



# Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**A meeting of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held at the Committee Room, The Forum, Towcester on Tuesday 18 April 2023 at 6.00 pm**

## Agenda

1.	<b>Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members</b>
2.	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> 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.	<b>Minutes</b> (Pages 5 - 10) To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21 <sup>st</sup> March 2023.
4.	<b>Chairman's Announcements</b> To receive communications from the Chairman.
5.	<b>Libraries</b> (Pages 11 - 26) The Committee to consider and provide Scrutiny input into the Council's Policy regarding libraries  6.05pm to 6.35pm
6.	<b>Broadband contract</b> The Committee to consider and review the broadband contract  6.35pm to 7.05pm

7.	<p><b>Home to school policy changes</b></p> <p>The Committee to consider and provide Scrutiny input in to the proposed changes to the Home to School Policy</p> <p>7.05pm to 7.35pm</p>
8.	<p><b>Updates from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Groups</b></p> <p>The Chairs of the Task and Finish and Oversight Groups to provide progress reports to the Committee</p> <p>i) Highways Contract Strategic Oversight Group</p> <p>ii) Active Travel Oversight Group</p> <p>7.35pm to 7.50pm</p>
9.	<p><b>Update from the Chair of the Waste and Resources Strategy Members Working Group</b></p> <p>The Chair of the Waste and Resources Strategy Members Working Group to provide a progress report to the Committee</p> <p>7.50pm to 8pm</p>
10.	<p><b>Review of Committee Work Plan (Pages 27 - 34)</b></p> <p>To review and note the Committee Work Plan.</p> <p>8pm to 8.10pm</p>
11.	<p><b>Urgent Business</b></p> <p>The Chairman to advise whether they have agreed to any items of urgent business being admitted to the agenda.</p>
12.	<p><b>Exclusion of Press and Public</b></p> <p>Exempt Items In respect of the following items the Chairman 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"</p>

Catherine Whitehead  
Proper Officer  
6 April 2023

### **Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members:**

Councillor Dermot Bambridge (Chair)	Councillor Jo Gilford (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Bob Purser	Councillor Anthony S. Bagot-Webb
Councillor William Barter	Councillor Pinder Chauhan
Councillor Paul Joyce	Councillor Paul Dyball
Councillor Terrie Eales	Councillor Louisa Fowler
Councillor Enam Haque	Councillor Charles Morton
Councillor Kevin Parker	Councillor Richard Solesbury-Timms
Councillor Andre Gonzalez De Savage	Councillor Rosie Herring

### **Information about this Agenda**

#### **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence and the appointment of substitute Members should be notified to [democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk) prior to the start of the meeting.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

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

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

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

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

Tel: 01604 837408

Email: [democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk)

Or by writing to:

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



### Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at The Jeffery Room, The Guildhall, Northampton on Tuesday 21 March 2023 at 6.00 pm.

#### **Present:**

Councillor Dermot Bambridge (Chair)  
 Councillor Jo Gilford (Vice-Chair)  
 Councillor Bob Purser  
 Councillor Anthony S. Bagot-Webb  
 Councillor William Barter  
 Councillor Paul Joyce  
 Councillor Terrie Eales  
 Councillor Louisa Fowler  
 Councillor Enam Haque  
 Councillor Charles Morton  
 Councillor Kevin Parker

#### **Also Present:**

Councillor Jonathan Nunn, Leader of the Council, Leader of the Conservative Group and Cabinet Member for Strategy  
 Councillor David Smith, Cabinet Member for Community Safety & Engagement and Regulatory Services

#### **Apologies for Absence:**

Councillor Paul Dyball  
 Councillor Richard Solesbury-Timms

#### **Officers:**

Stuart Timmiss, Executive Director - Place and Economy  
 Rebecca Peck, Assistant Chief Executive  
 Ruth Austen, Assistant Director Regulatory Services  
 Karen Pell, Environmental Health Manager  
 Martin Wilson, Contracts and Performance Manager,  
 Tracy Tiff, Deputy Democratic Services Manager  
 Marina Watkins, Committee Officer

#### 93. **Declarations of Interest**

None advised

#### 94. **Minutes**

It was noted that Cllr Bagot-Webb was in attendance at the meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

That, subject to the amendment above, the Minutes of the meeting of the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 7th February 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

95. **Chairman's Announcements**

None advised.

96. **Fly Tipping**

The Chair welcomed Councillor David Smith, Ruth Austen and Karen Pell to the meeting.

The Committee received a presentation from Ruth Austen, Assistant Director Regulatory Services outlining the types of fly tipping and work being undertaken to reduce it, including the Cleaner Communities campaign, dedicated webpages and work with the Communications team. The committee had provided scrutiny input last year into the initial shaping of the fly tipping policy.

In response to questions from Councillors:

- The intention was to win hearts and minds and encourage pride in the community
- The long term aim was to make fly tipping socially unacceptable. The hope was to develop a 'rogue's' gallery' on the website
- CCTV was currently being procured, which would be installed in the most commonly affected areas. In some instances just the presence of a camera could be a deterrent
- A large amount of evidence was required to complete a successful prosecution
- A monitored CCTV package was being purchased which would make better use of officer time
- Education was an important element of enforcement.
- There was often an increase in fly tipping at the end of the university year when students left their accommodation and landlords dumped bedding etc
- The definition of fly tipping was not clear. One bag could be construed as littering. It also depended on the ownership of the land involved. A person dumping items on their own occupied property would probably not be classed as fly tipping but would come under other legislation
- In cases where the Council took action, costs would be applied for and sometimes be awarded. Individuals on a restricted income would repay the fine under a payment plan. Fixed Penalty Notices were in the Council's control and the fines returned to the service.
- Statistics were being collected regarding number of incidents, number of fixed penalty notices issued etc. Performance Indicators could be provided to the Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis. It was harder to measure less tangible issues such as the impact on the local environment
- An annual report providing details on a ward by ward basis would be useful

