property Strategy Manager Lauren.Humber@westnorthants.gov.uk

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

West MO	Catherine Whitehead	11/01/2023
West S151	Martin Henry	05/01/2023
Other Director/SME	Stuart Timmiss – Executive Director Place, Economy & Environment	23/11/2022
	Simon Bowers – Assistant Director Assets & Environment	23/11/2022
Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	04/01/2023

List of Appendices

None.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek approval for the purchase of the long leasehold interest of six residential properties in Brackley, currently used by the Council to provide a residential service to Adult Social Care customers.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Council owns the freehold of six houses in Brackley. These houses are on long leases to Paradigm Housing Association (PHA) and subject to a contract under which the Council pays PHA a fee each year. The fee is currently £113k. It rises by RPI each year.
- 2.2 Three of the houses are occupied by tenants, who receive support in living. The remaining three houses are vacant.
- 2.3 The Council could terminate the arrangement but would need to transfer the freehold of the houses to PHA without payment. This would leave it needing to accommodate the residents otherwise. This is unlikely to be suitable or cost-effective.
- 2.4 An agreement has been reached in principle with PHA for the Council to buy out PHA's interest for £1.858m. It is also proposed to refurbish the properties. A total budget of £2.012m would therefore be required.
- 2.5 Once the Council had full control over the properties it would be able to provide arrangements more suitable for residents' needs and which reduced the Council's net costs. Additionally, the three vacant properties would be used for other suitable services or disposed of.
- 2.6 Overall, the initial annual saving, after allowing for capital financing costs, should be £69k (£55k in the first 12 months). This should rise over time.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:
 - 3.1.1 Recommends to Council that a capital budget of £2.012 million is created to acquire the long leasehold interest in the six residential properties in Brackley referred to in the report and refurbish them.
 - 3.1.2 Subject to Council approval of the budget, authorises the Assistant Director Assets & Environment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, to agree the terms of the acquisition and any related transactions.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 To allow WNC to end the historical agreement with PHA which is no longer fit for purpose and is not in line with best value objectives.
- 4.2 To remove the requirement to pay the RSP to PHA and mitigate the Council's exposure to annual index linked uplifts.
- 4.3 To allow the Council to use the properties as it determined, rather than being confined by the funding agreement. This would enable the customers to receive better tailored care and support and would enable the Council to use vacant or underutilised properties to meet additional Council needs.

- 4.4 The Council would own the properties and the interest and capital payment requirements would pay down the Council assets, rather than an asset effectively owned by a third party.
- 4.5 The Council will have greater control over the future of the properties. If they were deemed surplus to requirements, the Council could dispose of any of them and generate a capital receipt.

5. Report Background

Project initiation

- 5.1 In 2002 Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) partnered with Chiltern Hundreds Housing to acquire the six residential properties in Brackley for service users who needed moving from a hospital setting and to reduce revenue costs. Subsequently Chiltern Hundreds Housing became part of Paradigm Housing Association (PHA) and NCC was replaced by West Northamptonshire Council. For convenience, the housing association is referred to as PHA throughout this report.
- 5.2 Six properties were identified within Brackley, all of which were within traditional housing estates. It is understood that the original intention was for PHA to acquire the freehold. However, due to the presence on covenants placed on these properties by the original developer, it was agreed that NCC would acquire the freehold of the properties but using monies provided to it by PHA.
- 5.3 As part of the agreement, NCC was required to simultaneously grant PHA a 125-year lease (of which 105 years are currently unexpired) to protect the investment that PHA had made in the properties by funding their acquisition. PHA provided NCC with £816,950 to purchase the properties and paid all legal fees and stamp duty.
- 5.4 NCC also entered into a care and support contract, under which care and support is provided on a residential care model (WNC pays a set amount which includes all care, food, and housing costs). Currently this is with Livability via the Commissioning for a Good Life framework. This contract began in 2020 and is for five years. However, Livability has just served notice and it will accordingly end in early 2023.

Agreements and the impact on the Council's freehold interest

- 5.5 There are three agreements in place, which interact:
1. The lease between WNC and PHA.
 2. A funding agreement between WNC and PHA.
 3. The care and support contract between WNC and Livability.
- 5.6 The funding agreement has the following key terms:
- A minimum period of 15 years from 2002.
 - PHA to maintain the properties to an agreed standard.
 - NCC to pay Revenue Support Payment (RSP) of approximately £82,000 per annum, indexed by RPI.

- If the Council terminated the agreement, it would be required to transfer the freehold to PHA for a nominal £1.
- If the Council terminated the care and support contract it would trigger the termination of the PHA funding agreement and thus the transfer of the freehold to PHA.
- The Council can also terminate the funding agreement if (a) the Council's reasonable view was that the accommodation failed to meet the needs of the residents, or (b) the Council judged the service was no longer cost effective, or (c) if PHA became insolvent. This would require the transfer of the freehold to PHA as above.

5.7 Thus, while WNC owns the freehold, it does not have control of this given the obligations and triggers in the other agreements. Nor do the agreements provide a mechanism for WNC to acquire PHA's interests in the properties.

5.8 While this is not explicitly defined in the funding agreement, it appears that the RSP reflected the market rent for the properties at the time of the original transaction. The RSP would give PHA the income that it would have anticipated should PHA have purchased the properties and then made them available to NCC. The assumption is also consistent with the obligations placed on PHA which requires it to maintain the structure of the properties (like the obligations of any residential landlord)

Evolution of the position

5.9 Over the initial 15-year term of the funding agreement, the financial structure was sustainable, and the accommodation model was suitable for the customers as they stepped down from hospital settings. However, this arrangement is no longer sustainable for the Council. The model no longer meets the customers' needs, and the RSP has increased to a level which exceeds reasonable levels (discussed in more detail below).

5.10 It appears that the intention was that within the 15-year term, NCC would have found and/or developed alternative provision to replace the six Brackley houses and then exited the arrangement. However, this not happened, nor has WNC used its rights to terminate the Funding Agreement as this would cause a chain of events which would ultimately remove the current residents from their homes, which the Council is not seeking.

Revenue Support Payment

5.11 For as long as the current structure remains in force, the Council is obligated to continue to pay the RSP to PHA. Following historic RPI increases the RSP current stands at approximately £133,000 per annum. It will rise further.

5.12 It is predicted that in ten years' time WNC could be paying £197,248 per year using based on the forecast provided but the Office of Budget Responsibility.

Ending the Revenue Support Payment

5.13 The only two contractual mechanisms currently available to the Council to terminate the RSP would be to terminate the care contract or to notify PHA that it considers that the service is no longer cost effective. Both these options would bring the agreement to an end but would place an obligation on WNC to transfer the freehold interest in the houses to PHA for £1.

- 5.14 PHA has informed the Council that, if it owned the freeholds, it would intend on selling them as it does not operate in Northamptonshire any longer. It would therefore be risky for the Council to terminate under the grounds mentioned in 5.4.4, because PHA would sell and WNC has no suitable alternative accommodation to move the current customers on to. It is therefore attractive to negotiate an exit where the Council purchases the leaseholds off PHA.
- 5.15 Initial talks on a negotiated exit which would leave the Council in ownership of the properties have therefore taken place. These have been positive, and the parties have provisionally agreed on a fair purchase price of £1,857,500. This figure was provided by PHA and represents an external valuation of the six properties taking into account the condition of the properties. The breakdown is shown in Table 1.

Property	Value, £
Remus Gate	332,500
Westminster Croft	305,000
Holly Close	315,000
Hanover Drive	325,000
Hawkins Close	285,000
Tudor Way	295,000
Total	1,857,500

- 5.16 An internal desktop review of the values has been conducted. From that assessment it is concluded that that with the freehold title and the refurbishment work of £154k to bring them up to decent standard, the properties could be valued at £2.282m collectively. This suggests the price is fair and would not impose undue risks on the Council.

Future care provision

- 5.17 The current customers have lived in these properties since 2002. The relevant services have confirmed that these properties, in terms of location and size, are still suitable to meet the residents' needs. However, the care and support model needs changing to provide more suitable and tailored care and support. This should also help WNC mitigate its revenue costs.
- 5.18 WNC currently cannot change the care model. As a result of this three of the properties are now empty, but WNC still pays for them as part of the RSP. Under the contractual terms WNC cannot extract itself from the agreement in relation to some properties without terminating them in relation to all the properties.
- 5.19 In addition, there are range of options to positively use the vacant properties.

Proposal

- 5.20 It is therefore proposed to purchase the PHA interest in the properties and refurbish them. The costs would be as set out in Table 2.

Item	Cost, £k
Agreed purchase price	1,858
Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT)	100

Table 2: Acquisition and refurbishment costs	
Item	Cost, £k
Allowance for legal and professional fees	20
Refurbishment	154
Total	2,132

5.21 It is possible the Council may be able to benefit from an SDLT exemption. If so, that element of cost would be removed.

6. Issues and Choices

6.1 The Council has the following options.

6.2 Option 1 (do nothing): The Council could 'doing nothing', leaving the current arrangements in place, but this would mean that the customers would stay in accommodation that is not suitable for their needs and over the next 10 years the Council would pay a minimum of £1.330m in revenue support to PHA. In practice it would be higher since RPI is currently running at over 10%. In addition, the Council would continue to pay for three empty properties.

6.3 Option 2 (purchase alternative properties): The Council could terminate the current arrangement and purchase alternative properties. Nothing suitable has been identified in the market. The cost of purchasing six similar properties would be higher than the £2.032m to purchase and refurbish the six Brackley properties (purchasing only three would obviously be cheaper, but the 'surplus' three could if not required for service purposes be sold, meaning the financial balance is still in favour of purchase). Moving the four remaining customers would also be very disruptive. They have lived in these houses, close to each other, for many years.

6.4 Option 3 (leasing alternative properties). This is similar to Option 2, but the alternative properties would be leased. The estimated (average) Market Rent for these properties at the moment is around £1,895 per calendar month (£22,740pa, or £136,440pa for all six), based on a 4-bed property in Brackley. This is slightly higher than current levels of RSP. There is currently a shortage of houses in the market which is driving rental prices up further. The disadvantages of relocating the residents would remain.

6.5 Option 4 (terminate the arrangement and move residents to extra care). The residents are not considered suitable for extra care accommodation at present. There currently is not any suitable extra care provision within Brackley.

6.6 Option 5 (proposed purchase of PHA's leasehold interest). This arrangement would deliver savings which grew over time, whilst enabling the Council to provide suitable care and support for the residents.

6.7 The Council would also have choices about what to do with the three homes currently unoccupied. They could either be sold (thus reducing the financing costs) or used for other service purposes.

6.8 The Council would also need to consider who will manage the properties. A suitable organisation will be needed to provide housing related support when the houses are registered as supported living units. Work on this is underway.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

Resources and Financial

7.1 It is proposed to use General Fund capital to purchase the leasehold interest of the six properties.

7.2 It is proposed to expend £2.132m on the acquisition and refurbishment. If this is assumed to be borrowed at 4.5% over 60 years, the annual financing cost on an annuity basis would be £103k. This would remain constant in cash terms whilst, conversely, the RSP would continue to rise by RPI.

7.3 While the responsibility is likely to be passed to a future operator, it is appropriate to include an allowance for the management and maintenance for these properties within the proposal. This is estimated to be £9k per year once the properties have been upgraded. Thus, the annual revenue cost should be £112k pa.

7.4 Against the (current year) cost of £133k pa WNC should thus make a revenue saving in each year, which would increase over time.

7.5 Allowance should be made for periodic refurbishment thereafter. Every ten years a cost (in current values) of £63k is estimated. This would increase the nominal annual cost after year 10, but well below the increasing savings as RSP would have increased by well over that amount during the 10-year period.

7.6 For these purposes if it is assumed the three vacant properties are sold this would generate a capital receipt in the order of £1.141m, reducing capital financing costs by £56k pa. Thus, the initial annual costs would be around £64kpa, and the initial annual saving around £69k pa. There is potentially some erosion of this arising from holding costs until properties were sold (or brought into use, as in 7.7) so a saving figure of £55k for the first 12 months may be appropriate for budgeting purposes.

7.7 If the vacant properties, or any of them, were put to service use rather than being sold, it would be on the grounds that this delivered greater benefits than the financial saving relating to that property. Thus, the saving identified in 7.6 would be a minimum figure.

7.8 By pursuing Option 5, WNC would also have an unfettered freehold interest. While the capital repayment costs have been included in the assessment, it is important to draw a distinction between this and the RSP. Under the RSP, WNC's payment (in effect) repays PHA's capital investment. By adopting the current approach, those costs will go directly to paying off the debt, increasing the Council's effective equity in the property over time. In addition to this, WNC would be able to directly benefit from any capital appreciation and would have full control over the disposal process should the properties no longer be needed to meet the service need.

- 7.9 The freehold is currently held within the General Fund, having migrated from NCC. Depending on the choice of housing related support provider, it may be that the property interest would be transferred to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). If so, the HRA would pay the General Fund to 'purchase' the properties and then receive the benefit of the rent.

