People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held at the Council Chamber, Lodge Road, Daventry, NN11 4FP on Tuesday 25 October 2022 at 6.00 pm

Agenda

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.	Notification of requests from Members of the Public to address the Meeting
	To receive notification of requests from members of the public to address the meeting on an item on the public part of the agenda.
4.	Minutes (Pages 5 - 16)
	To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21 June 2022.
5.	Chair's Announcements
	To receive any communications from the Chair.
6.	Adult Social Care social worker recruitment and retention (Pages 17 - 26)
	To consider the latest position with regard to posts supporting the delivery of statutory adult social care services, including use of Workforce Recruitment and Retention Funding.

7. Homelessness & Housing Solutions Transformation Project (Pages 27 - 34)

To consider an overview of the transformation project for the Housing Solutions function and help to inform its approach.

8. Review of Committee Work Programme (Pages 35 - 42)

To review and note the Committee Work Programme.

9. Urgent Business

The Chair to advise whether they have agreed to any items of urgent business being admitted to the agenda.

10. Exclusion of Press and Public

In respect of the following items the Chair may move the resolution set out below, on the grounds that if the public were present it would be likely that exempt information (information regarded as private for the purposes of the Local Government Act 1972) would be disclosed to them: The Committee is requested to resolve: "That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that if the public were present it would be likely that exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act of the descriptions against each item would be disclosed to them."

Catherine Whitehead Proper Officer 17 October 2022

People Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members:

Councillor Rosie Herring (Chair) Councillor Karen Cooper (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Azizur Rahman Councillor Harry Barrett

Councillor Imran Ahmed Chowdhury BEM Councillor Raymond Connolly

Councillor Cheryl Hawes Councillor Rufia Ashraf
Councillor Penelope Flavell Councillor Greg Lunn
Councillor Emma Roberts Councillor Janice Duffy

Councillor Sue Sharps Councillor Nick Sturges-Alex

Councillor Mike Warren

Information about this Agenda

Apologies for Absence

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

Declarations of Interest

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

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

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

Evacuation Procedure

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Mobile Phones

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

Queries Regarding this Agenda

If you have any queries about this agenda please contact James Edmunds, Democratic Services via the following:

Email: <u>democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk</u>

Or by writing to:

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





People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at the Council Chamber, Lodge Road, Daventry, NN11 4FP on Tuesday 21 June 2022 at 6.00 pm.

Present Councillor Rosie Herring (Chair)

Councillor Harry Barrett

Councillor Raymond Connolly

Councillor Rufia Ashraf
Councillor Greg Lunn
Councillor Emma Roberts
Councillor Janice Duffy
Councillor Nick Sturges-Alex
Councillor Mike Warren

Also Councillor Adam Brown, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet

Present: Member for Housing, Leisure and Culture

Councillor Matt Golby, Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Wellbeing and

Health Integration

Apologies Councillor Karen Cooper for Councillor Azizur Rahman

Absence: Councillor Imran Ahmed Chowdhury BEM

Councillor Sue Sharps

Councillor Fiona Baker, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and

Education

Stuart Lackenby, Executive Director of Adults, Communities and

Wellbeing

Officers Jane Carr, Director of Communities and Opportunities

Gillian Spencer, Transformation Delivery Manager

Colin Foster, Chief Executive, Northamptonshire Children's Trust Cornelia Andrecut, Director of Children's Services, Northamptonshire

Children's Trust

Andrew Tagg, Director of Finance and Resources, Northamptonshire

Children's Trust

Geraldine Davies, General Manager for Renal and Transplant

Services, University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust

Suzanne Glover, Deputy Head of Nursing, University Hospitals of

Leicester NHS Trust

James Edmunds, Democratic Services Assistant Manager

Kathryn Holton, Committee Officer

57. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Roberts advised that she was no longer declaring an interest as a Board member of Northampton Partnership Homes because she had resigned from the Board in May 2022. She was still Chair of Food Aid Far Cotton.

58. Notification of requests from Members of the Public to address the Meeting

There were none.

59. Minutes

RESOLVED: that the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the minutes of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 25 April 2022.

60. Chair's Announcements

The Chair announced that there had been changes to the membership of the Committee for 2022/23. Councillors Ashraf, Duffy and Flavell had joined the Committee and Councillors Randall, Purser and Hinch had left. The Chair welcomed the new members and thanked those who had left for their contribution over the last year.

The Chair and Councillor Roberts advised that an action plan had been produced by the Anti-Poverty Oversight Group, which was well done and targeted. Feedback had been taken into account.

In response to points arising from the item on Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH) at the previous Committee meeting, the Chair advised that she had spoken to the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Built Environment and Rural Affairs who had said that there would be a strategic effort to address the backlog of planning applications. The Chair of Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee did not propose that the Committee should investigate issues around land ownership and maintenance responsibility affecting NPH, due to other work programme priorities.

The Chair advised that she had put forward the comments of People Overview and Scrutiny Committee members in relation to Household Support Fund Scheme 2 funding. She had attended the Cabinet meeting on 14 June 2022 and the comments were duly noted, with some to be taken up.

Committee members commented that the issues around land ownership and maintenance responsibility arising from the previous item on NPH were important and that the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be encouraged to follow up this matter if possible.

RESOLVED: that the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that the Chair should again contact the Chair of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee to encourage that committee to scrutinise the issue of land ownership and responsibility for maintenance affecting Northampton Partnership Homes properties.

61. **Debt and Money Advice Transformation Project**

The Chair invited the Director of Communities and Opportunities and Transformation Delivery Manager to present an overview of the Debt and Money Advice Transformation Project.

The Transformation Delivery Manager outlined the report and noted current pressure on the debt and money advice services provided by many different organisations. The pandemic had magnified issues substantially and there had been an uptake in services due to the increased cost of living. Issues relating to debt could have a significant impact on health and wellbeing, whilst people dealing with anxiety and stress were also less able to make good decisions. Education and early intervention were critical and this provided an opportunity to work across directorates.

