



**West  
Northamptonshire  
Council**

## **Cabinet**

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Council Chamber, The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester, NN12 6AD on Tuesday 14 November 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 Rosie Herring  
Councillor Keith Holland Delamere  
Councillor Ian McCord  
Councillor Bob Purser  
Councillor Wendy Randall

### **Officers:**

Anna Earnshaw, Chief Executive  
Rebecca Purnell, Assistant Chief Executive  
Martin Henry, Executive Director - Finance (Section 151 Officer)  
Catherine Whitehead, Director of Legal and Democratic (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  
Rebecca Wilshire, Director of Children's Services  
Sally Burns, Director of Public Health  
Lisa Hyde, Acting Director of Communities and Opportunities  
Paul Hanson, Head of Democratic & Elections  
Kathryn Holton, Committee Officer  
Gillian Baldock, Political Assistant to the Conservative Group  
Josh West, Political Assistant to the Labour Group

## **68. Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

69. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting on 10 October 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

70. **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair reminded the meeting that Cabinet members had already had an opportunity to review the reports before the meeting.

71. **Report of the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Integrated Care across Northamptonshire (iCAN) Scrutiny Review**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Herring addressed the Cabinet and thanked everyone for their efforts, particularly Councillor Roberts who had chaired the panel. She put forward the recommendations from the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Integrated Care across Northamptonshire (iCAN) Scrutiny Review. iCAN was a collaborative between the council and the NHS set up in 2019. The Task and Finish Group had met 4 times to review the transformation programme.

Councillors made the following comments:

- The report was welcomed.
- What was the cost to the Council of the iCAN programme?
- Merging information with the LAPs was important.
- How many people had returned to hospital after being discharged?

Councillor Golby responded as follows:

- The committee were thanked for their work.
- Cabinet would consider the recommendations and report back.
- The numbers returning to hospital after discharge was difficult to establish due to Covid issues.
- WNC had contributed £360k to the iCAN programme, with over £8m from health sources.
- The involvement of Newton Europe in delivering the programme had been positive.

The Executive Director, People advised that the iCAN programme had been delivered through the pandemic which had given challenges. However, this had enabled a more integrated response during the latter stages of Covid.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet noted the recommendations, thanked the task and finish group and resolved to consider a report setting out a response to the recommendations at a future meeting.

72. **Commissioning of the National NHS Health Check Programme for West Northamptonshire.**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Golby presented the report seeking approval of the recommended care pathway for the delivery of the NHS Health Check programme. Officers were thanked for their work.

Councillors made the following comments:

- The report was welcomed.
- How would engagement with hard-to-reach groups be carried out?
- Why had health checks not previously been carried out effectively?
- Could workplace checks be undertaken, for example, in large warehouses?

Councillor Golby responded as follows:

- Past performance had not been what it should have been, but the issue would be coming to Cabinet regularly and future performance could therefore be challenged.
- Hard-to-reach groups would be targeted, for example using workplace checks, mobile vans, promotional material in welcome spaces.

The Director of Public Health advised that the budget would be monitored by the Public Health team. Payment would be made by results so there would be tight control of the budget. Performance would be monitored using the corporate score card.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet:

- a) Adopted and agreed the recommended model of care for redesigning our service, improving access to NHS Health Checks for early detection of CVD diseases and preventing premature mortality due to CVD and its complications.
- b) Agreed to initiate the commissioning process of the recommended service delivery model for the NHS Health Check programme in West Northamptonshire for its implementation for five-years (2+2+1).

### 73. **West Northamptonshire Housing Allocation Scheme**

At the Chair's invitation, Councillor Brown presented the report and advised that the Structural Changes Order required WNC to create a Housing Allocation Scheme by 1 April 2024. A consultation had been carried out with 732 responses, a quarter of which were from social housing tenants. The responses had been broadly positive and had resulted in some changes to the bands and qualification criteria.

Councillors made the following comments:

- Officers were thanked for their excellent work.
- Choice-based lettings were a good idea.
- Penalties should be introduced for those deliberately damaging homes.
- Concern was expressed at the tight schedule between now and 1 April 2024.
- The needs and rights of existing tenants and leaseholders needed to be considered when allocating properties.
- There was no point in having a good Housing Allocations policy if there were no houses to allocate. There was one resident who had been in temporary

accommodation with 4 children for 12 months and who had to take the children to school on the other side of town.

Councillor Brown responded as follows:

- Homeless households were allocated to Band A.
- There were penalties for inappropriate behaviour within the accommodation.
- Contingency plans had been put in place with NPH in case the schedule slipped.
- The Housing Allocations team took care to offer appropriate accommodation where possible.
- The resident mentioned by a Councillor above would move from Band B to Band A under the new scheme.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet:

- a) Approved the final West Northants Housing Allocation Scheme for West Northamptonshire contained in Appendix A to this report
- b) Approved delegated authority to Portfolio Holder for any minor amendments to the Scheme prior to operational commencement on the 1 April 2024

#### 74. **Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2022-23**

At the Chair's invitation, Councillor Baker presented the Corporate Parenting Board annual report for 2022/23 which covered both West and North Northamptonshire. In April 2023 the Corporate Parenting Board separated and WNC now have their own board focussing on West Northants children.