Legal

- 7.10 The Council can acquire the leasehold interests under Section 120 of the Local Government Act 1972. This empowers the Council to purchase land for the purposes of any of its functions. 'Land' is defined in Section 270 of that Act as including "any interest in land and any easement or right in, to or over land" and thus includes the leasehold interests it is proposed to acquire.
- 7.11 The Council would need to ensure it, or any organisation it appointed to manage the properties, would comply with the requirements set by the Regulator of Social Housing as well, as applicable, those of the Care Quality Commission.

Risk

- 7.12 There are a number of risks involved in pursuing the proposed course of action. None seem particularly significant.
- 7.13 The Council could face a lack of demand for the properties for the intended purposes. This would be resolved by disposing of them.
- 7.14 Changes in the law might make the proposed arrangement unviable. Whilst this is possible, having unfettered freehold ownership should make it easier to make any changes needed to respond to changes in the law. The Council would also have the option of disposing of some or all of the properties.
- 7.15 The Council might not secure a suitable registered provider. In this case, it could undertake the function itself (doubtless making use of NPH). It may also choose to undertake the function itself.

Consultation

- 7.16 The customers and their families have been consulted about the proposals and are very supportive of this.

Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

- 7.17 This report has not been considered by an Overview and Scrutiny committees.

Climate impact

- 7.18 The recommendation is not considered to have any impact on climate change. The properties already exist, and their emissions would not change as a result of a change of ownership.

Community impact

- 7.19 The properties have been used to provide residential care since 2002. Their continued use, in a new arrangement, for similar purposes should not cause any adverse effects on the community.
- 7.20 The proposal would enable the Council to bring the three vacant properties back into use, which should have a positive community impact.

Communications

- 7.21 The current residents would be kept informed as the process proceeds.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1 None

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

17 January 2023

CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR HOUSING, CULTURE & LEISURE – COUNCILLOR ADAM BROWN

Report Title Active Quarter Northampton

Report Author Peter Cox, Interim Head of Sport & Active Lives,
peter.cox@westnorthants.gov.uk

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

West MO	Catherine Whitehead	05/01/2023
West S151	Martin Henry	05/01/2023
Other Director/SME	Jane Carr, Director of Communities & Opportunities	16/12/2022
Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	03/01/23

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Outline of the Active Quarter

Appendix B – Outline of a place-based marketing approach

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report seeks West Northamptonshire Council's (WNC) formal endorsement for establishing a pioneering place-shaping 'Active Quarter' in Northampton. The report defines:

- 1.1.1 How the Active Quarter can improve people's health and wellbeing through the transformational use of existing green, water and urban spaces, at the same time uniting communities, aiding regeneration and improving safety.
- 1.1.2 The Council's role as part of a collaborative partnership of key public, third sector and private sector stakeholders, who have come together around a shared ambition for the Active Quarter.
- 1.1.3 The alignment between the ambitions of the Active Quarter with the Council's key priorities, strategies, and national policy.
- 1.1.4 How contribution of £10k funding will accelerate the development of Active Quarter strategic plans and alignment towards delivering 'Live Your Best Life' shared ambitions of the Council and other local partners working together to improve health and wellbeing in West Northants.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The vision is to create an Active Quarter – an identifiable place supporting wellbeing and active lifestyles in Northampton focused on the south-west area of the town, encompassing Midsummer Meadow, Becketts Park, Delapré Abbey, Delapré Park, Golf Centre, Brackmills and the neighbouring Pocket Parks (see map in Appendix A).
- 2.2. It would bring multiple benefits for communities in terms of health, environment, safety, regeneration, culture, tourism, heritage and civic pride.
- 2.3. The Active Quarter will deliver an important contribution towards the 'Live Your Best Life' shared ambitions through leading collaborative working practices and creating an identifiable place for wellbeing and active lifestyles.
- 2.4. The Active Quarter ambition is to become a pioneer for community engagement, active travel, green social prescription, the custodianship of accessible green, water and urban spaces and as a place for sports participation and performance.
- 2.5. The Active Quarter is supported by a collaborative group of stakeholders. Early adopters were The University of Northampton, Delapré Abbey Preservation Trust and Northamptonshire Sport. Subsequent organisations to have joined include Brackmills Business Improvement District (BID), Public Health, British Cycling and elected member and officer representation from West Northamptonshire Council.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. It is recommended that Cabinet:
 - 3.1.1 Note the content of this report.

- 3.1.2 Endorse continued support of working collaboratively with partners, towards achieving the Active Quarter ambitions outlined within the report.
- 3.1.3 Note the ‘in-principle’ funding contribution from Public Health of a single payment £10k to support evidenced-based research, develop the Active Quarter (AQ) communication and engagement strategy and align AQ ambitions with WNC’s strategic priorities.

4. Reason for Recommendations (NOTE: this section is mandatory and must be completed)

- 4.1 To update on the Active Quarter’s achievements and future ambitions.
- 4.2 To demonstrate the Council’s support of the Active Quarter opportunity to work with partners in the creation of a hub for wellbeing and ‘place’ for pioneering health and wellbeing interventions.
- 4.3 To update on the ‘in-principle’ investment from Public Health funding to support the work to achieve the ambitions.

5. Report Background

- 5.1. The proposed Active Quarter creates an identifiable place for active lifestyles and wellbeing in the heart of Northampton. It covers an area of over 900 hectares (Appendix A). This footprint of land contains extensive areas of green and blue space that has the potential to be reactivated, as it contains miles of footpaths and cycle routes, sport and leisure facilities, and spaces that could bring significant health, social, cultural and economic benefits. Of the 900 hectares, approximately 90% of the land is owned by West Northamptonshire Council.
- 5.2. A wide array of facilities are already located within the Active Quarter: Midsummer Meadow and Becketts Park; The River Nene; Delapré Abbey; Delapré 18 Hole Golf Course and Driving Range; Delapré Park; Northampton Bike Park; Becks Meadow and Barnes Meadow Nature Reserves; Radlands Skatepark; Nene Whitewater Centre; Northampton Rowing Club; Water-Skiing and Fishing Lake; Northampton Marina; Hardingstone and Brackmills Pocket Parks.
- 5.3. Early discussions around the concept of the Active Quarter began in August 2020 through an informal collaboration between a small group of interested parties including The University of Northampton (UON), Delapré Abbey Preservation Trust and Northamptonshire Sport. The initial ambition was to work together to consider how to bring to life a part of the town considered to be a hidden gem, through the prism of healthy active lifestyles and wellbeing.
- 5.4. Subsequently organisations to have joined this conversation include WNC and West Northants Public Health services, Brackmills BID and British Cycling.

- 5.5. The Active Quarter is regarded by all those involved as a shared ambition, one in which each stakeholder could deliver some of their own objectives themselves but that, by collaborating and working in partnership with others, including the community, so much more could be achieved. To that degree WNC's role is to enable, support and give permission.
- 5.6. The group recognised the value that urban greenspace can bring. The Parks Alliance estimates that for every £1 invested in urban green spaces, urban communities receive £7 in wellbeing benefits. This helped to set of guiding principles for the development of the Active Quarter:
- That partnership, **co-creation** and collaboration by key stakeholders was fundamental for the approach, a pioneering model for the transformation of place
 - That new activities and infrastructure should be **co-designed** with the community.
 - That **wellbeing and active lifestyles** should be at the heart of the approach
 - That it should seek to help **transform** an area of the town that has great potential to be a pioneering place while ensuring no negative impact on nature or biodiversity.
 - That **tackling inequalities** (health, socio-economic and educational) should drive planning and delivery.
 - That **measurement, evaluation and learning** should be threaded through future work.
 - That it would inform **blueprint** for a scaled-up approach and a wider roll-out to other parts of the county and country.
- 5.7 The ambitions below are framed around three over-lapping themes, a definition of which is given below:
- Place:** The core infrastructure within the area such as trails, tracks and rights of way; access roads/routes; cycling and walking; use of the lakes; visibility/ lines of sight; signage and waymarking; bridges and access points; benches/barbecues.
- People:** The way people use and access the place to engaged in activities, sessions, events and usage set up within the area. This includes organised and informal activities, special events, festivals and regular community engagement.
- Identity:** The communication, marketing, information and messaging required to create an identity, perception, sense of civic pride and shape a place.
- 5.8 A significant amount of progress has already been achieved already, as described below. Partners have the intention to develop a pipeline of potential future ambitions for the AQ. It is recognised that this phase of future development will involve engaging the wider community through consultation.

Place :

Active Quarter Achievements
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recently opened award-winning Northampton Bike Park• Waymarked Trail with 3km routes around Delapré Abbey and wider park• New outdoor table tennis tables on the University Waterside campus• Wheelchair accessible angling platforms around the water-skiing lake• Improved footpath sections to the south-east perimeter of the lake• Improved footpath between Delapré Abbey and the lake• Trail widening work on the Delapré Park – Waterside Campus access route.

People :

Active Quarter Achievements
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A 'Thriving Communities' Social Prescribing project in partnership with the General Practice Alliance one of 36 delivered in the country.• Vibrant programme of visitor experiences at Delapré Abbey (Winter Lights Trail, Family activity in the grounds, Classic Car Rally)• A partnership between Public Health Northampton and UON in developing a Waterside as an 'Active Campus' for staff and students• Annual 5km mass participation running event around Delapré Abbey and wider park area• Regular Pilates, yoga and wellbeing sessions in the Delapré Abbey Coach House.• Funding and commencement of 4yr PhD research project established at UON to lead community and stakeholder engagement work and measure progress.

Identity:

Active Quarter Achievements
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Informal Stakeholder Group formed to increase communication and co-ordinate efforts• An Emerging Talent Centre developing girls and women's football established in partnership with Northampton Town FC, Northampton FA and UON and hosted at Waterside• £10K of funding awarded for the creation of an interactive 'Active Digital Map' of the AQ and wider surrounds• Pilot work in partnership with UON Graphic Design students in the design of possible Active Quarter logo, brand and digital assets• £10K Knowledge Exchange Funding grant application to develop a theory of change and research plan for the AQ to ensure we measure wellbeing outcomes and engage in research with the community so their voice can shape the AQ.

5.9 As outlined, a significant amount of progress has already been made utilising existing capacity within the partner organisations. All are committed to continuing focusing their efforts towards the ambitions of the AQ. The collaboration of partners offers not only more opportunities but also greater potential success of accessing external funding including government, national funding bodies, lottery and commercial streams.

The AQ can deliver on many future ambitions through collaborative working, for example:

- Redevelopment of Delapré Abbey 19th Century Stable Block into a Wellbeing Hub. Development stage funding secured Summer 2022.
- Delivery of legacy programmes and community engagement providing added value to the council's ambition to become a recognised host for major sporting and cultural events.
- Working in partnership with Northamptonshire Community Foundation to establish an Active Quarter Fund that local groups within the Active Quarter area can bid into to support local projects that promote activity, wellbeing and connecting communities.

5.10 However, to accelerate the opportunity presented by the AQ some dedicated capacity is required to:

- Develop a suite of research that provides the AQ and partners with evidence base intelligence
- Drive engagement and co-design with the local community
- Develop and deliver a communication and place-based marketing strategy for the AQ that creates a clear identity, raises its profile and results in mass community engagement and participation (Appendix B).
- Align the AQ with the emerging Integrated Care System, Health & Wellbeing Forums and Local Area Partnerships.
- Align the AQ with West Northants Council strategic plans including, but not limited to, Sport and Leisure, Community Safety and Community Engagement, Regeneration, Economic Growth, Parks and Open Spaces, Highways, to ensure the best outcomes for West Northants.

5.11 In recognition of the contributing role the Active Quarter plays towards delivery of the below-mentioned strategies including the 'Live Your Best Life' ambitions, Public Health has, in principle, earmarked a £10k sum to achieve this reports recommendation 3.1.3. An application to PH funding will be required for assessment prior to confirmation of funding.

5.12 £10k PH funding will contribute as match funding towards unlocking capacity from UoN for 0.6 FTE place-based marketing specialist and a 1 FTE graduate intern who has a digital content creation skill set. Both of these posts are to be managed by UON on behalf of the Active Quarter.

5.13 By endorsing the Active Quarter ambition as per recommendation 3.1.2 WNC will allocate officer time (Interim Head of Sport & Active Lives) to support the AQ. The role of the WNC officer support will be to attend AQ meetings, to align AQ ambitions with WNC strategic plans,

champion the AQ as a pioneer location for projects and resources, feedback to WNC colleagues bringing in WNC expertise to the AQ group as required.

Strategic Links:

- 5.14 It is well evidenced that accessible, high quality, safe, open space supports the improved health of our population, the vibrancy of our place, the connectedness of our communities and regional economic regeneration and growth.
- 5.15 WNC has outlined in its Corporate Plan and Strategy Priority that it can only achieve its vision using partnerships and collaboration within our communities and with public and private partners. The Active Quarter will help WNC achieve the challenges of its six corporate priorities:
- Green and Clean (Create vibrant towns and villages, high quality parks and accessible green space for all)
 - Economic Development (Building on our rich heritage and increase visitors to our attractions)
 - Improve Life Chances (Increasing aspirations for young people and reducing hospital stays)
 - Connected Communities (improved transport and connectivity with emphasis on low carbon active travel)
 - Thriving Villages and Towns (Regeneration of core town centres and less antisocial behaviour)
 - Robust resource management (Financial prudence and financial probity)
- 5.16 In addition, the Active Quarter supports the delivery of the West Northamptonshire 'Live Your Best Life' shared ambitions to be achieved through the Integrated Care System (ICS) for the population to have:
- 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
 - Good housing in places which are clean and green
 - Safety in their homes and when out and about
 - Feel 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.
- 5.17 The Integrated Care System has health inequalities front and centre of its approach. As part of this, at a neighbourhood level, WNC, alongside Health and Wellbeing Board partners, is developing Local Area Partnerships (LAPs) tackling the wider determinants of health at a community level, moving decision making closer to local people and local needs. The Active Quarter is a clear asset for the local LAP in its efforts to tackle inequalities.