The interim model of debt and money advice services provided by West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) since its creation was different in each locality. In Northampton, the Housing Options Team focused on homeless prevention and keeping people in their own homes. South Northamptonshire had an in-house debt and money advice team providing an extensive range of support. In Daventry, the service was provided by the Citizens Advice Bureau. These different approaches had generated the aim of developing an effective service that covered the whole of West Northamptonshire in a consistent way whilst also responding to different needs within the local population.

The Director for Communities and Opportunities emphasised that the Transformation Project was at a very early stage. The objective was to establish what services were currently being provided and then use the Appreciative Inquiry framework to deliver the project. This would be a proactive approach, working with other services to look at the wider holistic picture. Workshops had been held with senior staff, with stakeholders and the wider community also to be included. There were no preconceptions about how the project would be delivered and the consideration would be how to reach those most in need. The WNC offer was currently geographically focused. There were many charities offering advice and the current focus was on mapping this information. No decisions had been made about how services would be delivered. The priorities of other corporate strategies, such as the Anti-Poverty Strategy would be taken into account during the development process.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Leisure and Culture advised that he had no preconceptions about the outcomes of the Transformation Project. This could include changing the location of the debt and money advice function within WNC's organisational structure if this would be logical.

The Director for Communities and Opportunities invited input from Overview and Scrutiny on the direction and outcomes of the Transformation Project. The Chair welcomed the opportunity for the Committee to be involved at an early stage.

The Committee considered the report and members highlighted areas to be taken into account in the development of future provision as follows:

- There was significant pressure on the resources available to voluntary and community sector organisations to provide support to local residents without additional investment.
- There should be mapping of deprivation areas and the reach and effect of existing services, with an opportunity to scrutinise resulting information before partners were commissioned.
- The use of ethical loan providers was emphasised.
- Language barriers were highlighted as an issue for people not engaging with services and in enabling providers to give correct advice.
- Good communication was key: if people were referred to WNC and struggled to make contact they were likely to give up.
- Community groups often gave immediate advice and then referred people on: acting as a conduit rather than the ultimate solution.
- People in debt to WNC, for example in relation to housing or Council Tax, could find it difficult to approach it for advice about debt and money management.
 Providing these services through a partner, or under different branding, was important to address this issue.
- If WNC got to the stage of considering punitive action to recover a debt there should be the option of referring a person for debt advice before the final step was taken.

The Director for Communities and Opportunities noted the comments made and advised that the Transformation Project could be brought back to the Committee in future. Consideration was also being given to carrying out a survey of councillors to gain further local knowledge to inform the Transformation Project.

RESOLVED: that the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- a) Agreed that the points raised in discussion would be fed into the transformation of debt and money advice services;
- b) Agreed that the debt and money advice transformation project would be added to the Committee work programme to allow further scrutiny in future.

62. Children's Services Performance

The Chief Executive of the Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT) introduced the report and invited questions from the Committee on the latest overview of children's services performance presented to it.

The Chair made the following initial points:

- The report indicated that the overall position in Northamptonshire had been steadied but what plans were being made to achieve significant changes in performance where this was necessary? The report identified that 47% of children in care had initial health assessments within 28 days of entering care in 2021/22. This was an area where there was scope to show more ambition, although it was recognised that this function did not just involve NCT.
- The Committee should consider any other areas where there might be scope to make more progress in performance improvement. This should take account of external factors, such as pressures on recruitment, as well as good work being done such as the emphasis that the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and

Education was putting on increasing local provision for children with special educational needs and disability and on future corporate parenting arrangements in the authority.

The Chief Executive made the following points in response:

- Work was being done with health partners relating to the completion of health assessments for children entering care. This was recognised as a priority area.
- The Local Government Association was due to carry out a review of corporate parenting arrangements in Northamptonshire in January 2023, which was timed to reflect the full Ofsted inspection in autumn 2022.

The Committee considered the report and members raised the following matters during the course of discussion:

- What was the latest position concerning work to manage pressures on staffing, including in relation to attracting new social workers, developing existing staff members and enabling social workers to return to work after a career break?
- It was questioned why the overview of Collaborative Reflective Practice
 Discussion (CRPD) gradings included in the report appeared to show a significant
 number of 'inadequate' gradings in the area of support to remain living safely with
 family.
- How was the overview of CRPD included in the report used to maintain continuous oversight of performance?
- Contact with NCT staff reinforced that improvements were being made as well as
 providing feedback that staff valued communication and openness by the Chief
 Executive and senior managers and felt able to raise issues.
- There needed to be a clear idea of what 'good' looked like in relation to children's services in West Northamptonshire and the provision of resources to support achieving this.
- The profile of social work needed to be raised within society as a whole.
- The information in the report that 12.7% of children in care had three or more placements within a year in 2021/22 suggested an issue with the quality of placements.
- Consideration should be given to the availability of drop-in provision for young parents, which played a crucial role in supporting parents and children at that stage in their lives.
- It would be useful for future updates to the Committee to include more comparative data to enable it to see progress over time. The ratio of caseworkers to children, how this was changing and how it compared to the position in other authorities should also be included.
- The percentage of children in foster placements in 2021/22 who were in in-house placements, and the percentage of children in care in residential placements, reinforced the need to make progress with the development of in-house provision.
- The thanks received from service-users and successes set out at the end of the report had been encouraging to read.

The Chief Executive, Director of Social Care and Director of Finance and Resources responded to points raised by members during the course of discussion as follows:

 NCT had just launched a teaching partnership with the University of Northampton that was intended to attract more trainee social workers to Northamptonshire and

