



Cabinet

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Council Chamber, The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester, NN12 6AD on Tuesday 10 October 2023 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 Sally Beardsworth
Councillor Jonathan Harris
Councillor Keith Holland-Delamere
Councillor Koulla Jolley
Councillor Paul Joyce
Councillor Bob Purser
Councillor Wendy Randall

Officers:

Anna Earnshaw, Chief Executive
Rebecca Purnell, Assistant Chief Executive
Martin Henry, Executive Director - Finance (Section 151 Officer)
Sarah Hall, Deputy Director - Law & Governance (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Stuart Lackenby, Executive Director - People Services & Deputy Chief Executive
Sarah Reed, Executive Director - Corporate Services
Stuart Timmiss, Executive Director - Place, Economy and Environment
Sally Burns, Director of Public Health
Lisa Hyde, Acting Director of Communities and Opportunities
Jo Barrett, Assistant Director - Housing and Communities
Paul Hanson, Head of Democratic & Elections
Kathryn Holton, Committee Officer
Gillian Baldock, Political Assistant to the Conservative Group

52. Apologies

There were none.

53. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

54. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting on 19 September were agreed as an accurate record.

55. **Chair's Announcements**

There were none.

56. **Northamptonshire Youth Justice Plan**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Baker presented the report and outlined the salient points.

Councillors made the following comments:

- The report and strategy were welcomed. However the increase in violence and use of weapons, especially by boys and young men was concerning.
- Would the data be split between North Northants and West Northants in future? Provision of detail by LAP area would also be helpful.
- Most of the funding had been used for salaries – more needed to be spent on prevention and early intervention.

Councillor Baker responded as follows:

- Salary costs were primarily related to provision of the dedicated and experienced youth/social workers rather than overhead costs.
- Data could be obtained from the new police data system – potentially segregated by LAP.
- Splitting between North Northants and West Northants was in the hands of Ofsted and would be likely to happen at some point.

The Executive Director People advised that prevention of youth offending was a priority and ways of improving early help were being looked at.

Councillor Golby offered his support to the report. Money had been given by Public Health to tackle issues such as substance abuse.

The Chief Executive stated that there were a high number of children in care in the figures. Detailed case studies had identified that very early diagnosis and intervention were key in preventing youth offending.

RESOLVED: Cabinet agreed the content of the Youth Justice Plan for 2023/24 and recommend the Plan to Council for approval.

57. **The Establishment of a West Northamptonshire Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Baker presented the report proposing the SACRE for West Northants.

A Councillor welcomed the report and pointed out that a SACRE adviser had now been employed to work one day per week in West Northants and one day per week in North Northants.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet;

- a) Approved the establishment of a West Northamptonshire SACRE.
- b) Approved the SACRE Constitution as detailed in Appendix A

58. **West Northants Council nightly purchased temporary accommodation procurement via Dynamic Purchasing System**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Brown presented the report. The proposed Dynamic Purchasing System would provide enhanced competition between providers and enable WNC's duty under the Housing Act to be met. The cost over a 5 year period would be up to £30m (accommodation, not system costs) but would be offset by £20m benefits.

Councillors made the following comments:

- The report was necessary and welcomed.
- Would the system help to control costs and monitor quality of temporary accommodation?
- Would the provision be available in all areas? Many people requiring temporary accommodation had no money or transport.
- It would be good if temporary accommodation could be provided in-house in order to control the costs.

Councillor Brown responded as follows:

- The new system would help to monitor costs.
- Increased quality was an objective of the system.
- The spread of accommodation depended on what provision was available. Placing people locally was always the aim, but the needs were massively tilted towards Northampton.
- The council sought to maintain a healthy stock of temporary accommodation but needed private sector assistance at times of high demand.

RESOLVED: Cabinet approved;

- a) The commencement of the procurement process and delegated authority to the Head of Private Sector Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture & Leisure; Procurement Governance Group and Chief Financial Officer (s151) to manage the process throughout its lifespan, including procuring, awarding, maintaining and cooling off (if needed) the DPS.
- b) The introduction of a new Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for the booking of nightly purchased temporary accommodation for homeless households from the 1st June 2024
- c) That the duration of the DPS be for an initial 5-year period beginning from the notified contract award commencement date and with the option to extend on an annual basis whilst the DPS remains fit for purpose and depending upon the Council's ongoing need for this type of temporary accommodation.

59. **Procurement of Key Waste Contracts**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Larratt presented the report proposing to commence procurement of key contracts.

Councillors made the following comments:

- A councillor who had been a member of the working group considered that the process had been good. Contracts were vital in continuing to provide a good service.
- Public education and engagement was important, together with encouragement to mend and reuse rather than discard items.
- Use of recycling boxes in terraced streets needed to be addressed.
- Reduced opening hours of recycling centres potentially resulted in issues, including queuing on local roads.
- Community schemes (such as collection of blister packs) needed to be supported and linked to the work done by the council.
- Due diligence and transparency regarding the end destination of recycled items was needed to reassure residents.
- Opportunities should be taken to focus on sustainability, for example in the vehicles used.