- 5.18 WNC's Anti-Poverty Strategy commitment is to 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.
- 5.19 Sport England's new 10 year 'Uniting the Movement' strategy focuses on the physical activity inequalities that prevail throughout society and makes having an 'Active Environment' as one of five Big Issues to solve by connecting communities, connecting with health and wellbeing and the provision of active environments.
- 5.20 The University of Northampton's ChangeMaker programme has Challenge #2 to "Make Northamptonshire the leading county in the UK for Health and Wellbeing".
- 5.21 Northamptonshire Sport's draft physical activity strategy for Northamptonshire (working title - 'Let's Move Together') details Active Environments are one of its six Key Enablers in helping people to lead healthy active lifestyles and goes on to prioritise the importance of activating the use of green and blue space. Delapre Abbey's new strategic plan places connecting people to improved wellbeing and environment within its priorities over the next 5 years, and the Master Plan for the next 15 years supports the Active Quarter vision.
- 5.22 National Lottery Heritage Fund evidenced the benefits of heritage, green space through their "Space to Thrive" report in 2020, delivering substantial funding streams to support this through the National Future Parks Accelerator programme, which has demonstrated the role green spaces can play in acting as drivers for public health and wellbeing improvement:
- Activators of environmental protection and climate change
 - Incubators for system change programmes
 - Green spaces as assets for change rather than liabilities
- 5.23 The AQ also supports the national policies of Heritage England, Department for Transport, Active Travel England and the Forestry Commission.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1. The choices available to the Council are as follows.
- 6.2. Option 1: Not to endorse the ambitions of the Active Quarter. This would remove the Council's support of an opportunity to create a pioneering place in the heart of an urban community that will champion community health and wellbeing. A further knock-on would be the loss of an opportunity to lever in significant amounts of external funding into West Northamptonshire. As an example, over £800,000 of investment has already been levered in.
- 6.3. Option 2: Approve the Council's support through endorsement of the report. This will demonstrate the Council's willingness to work in partnership with the Active Quarter. Officers

will work with the Active Quarter to strategically align the ambitions with WNC priorities for a collaborative approach that will champion community health and wellbeing.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources and Financial

7.1.1. Beyond recommendation 3.1.3 the approval of this report does not incur any new revenue or capital liabilities for the authority.

7.1.2. To turn some of the ambitions into reality could require the allocation of officer capacity as and when opportunities present themselves. It is considered that this commitment would not be excessive, and any contribution would have an appropriate return on investment. For example, delivering the Northampton Bike Park took officer support from the Community Development Team, Property & Assets Team, Regeneration Team, Sport & Active Lives Team and Legal Services, working alongside the capacity provided by other stakeholder organisations. This development has been an unbridled success.

7.2. Legal

7.2.1 There are no legal implications that would arise from the decision to approve the recommendations (3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3).

7.3. Risk

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

7.4. Consultation

7.4.1 To this point, there has been extensive engagement and consultation that has been linked primarily to existing schemes such as the Bike Park and the Green Social Prescribing project. Other examples include;

- Walk and talk interviews with park users to understand why they visit Delapré and the perceived impact on their wellbeing
- Observation of Delapré park footfall on the walking routes and the demographics of park users
- Public consultation on the delivery preferences for a cycling and walking hub at Delapré - unguided rides, bike hire, wayfinding
- Public consultation on wayfinding in parks to understand community perceptions of signage and what information signs need to include
- Development of park monitoring methods to identify what communities do and do not use parks.

- Development of an engagement survey to identify who and who does not use the AQ and reasons why, allowing for workshops about the themes identified in the survey
- Video recording of cycling and walking routes within Brackmills to act as a form of Google Street View so people can see where these off road routes go and what they look like
- Auditing Brackmills' walking and cycling routes for accessibility standard
- Developing a theory of change and research strategy to map how this can lead to improved population wellbeing and where community voice needs to be heard to inform decisions

7.4.2 In addition, co-design and collaboration with key regional stakeholders and members of the community is currently underway through PhD research at the University. One of the key principles behind the Active Quarter is community consultation as it will be the foundation of all future developments.

7.5. **Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

There has been no specific consideration by overview and scrutiny in relation to this report.

7.6. **Climate Impact**

7.6.1 As described in the main body of the report, the impact on our climate is one of the key drivers behind the Active Quarter. Through the protection and enhancement of green open space, improved air quality, as a consequence of an increase in active travel options, volunteer groups helping to conserve and safeguard wildlife and biodiversity.

7.7. **Community Impact**

7.7.1. As outlined in section 5, helping to tackle some of the inequalities that prevail across the population is one of the key 'design principles' behind the Active Quarter.

7.7.2. Each workstream will base its approach on community insight, consultation and co-design. This will lead to delivery that is shaped around community need and that builds capacity within the communities themselves to deliver.

7.8. **Communications**

7.8.1. As outlined, 'Identity' is one of the key workstreams of the Active Quarter. Creating a name and 'brand' that makes sense to the public will be an early goal. An identity that stakeholders can rally around to work collaboratively in order to enhance the quality of our urban greenspace be that through, consultation, research, external funding applications, community project support funding, community activities, inclusive physical infrastructure improvements. WNC will work with and support partners to inform and engage communities about the benefits of the Active Quarter and promote the objectives and outcomes moving forward.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1. See Appendices A; outline of the Active Quarter
- 8.2. See Appendix B; outline of a place-based marketing approach

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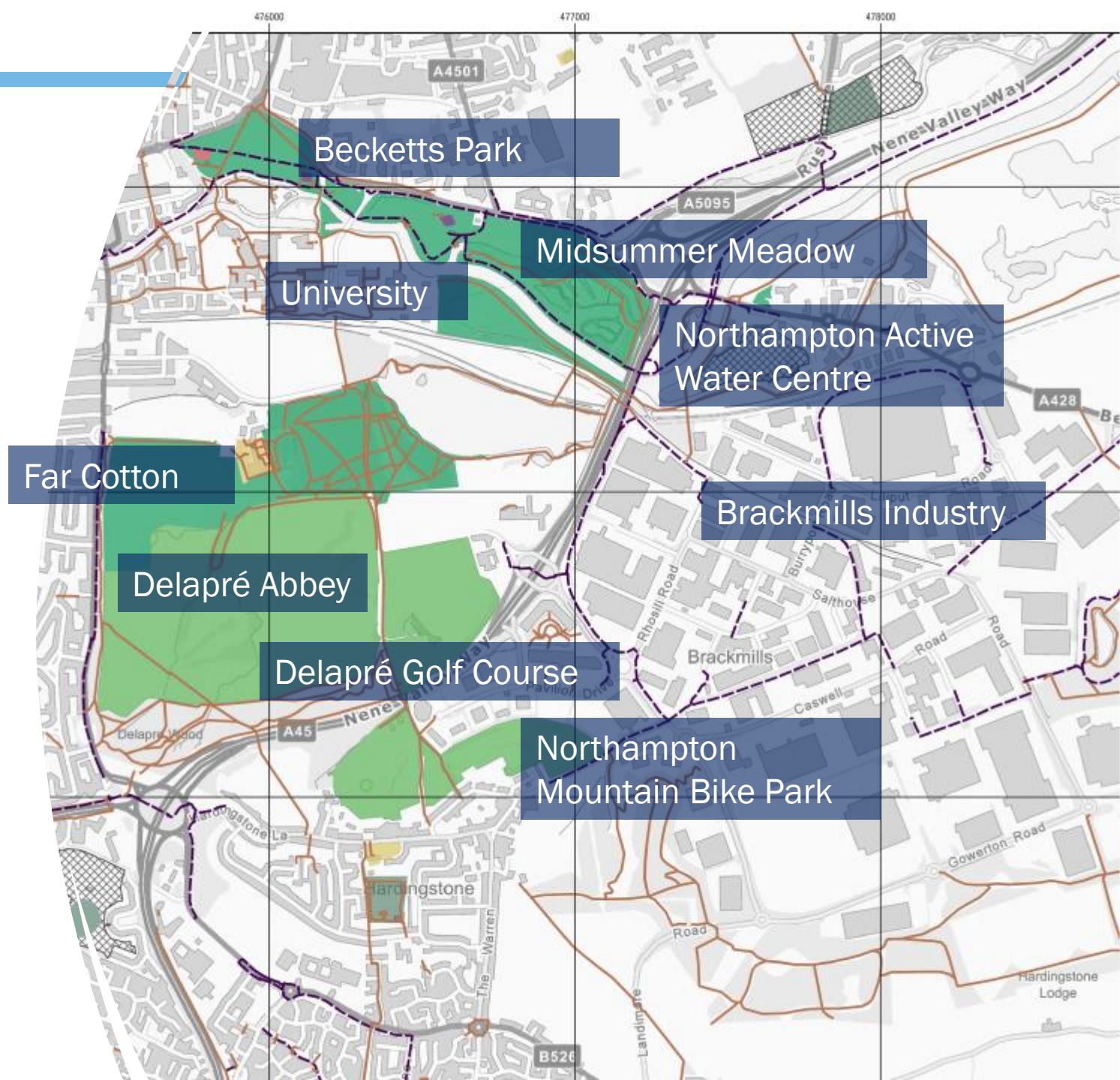


Active Quarter - Northampton



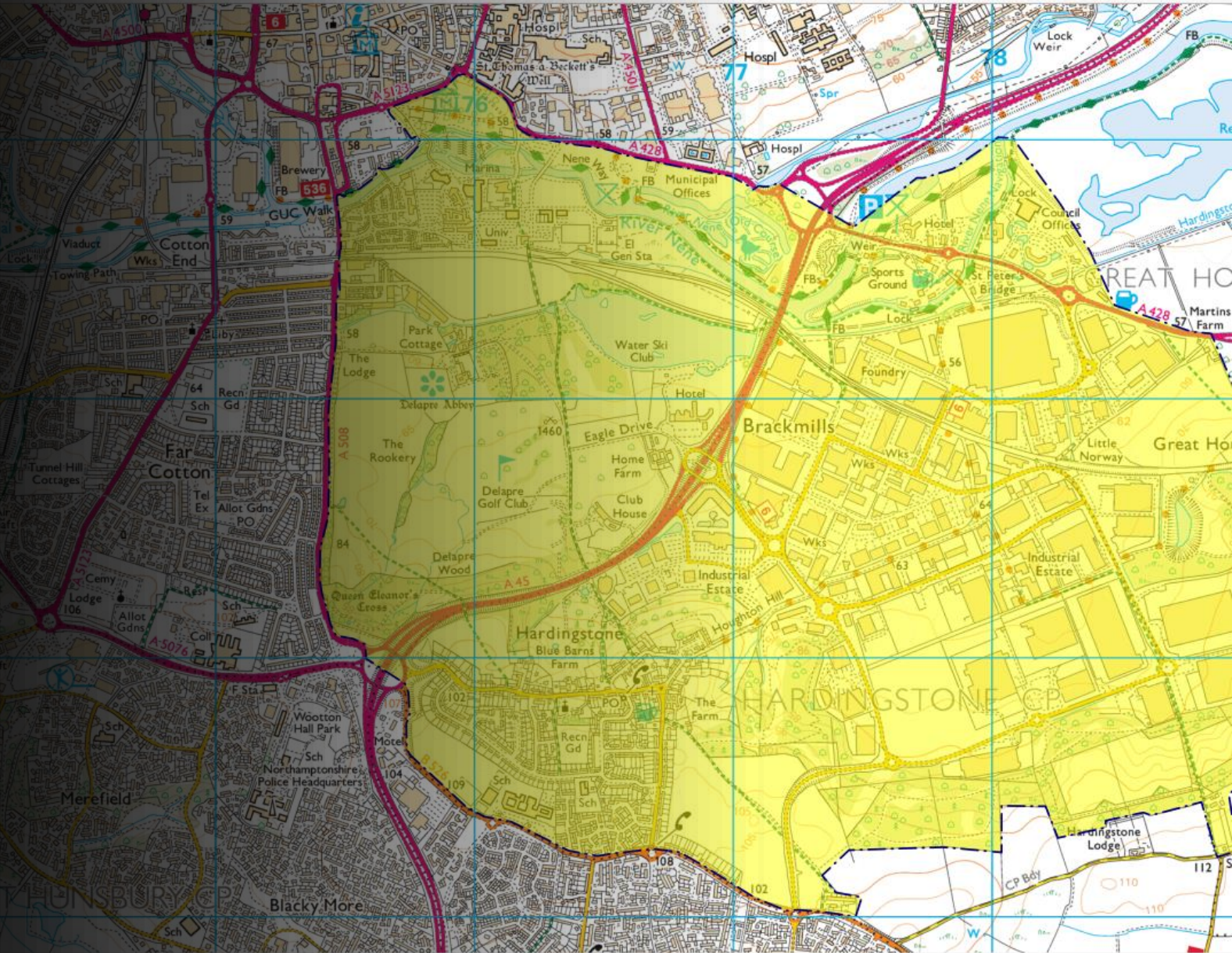
THE VISION

- Northampton Active Quarter – an identifiable zone supporting physical activity, health and wellbeing promotion in Northampton.
- Multiple benefits: Health, social, safety, environmental, cultural, economic heritage, and civic pride.
- Provides good quality, safe and accessible areas of greenspace that meets the need of the whole population.
- Opportunity for improved active travel, green social prescription, and community sport facility development.
- Aligns with regional and national strategies.