- Domestic waste was more of an issue in the town areas, with commercial waste being more problematic in rural areas
- Mixed use areas, e.g. flats above shops needed additional information with regards to how, when and where to dispose of waste appropriately
- Recycling centres – hours of opening, locations etc was being considered as part of a wider review into the Waste strategy
- The involvement of businesses and community groups such as the Wombles was very much encouraged
- There were currently a number of reporting systems. The intention was to develop one, easy to use system.
- It was noted that the funds for farmers and other landowners to claim back the costs of clearing their land after fly tipping was onerous. It was noted that the Council were merely administering the scheme on behalf of other agencies. The scheme was grant money and therefore quotes were required
- There were regularly issues with littering at Junction 15 and 16. ANPR cameras had been considered but Police were not keen to prioritise. Further discussions were required with Highways on the issue.
- The Committee were reminded that the document was live and evolving, and would be returned to the Committee in 12 months' time with additional statistics

The Environmental Health Manager advised that at the moment incidents could be reported via email to: [envcrime@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:envcrime@westnorthants.gov.uk)

The Chair thanked Councillor Smith and officers for their presentation and members for their contributions.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That The Committee noted the presentation
- 2) That the Committee provide further input into the Policy in 12 months' time.

97. **Net Zero**

The Committee received a presentation on Net Zero from Councillor Jonathan Nunn. The Council was taking a strong community leadership role for sustainability in West Northants.

- The Sustainability Strategy was launched a year ago, which set out bold targets
- The legacy Councils were at different levels with regards to their net zero policies
- The intention was to Net Zero WNC's own emissions by 2030 and those of residents and businesses by 2045
- It was preferable to cut emissions as much as possible and only make use of carbon off-setting when all other options had been exhausted.
- The Council had joined up to the UK100 Net Zero pledge, which set strong quality standards as well as providing opportunities for networking and best practise.
- A cross party Councillor working group had been established
- Four members of staff had been recruited to the Sustainability team
- Sustainability would be a big driver in the new Local Plan

In response to questions from Councillors, the following points were raised:

- Older commercial buildings were often not strong enough to take the weight of solar panels, however panels were becoming lighter
- It was important that planning policy played a role in ensuring that buildings were built appropriately to allow the installation of panels
- Solar panels were due to be installed on the roof of One Angel Square. This would only cover the Council's needs but other Council owned properties were being considered for the installation of solar panels, which would allow surplus electricity to be fed back into the grid
- The construction of buildings was becoming more sustainable. In some cases, buildings were constructed off site which reduced the carbon footprint and waste
- It would be inadvisable to re-open capped waste sites. It was pointed out that the emissions would reduce over time
- It was incredibly expensive to retro fit efficiency measures into old properties which is why it was important for new builds to be built to high sustainability standards
- It was suggested that consideration be given to a 'future show home' which would enable companies to showcase their products with regards to energy efficiency and sustainability

The Chair thanked Councillor Nunn for the presentation and members for their contributions.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the presentation

98. **Updates from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Groups**

The Chairs of the Task and Finish and Oversight Groups to provide an update to the Committee

**i) Highways Contract Strategic Oversight Group**

Councillor Bagot-Webb advised that the Oversight Group would be undertaking their first review of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) next week

**ii) Active Travel Oversight Group**

Councillor Bagot-Webb advised that there had been a slippage of three months on the work of the Oversight Group. The first meeting would take place on 23<sup>rd</sup> May. Concerns was expressed regarding the Abington Active Travel Scheme. The Executive Director - Place and Economy advised that consultation on the scheme would be extended

**RESOLVED:**

That the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the updates from the Chairs of the Task and Finish and Oversight Group



99. **Waste and Resources Strategy Members Working Group**

Councillor Jo Gilford, the Chair of the Waste and Resources Strategy Working Group provided a progress report to the Committee. The intention was to produce a strategy to harmonise the waste services across West Northants. The scope of the working group was wide ranging and complex, including all elements of waste collection.

Work was progressing well, with baseline data gathered and consultants questioned.

**RESOLVED:**

That the update on the Waste and Resources Strategy Working Group be noted

100. **Review of Committee Work Programme 2022-23**

The Chair introduced the work programme and asked the Committee for their comments and views.

Items on libraries and the broadband contract were due to be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

The Executive Director - Place and Economy advised that it was necessary to bring an item on School to Home Transport Policy to the next meeting for the Committee's consideration. The matter would also be discussed with the Chair of People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

- i) That the work programme be noted.
- ii) That an item on School to Home Transport Policy be included on the agenda for the Committee meeting in April

101. **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

102. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Library Service Strategy

2023 – 2027



## Foreword

[Cabinet member/chief exec](#)

In recent years West Northamptonshire Libraries have been through a period of significant transformation against a challenging background of the global Covid pandemic and local government reorganisation. Throughout this period we have been privileged to partner with the amazing local community groups and organisations who worked tirelessly to take over their local libraries. This enabled continued local access to library services and a range of other services. Thanks to their dedication there are 9 thriving community managed libraries in West Northamptonshire, enhancing those libraries that form part of the statutory provision, each offering consistent library services along with a range of tailored activities, events and support services to meet the needs of their local communities.