Councillor Larratt thanked all those who had spoken for their support and comments and made the following points:

- Residents were key and engagement with them was important.
- Discussions were ongoing regarding opening hours of recycling centres.
- An appointment system could address the issues of queuing at recycling centres, although residents were not in favour of this.
- 85% of residual waste was currently being recycled.
- Harmonisation of waste contracts was the ultimate aim, although some current contracts extended until 2028.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet;

- a) Approved the commencement of procurement for a new contract(s) for the treatment of residual waste.
- b) Approved the commencement of procurement for new contracts for the provision of Household Waste Recycling Centre services.
- c) Approved the commencement of procurement of a contract for a waste transfer facility to enable bulking of dry mixed recyclables collected from the South area.
- d) Delegated authority to the Executive Director for Place, Economy and Environment in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste Services, and the Executive Director for Finance to:
 - i) Finalise the specification for the contracts;
 - ii) Take decisions relating to the procurement processes, to enable them to progress as planned; and
 - iii) Award the contracts, providing the procurement exercises reach a satisfactory conclusion.

60. **Transfer of Dedicated School Grant Funding for Forensic Services from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to West Northants Council**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Baker presented the report and advised that all other similar units were now being run by local authorities as they were best placed to undertake this.

Councillors made the following comments:

- The report and extra funding was welcomed.
- The beneficial community impact of discussions with St Andrews to train other schools should be noted.

Councillor Baker acknowledged the potential benefit of the closer working relationships.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet;

- a) Accepted the additional funding and commissioning responsibilities for St Andrew's Healthcare forensic services.
- b) Approved the award of a contract to St Andrews Healthcare for the provision of education and training for young people up the age of 18 detained in the unit.

61. **Purchase of a dwelling in Northampton for NCT (General Exception Rule has been applied)**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Longley presented the report. The largest overspend of NCT was in placements and this was an opportunity to save money and provide a good home for 4 children.

Councillor Baker advised that the property was a bungalow with plenty of parking which would be occupied by 4 children with complex medical needs who required a stable home.

Councillors made the following comments:

- This was a good news story. It was important that planning and consultation with neighbours was undertaken well.
- Bringing care back in-house was welcomed.
- There was an old care home in Daventry which could potentially be redeveloped to provide more accommodation.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

Authorised the Assistant Director Assets & Environment to purchase the property in question, or if that should prove impractical, another property which delivers similar outcomes, in each case within the approved budget.

62. **West Northants Housing Allocations Function**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Brown presented the report and outlined the salient points.

Councillors made the following comments:

- Concern was expressed about losing knowledge locally. It was important to bring the experience from the Housing Allocations team into any solution.
- Obtaining the right data was important to ensure people were placed in the most suitable accommodation.
- A single approach made sense but would create change. Reassurance was needed that those involved would be engaged in the transition.
- It was important that arms-length providers supplied information in a timely way.

Councillor Brown responded as follows:

- The concerns regarding the workforce were understood and the process would be undertaken sensitively.
- The integrity of data during transition was important – management of customer data needed to serve residents in the best way.
- Everyone needed to buy into the change management process and be trained effectively.
- The provision of more useful information and contacts for arms-length providers to ward members would be looked at.
- The consultation results were expected to be reported to Cabinet in November.

RESOLVED: Cabinet decided that an in-house team manage the housing allocations service and deliver the Council's single housing allocations scheme for West Northamptonshire.

63. **Acquisition of Broadmead Court**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Brown presented the report. The opportunity had arisen for the council to acquire a building for 21 units of temporary accommodation. A government subsidy was available and the council had a duty to relieve homelessness. The current need was acute.

Further discussion and consideration of the recommendations was postponed to the private session which followed.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet;

- a) Approved the proposal to acquire Broadmead Court as outlined within exempt Appendix A subject to a red book valuation, satisfactory due diligence having been undertaken and approval by the S151 Officer of a fully costed business case to develop the property using either SHAP or Housing Revenue Account funding.
- b) Delegated authority to the Assistant Director of Assets and Environment in consultation with the S151 Officer, the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Culture and Leisure and the Portfolio Holder for Finance to negotiate and acquire Broadmead Court including completion of the legal requirements.
- c) Delegated authority to the Director of Communities and Opportunities to undertake a compliant procurement process and to enter into construction contracts, and any related bonds to develop Broadmead Court into self-contained flats to accommodate people with immediate housing and support needs

65. Four Waterside and Marefair - Appointment of Preferred Development Partner

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Lister presented the report seeking approval for the appointment of a development partner for the Four Waterside and Marefair development. The site had been empty for a significant length of time and there were 5 acres to be developed.

Further discussion and consideration of the recommendations was postponed to the private session which followed.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet:

- a) Subject to robust financial and other due diligence having been carried out in respect of Bidder 1 approved the selection of Bidder 1 as the preferred development partner for Four Waterside and Marefair having considered the detail set out within this report and exempt Appendix A.
- b) Noted the use of £1.5m of Towns Fund and £7m of Enterprise Zone grant funding that will be used for the delivery of this scheme.
- c) Delegated authority to the Director of Communities and Opportunities in consultation with the Executive Director for Finance, Director of Legal and Democratic and Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Town Centre Regeneration and Growth and Cabinet Member for Finance to negotiate and conclude the terms of and enter into, the Development Agreement and associated documents with the preferred bidder, in accordance with the Final Tender. This includes engaging with the preferred bidder to confirm financial commitments and other commercial terms through the finalisation of the Development Agreement and associated documents in accordance with the Final Tender and detailed Heads of Terms contained within it.
- d) Approved the recommendations set out in the Exempt Appendix A.

66. Private Session

In respect of the following items the Chair moved 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 resolved: "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".

67. Private Appendix - Item 13 Broadmead Court

This item was considered in private session.

68. Private Appendix - Item 14 - Four Waterside and Marefair

This item was considered in private session.

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The meeting closed at 8.00 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____