The Place and Space:

The Active Quarter goes from Far Cotton to the east of Northampton to the large Brackmills Industrial estate to the west. From the new Northampton Mountain Bike Park at Hardingstone in the south, northwards toward the town and the beautiful Becketts Park.



Active Quarter multi-stakeholder partnership

- Dr Peter Jones - Associate Dean
University of Northampton
- Dr Declan Ryan - Senior Lecturer in
Exercise Physiology University of
Northampton
- Scott Bradley - Head of Science and
Sport University of Northampton
- Ana Pal – PhD Researcher , University
of Northampton
- Deborah Mbofana - Public Health and
Chair of Physical Activity Network
- Chris Holmes - CEO Northamptonshire Sport
- Steve Adams - Chair Northamptonshire Sport
- Richard Clinton - CEO Delapré Abbey
- Peter Cox – Interim Head of Sport & Active
Lives
- Cllr Greg Lunn – Sport Lead West Northants
Council
- Nick Barr - British Cycling Lead Cycling Delivery
Manger for Central Region
- Sara Homer – CEO Brackmills Business
Improvement District



**~15 km of
'cycle ways'**

Open Street Map¹



**~44 km of 'footways'
and 'paths'**

Open Street Map¹



[
Public parks
Play spaces
Golf courses
Sports areas
Churchyards
Allotments
]

**~158 ha of OS
greenspace**

Ordnance Survey

Mapping of by Geographers at the University of Northampton revealed that the Active Quarter contains miles of cycle routes and paths set within a 158 hectares of green and blue urban space

Draft Short, Medium & Long-Term Plans

1-2 years



3-5 years

- Developments and strategy based on PhD research and community needs and demand
- Infrastructure changes to enhance activity and active travel
- Grow events and create AQ as a destination
- Robust evaluation of project to inform future central government funding
- Open Waterside Sports Village at UON
- New PhD student building on current research

6-10 years

- Developments and strategy based on PhD research and community need sand demand
- Additional local infrastructure changes to highways and public realm to support activity and active transport
- Growth of larger scale, mass participation events in Northampton
- Expansion to rest of county and country

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENTS



West
Northamptonshire
Council

Aligns to WNC vision - making West Northants a great place to live, work, visit and thrive – and strategic priorities:

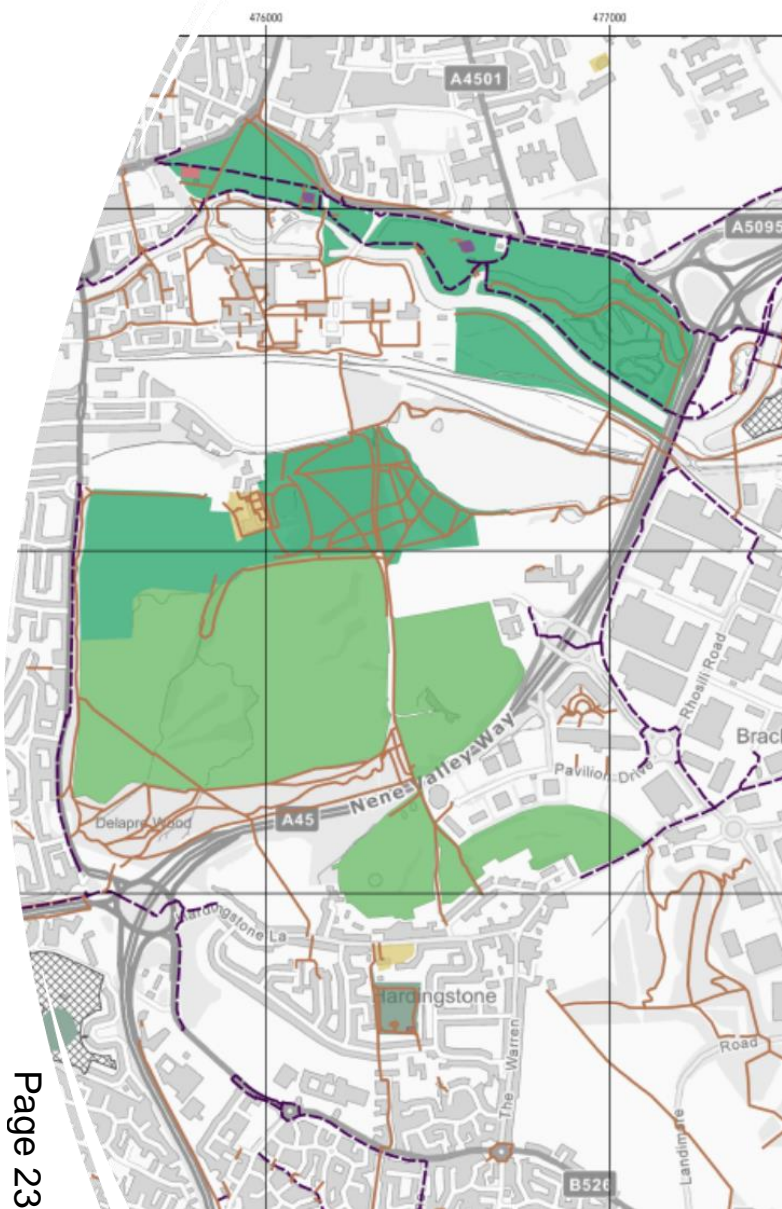
- **Green and clean:** carbon neutral, vibrant towns and villages, high quality parks, accessible green space for all
- **Improved life chances:** healthy children, increasing aspirations, joined up local services with health
- **Connected communities:** infrastructure development connecting people and places (sustainably/safely), improved travel networks
- **Thriving villages and towns:** re-imagined town centre and local areas, reducing the cost of commuting, support for local businesses
- **Economic development:** local infrastructure investment – meeting local need, increasing visitors, supporting economic growth

National / local strategic alignment:

- England Economic Heartland (EEH) Transport Strategy ‘Connecting People, Transforming Journeys’
- ‘Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy’, ‘Gear Change: Vision for Cycling & Walking’
- British Cycling 2021-24 Strategy (increase cycling clubs, embedding diversity, increased emphasis on MTB and BMX)
- Northampton Forward; Central Area Action Plan

SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

- The Active Quarter is a pioneering, identifiable green, blue and grey space and place in the heart of Northampton and represent an opportunity to deliver social impact, which benefits current and future generations.
- It supports active healthy lifestyles, active travel, Sport participation and social prescription. Importantly, it also connects communities, supports economic regeneration has environmental benefits, improves safety, enhances the regions culture and heritage and as a consequence increases tourism and civic pride.
- The Active Quarter projects align to WNC strategic vision - making West Northants a great place to live, work, visit and thrive. It also aligns with national level strategies (England Economic Heartland (EEH) Transport Strategy 'Connecting People, Transforming Journeys'; 'Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy', 'Gear Change: Vision for Cycling & Walking'; British Cycling 2021-24 Strategy
- Further partner involvement and seed investment is required to advance the long term aspirations and related projects. These could be achieved over time by consideration of the Active Quarter as part of relevant planned spending.





NORTHAMPTON ACTIVITY QUARTER
PLACE-BASED STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

DR MARCELLA DAYE

NORTHAMPTON ACTIVITY QUARTER

The Activity Quarter Network is a collection of academic, heritage, and charitable organisations, and Public Health Northamptonshire who are collaborating to increase the use of green and blue space surrounding Waterside Campus as a public health asset.

Social Prescribing – linking people into community support to improve their health.



PLACE BRANDING AND HEALTH

Therapeutic Landscapes:-

Scholars across disciplines including geography, public health, and tourism present the concept of therapeutic landscapes in terms of places offering hygienic food, clean hospitals, necessary medical interventions, wellness treatment, clean accommodation, beaches, fresh air, and natural landscapes to boost the anatomical connection of the mind, body, and soul.



PLACE BRANDING AND HEALTH

Meaning is the key to the importance of places, and it is the subjective experiences that people have within places that give them significance. The concept of therapeutic landscapes provides a fitting means to develop the links between place and health.



PLACE ATTACHMENT AND IDENTITY

People use places to forge a sense of affiliation through attachment

Such an identification with a place often involves emotional ties to place, but it may also involve a sense of shared interests and values.



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder engagement (is essential in managing therapeutic landscapes and promoting health and wellness tourism. DMOs, therapeutic service providers, and governments need to collaborate.

If not, there'll be chances of reproducing social and race disparities in new developments – so that provision and benefits are limited to the people who would normally engage in these activities – they add to their existing provisions but the most-needy are still excluded.



COMMUNITY- ENGAGED APPROACH



Community-engaged participatory approach involves the community in developing and delivering the product and services for the location



Time consuming



Long term benefits

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- It is not just about provision of a community asset – but it is also about how you are going to support this with health education messages to support behavioural change.
- Where place based values come in is in building the connection to the place – that is valued, seen as a distinctive space that offers an experience – builds a place identity and place attachment.
- Activity Quarter as an umbrella brand – not just for residents but also businesses, NGOs
- Co-operative marketing opportunities with private and public sectors
- Living laboratory as well for study – needs of the University team





WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

17TH JANUARY 2023

**CABINET MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR FINANCE – COUNCILLOR
MALCOLM LONGLEY**

Report Title	Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Lifecycle Works
Report Author	Colin Barrett, Head of Works Colin.Barrett@westnorthants.gov.uk

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

MO	Catherine Whitehead	09/01/2023
S151	Martin Henry	05/01/2023
Other Director	Stuart Timmiss – Executive Director Place, Environment & Economy	13/12/2022
	Simon Bowers – Assistant Director Assets & Environment	13/12/2022
Communications	Becky Hutson – Head of Communications	04/01/2023

List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek approval for capital budget of £1.1m to be fund replacement of failed building fabric items at Northampton PFI schools.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 In December 2005 Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) entered a contract with Northampton Schools Limited to refurbish, extend, build new schools and then to operate/maintain them for a period of 32 years. Following extensions, the contract includes 43 primary, secondary and specialist schools.
- 2.2 In 2018 NCC took the decision to vary the Northampton Schools Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract to obtain £2m of in year savings. As part of this decision, it removed 47 items that were due for replacement that year as part of the lifecycle programme. These items ranged from floor finishes, lighting replacements through to window/door replacements.
- 2.3 The removal of these items led to the Council being responsible for the cost of their future replacement for the remainder of the contract period. However, there is a process to re-add the assets back into the programme and transfer the liability back to Northampton Schools Ltd (NSL). This requires the Council to put them in good condition, typically by replacement.
- 2.4 The School Premises Regulations 2012 sets out general health and safety in school buildings as well as the requirements for lighting, welfare etc. Building Surveyors have undertaken a review of the assets removed and have confirmed that they fail to meet regulatory standards. The condition of the assets is that they pose a health and safety risks and affect the delivery of the statutory curriculum and require replacement.
- 2.5 It is therefore proposed to replace the failed assets. For this purpose, a budget of £1.1m is needed.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
 - 3.1.1 Recommend to Council that it approve a capital budget of £1.100m to undertake essential asset replacement works to the Northampton PFI Schools.
 - 3.1.2 Authorises the procurement of these works.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 The assets to be replaced do not comply with the School Premises Regulations 2012 and their condition poses a health and safety risk to students, visitors, and staff to the premises.

- 4.2 The Council has an obligation to meet the Regulations in the schools as a result of the PFI arrangements, which include contracts with each school governing body or academy trust.
- 4.3 Replacing these assets will result in the responsibility for them transferring back to the PFI contractor, thus managing the Council's liabilities.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 In December 2005 Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) entered a contract with Northampton Schools Limited (NSL) to refurbish and extend existing schools, and build new schools, and then to maintain them and provide building maintenance and support services for a period of 32 years. The contract includes 43 primary, secondary and specialist schools.
- 5.2 The contract supported the Council's objective of creating a two-tier education structure within Northampton Town. Originally the contract included 42 primary and secondary schools but was varied shortly after contract signing to include Greenfields Specialist School for Communication.
- 5.3 Other than Greenfields since entering the contract the Council has varied the contract on multiple occasions. This has included two waves of extensions (2012 and 2014) to add existing schools and a new primary school at Duston. These 'wave' extensions enabled the Council to meet its statutory duty to meet local demand for school places.
- 5.4 The unitary charge (UC) payment made by the Council to NSL features two elements: (a) availability (cost of borrowing) and (b) services. The lifecycle programme is one component within the services charge. Other components include facilities management, insurance, project management etc. The services element is funded by a combination of recharges to schools, a contribution from the Council's General Fund, and some other smaller elements.
- 5.5 In 2018 NCC took the decision to vary the contract reducing the UC payment by £2m in year. There were three variations; one included removing 47 assets that were due for replacement that year as part of the lifecycle programme. The assets ranged from floor finishes, lighting replacement through to window/door replacements. The removal of the asset replacement after fees provided a services credit of £0.962m at base cost. It is to be noted that only the Council benefited from the reduction in service costs. None was passed on to schools that contribute to the cost of services.
- 5.6 The removal of these assets led to the Council taking responsibility for the future cost of replacement and maintenance for the remainder of the contract period. When the assets failed the variation allowed for the Council to instruct NSL to replace them but at current market cost. Since 2017 inflationary costs have meant that the current value of

replacement will be more than the base cost. Once replaced NSL would then take on responsibility for future replacements and maintenance.