They did this because libraries change lives – they provide a valuable resource to the local communities they serve; they are unbiased, accessible, friendly, free and warm. They offer opportunities and support at every stage of life and are a trusted source of information, providing learning and skills, study spaces, essential digital resources, a place to meet and socialise and volunteering opportunities. Throughout their lives, people dip in and out of libraries particularly during times of significant change: unemployment, parenthood, bereavement. It is important therefore that modern libraries are:

- Welcoming and accessible
- Safe and inclusive
- Enabling
- Proactive and responsive

When the closure of libraries was enforced as part of the Covid measures in 2020, the library team used their skills to support the Covid response and helped to contact 40,000 vulnerable individuals whilst adapting the library service to deliver as much as possible within the confines of the Government restrictions. Once these restrictions were finally lifted, Libraries re-opened and began the task of rebuilding public confidence delivering the highly valued services that our users need.

There are new challenges to meet with the rise in the cost of living and other global crises, and our libraries are seeking to meet these emerging needs; providing welcome and support groups for Ukrainian settlement, providing warm spaces for those who need them and partnering with banks and other organisations to ensure residents can access advice and support locally.

As West Northamptonshire moves forward with a new Integrated Care System, the function of our libraries as community hubs for local area partnership neighbourhoods is more important than ever. They are the eyes and ears at the heart of their communities, proactively identifying local challenges and opportunities and working with the right partners to meet the changing needs.

This strategy sets out how we propose to continue to develop our libraries as thriving community hubs over the next 4 years ensuring that we take advantage of every opportunity to help deliver on our council priorities and the 10 Public Health Live Your Best Life ambitions.

## Our Strategy

This strategy will guide how we develop and deliver our statutory service over the next 4 years, shaping our services around local need and in alignment with the Libraries Connected Universal Library Offers, West Northamptonshire Council's Strategic Priorities and Integrated Care Northamptonshire Strategy: Live Your Best Life Ambitions.

West Northamptonshire Council priorities:



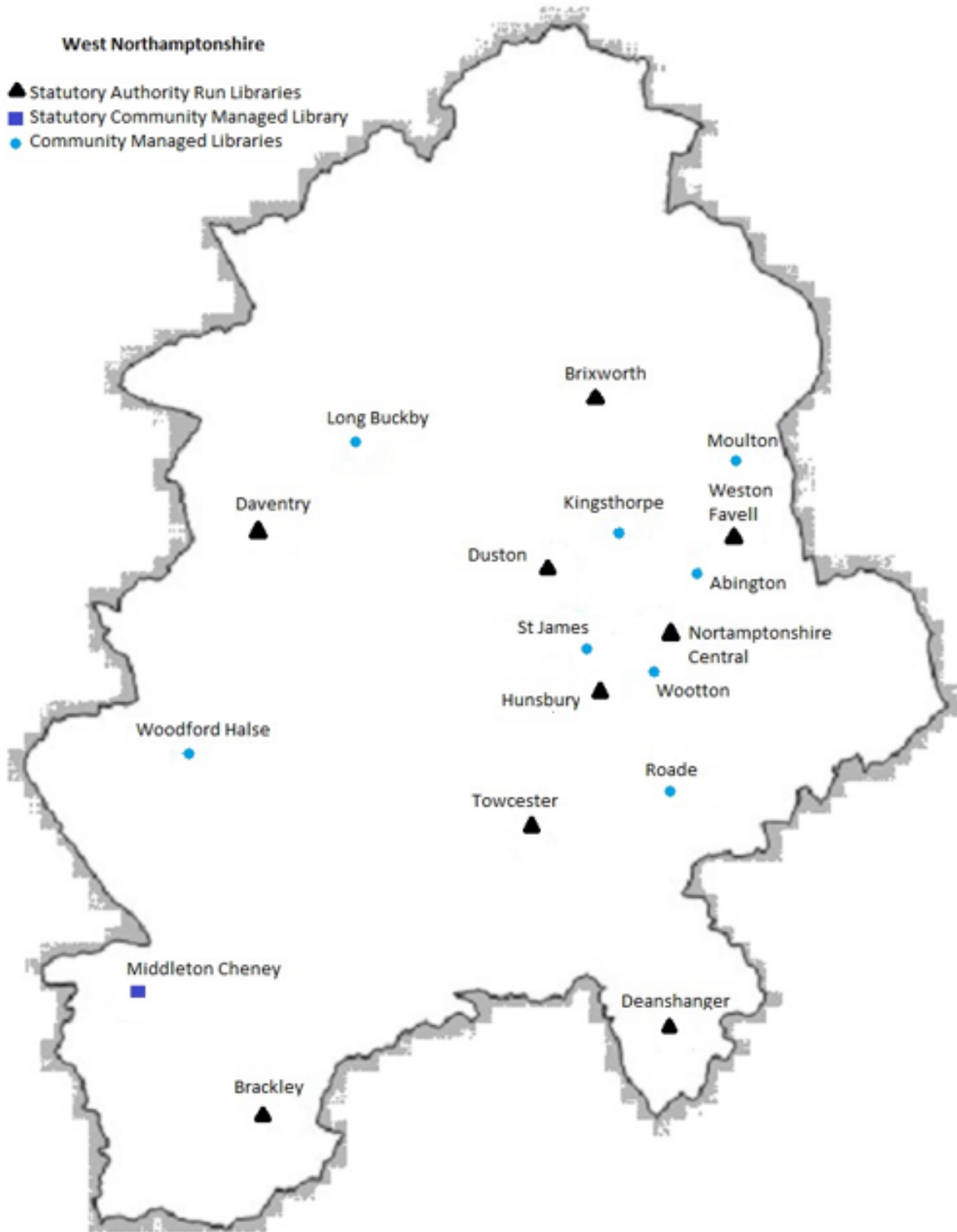
As a Public Library Service, we aim to include a broad representation of opinion and as such do not censor or remove books. Our public libraries are committed to upholding the values of freedom of expression and debate as set out by the Chartered Institute for Library and Information Professionals. We therefore do not restrict access to information on any grounds, except that of the law and we do not censor material on moral, political, religious, racial or gender grounds.