- to support them to work in the area. All social work students could be offered a supported year of practice through the Social Work Academy.
- NCT was offering other childcare professionals opportunities to step up to social work.
- The current vacancy rate for children's social workers in Northamptonshire was 16.5%, which was better than the national average of 17%.
- When the Chief Executive had first joined NCT he had been concerned at how far out of step the challenges it faced where with the national position. This was no longer the case: Northamptonshire was now facing similar challenges to other local authority areas.
- A specific recruitment process was used with social workers returning to the profession. Further information on this could be provided if requested.
- NCT had a net increase in social worker numbers over the previous six months. It
 continued to work on the aim of reducing the number of agency staff. Part of
 NCT's approach involved the Chief Executive or directors speaking directly to
 applicants for social worker positions to reinforce that it offered a supportive
 working environment to inspire confidence in staff.
- The overview of CRPD gradings included in the report showed a snapshot of the practice in particular cases that had been audited. Of these, 77% were graded as 'good' for support to remain living safely with family: 9% that had been graded as 'inadequate' would be the focus of subsequent improvement work. This level of 'good' practice, as well as the ability to quantify it and to maintain good oversight of overall effectiveness, reflected the improvements made in Northamptonshire in recent years.
- The NCT quality assurance cycle did not repeatedly revisit the same cases, although it would revisit those where concerns had been identified. Cases where practice was graded as inadequate would result in action by managers to address specific issues. The Quality Assurance Board maintained oversight of the overall position to ensure that Ofsted requirements were met.
- The overview of CRPD gradings could be included in future reports produced for the Committee.
- There would always be some children in care who would need to be in residential placements. The percentage in Northamptonshire in 2021/22 was in-line with the national picture, although it would be beneficial to have more in-house foster carers. Placements was an area of significant pressure as it was challenging to find placements to meet individual needs, particularly when young people came into contact with NCT at a point of crisis. NCT was working to give young people more choice.
- Nationally, the independent care sector was not effective and the more of a move that could be made to high quality local provision the better.
- NCT was required to demonstrate value for money and to work in a way that took account of the budget environment set by the two Northamptonshire authorities.
- NCT had no placements in Clarion Housing Group properties.

The Committee considered potential conclusions resulting from the discussion. Committee members commented that the Committee could highlight to the Cabinet the point raised about performance on initial health assessments of children entering care.

RESOLVED: that the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- a) Recommended that West Northamptonshire Council recognise the need to improve performance from the current position of 47% of children in care receiving an initial health assessment within 28 days of entering care.
- b) Requested that Northamptonshire Children's Trust develop the content of future performance updates to the Committee to provide more comparative data.

63. Changes to provision of NHS dialysis services in Northamptonshire

The Chair welcomed the General Manager for Renal and Transplant Services and Deputy Head of Nursing from University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust.

The Democratic Services Assistant Manager advised that scrutiny of health service provision was part of the remit of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This gave the Committee the role of reviewing and scrutinising the planning, provision and operation of health services in West Northamptonshire and powers to make reports and require the provision of information. A health service provider that proposed to make a substantial variation to a local health service was required to consult with Overview and Scrutiny in the area concerned. This did not seem to apply in the current case, but the service provider was seeking engagement with the Committee and potential input in shaping the way forward.

The General Manager for Renal and Transplant Services presented the report, highlighting the following points:

- The University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust (UHL) was commissioned to deliver out-patient renal dialysis in Lincolnshire, Peterborough, Leicestershire and Rutland, and Northamptonshire.
- In Northamptonshire there was one unit in Kettering and one in Northampton, located at Riverside House.
- The unit at Riverside House had opened in 2014. The contract with the private provider – Renal Services (UK) Ltd – that operated the two Northamptonshire units was now up for renewal and planning was being done for the future provision of the services.
- Riverside House was a five storey building: the dialysis unit was located on the
 ground floor and the other floors had previously held offices. However, NPH was
 now redeveloping the other floors for housing. Renal Services (UK) Ltd had
 experienced issues connected with the building works. In light of this and the
 wider impact of the redevelopment on the suitability of Riverside House as the
 location for a dialysis unit Renal Services (UK) Ltd was pursuing an opportunity to
 move provision to an alternative location that would better meet the needs of
 patients.

The Deputy Head of Nursing went on to provide additional information on the provision of out-patient dialysis as follows:

 There were approximately 250 patients receiving out-patient dialysis in Northamptonshire. They attended appointments three times per week for around four hours each time and often needed transport to and from the unit. The Northampton unit also provided nocturnal dialysis and training for patients in home dialysis.

- The redevelopment of Riverside House would involve patients and staff using a shared foyer with residents. This represented a health risk to patients as well as having security implications for the dialysis unit.
- There was a 25-year lease on Riverside House, which included one break point in December 2022.
- The proposed alternative location for the Northampton unit was bigger and would support future service provision. A planning application relating to the new location was due to be submitted that week.

The Committee considered the report. In response to questions the Deputy Head of Nursing advised that it was not standard practice for out-patient dialysis services to operate from hospital sites due to pressures on space: the existing Kettering unit was not based at Kettering General Hospital. The Committee sought reassurance about the suitability of the proposed new location for the Northampton unit. The Committee was advised that the site was on a small industrial estate, which was not near residential buildings and was close to an ambulance station. The location had good transport links. The site would provide good space for treatment including capacity for likely increases in demand.

Committee members questioned what engagement had taken place with patients and local Healthwatch about future plans; the level of risk to relocating the dialysis unit arising from the need to secure planning approval; and what length of tenure would be sought on the new location with a view to securing best value. The General Manager for Renal and Transplant Services and Deputy Head of Nursing provided additional information as follows:

- Future plans had been discussed with existing patients and staff who had responded positively. Engagement with Healthwatch Northamptonshire was planned.
- The new site would be leased for 25-years, which was standard and considered to be most appropriate for this service.

Committee members expressed support for the case for relocating the Northampton unit. It was further suggested that the Committee should highlight to the Cabinet the issues that appeared to have arisen regarding the future use of Riverside House as a location for the dialysis unit as a result of it being redeveloped for housing. These should be considered and addressed as may be necessary to get best use from Riverside House whilst it remained the location for the Northampton dialysis unit as well as in the interests of partnership working.

RESOLVED: that the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- a) Supported the need to relocate the Outpatient Renal Dialysis at Riverside House, Northampton, from its current site.
- b) Recommended that the Cabinet looks into issues arising from the change of use of Riverside House from office space to housing that have affected its continued suitability as a site for Outpatient Renal Dialysis, in order to support effective partnership working.

