



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Cabinet

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at The Forum, Towcester, NN12 6AF on Friday 23 September 2022 at 6.00 pm.

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

Also
Present: Councillor Ian McCord
 Councillor Cecile Irving-Swift
 Councillor Emma Roberts
 Councillor Sally Beardsworth
 Councillor Sue Sharps
 Councillor Ken Pritchard
 Councillor Rosie Herring
 Councillor Danielle Stone
 Councillor Walter Tarasiewicz
 Councillor Bob Purser
 Councillor Keith Holland-Delamere

Officers: Anna Earnshaw (Chief Executive Officer)
 Cath Whitehead (Director of Legal & Democratic and Monitoring
 Officer)
 Martin Henry (S151 Officer)
 Stuart Lackenby (Executive Director – Adults, Communities and
 Wellbeing)
 Stuart Timmiss (Executive Director - Place and Economy)
 Paul Hanson (Democratic Services Manager)
 Ed Bostock (Democratic Services Officer)

60. **Declarations of Interest**

None.

61. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th September 2022 would be brought to the next meeting.

62. **Chair's Announcements**

None.

63. **Urgent Business**

None.

64. **Corporate Plan Performance Report - 2022-23 Q1**

At the Chair's invitation, councillors made the following comments on the report which had been previously circulated.

- Fly-tipping was a continuous problem for the authority, particularly in urban areas.
- Co2E production should be measured.
- Concern was raised around no target for tree planting.
- The descriptor for "clean and green" stated "carbon neutral" rather than "net zero".
- Customer satisfaction was positive, however there should be information on the number of complaints in each quarter.
- There was no information relating to how many homeless people accepted temporary accommodation; this should be included.
- Regarding robust resource management, sickness seemed high, and Members questioned how this related to other local authorities.
- Members felt that the goalposts had been shifted by not reporting outcomes.
- There was no real terms forecast for transformation.
- An action plan was needed regarding Improved Life Chances figures.
- Regarding Customer Services, a breakdown of what help was applied for and what was given would be beneficial for Members to see.

The Leader presented the report and the recommendations to Members. He advised that the report would include measures where they would make a contribution. He noted that tree planting was seasonal and that numbers would increase in the coming months and further noted that regarding Co2E, "carbon neutral" was no longer the descriptor and would be changed in future reports. This would be reported on a quarterly basis.

Cabinet Members then highlighted the salient points of the report which related to their portfolios.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet:

- a) **Noted the content of the appendix covering the first quarter of 2022-23.**

65. **Revenue Monitoring Quarter 1 - Financial Year 2022-23**

At the Chair's invitation Councillors made the following comments on the report which had been previously circulated.

- Members welcomed the openness and detail of the report.
- The overspend on Adult Social Care was a concern; zero-based budgeting was needed and also a wider rethink of how to deliver services and the budget.
- It was suggested that despite meetings having taken place, the Children's Trust seemed more separate from Members than ever before.
- Underspends in the education budget were impacting on outcomes.
- Costs relating to temporary accommodation were a concern; evidence of real solutions were needed.
- Members felt that staff vacancies were propping up the budget.
- A timescale on the Children's Trust delivering proposals on forecasted pressures would be useful to have.
- It was felt that there had been a failure to transform and "old NCC ways of working" had produced the same results.

Cabinet members then highlighted the salient points of the report that related to their Portfolios.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

a) Noted the forecast outturn position for 2022-23 and associated risks

b) Noted the deliverability assessment of West Northamptonshire Council savings requirement

for 2022-23 summarised in section 7 and detailed in Appendix B

c) Delegated authority to the Executive Director – Finance in consultation with the portfolio holder for finance to apply any budget virements required to effectively manage the overall budget.

66. **Quarter 1 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Monitoring Report 2022-23**

At the Chair's invitation Councillors made the following comments on the report which had been previously circulated.

- Concern was raised regarding the Fraser Road development; some Members understood that the Inspector had recommended that the land be kept as open space and further concern was raised around the sustainability of homes built by the Council.
- Members questioned whether Table 1 of the report should state St James Library rather than Wootton Library.
- Concern was raised regarding the strength of the Housing Revenue Accounts and the government's recent consultation on CPI.
- Members would like an update regarding Section 106 Legal Agreements.
- Members would like life outcomes reports to be targeted more rurally in the future.

Cabinet members then highlighted the salient points of the report that related to their Portfolios.

RESOLVED: that the Cabinet:

- a) Noted the latest capital monitoring position for the General Fund and HRA.
- b) Noted the new capital schemes and changes to the Capital Programme since the report that was considered by Cabinet in July 2022.

67. **Treasury Management Update Quarter 1, 2022-23**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Malcolm Longley presented the report which had been previously circulated.

Councillors made the following comments.

- Northampton was one of the leading areas in the country for credit card debt.
- Members questioned how the maturity profile regarding loans compared to other local authorities.
- It was noted that highly skilled refugees were able to work but were not finding employment opportunities.

Councillor Longley made the following comments.

- The majority of loans were on a fixed rate for a fixed term; interest rates could increase with LOBO loans.

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

68. **West Northamptonshire Housing Strategy (2022-2025)**

Councillor Purser declared an interest in the item as a board member of Northampton Partnership Homes.

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Adam Brown presented the report which had been previously circulated.

Councillors made the following comments.