The local authority has a statutory duty to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' public library service and the Libraries Connected Universal Library Offers give guidance as to how to connect communities, improve wellbeing and promote equality through learning, literacy and cultural activity. We have aligned this strategy to the wider council priorities and the public health 'Live Your Best Life' ambitions. We will be engaging local partners and volunteers to enable us to fulfil our objectives.

Our statutory library service is made up of 9 council run libraries, a 24/7 online library service, a school library service and a Library to You home library service which delivers to housebound customers. We also support 9 Community Managed Libraries who extend the library services outside of the statutory provision and we value our Community Managed Libraries as key stakeholders and community-based delivery partners.

### West Northamptonshire

- ▲ Statutory Authority Run Libraries
- Statutory Community Managed Library
- Community Managed Libraries



Our Public Library priorities are:

- Increased reading and literacy
- Cultural and creative enrichment
- Improved digital access and literacy
- Healthier and happier lives
- Helping everyone achieve their full potential
- Greater prosperity
- Stronger and more resilient communities



### What are we going to do?

We will provide a modern, sustainable, responsive library service in welcoming, inclusive spaces in local communities where people are treated with dignity and respect. This means we will:

- Optimise the spending of the annual book and media fund
  - Negotiating the best prices for books, e-lending, e-books and other resources
  - Consortium purchasing, bulk buying and standing order plans for discount purposes
  - Purchasing the best value items from the permitted sources
  - Make best use of economies of scale
  - Meeting the changing needs of modern readers by providing books in a range of formats
- Provide up to date books, resources and technology to enable equal access to services for all by:
  - Maintaining books and resources that are current and relevant in accordance with the Northamptonshire Libraries Stock Policy and national guidance
  - Providing resources that cover a range of perspectives that encourage debate
  - Regularly refreshing technology to be fit for the future
  - Stocking items to meet community need

- Support Community Managed Libraries to provide up to date, relevant resources and support in their communities by:
  - Providing training and support
  - Annually reviewing the Service Level Agreement
  - Providing systems and resources
  - Updating and renewing systems and resources
  - Assisting with purchase of their books within their allocated funds
  - Engaging and consulting around any proposed changes
- Engage with local partners and volunteers to maximise our range of services making full use of the Local Area profiles to target events around local need
- Making Every Contact Count to improve health and wellbeing of individuals by:
  - Engaging with customers and listening to their needs
  - Signposting to services and support
  - Obtaining impact stories to measure success
  - Supporting Public Health campaigns
- Support climate responsibility and sustainability by:
  - Reducing our carbon footprint in our activities and physical resources
  - Enabling communities, jointly with local partners to explore, develop, learn and decide about sustainability
  - Increasing recycling in our buildings including supporting residents to recycle in our libraries
- Seek to enhance our income opportunities to reduce the cost of the library service to the council by:
  - Accepting donations and selling redundant stock
  - Hiring rooms and exhibition spaces
  - Developing our retail offer
  - Being entrepreneurial by maximising income generation opportunities such as parcel distribution centres
  - Hosting traded services

### How will we measure success?

- We will seek customer feedback about the impact that the library service has made to them
- % Increased use of library facilities
  - Visitors
  - Borrowing
  - Engagement at events
- % Increase in volunteers

### Vision and Values

West Northamptonshire Libraries will provide local access to resources and services to enable individuals to develop their skills and improve their wellbeing throughout their lives, leading to more resilient communities.

We draw from the Libraries Connected strategic vision. Our ethos and values entwine with the council values thoroughly for our customers, our partners and our colleagues.

Libraries are essential community hubs in West Northamptonshire that continue to thrive because of a strong customer ethos, a hard-working and dedicated workforce of staff and volunteers and a constantly moving offer which is relevant in the lives of local people.





We will provide an up to date, diverse and accessible library service for all to make use of.

**Libraries in the local communities, where everyone is welcome** – where you can go to study, to meet people and to become involved in your local community.

**Libraries for life** - residents are able to utilise services from cradle to grave, as places to learn and develop, enabling them to be healthy and happy.

**Libraries where you can access information and support** – in a variety of innovative and accessible ways.

**Libraries that are diverse and inclusive** – demonstrating a broad representation of opinion and without censoring material on moral, political, religious, racial or gender grounds.

## **Priority 1**

### Increased Reading and Literacy

Engage, Imagine, Discover

Research shows that those reading for pleasure are happier, healthier and more confident. Adult education in literacy is shown to reduce depression levels and children who read for pleasure have increased cognitive development.

Libraries give everyone free access to books and literature regardless of age, disability, wealth or education. Increasing literacy is vital for learning, employability and life opportunities.

Working with partners we will:

- Deliver a range of events and activities to support reading
  - Bookstart Bear club, Summer Reading Challenge
  - Adult reading initiatives
  - Quick reads
  - Library to You
  - Rhymetime / story-time
  - Book clubs
  - School Library Service
  - Story sacks
  - Other national and regional initiatives to promote reading for pleasure
- Increase opportunities for Reading Friends groups to further engage locally and with partners
- Provide advice and guidance to help people extend and develop their reading choices
- Provide an engaging and diverse book stock and reading material that is fully inclusive, upholding the values of freedom of expression and debate
- Work with volunteers and reader development organisations to support less confident readers and grow reading for pleasure activities
- Provide alternative access to library resources through Library to You and online library membership
  - Digital book club
  - Online and audio books and resources

“My eight year old daughter did the summer reading challenge and chose quite difficult books because she wanted it to be hard. She has gone back to school now and she has gone up by four reading levels! I attribute it completely to the SRC.”