64. Integrated Care across Northamptonshire (iCAN) Scrutiny Review - Update

Councillor Roberts, chair of the iCAN scrutiny panel, outlined progress with its work and highlighted the following points:

- There had been two good scrutiny panel meetings so far.
- The scrutiny panel had sought to enhance the information it received on progress with the iCAN programme, as this had initially focused on 'selling' the aims of the programme.
- The scrutiny panel's second meeting had been attended by patient and carer representatives. This had helped to give a better picture of the practical effects of the iCAN programme and of real world pressures.
- Representatives from East Midlands Ambulance Service would be invited to attend the next scrutiny panel meeting to discuss how iCAN might affect demands on first response, although it was important to be clear that iCAN was not directly concerned with this function.
- The iCAN programme was meeting gateway points so far.

The Chair invited Committee members to raise any points relating to the progress of the iCAN scrutiny review that they wished the Committee to consider.

RESOLVED that: the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the update on the iCAN Scrutiny Review.

65. People Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2021/22

The Chair introduced the draft Annual Report by the Committee for Full Council, highlighting that it illustrated that the Committee had done a significant amount of work from a standing start.

The Chair invited Committee members to raise any points on the draft Annual Report that they wished the Committee to consider. Committee members made the following points:

- The Committee had covered a lot of ground in its first year. It was important that Overview and Scrutiny asked challenging questions on the areas it considered.
- The Committee had gathered a lot of information in its first year and had established a good relationship with those it scrutinised. Looking ahead it should aim to make more recommendations. The Annual Report should make reference to this.

RESOLVED: that the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the Annual Report to Council, subject to the addition to the Looking Ahead section of an acknowledgement that the Committee aimed to make more recommendations in future.

66. Review of Committee Work Programme

The Chair introduced the report and went on to advise that she was seeking to establish more regular liaison with each of the portfolio holders whose portfolios came under the wide-ranging remit of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Chair planned to see each on a quarterly basis in future, which should help to

inform the Committee's work programme and help with pre-decision scrutiny of issues at an early stage.

The Committee considered the latest version of the work programme. Committee members raised the need for the Committee to receive more regular information on performance against Key Performance Indicators for the service areas within its remit, although it was acknowledged that this might be done using relevant existing reports such as the quarterly performance report presented to the Cabinet.

The Committee considered additional potential areas for inclusion in the work programme that had been suggested by the Director of Communities and Opportunities. Committee members highlighted that the challenge for scrutiny was to establish what was most useful to spend time on. The Committee was subsequently advised of the opportunity for it to seek further information about potential topics to inform its decision. The Chair also noted the potential to apply different approaches to different topics and highlighted the 'one-day scrutiny enquiry' model that had been discussed in the Overview and Scrutiny training session held the previous week.

The Committee was advised of and considered a proposal by the Director of Public Health that it hold a workshop-style meeting at the end of July 2022 to consider the delivery of the Household Support Fund Scheme 2.

RESOLVED: that the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- a) Agreed to seek more regular information on performance against key performance indicators for the Council service areas within the Committee's remit.
- b) Agreed to include in its work programme potential items of business on the Council's Housing Solutions Transformation Plan and Housing Allocation Policy.
- c) Agreed the following items of business for the Committee meeting on 15 September 2022:
 - Adult Social worker recruitment and retention, including use of Workforce Recruitment and Retention funding
 - Special educational needs and disability support
 - Housing Solutions Transformation Plan
- d) Requested to receive further information about a potential item of business on Communities & Opportunities Directorate key contracts and delivery plans to enable the Committee to confirm at its next meeting whether to proceed with scrutiny.
- e) Agreed to hold a remote workshop-style meeting at the end of July 2022 on the Household Support Fund Scheme 2.

67. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm

Chair:	
Date:	





Overview and Scrutiny – Workforce Recruitment and Retention

Katie Brown – Assistant Director Safeguarding and Wellbeing Ashley Leduc – Assistant Director Commissioning and Performance

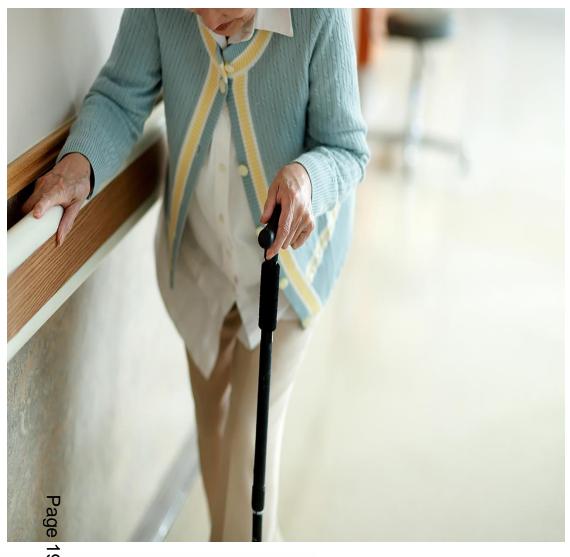
25 October 2022



- Increased infection rates causing acute hospital pressure
- Average of 2,400 unmet home care hours
- Care Home prices escalating
- Significant strain on home care market
- Care staff agency hourly rates inflated and causing financial strain on providers
- Care agencies reporting difficulties in recruiting and retaining permanent care staff
- Staffing pressure due to mandatory vaccinations and staff isolating due to covid restrictions in place







- Engaged with the independent care market to understand the challenges
- Supported providers with BCP's
- Compiled staff agencies registers for use by providers
- Created the WNC Provider Hardship Fund
- Created the Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund



What is the WRRF Scheme?

Aim:

- Support a sustainable, safe and well staffed care sector across WNC
- To avoid financial sustainability issues caused by rising agency costs
- To help staff to feel valued and to remain in the care sector
- To encourage genuine new people into the care sector



WRRF Grant	£985,166
WRRF 2 Grant	£1,818,769
WNC Contribution	£254,454
Sub-Total Available	£3,058,389

Criteria:

- Must be delivering CQC Regulated Activity
- Must be employed between 23rd December 2021 and 31st March 2022 (Retention Bonus)
- Must be new into the care sector before 28th February 2022 and work at least until 31st March 2022 (Recruitment Bonus)
- Payment can only be made once per employee
- Paid on a pro rata basis calculated on average hours worked



Was the scheme a success?