Councillors made the following comments:

- More information was needed on the services being provided.
- More evidence-based information was needed, not just reports from social workers.
- The WN Corporate Parenting Board was welcomed as it would enable better integration of the work of NCT with WNC.
- Work with foster carers needed to be improved.
- The issue of exclusions was a challenge.
- Concern was expressed about health assessments and access of children to dentistry.

Councillor Baker responded as follows:

- Separating the Corporate Parenting Boards had been a big piece of work, with substantial challenges and opposition.
- Young people were holding several events which corporate parents were welcome to attend. Details would be provided.
- She shared the concerns expressed by Councillors – particularly regarding exclusions and excluded children were vulnerable and more likely to end up in gangs.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet:

- a) Noted the content of the Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report that gives an overview of the Corporate Parenting Board and its oversight, challenges and activities.
- b) Noted that The NCT Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-25 sets out four key priorities including updates on each area's progress.
- c) Recommended that the report was taken to the Councils' Full Council meetings for consideration.

75. **Resources and Waste Strategy for West Northamptonshire**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Larratt presented the report. The Resources and Waste Strategy had been developed by officers working with a cross-party members' working group with input from independent experts. There had been public consultation on the vision which had been used to tailor the strategy to ensure it reflected residents' priorities. The strategy provided a set of 10 principles which would be used to guide the development of the Council's waste services over the next 15 years. This would allow the council to remain compliant with any statutory guidance issued by DEFRA. The action plan would be reviewed annually and any significant changes to service delivery would be the subject of a future consultation.

Councillors made the following comments:

- It would have been helpful for this to have been brought to the Sustainability Group.
- On the council climate action scorecard, WN scored very well on waste.
- It was positive that the strategy referred to prioritising waste reduction, reuse and recycling and the circular economy. Momentum needed to be maintained.
- Repurposing and repair needed to be included in the strategy.
- A library system for borrowing items when needed rather than everyone owning their own could be considered.
- Incorporating disposal of materials such as soft plastics, blister packs and ink jet cartridges within Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) would be helpful.
- Item 5.8.9 on page 258 referred to carbon emissions. Should this be CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent? It would be helpful if this were included in a glossary for clarification.
- Transparency around disposal of waste was key.
- The focus on minimising landfill was good.
- When would services across the former districts be harmonised?

Councillor Larratt responded as follows:

- A request would be made for the Sustainability Group to look at the strategy.
- Work had begun on procuring a new HWRC contract. The working group would continue and help to inform the procurement process.
- In respect of harmonisation across West Northants, the council would need to be compliant with DEFRA who were minded to require fortnightly collections. Money would be allocated to accommodate the cost, but this was not likely to be until 2026.

The Executive Director Place made the following comments:

- The performance of West Northamptonshire was over and above many of its neighbours.
- Re-use, repurpose and repair were included in the action plan.
- Members' workshops would be repeated on a regular basis.
- Business cases for harmonisation of waste and types of fuel in vehicles would be built going forward.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet approved the Resources and Waste Strategy.

## 76. **Estate and Construction & Maintenance Climate Strategies**

The Chair presented the report setting out the Council's approach to delivering net zero in the operation of its estate and in construction and maintenance activities by 2030. This was not presented as a detailed business case but sought to provide clear direction. The focus was on reducing emissions and saving/making money. Officers were thanked, particularly the Assistant Director Assets.

Orianne Neyroud, a sixth form student representing Climate Action West Northants addressed the Cabinet and stressed the importance of communicating strategies to the public, putting them into an action plan and breaking it down into steps to achieve the results.

Councillors made the following comments:

- Orianne Neyroud was thanked for her contribution.
- The reports were welcomed and it was good that they had been brought to the Sustainability Group.
- There was no option to do nothing. If costs were not faced now, they would increase in future.
- Caution needed to be exercised around biomass and whether it was considered to be green energy.
- The report did not address how implementation of the suggested strategies would be paid for – they should either be costed or abandoned.

The Chair pointed out that this was a set of principles to outline the future direction.

The Executive Director Place noted that many of the projects were concerned with efficiency and investing to save.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet:

- a) Approved the Estate Climate Strategy, as set out at Appendix A.
- b) Approved the Construction & Maintenance Climate Strategy, as set out at Appendix B.

## 77. **Council Tax Care Leavers Discount**

At the Chair's invitation, Councillor Baker presented the report which sought approval to introduce a discretionary council tax discount for care leavers. The original scheme had been too difficult for care leavers to access, and the new scheme would

put this right. Thanks were expressed to the Assistant Director Revenues and Benefits for her work in implementing the scheme.