What does success look like:

- Increased borrowing of both physical and digital literature
- Increased involvement in literature initiatives
- Topical subjects covering a wide range of materials
- Up to date Wellbeing collections
- Protected book and media fund
- Impact stories are actively sought and recorded
- Systems are updated on a 5-year cycle enabling improved services

West Northamptonshire Council priorities:

- Improved life chances
- Robust resources management

Live Your Best Life ambitions:

- The best start in life

- Access to the best available education and learning

#### Case Study:

Reading Friends connects people by starting conversations through reading, providing opportunities to meet others, share stories, make new friends, and have fun. It creates social connections and takes a person-centred approach, building on interests and hobbies to get people talking.

It is not a traditional reading group and people taking part in Reading Friends don't need to be 'readers' as reading is used as a conversation starter, to create connections and to help people get to know each other.

Reading Friends helps both participants and volunteers feel more connected to others (Reading Friends evaluation)

Age UK's research shows that maintaining meaningful engagement with the world around you is key to wellbeing. Taking part in activities that support wellbeing is most difficult for people who are lonely and isolated or in poor health<sup>1</sup>

"we're so pleased we came to Reading Friends, it made us realise that just because we're in the place we are that we are still welcome in the library. You told us about the link to Universal Credit on your computers and we came in and used them, that helped us sort our Universal Credit. We had a look at the Strong Start website and think it's something we can do when the baby gets here, it's really good to find out about the free stuff out there and who can help us: it's all a little scary at the moment but you really helped us."

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<sup>1</sup> Hughes et al (2010) - 'Engagement in reading and hobbies and risk of incident dementia: The MoVIES project OECD' [↗](#)

## **Priority 2**

### Enhanced Cultural and Creative Enrichment

#### Explore, Create, Participate

Culture and creativity enrich lives enhancing a sense of place, improving social opportunities and increasing wellbeing. Studies show that only 15% of the general population engage in cultural activity and they tend to be of the higher socioeconomic status.

Libraries are inclusive cultural hubs in communities used by all social groups. We will support an increase in cultural and creative activities and resources to enable and encourage all to explore, create and participate in learning, leisure, community and social activity.

#### Working with partners we will:

- Deliver a range of events and activities to support culture and creativity and enable peer support networks
  - Rhymetimes, knit and natter, craft groups
- Provide an engaging and diverse book stock reflecting culture and creativity that is fully inclusive
- Identify and maximise opportunities to enhance our cultural offer with a range of partners
- Provide space within libraries for cultural and creative groups to exhibit and meet which will encourage participation
- Work closely with Northampton Museum and other partners to bring cultural activity into libraries
- Pursue cultural funding opportunities from a range of sources e.g. Arts Council England

#### What does success look like:

- Increased engagement in cultural activities
- Increased delivery of cultural events and activities through partners
- Impact stories are sought and recorded

#### West Northamptonshire Council priorities:

- Improved life chances
- Thriving villages and towns

#### Live Your Best Life ambitions:

- Connected to their family and friends
- To be accepted and valued simply for who they are

### **Priority 3**

#### Improved Digital Access and Literacy

Inform, Inspire, Innovate

Digital skills give people the opportunity to live more independently, to access services more easily and more economically, to learn and interact with others. This increases employability and reduces social isolation.

Libraries provide a network of accessible locations with free Wi-Fi, charging, computers, printing, and tablets.

We will provide a safe and supportive environment enabling an increase in digital access, training and support to help people use online services confidently and safely. We seek to future proof citizens in a world that is rapidly becoming digital by default.

Working with partners we will:

- Provide resources and activities to develop the skills to become independent users of digital services
  - Coding clubs, digital skills
  - Digital champions
  - Learning and development activities
- Promote Online safety within our own equipment and provide access to resources for individuals to be safe online
- Support to access gov.uk and other online services
- Provide physical and virtual access to resources and activities
- Provide engaging and diverse e-lending services including e-books, e-audiobooks, e-magazines, e-newspapers, online subscriptions such as Go Citizen, Theory Test pro, Ancestry
- Provide access to the internet in a range of ways to enable use of information, services and support
- Provide up to date, relevant technology to provide an efficient and future proofed library service

What does success look like:

- Increased engagement at digital events
- Increased delivery of digital events and activities through partners
- Impact stories are sought and recorded, demonstrating increased digital confidence
- Systems are updated on a 5-year cycle
- Increased digital champion volunteers

West Northamptonshire Council priorities:

- Improved life chances

Live Your Best Life Ambitions:

- Access to the best available education and learning
- To feel safe in their homes and when out and about
- Connected to their family and friends

“After helping me print a document I was booked in with an IT buddy who supported me to use my laptop. I never realised this sort of help was available in the library, I am very grateful.”

## **Priority 4**

### Healthier and Happier Lives

#### Healthier, Happier, Connected

Libraries deliver significant economic benefits on preventative spend and return on investment. The health and wellbeing offer from libraries is estimated to bring a cost saving to NHS England of £27.5m each year (source Arts Council 2015 Health and wellbeing benefits of public libraries.) Research suggests significant associations between frequent library use and reported wellbeing and improved access to health information through libraries and reduced calls on services such as GP's.

Libraries offer a wide range of information around more common health conditions as well as activities and resources to improve mental health.

We will offer non-clinical spaces for health and wellbeing groups and provide resources to promote self-care and self-management of long-term conditions to boost health literacy. This enables an understanding of how to find and use information to improve own health and wellbeing, closing health inequality gaps.