What went well:

- The Scheme generated 383 new recruits
- 4,830 existing staff received the bonus payment
- 88% of all providers signed up to the scheme
- £3m distributed to carers in West Northamptonshire

"This bonus has helped at a time when the cost of living has risen sharply so the additional money will really help"



What could have been better?

- The scheme caused upset to those staff who did not qualify due to the work activity that they undertake
- Communications could have been clearer to staff
- There was insufficient pre launch engagement with providers
- Provider applications to the scheme were slow and last minute, and payments have continued to be made beyond the end date of the scheme
- NNC changed the allocation rules mid-way through the scheme



Internal Recruitment and Workforce

WNC Internal Care Staff Current Position



- Care homes/day services/domiciliary care
- June 2022 62.3 FTE vacancies
- September 2022 53.2 FTE total vacancies
 - 36.2 FTE care and support roles



SCC's and reablement

- Both hospital pathways have undergone significant transformation in preparation for winter.
- Targeted recruitment campaigns have been successful with 8 Reablement Support Officers recruited in the last week
- 30 applications received for the roles at Turn Furlong with interviews taking place during September

WNC Internal Current Care Staff Recruitment and Retention



- The introduction of £10 per hour from 1st April 2022 has stabilised the number of vacancies in direct care roles
- The £600 WRRF payment did reduce the number of leavers per month
- Average leavers per month pre Dec 2021 5.25 people
- Average leavers Jan 22 March 22 3.66 people



Recruitment campaign – All in a days work

• There has been a 19.9% increase in job applications for care and support roles since the introduction of the £10 per hour pay rate

Care & Support Worker applications	Feb – 70 March – 165 April – 127	May- 119 June - 175 July - 140	19.9% increase
	Total - 362	Total - 434	

WNC Internal Current Care Staff Recruitment and Retention



- Activities undertaken by the recruitment team
- A landing page which all social media (paid for and organic) directs people
- An ongoing social media Pay Per Click campaign on Facebook and Instagram,
- Resourcing screen all applicants that come in via the social media ads and sent them to Service Managers to book in for interview. (we do ask for feedback so we can measure the success of this but often don't get it)
- Social media posts on the WNC Careers Facebook page about jobs in Reablement & Provider Services with content like this
- Ads on various job boards (Indeed, NHS Jobs, DWP, UoN) and linking to the DHSE care worker recruitment campaign.
- Offline, we have banners put up at our care services, digital display ads, posters and leaflets, and massive ads on the side of buses across the county which ran in January - February 22.
- We attend Job Centre recruitment events and job fairs and Service Managers held monthly drop-in days at services for anyone interested in finding out about our carer vacancies.
- We liaise with all local Job Centres regularly about vacancies in social care in WNC



West Northamptonshire Council Careers

Published by Duyen La @ · 19 August at 13:57 · @

Reablement West are looking for a number of Reablement Support Officers. This is an exciting newly created position within our Reablement Service.

The new posts involve working independently with individuals in the community, from assessment to discharge. Pay rate from £11.05 per hour plus a range of great benefits.

Click here to find out more http://ow.ly/YAzS50KnQeJ



See Insights and Ads

Boost post



O You and 43 others

55 comments 122 shares



Comment





- Adult Services (not eligible for WRRF)
- June 2022 38.32 FTE vacancies
- September 2022 46.5 FTE total vacancies
 - 18 FTE social worker vacancies

Commissioning, brokerage and financial services

- June 2022 16.5 FTE vacancies
- September 2022 12 FTE vacancies



WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

25 October 2022

Cllr Adam Brown, Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Leisure

Report Title	Homelessness and Housing Solutions Transformation Project
Report Author	Joanne Barrett, Assistant Director for Housing and Communities, joanne.barrett@westnorthants.gov.uk

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

West MO	Catherine Whitehead	14/10/2022
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Other Director/SME	Rowany Job, Interim Head	06/10/2022
	Homelessness and Housing	
	Solutions	

List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. To provide an overview of the Homelessness and Housing Solutions transformation project, the project approach and the activity which has taken place so far. To also seek challenge and feedback from the committee to inform the direction and outcomes of the project.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Our Corporate Plan sets out our collective vision for making West Northamptonshire a great place to live, work, visit and thrive. As a new organisation we have the unique opportunity to work collectively, along with our partners, to design services that are customer focussed, providing the services they need in a way that suits them.
- 2.2 As an organisation the scale of our transformation ambition is substantial and to deliver real change for our residents we must prioritise the transformation projects, focussing on those which will have the greatest positive impact.
- 2.3 The pandemic has amplified many of the issues that existed across our communities in West Northamptonshire, resulting in a further demand of increased need and support. One area which has seen an increase in demand is residents seeking advice on housing and approaching the council for assistance. Data submitted to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities evidences this increase in demand since West Northamptonshire Council was created. Across West Northamptonshire, there were 3.36 per 1,000 households owed a homelessness prevention or relief duty in January March 2022, increasing from 2.62 in April June 2021, with assessments going up by 28.8% over the same period (from 448 to 557). We are monitoring this trend to identify the capacity required and any efficiencies in working practices to ensure that we are able to respond to demand.
- 2.4 The impact of unsuitable housing or unsettled accommodation can negatively affect people's welfare and impact both their physical and mental health. The importance of good housing advice, prevention and early intervention cannot be under-estimated. Therefore, this service has been identified as a priority project within the Transformation Portfolio.
- 2.5 The Homelessness and Housing Solutions service offer advice and assistance on a range of housing related issues. These include the provision of statutory homelessness services and advisory services to all those affected and utilising various powers to secure accommodation either on an interim basis or as a settled home. The service offers an innovative, solution-focused, multi-agency approach to tackling rough sleeping. The service also manages two housing registers and nominations to our registered providers.
- 2.6 The design of our Homelessness and Housing Solutions service must consider the whole population, building a service which focusses on education, prevention, early intervention and recovery to not only prevent homelessness but also avoid repeat homelessness.