Councillors made the following comments:

- The report was welcomed as it simplified the process.
- Reassurance was needed that the council tax was not carried forward until care leavers were able to pay.

Councillor Baker advised that the policy was that the council tax would not be payable. It would not be carried forward.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet:

- a) Noted the contents of this report.
- b) Recommended to Council the implementation of the proposed Care Leavers discount for 2024/25 and the policy shown at Appendix A of this report.

**78. Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2024-2025**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Longley presented the report updating members on the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme and proposing no changes for next financial year.

A Councillor made the following comments:

- Maintaining the scheme at the same level was endorsed.
- Could further provision be made from the separate hardship fund?

Councillor Longley advised that the budget had not yet been set for next year.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet:

- a) Noted the contents of the report
- b) Approved the proposed LCTRS for 2024-2025 as outlined in the report
- c) Recommended to Council a no change LCTRS for 2024-2025

**79. Public Spaces Protection Order - Emporium Way**

At the Chair's invitation, Councillor Smith presented the report seeking to restrict access to Emporium Way. The walkway had attracted illicit activity and police presence had been needed. It was proposed to close the walkway for a period whilst the Market Square was being redeveloped.

Councillors made the following comments:

- Could the access be retained but closed at night? It was used as a walk through to the car park.
- The area should be looked after and not left to become overgrown. If it were made nicer, anti-social behaviour might be reduced.

Councillor Smith responded as follows:

- It was not practical to open and close the access daily. Some assaults had happened during the day.

- 58% of those responding to the consultation were in favour of closure.
- Towns Fund money had been available to improve the area, but the public had prioritised Market Way.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet:

- a) Authorised the Executive Director Place and Economy to make a PSPO to restrict public access to the walkway known as Emporium Way in accordance with the results of the consultation as detailed in Appendix 3 and to carry out any outstanding legal requirements prior to it coming into force.
- b) Approved that the PSPO is brought into force once the gates and hoardings restricting access to Emporium Way have been installed, which cannot be arranged until the decision whether to make the Order has been made.

80. **Active Travel Fund 4 - Connecting the Active Quarter - Access for All, Northampton**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Larratt presented the report which noted the Active Travel Fund Tranche 4 funding and delegated authority to implement the scheme which would provide a new traffic-free route connecting the town centre and Far Cotton to Brackmills.

Councillors made the following comments:

- The report was welcomed.
- The area was already within a traffic-free route. Ensuring safety for people on mainstream routes also needed to be tackled.
- There was a clear connection with the health and wellbeing strategy and air quality issues.
- There had been delays in bringing forward active travel work.

Councillor Larratt responded as follows:

- A transport plan was being worked up and active travel would feature in that. Progress had been slow but was getting up to strength.
- Work was being done with residents to establish what local people wanted.
- Connections between Silverstone and Brackley and Towcester were being worked on but the A43 overbridge of HS2 needed to be completed first.
- The Abington active travel scheme was a legacy one from NCC.
- Active travel schemes were planned to join up disconnected employment areas around Northampton.

Councillor Brown noted that the Delapre Abbey Preservation Trust were excited about the scheme passing through Delapre Abbey.

Councillor Golby noted that the Health and Wellbeing Strategy included active travel as part of healthy ageing.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet:

- a) Noted and accepted the ATF4 funding to deliver the Connecting the Active Quarter – Access for All scheme, Northampton



- b) Delegated authority to the Executive Director of Place, Economy and the Environment in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste to take all operational decisions necessary to implement the active travel scheme at Delapre Abbey as outlined in 1.6 above.

81. **Decision Taken Under Special Urgency Powers: Acquisition of Former Bus Depot, St James, Northampton**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Lister presented the report notifying Cabinet of the decision taken by the Leader to approve the acquisition of the former bus depot for regeneration. The decision had not been taken lightly. The site had been empty for 10 years and there were others wanting to develop the site for less suitable uses. The site would be used for housing and was a positive step forward for regeneration.

Councillors made the following comments:

- Members had been kept informed during the process, which had been appreciated.
- The report was welcomed because new housing was needed – particularly social and affordable housing.
- Architecture should be preserved where possible to maintain the history of the site.
- Problems had been caused by poor process of the previous council and lessons needed to be learned. A clawback clause should have been in place.
- Had WNC overpaid for the site?
- Would problems arise from a Homes England covenant on the site?

The Chair responded as follows:

- Social and affordable housing was desired, but a viable scheme would need to be put forward.
- Lessons had been learned regarding clawback.
- The architecture would preserve and reflect the heritage of the site where possible.
- WNC had not overpaid for the site.

The Executive Director Place advised that the Homes England covenant was not a barrier because the site would be used for housing. Timescales for delivery of the project would depend on grants/processes and planning procedures.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet noted the decisions taken by the Deputy Leader of the Council set out at Appendix A and Appendix B.

The meeting closed at 7.55 pm

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

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