#### Working with partners we will:

- Provide free, warm, accessible, welcoming places
- Provide quality assured health literacy resources and information
- Provide volunteering opportunities to reduce isolation and improve future life choices
- Provide opportunities and activities to connect with the wider community to reduce social isolation
- Upskill staff to enable them to have healthy conversations - Make Every Contact Count (MECC)

#### What does success look like:

- Up to date reading well collections
- Increase in reading well collection loans
- Impact stories are sought and recorded

#### West Northamptonshire Council priorities:

- Improved life chances
- Robust resource management

#### Live Your Best Life ambitions:

- Opportunity to be fit, well and independent
- To be accepted and valued simply for who they are

"Just to say, I popped in and borrowed the epilepsy books this morning. What a great selection. I'm very pleased and impressed. Thank you so much for your efforts in this regard. I'm most grateful"

## **Priority 5**

### Helping Everyone Achieve Their Full Potential

#### Aspirations, Transitions, Lifelong Learning

Libraries provide support during key life transitions and help people to access services to resettle, reset or improve their life. They raise people's aspirations and promote lifelong learning through the offer of free resources for developing and studying: From the provision of parent/carer collections and rhymetimes for babies to development of the skills to handle and interpret information confidently and safely throughout a lifetime.

We will provide warm welcoming spaces with opportunities to study, develop, volunteer and socialise.

Working with partners we will:

- Provide alternative spaces for study where people cannot study at home
- Provide Study Happy spaces and resources
- Provide volunteering opportunities to enable people to develop life and work skills
- Deliver a range of events and activities to support lifelong learning
  - Rhymetimes
  - Homework clubs
  - Language café's
  - Digital (online) skills
  - Maths/English/English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
  - BIPC courses and workshops
- Provide parent /carer collections
- Provide physical and online resources for self-led studying and learning
  - Books and audio books
  - E-books and e-audio books
  - Go Citizen
  - Theory test pro

What does success look like:

- Increased engagement at learning events
- Increased delivery of wellbeing events and activities through partners
- Increased borrowing
- Impact stories are sought and recorded
- Volunteers gaining employment

West Northamptonshire Council priorities:

- Improved life chances

Live Your Best Life ambitions:

- The best start in life
- Access to the best available education and learning
- Employment that keeps them and their families out of poverty
- The chance for a fresh start when things go wrong

"Thank you for your help using Excel in the past, I have passed my exams with marks of 75% and 95% and thank you for providing me with a study space, I would not have been able to study at home and appreciate being able to use the library"

## **Priority 6**

### Greater Prosperity

Employability, Economic Growth, Financial Security

Libraries contribute to improving the prosperity of local communities by increasing employability, supporting small businesses to flourish and helping to keep families out of poverty.

BIPCs provide excellent value for money and return on investment - £6.95 is generated for every £1 of public funding.

We will work alongside local partners to expand our support for job seekers and provide good quality information and resources on debt and money management to enable people to take up benefits and support they are entitled to.

Through the BIPC we will enhance our provision for aspiring entrepreneurs and small medium enterprise (SME).

Working with partners we will:

- Deliver and develop our award-winning Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC)
  - Provide advice and support to help start up, protect and grow business through one-to-one advice, workshops and webinars
  - Provide free access to business research databases and Intellectual Property advice
  - Seek external funding to deliver grants for small businesses
- Support the West Northamptonshire Council anti-poverty strategy
- Provide physical and virtual resources to enhance money management skills, employability and small business success
- Deliver a range of events and activities to support job seeking and business improvement
  - Job clubs
  - Networking events
- Provide volunteering, apprenticeship and work experience opportunities to enable people to develop work skills
- Provide learning opportunities which support people with work and life skills
- Provide access to the internet to enable people to acquire information and conduct research

What does success look like:

- Increased number of small and medium businesses launched
- Increased engagement at events
- Increased delivery of events and activities through partners
- Impact stories are sought and recorded
- Additional specialist support leveraged from partners by the BIPC

West Northamptonshire Council priorities:

- Improved life chances
- Thriving towns and villages
- Economic growth

Live Your Best Life ambitions:

- Employment that keeps them and their families out of poverty

### **Case study**



The Business & IP Centre (BIPC) Northamptonshire is part of the British Library led network of Business & IP Centres. They support entrepreneurs and innovators from that first spark of inspiration to successfully launching and growing a business.

The programme of support includes workshops, webinars and 1:1 advice sessions covering everything from the basics designed to equip attendees with the skills needed to start and run a successful business, to business growth, social media, website SEO, intellectual property and more. They also offer free access to business subscription resources which are invaluable for business planning and intelligence.

BIPC Northamptonshire is comprised of a Regional Centre at Northampton Central Library and four BIPC Locals – two in North Northamptonshire at Kettering and Wellingborough Libraries and two in West Northamptonshire at Brixworth and Towcester Libraries. All other council run libraries act as a signposting service.

Libraries in Northamptonshire have been delivering business support since 2012 and have been part of the National Network of Business and IP Centres since 2015. They are ideally situated within communities to provide trusted and impartial advice and have a proven track record of supporting local economies. In 2019 an independent economic evaluation showed that businesses which start with the support of a BIPC show strong survival rates – an average of 9 in 10 are still trading after 3 years, compared to 6 in every 10 for the general business population. BIPCs also provide excellent value for money and return on investment - £6.95 is generated for every £1 of public funding.

#### **Feedback from BIPC Northamptonshire users**

“Good informative advice session, given me confidence to progress further with my business idea.”

“...Excellent training, really informative and I come away enthusiastic and with a ‘to do’ list full of suggestions from the session. Thank you, what an invaluable resource, so glad I have found you!”

“Very insightful, speaker was engaging, knowledgeable and easy to listen to. Probably one of the most helpful social media marketing webinars I have attended. The slides were also useful, clear and concise! Thank you very much!”