3. Recommendations

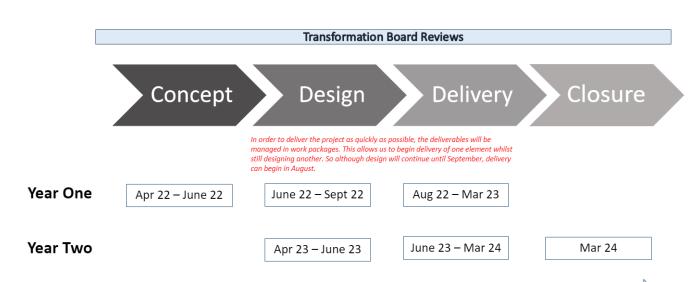
- 3.1 It is recommended that the committee:
 - a) Note the progress made to date
 - b) Endorse the project approach
 - c) Provide any insights and suggestions for additional outcomes.

4. Reason for Recommendations (NOTE: this section is <u>mandatory</u> and <u>must</u> be completed)

- To challenge the work completed to date, the direction of the project and to support the proposed outcomes.
- To understand and support the transformation approach, which ensures that the design is led by the service and has a strong customer focus.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 The Housing options service was previously delivered via three separate councils, Northampton, Daventry and South Northants. The aggregation and transformation of this service is a long-standing part of the plans for creating the unitary authority of West Northants Council (WNC). The activity was originally scheduled for delivery as part of the Future Northants programme in 2020-21, however it was delayed due to the impacts of Covid-19 and therefore the service continues to operate, with the three legacy approaches continuing to provide the service in the same way it had done so previously.
- 5.2 After the initial year of the new unitary council where the focus was on stabilisation, the aggregation of the service needs to progress to facilitate tackling some of the issues the service is currently facing and reduce any negative impacts currently being experienced by both residents and officers.
- 5.3 There is an ambition to provide a great service which, covers the whole of the West Northamptonshire area, is consistent but also responsive to the diverse needs of our population. The transformation project will draw the current teams into a unified structure and team culture, facilitate service improvement and fully support the new ways of working.
- 5.4 The structure of this transformation project will follow the timelines set out below. The Design phase of the project will focus on current strengths, identify best practice to build on and provide space for the team to create a common vision and direction for the service.



- 5.5 Effective and thorough engagement with staff, customers, key partners and stakeholders underpins the success of this project. We are seizing the opportunity that Unitary has provided to design a service that utilises the range of resources available to meet the needs of our residents and achieve the best outcomes for the people needing the service across West Northants.
- Appropriate engagement activities will be undertaken throughout the project with relevant teams and services across WNC, including Customer Services, Regeneration, Assets, Adult Social Care and Public Health to make sure we fully understand and embrace the opportunities and cross-cutting elements throughout the Design phase. Seeking the views of a range of interested parties and adopting a collaborative approach to develop the shared vision to create a great holistic service and the best way to deliver this service to the population of West Northamptonshire.
- 5.7 A series of staff workshops held during August gave all staff within the Housing Options service an opportunity to understand the different ways the service is currently being delivered, opportunities to consider how to deliver the service in the future and how these opportunities could be turned into a reality.
- 5.8 All feedback from the workshop has been collated and themes were identified. This feedback has cemented the themes identified by the project team and will form a series of work packages. This approach will enable this complex and large scale transformation project to be delivered alongside delivering a demanding front line service.
- 5.9 The agreed work packages are shown below:



- 5.10 This transformation programme links to several contracts, working arrangements with some key partners and other transformation projects, including:
 - Management agreement and partnership working with Northampton Partnership Homes
 - Contracts for homelessness and housing allocations software
 - Working arrangements with Registered Provider partners
 - Working arrangements with our customer services team
 - Large scale voluntary transfer contracts in the Daventry and South Northants localities

- Partnership working arrangements and service level agreements with registered providers and some voluntary sector organisations that provide accommodation and/or support for vulnerable, single households at risk of homelessness and rough sleeping
- Plans to improve the quality and value for money of local supported housing. This will be work that cuts across benefits team, housing, adult social care and children trust
- Debt & Money Advice Transformation project
- 5.11 As an identified priority project within the Transformation Portfolio the existing project governance process will be followed. This will ensure that the necessary quality assurance has taken place and that the project is delivered on time.

6. Issues and Choices

6.1 As this transformation project is in the early stages, there is an opportunity for any additional actions or area of focus to be included in the project. This will ensure that the view of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is included in the design and delivery of this priority project.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1 Transformation resource has been allocated to this project and is within existing budgets.
- 7.1.2 Through the Star Chamber and budget setting process for 2022-23 a £412k savings target was set to be achieved across the Housing and Opportunities area, for delivery by April 2023. £270k of this was expected to be delivered through reducing the use of temporary accommodation for homeless households. The service has encountered an increase in demand in:
 - Total number of approaches to service: 2020 = 3498; 2021 = 4183; 2022 to date (6 months) = 3390 (compared to 3109 at this date in 2021)
 - Number of households owed a homelessness prevention or relief duty per 1,000 of population: 2.62 for April to June 2021; 3.36 for January to March 2022
 - 28.8% increase in homelessness assessments completed

This has made achieving the required saving from the temporary accommodation budget difficult, with this budget currently forecasting an overspend. The temporary accommodation work package of this programme has been scoped and work to formulate an action plan to achieve reduced use of temporary accommodation and deliver financial savings is being prioritised.

7.1.3 There is an additional financial pressure on the council relating to housing benefit subsidy loss related to legacy charging arrangements for temporary accommodation in certain legacy councils. Progress in developing and delivering the action plan and work programme for the Temporary Accommodation Work Package will be monitored both through the corporate work on budget savings and the Transformation Board.

- 7.1.4 The full extent of the benefits and savings of this project are currently being baselined however some specific financial benefits identified so far include:
 - Reducing the costs incurred by employing agency staff;
 - Increase in homelessness prevention which is more efficient and reduces costs incurred throughout the customer journey; and
 - Reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation.
- 7.1.5 The full business case is currently being prepared and will include anticipated financial and non-financial benefits.

7.2 Legal

7.2.1 There is a requirement for the council to provide general housing advice to all residents and a legal duty to assist households who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. This includes working with households to prevent homelessness from occurring where possible.