5.7 The assets have been assessed by Building Surveyors. The assets in question have now continued deteriorating since 2017 and present health and safety risks to schools and are affecting the delivery of statutory curriculum. Examples of this include:

- Spring Lane Primary School – single glazed sliding sash windows in one block have failed. The glazing is loose as the gaskets have failed and there is a risk of glass falling out, the windows are secured with loose wooden blocks that restrict the windows from opening fully on the second storey.
- Chiltern Primary School – fluorescent lighting and replacement ceilings have failed. 20% of the lights have failed in some classrooms leading to poor light and children having difficulty reading presentations at the front of the class. In some classrooms the lighting fails to meet the requirements of the School Premises Regulations 2012.
- Briar Hill Primary School – taps and doors to sink units in classrooms have failed. Taps cannot be operated by children. Doors are hanging off and have already previously been subject to repair.

5.8 When removing the assets from the PFI lifecycle programme NCC also created a challenging situation to the hand back provisions at the expiry of the contract. The hand back provisions require the contractor hand back the assets with a minimum lifecycle period remaining. Currently the variation removes these assets from hand-back provision therefore the Council would transfer these risks to either the schools or back to itself. Replacing these assets now would remove that issue.

6. Issues and Choices

6.1 The choices available to the Council are.

- A. Do nothing: It is highly likely that individuals would suffer from harm. This could lead to action against the Council for breach of statutory duty and unlimited fines. Civil claims could be made. The Council would suffer reputational damage. Areas in schools would become unsafe to educate pupils in.
- B. Provide £1.1m of capital funding to replace the assets. This option would enable the Council to mitigate harm to persons and the likelihood of action for statutory breaches. It would protect the Council from reputational damage. It would provide pupils, staff, and visitors with safer schools to attend. Replacement lighting would assist schools in mitigating utility cost increases.

- C. Replace the assets prior to contract expiry: this would enable the Council to defer the cost of replacement although the costs of replacement would be higher as inflation increases. In the intervening period the Council would still be at risk of action for breach of statutory duty and unlimited fines. Civil claims could be made. The Council could suffer reputational damage. Areas in schools would become unsafe to educate pupils in.
 - D. The Council could seek to vary the contract to request that the contractor fund and replace and maintain the assets: This option would enable the Council to reduce the cost of its own borrowing but would require it to meet the additional revenue UC costs. The Council's borrowing rate is lower than that which the contractor would charge. Replacement lighting would assist schools in mitigating utility cost increases.
- 6.2 Option B is the most cost-effective option that enables the Council to mitigate harm to persons and the likelihood of action for statutory breaches. It would protect the Council from reputational damage and provide pupils, staff, and visitors with safer schools to attend.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

Resources and Financial

- 7.1 Option B would require a capital budget of £1.100m. Whilst a significant sum this is both necessary to meet the Council's legal responsibilities and justified by the reduced risks flowing from the proposed investment.
- 7.2 The alternative, of not approving the budget, would leave the Council exposed to significant financial liabilities including the costs of potential litigation or Health and Safety Executive action, and any penalties imposed by the courts.

Legal

- 7.3 The School Premises Regulations 2012 set out general health and safety in school buildings as well as the requirements for lighting, welfare etc.
- 7.4 The Council has responsibility to keep its property in safe condition under the Occupiers Liability Acts 1957 and 1984, and the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. It has duties under its contracts with each governing body or academy trust, and residual duties as the freeholder of all the affected schools.

Risks

- 7.5 The project carries a number of inherent risks, notably:

- 7.5.1 If works are delayed due to material and labour supply issues, then costs could increase and the risk of a breach and harm to persons would not be mitigated. This could be mitigated by urgently requesting that the contractor raise work orders.
- 7.5.2 The cost of the asset replacement could increase above the available budget. This could be mitigated again by the raising of work orders as soon as possible.
- 7.6 The risks of not acting are liability for breach of statutory duty and/or terms of contract, harm to individuals, and reputational harm.

Consultation

- 7.7 No consultation has been undertaken. The request for capital has arisen out of complaints received from schools and assessment made by Building Surveyors.

Climate Impact

- 7.8 The contractor is required to implement a sustainable approach to construction and where possible reuse and recycle. Where practical, sustainable materials would be used.
- 7.9 Modern lighting installed in replacement of failed older systems would be more energy efficient and thus reduce carbon impacts.

Community Impact

- 7.10 By replacing the failed assets, the Council would be providing safer and more suitable places for education to take place in.

Communications

- 7.11 Discussions with schools will be required to ensure that the replacements do not affect curriculum delivery.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1 None.



WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

17 JANUARY 2023

**CABINET MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR FINANCE – COUNCILLOR
MALCOLM LONGLEY**

Report Title	Asset disposals
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List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report seeks authority to declare various assets surplus to the requirements of the Council and dispose of them by freehold or leasehold, or in one case potentially to transfer to the Housing Revenue Account.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Council owns a large and varied estate. This calls for ongoing management to ensure it is delivering the best outcomes for the residents of West Northamptonshire and in line with the Council's vision and goals. As a result of ongoing work, several assets have been identified where disposals would be beneficial. Most of the proposed disposals outlined within this report are freehold, however one is leasehold. These are:

- Albion House, Northampton
- Former Ribble Close Group Home, Northampton
- Former Ecton Brook Elderly Persons Homes, Northampton
- Former Evelyn Wright Elderly Persons Home, Daventry
- Walker House, Moulton Park Industrial Estate, Northampton
- Former Brackley Swimming Pool Site, Brackley.

- 2.2 Albion House is an office building in central Northampton, near the St John's multi-storey car park. It has one commercial occupier but otherwise since the end of its use as site offices for the Vulcan Works scheme it has remained empty. Freehold disposal is proposed. This would involve the loss of a small amount of revenue income from rent. Additionally, Northamptonshire Partnership Homes (NPH) is exploring a housing scheme for the site. If this shows sufficient value to the Council, it is instead proposed the site is transferred to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

- 2.3 The Ribble Close former group home is situated in Kings Heath, Northampton. The property was originally built as a pair of semi-detached residential properties. It has been some years since it was last used and no service use has been identified except temporary use for homelessness accommodation. Freehold disposal is proposed, to take effect once the property ceases being used for homelessness accommodation.

- 2.4 The former Ecton Brook Residential Care Home located in the eastern Northampton. This has been disused for several years and no service use has been identified. Freehold disposal is proposed. However, Northamptonshire Partnership Homes (NPH) is exploring a housing scheme for the site. If this shows sufficient value to the Council, it is instead proposed the site is transferred to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

- 2.5 The former Evelyn Wright Elderly Persons Home is located on Badby Road, Daventry. It has been vacant for several years and no service use has been identified. Freehold disposal is proposed.
- 2.6 Walker House is a converted manufacturing unit on Pondwood Close, Moulton Park Industrial Estate, Northampton. It is held by the Council on the residue of a 99-year long lease which expires in October 2070. The Council pays annual rent of £12,500. The building has been vacant for several years and no service use has been identified. Disposal to the maximum extent possible is proposed; depending on market interest, this may result in grant of a sub-leasehold or a sub-long-leasehold, or assignment of the lease.
- 2.7 The Former Brackley Swimming Pool site in Brackley has not been in productive use since the opening of Brackley Leisure Centre. The site is vacant. It has access constraints, but it nonetheless considered developable. Alternatively, a land swap with one of the adjacent schools could deliver development value. However, the Council has received an approach from Brackley Town Council (BTC) which wishes to purchase the site to allow for other transactions it is considering. It is therefore proposed to pursue negotiations with BTC on the basis of a best consideration disposal, although potentially with staged payments. Should this not proceed, the property would be marketed and sold to the party making the best offer. Disposal would be by freehold.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that authority be given to the Assistant Director of Assets & Environment:
- 3.1.1 To agree terms for the disposal of the following assets and enter any documentation required to implement this:
- a) Albion House, Northampton (freehold or transfer to Housing Revenue Account).
 - b) Former Ribble Close Group Home, Northampton (freehold).
 - c) Former Ecton Brook Care Home, Northampton (freehold or transfer to Housing Revenue Account).
 - d) Former Evelyn Wright Care Home, Daventry (freehold).
 - e) Walker House, Northampton (leasehold or long leasehold, sub-lease or assignment of lease).
 - f) Former Brackley Swimming Pool Site, Brackley (freehold).

4. Reasons for Recommendations

Overview

- 4.1 It is sensible for the Council to review its estate and ensure it delivers the best overall value, taking policy and financial considerations together, for the residents of West Northamptonshire.

Albion House, Northampton:

- 4.2 To meet the Council's obligation not to dispose of land at less than the best consideration reasonably obtainable.
- 4.3 To generate a capital receipt.
- 4.4 To reduce the operating costs of the Council's estate (holding costs) and remove the risk of vandalism and any associated health and safety concerns associated with a partially empty property.
- 4.5 To enable the redevelopment or reuse of a prominent town centre property and promote regeneration within Northampton town centre.

Former Ribble Close Group Home, Northampton:

- 4.6 To meet the Council's obligation not to dispose of land at less than the best consideration reasonably obtainable.
- 4.7 To generate a capital receipt.
- 4.8 To reduce the operating costs of the Council's estate (holding costs) and remove the risk of vandalism and any associated health and safety concerns associated with an empty property.
- 4.9 To make it likely that the housing would be brought back into use.

Former Ecton Brook Elderly Persons Home, Northampton:

- 4.10 To meet the Council's obligation not to dispose of land at less than the best consideration reasonably obtainable.
- 4.11 To generate a capital receipt for the General Fund.

- 4.12 To reduce the operating costs of the Council's estate (holding costs) and remove the risk of vandalism and any associated health and safety concerns associated with an empty property.
- 4.13 To facilitate the delivery of housing on the site (whether through delivery of affordable housing or market housing, or both).

Former Evelyn Wright Elderly Persons Home, Daventry:

- 4.14 To meet the Council's obligation not to dispose of land at less than the best consideration reasonably obtainable.
- 4.15 To generate a capital receipt.
- 4.16 To reduce the operating costs of the Council's estate (holding costs) and remove the risk of vandalism and any associated health and safety concerns associated with an empty property.

Walker House, Moulton Park, Northampton:

- 4.17 To meet the Council's obligation not to dispose assets at less than the best consideration reasonably obtainable.
- 4.18 To generate either revenue income, or a capital receipt (premium), or both.
- 4.19 To reduce the operating costs of the Councils estate (holding costs) and remove the risk of vandalism and any associated health and safety concerns associated with an empty property.

Former Brackley Swimming Pool Site, Brackley:

- 4.20 To meet the Council's obligation not to dispose assets at less than the best consideration reasonably obtainable.
- 4.21 To generate a capital receipt.
- 4.22 To reduce the operating costs of the Council's corporate estate (holding costs) and remove the risk of health and safety concerns associated with a vacant site.

5. Report Background

Overview

- 5.1 The Council owns a large and varied estate. This calls for ongoing management to ensure it is delivering the best outcomes for the residents of West Northamptonshire, in line with the Council's vision and goals. As a result of ongoing work, several areas where disposal of parts of the Council's land would be beneficial have been identified. Most of the proposed disposals outlined below are freehold, but one is leasehold.

Albion House, Northampton

- 5.2 Albion House fronts onto Victoria Promenade and is situated adjacent to St Johns Multi Storey Car Park. It is a four-storey concrete framed office block understood to have been constructed in the 1970s. The building remains largely vacant, except for one tenant on the third floor as well as rooftop agreements for telematics equipment
- 5.3 The property had been previously identified as surplus to the requirements of Northampton Borough Council (NBC), but no formal advertising has been undertaken. NBC, and more recently WNC, has received unsolicited approaches for the property. However, these have not generated formal offers.
- 5.4 While the property is structurally sound, the internal specification of the property falls below that standard that would be expected in the market and it is likely that the Council would need to make a significant capital investment to internally refurbish the property, including external modernisation (cladding etc) to maximise its revenue generating potential and ensure that it complies with future energy performance requirements for commercial lettings.
- 5.5 In addition to the above, the configuration of the property may not be optimal and therefore redevelopment of the site could (subject to planning) increase the density, and therefore value to the Council. The property would also lend itself well to alternative uses such as residential (private or social), student accommodation, retirement living etc.
- 5.6 It is therefore proposed (subject to 5.7) that the Council disposes of its freehold interest in the property by way of an open market disposal. As the property currently generates an income, the option of the property with the benefit of those tenants will be considered. By doing so, it is considered that the rental income would support the short-term management of the property by the purchaser and therefore potentially have a positive impact on the value.
- 5.7 It is also proposed to also explore the 'disposal' of the property to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for Northamptonshire Partnership Homes (NPH) to deliver a housing

scheme on it. If such a scheme is approved under the NPH governance arrangements recommendation 3.1.1(a) would enable its transfer to the HRA, with the agreed capital value paid to the General Fund capital balances. Such a scheme has the potential to reduce General Fund revenue costs through, for example, reducing temporary accommodation costs.