## Priority 7

### Stronger, More Resilient Communities

#### Sense of Place, Celebrating Diversity, Social Cohesion and Mobility

Libraries are accessible, inclusive spaces, open to everyone, for the community to share. Library staff understand communities needs and are trusted to provide reliable guidance and to support a range of issues when needed. 'People who are more socially connected to family, friends or their community are happier and live longer, healthier lives with fewer physical and mental health problems than people who are less well connected.' The Mental Health Foundation (2016)

We will offer a modern, sustainable, responsive library service in welcoming inclusive spaces where people are treated with dignity and respect. Located in the heart of Local Area Partnership neighbourhoods, we will provide community hubs that seek to understand the needs of local communities enabling the right services and partners to collocate and deliver their services from the library.

#### Working with partners we will:

- Provide free warm, accessible, baby friendly, welcoming places
- Provide spaces where vulnerable residents can 'Keep safe'
- Provide information and resources to explore the local area and its history
- Host a range of diverse local events
- Provide rooms for hire
- Provide a front door to council and partner services including consultation and engagement activities and blue badge and bus pass applications
- Support refugee resettlement programmes, welcoming refugees and providing relevant resources in their language
- Deliver outreach activities and events outside of our buildings taking the library to new places to engage with new customers who do not currently use the library, to include underrepresented groups and protected groups under the Equalities Act
- Consider autism and dementia friendly spaces, adapt libraries where practical and build into future library redesigns
- Provide access to assisted technology to enable those with additional needs to access library service
- Provide volunteer opportunities for people to be involved in and give back to their communities

#### What does success look like:

- Increased partnership working to meet local needs
- Increased visitors
- Increased volunteers
- Impact stories are sought and recorded

#### West Northamptonshire Council priorities:

- Thriving towns and villages

#### Live Your Best Life ambitions:

- A chance for a fresh start when things go wrong
- To feel safe in their homes and when out and about
- To be accepted and valued simply for who they are

"It is really good that you are providing tea and coffee for the winter warmth, I suffer with mental health issues and it's great that I can come in each day and talk to the staff and have a cup of tea. Thank you, it's really important for me"

Place Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2022-2023

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

Item suggested for inclusion on the Place Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for the Committee’s consideration

Topic	Proposed purpose	Date of meeting	Cabinet Member and Executive Director	Proposed Task and Finish Group	Committee’s comments
<b>Local Plan for West Northamptonshire</b>	The Committee to consider and provide scrutiny input into the Local Plan for West Northamptonshire at various stages	<b>Date: 15 June 2023</b>	Executive Director for Place, Economy and Environment  Planning Policy Manager Cabinet Member for Planning	The Committee will provide Scrutiny input into the Local Plan for West Northamptonshire over a series of meetings	
<b>Northampton Town Plan (planning and growth including other main town progress /Review</b>		31 January 2022 (taken place)  <b>Update to the Committee at its meeting on 5 December 2022- M&amp;S and BHS Development</b>  <b>7 February 2023 - The Committee to consider its scope for Scrutiny input in the M&amp;S and BHS Development - APPROVED - added as a separate work plan item below:</b>	Executive Director for Place, Economy and Environment Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste	The Committee to consider setting up a Task and Finish Group to undertake a review of congestion, including parking and incorporating consideration of air quality and options for sustainable transport / active travel	<b>Update: An update on the progress of the Northampton Town Plan would be brought to the Committee in July 2022. (Meeting 12 September 2022)</b>  <b>Update to the Committee at its meeting on 5 December 2022- M&amp;S and BHS Development</b>  <b>7 February 2023 - The Committee to consider its scope for Scrutiny input in</b>

					<b>the M&amp;S and BHS Development - APPROVED</b>
<b>M&amp;S and BHS Development</b>	To provide scrutiny input into the M&S and BHS development at Northampton	<b>The evidence gathering for this Scrutiny activity will commence with site visits to various comparable developments.</b>  <b>Dates to be agreed.</b>	Executive Director for Place, Economy and Environment Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Built Environment and Rural Affairs Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Town Centre Regeneration and Growth	The Committee will provide Scrutiny input into the M&S and BHS Development over a series of meetings	
<b>Highways Contract to include economies of scale</b>	To have an overview, within the constraints of the contract.	31 August 2021 (taken place)  The Committee to consider the content of the scope of the Joint Scrutiny Review <b>18 October 2022 meeting - Oversight Group to be convened</b>  <b>The Chair of the Oversight Group will report to the Committee at each meeting when there is an update:</b>  <b>21 March 2023/18 April 2023</b>	Executive Director for Place, Economy and Environment Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste	A Joint Task and Finish Group with Corp OSC to look at the Highways contract	<b>A joint Highways Oversight Group with Corporate OSC is being convened.</b>  The Group has commenced its scrutiny activity
<b>Sustainability Strategy/Net Zero</b>	To provide Scrutiny input into the Sustainability Strategy	<b>Date: 21 March 2023 (taken place)</b>	Executive Director for Place, Economy and Environment	To be confirmed	

			Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste		
<b>WNC waste strategy And Waste management Contracts</b>	The Committee to set up an Oversight Group to look over various waste issues. The Group would begin to meet after September 2022 onwards.	<b>date: 18 October 2022</b>  <b>NB: A working group has been set up (outside the O&amp;S process) - The Chair of the Oversight Group to report to the Committee at each meeting:</b>  <b>21 March 2023</b> <b>18 April 2023</b>	Executive Director for Place, Economy and Environment Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste	Yes - A cabinet Group has been convened	
<b>Active Travel</b>	To provide scrutiny input to enable WNC to progress its plans for active travel	<b>29 March 2022 (taken place)</b>  <b>The Chair of the Oversight Group to report to the Committee at each meeting when there is an update:</b>  <b>15 June 2023</b>	Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste  Executive Director for Place, Economy and Environment	<b>Yes, this</b> work would take around 6- 12 months.	Information gathering to be provided to the Committee at its meeting on 29 March 2022 and a Task and Finish Group to be inaugurated. Councillor Bagott- Webb to Chair.
The Council's Carbon Programme/Net Zero	The Committee to review the Council's Carbon Programme	<b>21 March 2023 (taken place)</b>	Executive Director for Place, Economy and Environment Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste		The Committee may want to consider an 'internal' carbon review and separately an 'external' review The internal review would concentrate on buildings, fleet, WNC-own energy, procurement and (probably) ICT. It is important that the Carbon Programme does not conflict with air quality - low emissions approach favoured