- There was concern that the report did not see any risks in the Strategy.
- Members questioned whether there was sufficient capacity, and whether there was Member capacity to scrutinise the Strategy.
- Members questioned how the authority would deliver specialist housing.
- Members felt disappointed that few Overview and Scrutiny recommendations had been implemented in the Strategy.
- Houses were being sold under the Right to Buy scheme as fast as the authority could build them.
- The government should put a cap on private rent.
- The Strategy should go back to Overview and Scrutiny for regular monitoring.

Councillor Brown made the following comments.

- The Strategy was intended to cover the next 3 years; it was not a statutory duty but put the authority in a stronger position and would be used to inform service delivery decisions.

- Multiple workshops were held along with a public consultation.
- An action plan would be developed following the approval of the Strategy.
- There was an amendment to recommendation (c) which now read: “To approve the adoption of a robust Delivery Action Plan, aligned to the priorities set out in the housing strategy, which will be produced with the continued engagement of partners and subject to the approval of the Cabinet member for Housing, Culture & Leisure”
- He thanked officers who worked to produce the Strategy.
- Venture capital was currently the best and fastest way to deliver specialist housing.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet

- a) Noted the outcome of the consultation and how this has been reflected in the Housing Strategy.**
- b) Approved the West Northants Housing Strategy 2022-2025 for adoption.**
- c) Approved the adoption of a robust Delivery Action Plan, aligned to the priorities set out in the housing strategy, which will be produced with the continued engagement of partners and subject to the approval of the Cabinet member for Housing, Culture & Leisure**

69. Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)

At the Chair’s invitation Councillor Mike Hallam presented the report which had been previously circulated.

Councillor Hallam made the following comments.

- Following a recent visit from the IPCO several recommendations were made which were contained within the updated policy.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet:

- a) Noted the revised RIPA Surveillance Policy set out at Appendix A**
- b) Agreed to designate the Council’s Audit and Governance Committee as the responsible statutory committee for overseeing the operation of RIPA surveillance policies.**
- c) Noted that an external training provider has been identified to provide in-depth training to nominated staff (i.e. Authorised Officers and employees of the Council who may use surveillance).**

70. WNC Multiply Funding Investment Plan

At the Chair’s invitation Councillor Daniel Lister presented the report which had been previously circulated.

Councillor Lister made the following comments.

- The investment plan was submitted on 30th June; 1st year funding was approved.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet:

- a) Noted an investment plan to secure the Multiply funding was submitted to the Department of Education on 30 June 2022.**
- b) Noted the expectation is that DfE will assess the WNC Multiply investment plan and the provisional allocation will be signed off and approved by September 2022.**

71. UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Daniel Lister presented the report which had been previously circulated.

Councillors made the following comments.

- Members had concern regarding the authority's relationship with the voluntary sector; a robust voluntary sector was needed to help deliver projects.
- Some failures to secure funding were due to a lack of preparedness which Members felt was a concern.
- Members did not feel that the Midlands would benefit much from the government's levelling up agenda.
- Ward Members should be briefed on projects before the press (in relation to the Billing Road corridor).

Councillor Lister made the following comments.

- Regarding the investment plan, a submission was made in August 2022 and the funding was due to be received in October 2022.
- The Rural England Prosperity Fund had been set up and £4.1m was allocated to WNC for rural areas only.

It was further noted that the Billing Road cycleway scheme was defunct; work was underway to develop an alternative scheme.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet:

- a) Noted an investment plan to draw down the UKSPF was submitted to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) on 1 August 2022.**
- b) Noted the selected interventions which the funding will be allocated to including the expected outputs and outcomes.**
- c) Noted that the DLUHC will review the WNC UKSPF Investment Plan and year one funds are expected to be received in October, following sign off.**

72. Recommissioning of the Holiday Activities and Food Programme

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Baker presented the report which had been previously circulated.

Councillors Stone and Sharps declared an interest in the item as residents they worked with were recipients of food vouchers.

Councillors made the following comments.

- It would be useful to see outcomes in the report to see the value of the programme.
- More resources should be put into schools since they knew their children best.
- The way that food vouchers were delivered was not as smooth as it could have been, especially in rural areas.

Councillor Baker made the following comments.

- The government set out how food vouchers were delivered.

RESOLVED: that the Cabinet:

a) Noted the delivery of the Holiday Activities and Food Programme to date and its benefits to children, young people, and families in West Northamptonshire.

b) Approved the procurement of a supplier to coordinate the delivery of the Holiday Activities and Food Programme in West Northamptonshire in partnership with the Council from March 2023 in line with the Contract Procedure Rules.

c) Delegated authority to the Executive Member for Children, Families, Education & Skills in consultation with the Executive Director of Children's Services (DCS) to take any further decisions and actions required to conclude this procurement and award the contract.

73. Towns Fund: 24 Guildhall Road Phase 2 Works

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Daniel Lister presented the report which had been previously circulated.

Members made the following comments.

- The scheme would promote the arts within the town and would complement several other activities.
- Members felt that the timescale was very ambitious and questioned whether it was realistic.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

a) approved the business case for 24 Guildhall Road Northampton Project Phase 2.

b) delegated to the Assistant Director of Place Shaping authority to enter into a contract to appoint a principal contractor for the build.

c) delegated to the Assistant Director of Assets and Environment authority to enter into a lease in relation to the upper floors of the completed building. building targets.

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____

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