Former Ribble Close Group Home, Northampton

- 5.8 Ribble Close is situated in Kings Heath, Northampton and is a former group home. The property was originally built as a pair of semi-detached residential properties but was converted by Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) into a single building.
- 5.9 Several years ago, the occupying service (Adult Social Care) decided that the property was surplus to its needs and subsequently vacated. While NCC, and more recently WNC, has explored options for the premises, the property remains vacant. During this time, the Council has been responsible for the utilities, council tax and general maintenance and upkeep of the site. As such the property is a financial burden for the Council.
- 5.10 At a recent meeting of the Capital and Assets Board (CAB), it was determined that internal use of the property should be explored, but in the absence of any justifiable need, the property would be disposed in line with good estates management practices.
- 5.11 Initial interest was received from the Children's Trust, Adult Social Care and the Homelessness team and viewings were undertaken. While no longer-term use was identified, the Homelessness team have identified the property as being suitable for temporary use to house homeless people during the winter months. While this is being progressed, this use would not impact on the longer-term options for the site.
- 5.12 It is therefore proposed that the Council offer the freehold of the property to the market and align completion with the termination of use by the homelessness team. Consideration would also be given to separating the units back into two separate dwellings if it is felt that there would be a financial benefit to the Council in doing so. This would require some initial capital funding by the Council but may allow it to generate a higher capital receipt.

Former Ecton Brook Elderly Persons Home, Northampton

- 5.13 The former Ecton Brook Residential Care Home located in the Eastern part of Northampton. The property was vacated around 2017 after the residents were relocated to alternative provision.
- 5.14 While alternative options for the site were explored, no justifiable alternative use was identified. The property was subsequently declared surplus to the requirements of NCC, which formally marketed the freehold interest in the site. Several proposals were

received, which included wholesale redevelopment as well as conversion. The property was placed under offer on a subject to planning basis to a social housing provider.

- 5.15 While the planning process delayed the disposal, a sale was due to complete when the Covid-19 pandemic arose. Given the nature of the property, and the potential need to create step-down accommodation to free up beds in hospitals as part of the County's emergency response, NCC withdrew from the sale. It then undertook works on the property to ensure that it was ready to meet the care need if it arose.
- 5.16 The property is no longer required as part of the emergency planning response and now sits empty again. Unfortunately, the property has been the subject to vandalism and arson in the last three months, which has caused significant damage to one of the wings. This emphasises the need to dispose of the asset as soon as practicably possible to minimise financial risk to the Council. As the property is likely to be demolished by future purchasers, this fire is unlikely to have had a detrimental impact on value, but such occurrences do pose an additional health and safety risk that the Council needs to manage.
- 5.17 While the property has not been openly market of yet, the Council has received a number of unsolicited approaches for the site from private developers. In addition to this, the Council is also exploring options for the 'disposal' of the site from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account, to enable it to be used to meet its own social housing needs.
- 5.18 It is therefore proposed that the Council offers the freehold of the property to the market. As most of the interest in the past has been from social housing providers, it is also proposed to also explore the 'disposal' of the property to the Housing Revenue Account for NPH to deliver a housing scheme on it. Initial assessment suggests it should be possible for such a scheme to deliver market value for the site, thus achieving best consideration. If such a scheme is approved under the NPH governance arrangements recommendation 3.1.1(c) would enable its transfer to the HRA, with the capital value paid to the General Fund capital balances.

Former Evelyn Wright Elderly Persons Home, Daventry

- 5.19 The former Evelyn Wright Elderly Persons Home is located on Badby Road, Daventry. The property was vacated several years ago after the residents were relocated to alternative provision within the town.
- 5.20 NCC had explored alternative uses for the site, but no justifiable uses have been identified. While the property was previously declared surplus to the requirement of NCC, no formal marketing commenced prior to vesting day.
- 5.21 Discussions continued post vesting day and while options for use of the site have been explored by the WNC services, no deliverable option has been identified. There has

however been an indication that a service provider in the care sector would like to deliver a scheme on the site. It is possible this might offer sufficient benefit to the Council to justify a disposal (freehold or leasehold) to that provider.

- 5.22 It is therefore proposed that the Council offer the freehold of the property to the market. Alongside this the potential interest from the service provider would be explored. If it appears likely to be a more favourable outcome then a separate decision would be sought on that use and allied disposal.

Walker House, Moulton Park, Northampton

- 5.23 Walker House comprises a converted manufacturing unit on Pondwood Close, Moulton Park Industrial Estate, Northampton and extends to approximately 794 sq m (8,545 sq ft) on a site of approximately 0.174 hectares (0.430 acres). Internally the property provides office, kitchen, WCs, and locker / changing room facilities. An element of on-site car parking is also provided.

- 5.24 The property is currently held by the Council on the residue of a 99-year long lease which expires in October 2070. Under the provisions of the Lease, the Council pays a ground rent which is subject to rent reviews every 21 years. The current passing rent is £12,500 per annum.

- 5.25 Prior to vesting day NCC considered several alternative uses for the site however none were deemed suitable. Since vesting day, WNC has continued to review options for the site given the greater breadth of services that it now provides. However, no service use for the property has been identified. The property has therefore remained vacant for several years, during which time the Council has been responsible for its holding costs (rent, rates, utilities etc).

- 5.26 To reduce operational costs, it is proposed to dispose of the Council's interest in the property to the maximum extent practical. Given the existing agreements, the Council has the option to sub-let, on conventional or long lease, or to seek to assign its leasehold interest in the property to a purchaser. In granting a long sub-leasehold or assignment it may receive a premium (capital receipt) as well or instead of rent. To maximise the chances of success, it is proposed to offer the property on all available bases and take the most beneficial offer.

Former Brackley Swimming Pool Site, Brackley

- 5.27 The Former Brackley Swimming Pool site comprises a site of approximately 0.945 hectares (2.33 acres) situated just off Manor Road, Brackley. The site is held freehold by WNC, having previously formed part of the NCC portfolio.

- 5.28 Historically the site was leased in its entirety to South Northamptonshire Council (SNC), which constructed a swimming on part of the site with associated parking facilities. To the northeast of the former swimming pool site is an area of playing field which was leased by SNC to a local football club. Following the development of a new Leisure Centre, the current swimming pool site was no longer required. NCC accepted a surrender of the lease, predicated on the existing swimming pool building being demolished to an agreed standard. These works were completed, and the lease was surrendered. The site has been vacant since that time.
- 5.29 The site has been identified as a potential residential development site. Although it is not currently allocated for such a use in the Local Plan, it seems likely it would be acceptable given the location. It may be that a land swap with an adjacent school would provide a more coherent site; in principle this should be achievable.
- 5.30 Additionally, the Council has received an approach from Brackley Town Council (BTC) which wishes to purchase the site to allow for other transactions it is considering.
- 5.31 It is therefore proposed to pursue negotiations with BTC on the basis of a best consideration disposal, although potentially with staged payments. Should this not proceed, the property would be marketed and sold to the party making the best offer. Disposal would be by freehold.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 The Council has the following options.

Albion House, Northampton

- 6.2 (1) Do nothing – The Council could retain the property. It has not identified an internal use for the property and as such it would have to hold the property for an indefinable length of time. As previously identified, the property is largely vacant and the existing office accommodation falls below the standard that would be expected in the market, and as such would require significant capital investment in order to maximise revenue income and ensure that the property is compliant with changes to the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) which are due to come into force in a few years' time. In addition to this, the Council would continue to incur holding costs while the property is vacant.
- 6.3 (2) Seek outline planning permission for a revised use or development – While this could be a valid approach, the Council would need to ensure that the scheme for which is sought planning permission was one that would derive the highest return. This becomes complicated on sites where there are multiple alternative uses. Offices would generate a different value to retirement flats, which in turn would deliver a different value to social

housing, etc. It is therefore hard to conclude this approach would deliver the best overall value.

- 6.4 (3) Dispose without obtaining planning permission – Given the multiple different potential uses for the site, this seems the most pragmatic approach.
- 6.5 (4) 'Dispose' to the Housing Revenue Account – As described above, this may enable the Council, via NPH, to deliver social housing and allied facilities on the site whilst the General Fund still received best consideration.
- 6.6 Option 3 is recommended unless delivery of a social housing scheme on the land is approved under the NPH governance arrangements, in which case Option 4 would be recommended.

Former Ribble Close Group Home, Northampton

- 6.7 (1) Do nothing – The Council could take the decision to retain the property. Further to the investigations, the Council has not identified a service use for the property and as such it would have to hold the property for an indefinable length of time. Council would continue to incur holding costs whilst the building was vacant. It would also be at risk of vandalism or arson.
- 6.8 (2) Subdivision of properties prior to disposal – This will be a key consideration of the disposal process. As the properties were originally constructed as a pair of semi-detached properties, the Council will need to evaluate whether it would command a higher capital receipt by returning the properties to their original state, then selling them in their existing form. Such an approach would require the Council to commit capital to complete these works. However, this would only be considered if it offered a financial return that was greater than the cost of the works. This option would therefore be considered as part of planning for disposal.
- 6.9 (3) Disposal without subdivision – This option would therefore be considered as part of planning for disposal. It is essentially the mirror image of option (2).
- 6.10 Either option (2) or (3) could be preferable. The final decision would be taken once analysis of the cost and likely impact on capital receipts had been assessed.

Former Ecton Brook Elderly Persons Home, Northampton

- 6.11 (1) Do nothing – The Council could retain the property. However, the Council has not identified an internal use for the property and as such it would have to hold the property for an indefinable length of time. The Council would continue to incur holding costs whilst the building was vacant. It would also be at risk of vandalism or arson.

- 6.12 (2) Seek outline planning permission for a revised use or development – While this could be a valid approach, the Council would need to ensure that the scheme for which is sought planning permission was one that would derive the highest return. This becomes complicated on sites where there are multiple alternative uses. Social housing would generate a different value to retirement flats, etc. It is therefore hard to conclude this approach would deliver the best overall value.
- 6.13 (3) Dispose without obtaining planning permission – Given the multiple different potential uses for the site, this seems the most pragmatic approach.
- 6.14 (4) 'Dispose' to the Housing Revenue Account – As described above, this may enable the Council, via NPH, to deliver social housing and allied facilities on the site whilst the General Fund still received best consideration.
- 6.15 Option 3 is recommended unless delivery of a social housing scheme on the land is approved under the NPH governance arrangements, in which case Option 4 would be recommended.

Former Evelyn Wright Elderly Persons Home, Daventry

- 6.16 (1) Do nothing – The Council could retain the property. Further to the investigations, the Council has not identified an internal use for the property and as such it would have to hold the property for an indefinable length of time. The Council would continue to incur holding costs whilst the building was vacant. It would also be at risk of vandalism or arson.
- 6.17 (2) Seek outline planning permission for a revised use or development – While this could be a valid approach, the Council would need to ensure that the scheme for which is sought planning permission was one that would derive the highest return. This becomes complicated on sites where there are multiple alternative uses. Social housing would generate a different value to retirement flats, etc. It is therefore hard to conclude this approach would deliver the best overall value.
- 6.18 (3) Dispose without obtaining planning permission – Given the multiple different potential uses for the site, this seems the most pragmatic approach.
- 6.19 (4) Dispose by private treaty to potential service provider – This may offer greater value to the Council, but the detailed are not yet sufficiently clear to confirm if this is the case. Therefore, further investigation is required.
- 6.20 Subject to Option 4 not proceeding, Option 3 is recommended.