7.3 **Risk**

- 7.3.1 All risks have not been identified yet, however a failure to complete this project will result in additional costs for the council, should residents not seek timely advice. Evidence shows that education and early intervention are essential in delivering a prevention focussed service.
- 7.3.2 There is a reputational risk to the Council from failing to provide a consistent service across the geographical area.
- 7.3.3 Failure to provide a timely homelessness and housing advice service poses a financial risk to the council. Appropriate support, advice and guidance encourages early intervention and prevention which is a more-cost effective approach to delivering a housing options service.
- 7.3.4 Any risks arising from this project will be identified and mitigating actions will be deployed to reduce the impact of these.

7.4 Consultation

- 7.4.1 This transformation project is being completed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders including Revenues and Benefits Team, Finance Team, Customer Services, Emergency Planning, Public Health, the Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) that manages the council's housing stock and is the delivery vehicle for new council homes, other key Registered Housing Providers and our key DLUHC contacts (specialist advisers).
- 7.4.2 Any staffing changes arising from this project will be subject to appropriate consultation.

7.5 **Climate Impact**

7.5.1 There are no known climate/environmental impacts at this time.

7.6 **Community Impact**

7.6.1 This project will provide a positive community impact by enabling a consistently great homelessness and housing advice service across West Northamptonshire.

7.7 Communications

- 7.7.1 Timely and appropriate communications to staff are critical for a successful transformation project. A thorough communications plan has been developed and implemented as part of this project.
- 7.7.2 Once the revised service is designed and we progress into the project delivery phase colleagues from the Communications team will be involved in its development to promote clear and consistent messaging to let residents know the help and support that is available to them.

8. Background Papers

8.1 None.



West Northamptonshire Council

People Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

Topic identified and scheduled
Topic identified but not yet scheduled
Topic completed

Topic	Proposed purpose	Date of Committee meeting	Cabinet Member / Executive Director / other senior leader	Task and Finish Group	Comments
Integrated Care across Northamptonshire (iCAN)	The Committee to scrutinise progress made with the development of iCAN and the position on key risk factors.	21 September 2021 – A task and finish panel has been set up and will conclude its review in 2022/23	Executive Director Adults, Communities and Wellbeing	Yes	The task and finish panel will meet 6 times from January 2022 to April 2023, aligned to iCAN contract gateway review points, to scrutinise delivery of iCAN programme outcomes.
Adult Social Care social worker recruitment and retention	The Committee to scrutinise the latest position, focussing on posts supporting the delivery of statutory social care services.	25 October 2022	Assistant Director Safeguarding and Wellbeing	No	The Committee was due to consider this topic on 15 September 2022 but the meeting was not held due to the national mourning period.
Housing Solutions Transformation Plan	The Committee to consider an overview of the transformation plan for the Housing Solutions function	25 October 2022	Director of Communities and Opportunities	No	
Special educational needs and disability (SEND) support	The Committee to consider an update on the development of SEND support, to include performance against the timescale for completing	To be confirmed	Executive Director People Services Assistant Director Education Cabinet Member for	No	The Committee was due to consider this topic on 15 September 2022 but the meeting was not held due the national mourning period.
Page	Education, Health and Care Plan assessments.		Children, Families and Education		da Ite

Topic	Proposed purpose	Date of Committee meeting	Cabinet Member / Executive Director / other senior leader	Task and Finish Group	Comments
Healthwatch West Northamptonshire work in 2021/22	The Committee to invite Healthwatch West Northamptonshire to give an overview of issues identified through its work in 2021/22.	To be confirmed	Healthwatch West Northamptonshire representatives	No	The Committee proposed to scrutinise this topic on 25 April 2022. A Healthwatch Northamptonshire (HWN) representative was not able to attend on this date. HWN proposed that this topic could be best scheduled following publication of HWN's Annual Report for 2021/22 on 30 June 2022.
Communities & Opportunities Directorate key contracts and delivery plans	The Committee to consider the Directorate's key contracts and associated delivery plans	To be confirmed	Director of Communities and Opportunities	No	
Task and finish scrutiny review: child and adolescent mental health and the risk of self-harm	To approve the final report of the scrutiny review.	8 December 2022	NA	Yes	
Housing Allocation Policy	The Committee to consider the Housing Allocation policy for West Northamptonshire.	8 December 2022	Director of Communities and Opportunities	No	
Sports and Leisure needs assessment	The Committee to consider the needs assessment for sports and leisure provision in West Northamptonshire.	To be confirmed – 8 December 2022 suggested	Director of Communities and Opportunities	The Committee has previously identified wider issues relating to sports and leisure provision as a potential topic for an indepth scrutiny review.	

Topic	Proposed purpose	Date of Committee meeting	Cabinet Member / Executive Director / other senior leader	Task and Finish Group	Comments
School performance	The Committee to invite the Regional Director to discuss school performance in relation to academy schools in West Northamptonshire.	To be confirmed – 21 February 2023 proposed by the Regional Director	Executive Director People Services Assistant Director Education Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education	No	The Committee sought to schedule this topic in 2022 but the Regional Director (the title that replaced Regional Schools Commissioner in mid-2022) was not able to attend on scheduled meeting dates. This matter was pursued again in September 2022. The Regional Director has proposed to attend in February 2023 as this will be after the publication of performance data on the 2021/22 academic year.
West Northamptonshire Anti-Poverty Strategy	The Committee to scrutinise the outcomes delivered by the Anti-Poverty Strategy in the first year after it is adopted.	To be confirmed – subject to the timing of the Anti-Poverty Strategy Annual Report.	Executive Director People Services Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Wellbeing and Health Integration	No	The Committee will seek to scrutinise the substance of the Annual Report two months before it is presented to Full Council.
Debt and Money Advice Transformation Project	The Committee to provide scrutiny input into the development and deliver of the Transformation project.	To be confirmed	Director of Communities and Opportunities	No	The Committee agreed at its meeting on 21 June 2022 to add the Transformation Project to the work programme to allow further scrutiny in future.
Provision of free broadband to young people leaving local authority care.	The Committee to provide scrutiny input into the potential development of proposals by West Northamptonshire Council.	To be confirmed	Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education	To be confirmed	The Full Council meeting on 23 September 2021 referred a motion on this topic to the Committee, to consider the issues involved.