<b>Libraries</b>	The Cabinet Member and Assistant Director to provide a briefing to the Committee on the Council's policy regarding libraries	<b>date: 17 May 2022 completed</b>  <b>Further report to be received at a later meeting for scrutiny input:</b>  <b>Date:18 April 2023</b>	Executive Director for Place, Economy and Environment and Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Leisure	TBC	From the briefing the Committee will decide how it can undertake scrutiny activity into this topic
Broadband Contract	To monitor and review the broadband contract	<b>18 April 2023</b>	Executive Director for Place, Economy and Environment Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Built Environment & Rural Affairs		
<b>Home to School Transport Policy</b>	The Committee to consider and provide Scrutiny input in to the proposed changes to the Home to School Policy	<b>18 April 2023</b>	Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste  Executive Director for Place, Economy and Environment		
Place Overview and Scrutiny annual report 2022/23	The Committee to receive the annual report 2023/24 for Place OSC.	<b>15 June 2023</b>	Chair Place OSC		
<b>Crime and Disorder Scrutiny</b>	The Committee to receive a performance report from the Chair of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP)	26 January 2022 (taken place)  <b>7 February 2023 (taken Place)</b>  <b>11 September 2023</b>	Chair of the Community Safety Partnership and Cabinet Member for Community Safety & Engagement, and Regulatory Services		To receive a report from the Chair of the CSP each year.

			Executive Director for Place, Economy and Environment		
<b>Flood Risk Management</b>	The Committee to undertake scrutiny of the Flood Risk Management Strategy	31 January 2022 (taken place)  <b>7 February 2023 (taken place)</b> <b>11 September 2023</b>	Executive Director for Place, Economy and Environment Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste		To include information how West Northamptonshire Council works with Homes England
<b>Items to be scheduled</b>					
<b>Tree Policy</b>	The Committee to receive Cabinet's response to the O&S report – Tree Policy and monitor the implementation of the accepted recommendations	<b>Date: TBC</b>			
<b>Fly tipping</b>	To provide scrutiny input into the draft fly-tipping policy that will aim to harmonise cleansing standards across WNC & boost enforcement action	<b>29 March 2022 (taken place)</b>  <b>21 March 2023</b> - The Committee to receive information on progress on actions outlined in the action Plan <b>(taken place)</b>  <b>Date: TBC: That the Committee provide further input into the Policy in 12 months' time. (approximately March 2024)</b>	Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste  Executive Director for Place, Economy and Environment	The Committee to receive the draft fly-tipping policy for scrutiny input.	The Committee could consider the reporting mechanisms, clearance and enforcement when providing input Completed <b>2/3/22</b>  <b>21/3/23</b> The Committee to receive information on progress on actions outlined in the action Plan (taken place)
West Northamptonshire Travel Infrastructure Strategy	To provide scrutiny input into the Strategy, including footpath and cycleways, timescales and funding	To be confirmed	Leader of the Council Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Town Centre	To be confirmed	

			Regeneration and Growth Executive Director for Place, Economy and Environment		
Assets Strategy	To provide scrutiny input into the Assets Strategy	To be confirmed	Leader of the Council – Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Built Environment & Rural Affairs Executive Director for Place, Economy and Environment	To be confirmed	
Economic Strategy	The Committee to consider the Council’s Economic Strategy	To be confirmed	Leader of the Council Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Town Centre Regeneration and Growth Executive Director for Place, Economy and Environment	To be confirmed	
Performance Monitoring Report	The Committee to consider the Performance Monitoring Report to inform Performance Management Scrutiny	The Chair to contact the Chair of Corporate OSC to ask then when this Committee scrutinises performance management that, if applicable, any issues under Place OSC are referred to this Committee for Consideration  <b>Date: TBC</b>	Executive Director for Place, Economy and Environment	No	Performance Monitoring Reports will be taken from the Cabinet agenda for Place Scrutiny to consider
Performance Management Scrutiny	The Committee to undertake Performance Management Scrutiny	The Chair to contact the Chair of Corporate OSC to ask then when this Committee	Executive Director for Place, Economy and Environment and relevant Cabinet	No	



		scrutinises performance management that, if applicable, any issues under Place OSC are referred to this Committee for Consideration  <b>Date: TBC</b>	Members dependent upon the key performance indicator to be reviewed		
<b>COMPLETED ITEMS</b>					

**Schedule of meetings Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

- 18 April 2023
- 15 June - TBC

**Development of Overview and Scrutiny work programmes for 2022/23**

**NB:** The Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group considered the process to be used to develop Overview and Scrutiny work programmes at a meeting on 25 May 2022. The Group agreed that rather than go out to public consultation about suggestions for scrutiny topics as in 2021/22 it could be more useful to consider a survey of residents' views about Council services. This would enable areas to be identified where Overview and Scrutiny might help to alleviate issues. The Group also agreed that Cabinet Members should be asked to provide details of forthcoming issues within their portfolios that might be subject to pre-decision scrutiny. The chairs of the three Overview and Scrutiny committees have written to the Leader of the Council to progress these matters.

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