Walker House, Moulton Park, Northampton

- 6.21 (1) Do nothing – The Council could decide to do nothing and continue to hold the property vacant. Given the investigations that have previously been undertaken by NCC and more recently by WNC, it is unlikely that the Council will have a future need for the property. The Council would continue to incur holding costs whilst the building was vacant. It would also be at risk of vandalism or arson.
- 6.22 (2) Market and secure a new tenant – As the Council has the benefit of the residue of the existing lease (around 50 years), it could look to secure a commercial tenant for the property. In the current market, it is likely that a tenant would consider a five-year term (or ten with a break at five), although longer terms are possible. It is understood that the property is likely to be well received on the market. As the Council pays a ground rent, such an approach would allow it to benefit from any profit rent (difference between the ground rent and the market rent). As with any commercial letting, it would carry the risk or rental voids while vacant.
- 6.23 (3) Dispose of its long leasehold interest – Given the profit rent (discussed above) that is likely to exist with this property, it is possible that the Council could dispose of its long leasehold interest in the property for a premium. The level of premium payable would vary from tenant to tenant and will be inherently linked to the unexpired term, and the level of works that a purchaser may need to make to the property to make it fit for their purpose. Therefore, it is not possible to determine what level of premium could be commanded without exposing the property to the market. This disposal may be for a term less than the remaining lease, or it could be for the whole remaining term, in which case the lease would be assigned to the new tenant.
- 6.24 (4) Acquisition of the freehold – This option would be considered if WNC has a longer-term use for the property and it permanently secures the availability of the property. As no use has been identified, such an action would be unnecessary. In addition to this, while it would be reasonable to assume that the value of an unencumbered freehold would be more valuable than the Council's long leasehold interest, to realise this, the Council would need to negotiate that acquisition with the current freeholder. It is likely that the Council would need to share any benefit with the landlord, reducing the overall benefit to the Council. Whilst possible the Council has no obvious benefit from acquiring this property.
- 6.25 As noted above, either Option 2 or 3 could offer the best consideration. Accordingly, the property would be marketed for both possible outcomes and the best offer selected.

Former Brackley Swimming Pool Site, Brackley

- 6.26 (1) Do nothing – The Council could decide to do nothing and continue to hold the property vacant. Given the investigations that have previously been undertaken by NCC and more recently by WNC, it is not possible to determine whether the Council will have a future

need for the property, however this is considered unlikely. By continuing to hold the property vacant, it will continue to be responsible for the management and maintenance of the site and would forego the ability to generate a capital receipt from the disposal.

- 6.27 (2) Dispose of the Freehold – Given the investigations in relation to any future use of the site, disposal of the freehold would enable the Council to mitigate the cost, and risk of holding the property vacant. Such an action would also allow the Council to generate a capital receipt and meet its best consideration obligations.
- 6.28 Option 2 is recommended. This may be, as noted above, by private treaty to Brackley Town Council, or to another purchaser, probably a developer.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

Resources and Financial

General

- 7.1 In line with proposals developed during work on the 2023/24 budget, it is proposed where capital disposals are concerned, to levy a 5% fee (revenue) reflecting the Council's time and expense in processing such disposals. Realistically buyers will not simply add that fee onto the total they pay, so in whole or part this is likely to result in lower capital receipts. In some cases the fee will be higher and in others lower than needed to reflect the Council's costs, but overall it should balance out.
- 7.2 In each case it is expected the Council and the other party would bear their own costs. In the case of the Council, this would include, as required, things such as the provision of a Red Book valuation or the appointment of an external consultant to manage the disposal.

Albion House, Northampton

- 7.3 The former NBC commissioned a valuation of the property in 2020 which determined that the value of the asset could reach £900,000. Values are likely to have changed since that time but exposure to the market will prove current market value.
- 7.4 In addition to the capital receipt that WNC would generate through the disposal of the asset, it is important to note that as the property currently forms part of the Council's investment estate, it will also lose the income that is currently received from the tenant which currently equates to [£xxk] per annum. Additionally, there is income of [£xk] pa from use of the roof for telecommunications. Future revenue income targets would need to be reduced following sale.
- 7.5 As noted in the body of the report, there is a draft scheme prepared by NPH for housing development on the site. If it is concluded this scheme would offer greater value to the

Council than a disposal, the disposal process would be terminated and a transfer from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account made. This would result in a payment from HRA capital to General Fund capital reflecting the agreed value of the site (potentially with adjustment if necessary to make the scheme work, if there was still an overall benefit to the Council from proceeding).

Former Ribble Close Group Home, Northampton

- 7.6 As noted in the body of the report, it may be worthwhile splitting the building back into two houses. If it appears likely this would provide an enhanced value greater than the cost, it would be done.

Former Ecton Brook Elderly Persons Home, Northampton

- 7.7 The Council would also consider the demolition of the existing structure as part of any disposal process. This would incur a capital cost, but would remove the financial risks to the Council associated with vandalism etc. As any future purchaser is likely to demolish and redevelop the site, any offer received will make allowance for the demolition (usually with an element of contingency). By demolishing the buildings the Council could mitigate the holding costs and risk during the marketing period, whilst also removing any contingency adjustments from purchasers' bids.

- 7.8 As noted in the body of the report, there is a draft scheme prepared by NPH for housing development on the site. If it is concluded this scheme would offer greater value to the Council than a disposal, the disposal process would be terminated and a transfer from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account made. This would result in a payment from HRA capital to General Fund capital reflecting the agreed value of the site (potentially with adjustment if necessary to make the scheme work, if there was still an overall benefit to the Council from proceeding).

Former Evelyn Wright Elderly Persons Home, Daventry

- 7.9 The Council would also consider the demolition of the existing structure as part of any disposal process. This would incur a capital cost, but would remove the financial risks to the Council associated with vandalism etc. As any future purchaser is likely to demolish and redevelop the site, any offer received will make allowance for the demolition (usually with an element of contingency). By demolishing the buildings the Council could mitigate the holding costs and risk during the marketing period, whilst also removing any contingency adjustments from purchasers' bids.

Walker House, Moulton Park, Northampton

- 7.10 As highlighted earlier in this report, the property has been vacant for several years, during which time the Council has paid the holding costs. The costs include rent, utilities, and

business rates which have been around £20k per annum. By progressing with the recommendation, the Council should be able to mitigate this cost and in turn generate a revenue income or capital receipt (premium).

Former Brackley Swimming Pool Site, Brackley

- 7.11 In response to the approach from BTC, an independent Red Book Valuation will be undertaken to determine the market value of the asset. If this results in an agreement with BTC the value so determined would guide the price to be paid. BTC has indicated it would like to pay by instalments. This is acceptable in principle, but the price to be paid would be adjusted to allow for the interest WNC would have earned or paid had the full price been paid at one time.

Legal

General

- 7.12 The Council has the power to disposal of the land outlined in this report under section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 (the '1972 Act'). This provides that the Council in exercising its power is free to dispose of its land as it may determine subject to a duty (under sub-section 2) to dispose of it for the best consideration reasonably obtainable unless the Secretary of State otherwise consents, and subject to further duties in relation to disposal of open space (see below).
- 7.13 The Secretary of State has issued the General Disposal Consent (England) 2003 (the 'General Consent'), which permits land disposals at less than best consideration that can be reasonably obtained where the Council considers that a disposal at less than best consideration will help it to secure the promotion or improvement of the economic, social, or environmental well-being of its area. This is subject to the under-value not exceeding £2 million. Under-values above £2m require specific consent.
- 7.14 Any disposal of land at less the best consideration is also a form of subsidy. The giving of subsidy is subject to restrictions under the Subsidy Control Act 2022 as these come into force, and until then by the provisions of the European Union (Future Relationship) Act 2020.
- 7.15 Apart from the potential disposal of the open space in Towcester, all the proposed disposals are designed to be at full commercial value. Accordingly, neither the Section 123(2) nor the subsidy control provisions should be of concern in those cases.
- 7.16 Specific comments are provided below against specific proposed disposals were these are called for.

Former Brackley Swimming Pool Site, Brackley

- 7.17 Over time the residents of the properties that front Manor Road, Brackley have used the access road to gain access to the rear of their properties, some of which have erected garages. It is possible that these tenants may have gained rights to use the site access and egress which we will need to be appropriately managed through the disposal process.
- 7.18 In addition, to the above, since the closure of the swimming pool, staff and parents of Brackley Church of England Primary School have used the site for parking and school drop off. While this is not a documented right, and unlikely to be legally enforceable, it is appropriate to highlight this as it is likely to be a consideration as the disposal progresses.

Risk

General

- 7.19 Where sites with buildings on them or are open land without formal uses, the only substantial risk associated with disposal would be that the Council, having disposed of the property, then identifies a need which could be met by using it. However, in each case options have been assessed and no convincing case for a service need has been identified.
- 7.20 The principal risks for the Council in such cases would derive from a decision to do nothing whereby the Council would continue to be exposed to the financial risk of holding a property empty, including rates, utilities, general repairs and maintenance, the risk of vandalism, and acquisition of third party rights.
- 7.21 Specific comments are provided below against specific proposed disposals were these are called for.

Former Ecton Brook Elderly Persons Home, Northampton

- 7.22 The property has been vacant for a number of years and has more recently been the subject of vandalism and arson that has caused considerable damage to one of the wings. A decision by the Council to do nothing, would mean that the Council would continue to be exposed to risk, and the health and safety concerns that are associated with unauthorised access. This risk would however be partly mitigated should the existing structure be demolished.

Former Evelyn Wright Elderly Persons Home, Daventry

- 7.23 The property has been vacant for a number of years and has more recently been the subject of vandalism and arson that has caused considerable damage to one of the wings. A decision by the Council to do nothing would mean that the Council would continue to be exposed to risk, and the health and safety concerns that are associated with

unauthorised access. This risk would however be partly mitigated should the existing structure be demolished.

Walker House, Moulton Park, Northampton

- 7.24 If the Council took the decision not to proceed with the recommendation, it would continue to carry the financial risks associated with keeping the property empty. As highlighted above, these equate to approximately £20,000 per annum. This risk is mitigated through the leasehold or long-leasehold disposal.
- 7.25 The Council would retain some future risk on the leasehold disposal option given possible future void periods (for re-letting).
- 7.26 There is also the risk associated with the Council not being able to demonstrate that it has met its obligations to achieve the best consideration reasonably obtainable. Given the nature of the agreements that affect the site, it is not possible to determine at this stage which option would deliver the greatest financial return for the Council. This risk is mitigated through the recommendation to seek proposals on both options that the Council can then consider on their merits.

Former Brackley Swimming Pool Site, Brackley

- 7.27 There are risks around legal rights which may have been established through informal use of the land. These would be managed by disclosure through the sale process.

Consultation

- 7.28 In relation to the disposals recommended under this report, no external consultation has been undertaken. None is considered necessary except for the statutory invitation of objections relating to the disposal of open space (Bury Mount [the Watermeadows], and other small areas of open space in Towcester). Given the nature of the proposed transfers, objections appear to be unlikely.

Climate Impact

- 7.29 Most of the disposals relate to existing buildings, many of which are likely to be demolished. These disposals would enable development or potential adaption of existing buildings and subsequent occupation. Development of any form inevitably results in carbon emissions. However, the sites are generally in urban areas and thus support development and use in more sustainable locations, accessible by a range of means of transport other than the car. New buildings or major refurbishments should also be to modern building standards, thus reducing energy use and carbon emissions in operation.

Community Impact

- 7.30 Most of the disposals should result in disused buildings or land being brought back into productive use. This is likely to benefit the community both directly from the new uses, and indirectly through reduced potential for criminal and anti-social behaviour, fire risk, and appearance of neglect.
- 7.31 In respect of the disposal of the Former Brackley Swimming Pool site, as outlined earlier in this report, the Council has received interest in the site from BTC which would be looking to utilise the site. Should this disposal be agreed, it should positively impact on the local community within Brackley.

Communications

- 7.32 When opportunities are to be presented to the market for offers, this will be communicated openly and transparently. This should maximise the likely returns to the Council and help ensure that it meets its obligation to achieve the best consideration reasonably obtainable.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1 None.

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

17TH JANUARY 2023

**CABINET MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT,
TRANSPORT, HIGHWAYS & WASTE – COUNCILLOR PHIL LARRATT**

Report Title	Parking charge arrangements at parks
Report Author	Alan Craggs, Transport Facilities & CCTV Manager Alan.Craggs@westnorthants.gov.uk

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

MO	Catherine Whitehead	5/01/2023
S151	Martin Henry	5/01/2023
Other Director	Stuart Timmiss – Executive Director Place, Environment & Economy Simon Bowers – Assistant Director Assets & Environment	07/12/2022 05/12/2022
Communications	Becky Hutson – Head of Communications	04/01/2023

List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To propose revised and new parking charge arrangements at Brixworth and Daventry Country Parks, and the Racecourse Park, Northampton.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Council provides car parks for several of its parks. These meet user needs and incur costs of provision. At Daventry and Brixworth Country Parks parking charges are levied, but in other parks this has not been considered appropriate or sufficiently worthwhile.
- 2.2 The current methods of paying for parking in Brixworth and Daventry country parks are inconvenient for users, do not offer a choice of periods, and are vulnerable to abuse and non-payment. The machines are also aging and prone to failure.
- 2.3 The Racecourse car park tends to be used by people who then walk to the town centre, meaning it is not fully available for its intended purpose.
- 2.4 The Council faces a challenging financial position, which means it needs to increase income, where this is practical, in order to maintain services.
- 2.5 It is therefore proposed to provide new ANPR-based parking payment systems (using automatic number plate recognition) and new tariffs at the country parks and the Racecourse. Overall, the new arrangements should generate an additional £176k pa in revenue, with an installation cost of £144k.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
 - 3.1.1 Approves a capital budget of £144k for new parking charge arrangements at Daventry and Brixworth country parks, and the Racecourse.
 - 3.1.2 Authorises the implementation of new and revised parking charges for those areas as set out in Tables 2 and 3 of the report, to be implemented as soon as practical.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 To improve user choice and income generation, and reduce payment avoidance, at Brixworth and Daventry Country Parks.
- 4.2 To ensure the Racecourse car park is used for its intended purpose.
- 4.3 It is considered that the proposals either benefit users, or where there are negative effects these are outweighed by the need to provide funding to continue services.