Topic	Proposed purpose	Date of Committee meeting	Cabinet Member / Executive Director / other senior leader	Task and Finish Group	Comments
Rough sleeping	The Committee to provide scrutiny input on responses to rough sleeping in West Northamptonshire.	To be confirmed	Director of Communities and Opportunities Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Leisure	To be confirmed	The Committee has identified the following potential focus areas for scrutiny: • the potential to continue to apply the principles of the 'everyone in' approach used during the COVID-19 pandemic • severe weather shelter provision.
Support for people living with dementia	The Committee to scrutinise how well people living with dementia are supported in West Northamptonshire.	To be confirmed	Executive Director People Services Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Wellbeing and Health Integration	To be confirmed	The Committee has identified that work on this topic might take as a starting point the response to the Northampton Borough Council scrutiny review on dementia-friendly communities.
Sports and leisure provision	Scrutiny of how West Northamptonshire Council works together with other service providers and community groups to provide the best overall offer to residents from all parts of the community.	To be confirmed – early 2022/23 originally suggested	Director of Communities and Opportunities	The Committee to consider setting up a task and finish panel to carry out an indepth scrutiny review.	The Committee considers that this work could be an example of scrutiny on the wider theme of the community impact of Council services: looking at how the Council identifies needs, other support available in the community that help to meet them, and can therefore focus resources to have the most impact.

Topic	Proposed purpose	Date of Committee meeting	Cabinet Member / Executive Director / other senior leader	Task and Finish Group	Comments
Integrated Care System / Integrated Care across Northamptonshire (iCAN)	The Committee to receive an overview of the aims of the Northamptonshire ICS and iCAN, and plans for implementation.	20 July 2021	Executive Director Adults, Communities and Wellbeing	No	The Northamptonshire Integrated Care System is likely to be a continuing area for scrutiny in future.
Residential and nursing care for older people	The Committee to receive an overview of current provision and planning towards meeting future needs.	20 July 2021	Executive Director Adults, Communities and Wellbeing	No	
West Northamptonshire Anti-Poverty Strategy	The Committee to receive an update on progress with the development of the Strategy.	21 September 2021	Executive Director Adults, Communities and Wellbeing Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Wellbeing and Health Integration	No	
Northamptonshire children's services performance	The Committee to receive an update on the Ofsted monitoring visit in July 2021 that will focus on children with child protection plans and with children in need plans.	21 September 2021	Director of Children's Services Chief Executive, Children's Trust	No	
Residential and nursing care for older people	The Committee to scrutinise trends relating to performance and capacity of current care homes.	16 November 2021	Executive Director Adults, Communities and Wellbeing Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Wellbeing and Health Integration	No	
Adult Cocial Care transformation	The Committee to scrutinise outcomes from the implementation of the Adult	16 November 2021	Executive Director Adults, Communities and Wellbeing	No	

Topic	Proposed purpose	Date of Committee meeting	Cabinet Member / Executive Director / other senior leader	Task and Finish Group	Comments
	Social Care Target Operating Model (TOM)		Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Wellbeing and Health Integration		
Northamptonshire children's services performance	The Committee to receive an update covering the following matters: • Additional measures to further improve recruitment and retention of social workers • Achieving consistently good quality practice for all children, supported by full implementation of the practice model Outcomes of the Ofsted monitoring visit due to take place in November 2021.	25 January 2022	Director of Children's Services Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education Chief Executive, Children's Trust	No	
School improvement	The Committee to receive an overview of activity by West Northamptonshire Council to support school improvement.	25 January 2022	Director of Children's Services Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education	No	
Special educational needs and disability (SEND) support and alternative provision	The Committee to receive an overview of SEND support and alternative provision (education outside school arranged by the local authority or schools) in West Northamptonshire.	25 January 2022	Director of Children's Services Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education	No	
Healthwatch function P ag ge	The Committee to receive a briefing paper giving an overview of the Healthwatch function in Northamptonshire.	25 January 2022	NA	No	

Topic	Proposed purpose	Date of Committee meeting	Cabinet Member / Executive Director / other senior leader	Task and Finish Group	Comments
West Northamptonshire Anti-Poverty Strategy	The Committee to receive an update on progress with the adoption and implementation of the Strategy.	1 March 2022	Executive Director Adults, Communities and Wellbeing Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Wellbeing and Health Integration	No	
West Northamptonshire Council Housing Strategy	The Committee to provide scrutiny input in the developing Housing Strategy.	1 March 2022 – The Committee to hold a separate workshop-style session following its formal meeting.	Assistant Director Housing and Communities	No	
Northamptonshire children's services performance	The Committee to receive an update on performance against key targets and the continuing development of children's services.	21 June 2022	Chief Executive, Children's Trust	No	The Committee has also identified the way in which children's services contributes with other services to dealing with crosscutting issues as a potential future topic for scrutiny.
Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22	The Committee to consider the Annual Report on its activity in 2021/22, for submission to Full Council.	21 June 2022	NA	No	
West Northamptonshire Council Housing Strategy – outcomes from public consultation D Q G	The Committee to consider the outcomes of public consultation on the proposed Strategy.	9 August 2022	Executive Director Adults, Communities and Wellbeing Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Leisure	A workshop style remote meeting will be used.	The Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group considered potential crosscutting scrutiny topics on 22 March 2022. It agreed that scrutiny of the Housing Strategy should be open to

Topic	Proposed purpose	Date of Committee meeting	Cabinet Member / Executive Director / other senior leader	Task and Finish Group	Comments
					members of all three Overview and Scrutiny committees.
West Northamptonshire Council Housing Strategy – draft Strategy	The Committee to carry out pre-decision scrutiny of the full draft Strategy.	9 August 2022	Executive Director Adults, Communities and Wellbeing Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Leisure	A workshop style remote meeting will be used.	The Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group considered potential crosscutting scrutiny topics on 22 March 2022. It agreed that scrutiny of the Housing Strategy should be open to members of all three Overview and Scrutiny committees.

People Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting dates in 2022/23

21 June 2022	8 December 2022
15 September 2022 [NOT HELD]	21 February 2023
25 October 2022	24 April 2023