5. Report Background

Context

- 5.1 The Council provides car parks at several of its parks, including Daventry and Brixworth Country Parks, and the Racecourse park in Northampton. These meet user needs but have a cost to provide and maintain. There are already charges for parking at these country parks; these provide an important income for the parks service. In other parks it has been considered either not practical or not worthwhile to charge, or the benefits of doing so have been considered to outweigh the benefits.
- 5.2 The Council is installing ANPR-based charging in its larger Northampton town centre car parks. This should be in place by early 2023 and offers users a range of benefits, including no need for physical tickets or permits, and easier means of payment. This project offers the same benefits and ease of use that will be experienced as part of this roll-out.
- 5.3 The project also allows the Council to harmonise pricing across its assets, ensuring that there is a consistency of approach with the ability to provide opportunities for season tickets and other concessions as required.

Country parks

- 5.4 The Council inherited very different parking charge structures in its two main country parks, Daventry and Brixworth, as shown in Table 1. Minor changes towards consolidating them have been made by making the Daventry season ticket also permit parking at Brixworth, but they remain fundamentally different in structure.

Time period	£
Daventry, all day	£2.20
Brixworth, up to four hours	£3.50
Brixworth, up to eight hours	£5.50
Brixworth, up to twelve hours	£7.50
Brixworth only season ticket	£38.00
Dual park season ticket	£70.00

- 5.5 Payment is by means of pay and display. This is not convenient for users, as it requires users to visit the pay and display machine, have the right change, obtain a ticket, and return to their car with it before they are able to enjoy what the park offers. The machines in both parks are also aging and prone to failure. This means people have to try and find a working machine, or the Council loses income. The experience is not one which encourages easy and frequent use of the parks and impacts on revenue for the upkeep of the parks themselves.

- 5.6 The use of pay and display also means that enforcement by parking attendants is required; inevitably, there are times when enforcement does not occur, and people may take the risk of not paying. This is unfair to those who do pay.
- 5.7 There have been complaints, particularly from Park Run, at Brixworth that the shortest period, up to four hours, is too long and unfairly penalises those visiting for a short time. The changes suggested should encourage more people to use the park more frequently.
- 5.8 Given these factors it is proposed to implement an ANPR-based charging system at both country parks. This would make payment easier for drivers, largely remove the possibility of avoiding payment, and make it simpler to apply charges for smaller units of time. The implementation of ANPR also enables any future changes to be done easily and in a cost-effective way. It could assist with any specific changes that may be seen as required in making the parks more accessible at certain times.
- 5.9 Specifically on the issue of Park Run, the Council recognises the particular benefits this mass participation event brings. It is therefore proposed to introduce a Park Run season ticket. This would allow Park Run participants to park for no further charge between 8:30 and 10:30 on Saturday mornings when Park Run was operating. The Park Run season ticket would apply to a specific park.
- 5.10 The proposed charges are set out in table 2. Whilst overall higher they would allow people more choice about the time they spent and therefore the charge they incurred.

Time period	£
Up to two hours	£3.00
Up to four hours	£4.00
Up to six hours	£6.00
Up to eight hours	£8.00
All day	£12.00
Single park season ticket	£70.00
Dual park season ticket	£100.00
Park Run season ticket	£5.00

- 5.11 Even at £100pa, the dual park season ticket would represent excellent value at under £2 per week to use both parks as much as the purchaser liked.
- 5.12 The new payment system is estimated to cost £104k to install.
- 5.13 The revised charges are expected to generate an additional £145k pa across the two parks, with a further £5k pa from the revised season ticket prices, but with some reductions due to the Park Run season ticket (see 7.1).

Racecourse, Northampton

- 5.14 The car park at the Racecourse has 80 spaces; it is currently free to use. It is intended to serve the park. However, it appears that the car park is largely being used by people who then walk into the town centre avoiding the costs of parking in the town, making parking difficult for those wishing to use the park and impacting in the businesses that are located here. This means that the car park is not serving its intended purpose.
- 5.15 It is therefore proposed to introduce charges at set out in Table 3, along with a no return within three hours rule. This should ensure that the car park is available for users of the park. 'Evening/overnight' is defined, as with town centre car parks, as available to purchase between 5pm and midnight and allows parking until 10am next day. If arrangements for the town centre car parks are changed, consideration would be given to also adjusting the evening/overnight arrangements here.
- 5.16 There is also a Park Run at the Racecourse. It is therefore proposed to also offer a Park Run season ticket for the Racecourse car park, on the same basis as for the country parks.

Time period	£
Daytime up to 1 Hour	£1.10
Daytime up to 2 Hours	£2.20
Daytime up to 3 Hours	£3.30
Evening/overnight charge	£2.20
Park Run season ticket	£5.00

- 5.17 As with the country parks, it is practical to install an ANPR-based system at the Racecourse. Given the benefits to users and the Council, this is the proposal.
- 5.18 The new payment system is estimated to cost £40k to install.
- 5.19 This charge is expected to result in increased income of £60k pa. As the proposal is likely to result in the displacement of users to other, more central, car parks the income is unlikely to appear in the Racecourse car park; instead, much of it would appear in other car parks. As such, the impact of Park Run season tickets is likely to be low.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 The choices open to the Council are to apply none, both, or all of the proposals. Each of these has its own advantages and disadvantages. Given user benefits from ANPR-based charging, the Council's financial position, and the proportionate approach to the proposals, it is suggested it would be appropriate to proceed with them all.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

Resources and Financial

- 7.1 The proposed charges, except the Park Run season ticket, are included in the draft budget. They should result in additional income of the order of £210k pa. The introduction of the Park Run season ticket is likely to have some adverse impact on this income, but the extent of this is not possible to assess with confidence. If it is assumed that overall 250 cars are parked for Park Run 35 weeks per year, this would result in a loss of income of £35k, with Park Run season ticket income of £1k. Thus, the net increase in income would be £176k.
- 7.2 The use of ANPR-based charging systems would greatly reduce the potential for breaches of the regulations. This is likely to reduce income from penalty charge notices. However, parking attendant would be used more in the towns centres where travel distances are less and due to the volume of parked cars their time would be more efficient, detecting other contraventions, and thus generating income.
- 7.3 The Council faces a difficult financial situation, where the costs of providing services its residents depend on is unlikely to be matched by existing sources of funding. In that context it is necessary to look at the prices the Council charges for optional services.

Legal

- 7.4 The Council provides and regulates its off-street car parks under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and regulations made under it. Unlike for on-street car parking, the Act does not require the income from off-street car parks is ring-fenced for particular purposes. The Act also empowers the Secretary of State to give 'type approval' for equipment used for parking enforcement, which the Council then uses.
- 7.5 Under the Equality Act 2010 the Council needs to consider the impact of its proposals on protected characteristics. Although parking charges are the same for all parking users, this may have a disproportionate impact on those on lower incomes, and there is a higher proportion of individuals with certain protected characteristics on low incomes. This is mitigated, however, by the provision of town centre disability parking free of charge for blue badge holders, who do not have the same choices as others as to whether to use motorised transport. Everyone is encouraged to use other forms of transport where possible to minimise the impact of traffic on communities and to support the reduction in carbon emissions. One of the ways of doing this is charging for parking, although this is more relevant for Daventry and the Racecourse than Brixworth. In addition, car parking charges support the efficient use of public assets and generate income to support public services.

Risks

- 7.6 The proposals carry a number of inherent risks, notably:
- 7.6.1 The new and increased charges may reduce people's willingness to park to use the parks, thus reducing the expected increase in income. Given the improved ease of use through ANPR-based systems, and the additional flexibility on offer, this effect is expected to be minimal and it is hoped that more people may start to use the parks as a result.
 - 7.6.2 Procurement and implementation of new payment systems may take time, resulting in an inability to deliver full year benefits in 2023-24. This would be mitigated as far as possible through early commencement of procurement.
- 7.7 There may be some public objection to the proposals, attracting negative media coverage. This would need to be managed by clear and open communication, explaining the Council's reasons, including both the practical benefits and the realities of the challenging financial situation facing the Council.

Consultation

- 7.8 No consultation has taken place on these proposals. They do, however, respond to complaints at Brixworth about the limited choice of time periods.

Climate Impact

- 7.9 There is likely to be relatively little overall impact on climate as a result of these proposals. They are not considered likely to materially reduce usage and therefore travel by car.

Community Impact

- 7.10 The impact of the proposed changes on the community varies by area.
- 7.11 The Country Park changes would benefit some users, such as Park Run and other short-stay users, whilst increasing charges for others. They would benefit all users by providing a system which made payment easier and more reliable. They would also benefit honest users by making it very much harder for others to avoid payment.
- 7.12 The new charges at the Racecourse should mean that car park is available for park users.

Communications

- 7.13 Decisions to vary or create new parking charges inevitably involve some reaction. It would be necessary to clearly communicate the Council's reasons, including both the practical benefits and the realities of the challenging financial situation facing the Council.

8. Background Papers

8.1 None.



WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

17th JANUARY 2023

CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR HOUSING, CULTURE AND LEISURE - COUNCILLOR ADAM BROWN

Report Title	Decision taken by the Leader of the Council under urgency procedures: Approve budget for the rebuilding of 10 Windflower Place
Report Author	Jacqueline Brooks – Interim Head of Housing Strategy and Partnerships jacqueline.brooks@westnorthants.gov.uk

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

West MO	Catherine Whitehead	04/01/2023
West S151	Martin Henry	05/01/2023
Other Director/SME	Jane Carr	05/01/2023
/Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	04/01/2023

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Record of Decision by the Leader in relation to approve budget for the rebuilding of 10 Windflower Place – Signed by the Leader of the Council

1. Purpose of Report

This report seeks to notify Cabinet of the decision taken by the Leader of the Council to approve budget for the rebuilding of 10 Windflower Place.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Local Government Act 2000 Section 9E provides that the Leader of the Council can take any executive decision alone or with his Cabinet. In West Northants the vast majority of Executive decisions, not otherwise delegated, are taken collectively by the Leader and Cabinet together but in cases of urgency the Leader of the Council can take decisions where it is necessary.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet note the decisions taken by the Leader of the Council set out at Appendix A.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 Where decisions that would otherwise be taken by the Leader and Cabinet have been taken by the Leader alone, in the interests of transparency, the decision is reported to the next available meeting of the Cabinet.
- 4.2 The decision taken provided the authority for the Council to approve funding to support the rebuild of 10 Windflower Place, following a fire.
- 4.3 Full reasons for the decision taken are set out in the decision records appended to this report.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 Northamptonshire Partnership Homes (NPH) produced and presented a report to Capital Assets Board (CAB) on the 9 August 2022 regarding 10 Windflower Place, a property that was destroyed by fire in December 2021. The report was seeking additional budget through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programme of £200k to support the full cost of rebuild of the property.
- 5.2 The Capital Assets Board is not a decision-making body and recommendations for an additional budget from CAB require approval from Cabinet.
- 5.3 Although there was a report that went to Cabinet on the 20 December (Quarter 2 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Capital Monitoring) which referenced the damage at the property, as the work had already commenced an urgent decision by the Leader of the Council was required to authorise funding to continue to incur expenditure on the scheme.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 The decision taken was necessary to ensure the continued proper running of the Council and its business.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

7.1.1 The HRA Capital Programme is funded through borrowing, internal resources or external funding arrangements. Expenditure relating to this will be monitored by Finance and the Capital and Assets Board.

7.2 Legal

This report is required to ensure that the Council complies with its constitution in making key decisions relating to the Council's capital assets, even when they are under the management of Northampton Partnership Homes. The Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been consulted about this decision.

7.3 Risk

Funding for all capital schemes has been identified, and progress against budgets will be closely monitored to Cabinet on a regular basis.

8. Background Papers

None

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL
RECORD OF DECISION

Date Of Decision:	12 th December 2022
Title:	Capital funding for the rebuild of 10 Windflower Place
Is this a “Key Decision”?	No
Purpose:	To seek approval for capital funding
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Adam Brown
Decision Maker:	Leader of the Council – Cllr Jonathan Nunn
Consultation and Scrutiny:	Permission has been sought from the chair of People and Overview Scrutiny – Cllr Rosie Herring
Officer Recommendations:	To approve funding of £200k to allow the rebuild of 10 Windflower Place following fire damage.
Decision Taken:	Approved
Reasons For Decision:	<p>10 Windflower Place is a fire damaged end of terrace property managed by NPH. There are high housing needs for social housing across West Northants, alongside NPH have tenants that need to move into this property, it is important that this rebuild is undertaken so the property can be bought back into circulation.</p> <p>A report was submitted to Capital Assets Board (CAB) in August and the decision was to approve capital funding to support this rebuild. However as CAB is not a decision making body, an urgent decision is now required.</p>
Alternative Options Considered (Including Reasons For Rejection):	Not to approve funding, however this would result in a loss of a social housing dwelling.
Declarations of interest:	none

Authorised By Relevant Cabinet Member/Chief Officer/Deputy Chief Officer:

Name: Councillor Jonathan Nunn

Date: 12th December 2022

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