

**Summary of the decisions taken at the meeting of the  
Cabinet held on Tuesday 16 January 2024**

1. Date of publication of this summary: 16 January 2024
2. Deadline for requests for call-in (detailing reasons for doing so): 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024
3. Earliest date for implementation of decisions: 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024
4. Urgent decisions taken and not subject to the call-in procedure: N/A

<b>Agenda Item and Recommendations</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<p><b>Agenda Item 6</b> <b>Report from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (if any)</b></p> <p>None</p>	<p>None</p>
<p><b>Agenda Item 7</b> <b>Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2022-23</b></p>	<p>RESOLVED: Cabinet received the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership's Annual Report 2022-23 (Appendix A) and noted the findings.</p> <p>REASONS RESOLVED: To accord with legislation or the policy of the Council; Under the statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018', the five key strategic lead agencies are accountable for safeguarding children and young people, including the Local Authority, who in turn are required to publish an annual report. (see Section 8 Background papers).</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS: None</p>
<p><b>Agenda Item 8</b> <b>The closure of Ridgway House, Towcester</b></p>	<p>RESOLVED: Cabinet;</p> <p>a) Considered the outcome of the public consultation exercise on the future options for Ridgway House.</p>

- b) Approved the commencement of a safe closure programme with immediate effect, which will support residents to move to alternative residential care accommodation within the area.
- c) Approved the commencement of formal consultation with affected staff members on their redeployment into other council services in accordance with established HR policies and processes.

**REASONS RESOLVED:**

- a) Enabled the Council to prevent Ridgway House becoming both unsustainable and unsafe to the point that there is risk to the wellbeing of the care homes residents.
- b) Ensured that residents receive the high quality of care in a setting that is suitable and meets both their needs and the needs of future residents.
- c) Ensured the Council is able to deliver best use of its available adult social care budgets in meeting its statutory duties.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:**

- No change: To make no change to the existing facilities would mean that occupancy levels would continue to decline and the service difficulty in providing safe staffing levels is only likely to increase. The condition of the buildings is likely to result in further practical challenges and it is likely that residents would need to be moved to alternate provision at either a time when there needs can longer be managed within the home or at a point of crisis.
- Safe closure programme: A programme of safe closure would involve stopping new admissions to the service and recruitment to any staff vacancies within the home. Residents' care and support needs would be reviewed and we would work with them and their families to identify alternative arrangements for their care. The closure would be managed in accordance with Managing Care Home

	<p>Closures Good Practice Guide and management Checklist approved by the CQC. For the affected staff group we would engage the council's appropriate HR policies and undertake a process of redeployment of staff into our other care settings, with redundancy only where unavoidable. As far as possible we would seek to resettle people with the redeployed staff into Council delivered homes to support continuity of care and maintain friendship groups as far as possible.</p>
<p><b>Agenda Item 9 Interim Bus Policy</b></p>	<p>RESOLVED: Cabinet;</p> <p>a) Agreed the adoption of the Interim Bus Policy, which will be updated alongside a wider set of transport policies as part of the Local Transport Plan process by early 2025.</p> <p>b) Noted changes in funding for the local bus network for 2023/24 and 2024/25.</p> <p>REASONS RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council and customers would receive the maximum benefit from the option proposed.</li> <li>• Consistency with previous decisions concerning local bus network support.</li> </ul> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTION: None</p>
<p><b>Agenda Item 10 Northamptonshire Tourism Strategy</b></p>	<p>RESOLVED: Cabinet;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approved the Northamptonshire Tourism Strategy attached at Appendix A;</li> <li>2. Supported the proposal to continue to work closely with colleagues in North Northamptonshire, wider stakeholders and private sector representatives would begin to develop a LVEP. A future report would be brought to Cabinet which would set out detailed implementation plans and financial implications related to the development of the LVEP.</li> <li>3. Delegated authority to the Director of Communities &amp; Opportunities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Town</li> </ol>

Centre Regeneration and Growth would undertake any activity to develop the plans for LVEP development, ahead of these being brought back to the Cabinet for approval.

**REASONS RESOLVED:**

1. To support the visitor economy enabling economic benefits for the entire County, resulting in increased Gross Value Added (GVA), pride in place, inward investment and jobs.
2. To strategically grow the tourism offer, working collaboratively with North Northamptonshire Council, businesses, education providers and other relevant stakeholders in order to further deliver beneficial economic growth as a result of increased visitors and spend.
3. To explore the County-wide benefits of having an accredited LVEP, which would include expert support to drive the visitor economy and the potential of future funding only available to LVEPs

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:**

The alternative option would be to not have a Northamptonshire Tourism Strategy. However, this would not be a recommended approach as both councils wouldn't have a clear direction or plan to address the challenges faced by the declining visitor economy in Northamptonshire. Without a dedicated strategy, the county might miss out on valuable opportunities to attract more visitors, generate increased spending, and create jobs which can be realised by delivering county-wide initiatives.

**Agenda Item 11  
Commissioning a unified digital network  
for WNC**

**RESOLVED:** Cabinet;  
Delegated to the Assistant Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Information Officer and the Executive Director of Finance authority to award a contract for the provision to the Council of replacement network equipment and services, in compliance with the Council's procurement processes and procurement legislative requirements.

#### REASONS RESOLVED:

1. Ensured the Council has secure network hardware that receives manufacturer support.
2. Erased service differences across former council sites and equipment.
3. Reduced the complexity and effort (and thus money and risk) in running network services.
4. Made cost efficiencies where possible.
5. Allowed for other dependent systems and tools to be unified, speeding up service delivery.
6. Meet our continued contractual obligations to NNC via the IAA

#### ALTERNATIVE OPTION:

- **Option 1 – Do Nothing.**
  1. It is possible to continue running the existing network equipment and opt not to replace it, negating any planned short-term costs.
  2. This carries significant risks that may materialise at short notice and require significant investment to address, including but not limited to: loss of manufacturer support and problem resolution; inability to replace broken equipment; escalating maintenance overheads; failure to meet required security and compliance standards; incompatibility of new systems and tools.
  3. Whilst this remains an option for considerations of cost, the risks are not considered acceptable from a professional IT perspective.
  4. We would not have a compliantly procured network should replacements not be sourced before the existing EastNet arrangement ends in September 2025.
- **Option 2 – Partial Implementation.**
  1. Commence a partial upgrade of the network, targeting specific areas of weakness.
  2. A targeted partial upgrade would reduce the upfront costs of the work but fail to fully remedy any of the risks or issues; it would be akin to

	<p>“patching up” a system in need of replacement.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. The overall costs of reaching a complete replacement would likely increase substantially owing to the complexity of doing the work in phases.</li> <li>4. Until such time as a full implementation could be completed, most of the risks and issues would remain.</li> <li>5. While this remains an option to help spread the cost of the replacement, it does not represent a good overall value-for-money proposition for the Council, and perpetuates risks considered not acceptable from a professional IT perspective.</li> <li>6. We would not have a compliantly procured network should replacements not be sourced before the existing EastNet arrangement ends in September 2025.</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Option 3 – Full Implementation.</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Commence a holistic, co-ordinated upgrade of the network ensuring that all devices are fully supported and the given issues in section 6 are resolved.</li> <li>2. This options fully addresses the given risks and issues and is recommended as such from a professional IT perspective.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Agenda Item 12</b>  <b>Admissions arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled West Northamptonshire schools for 2025 intakes and co-ordinated schemes for 2025 intakes</b></p>	<p>RESOLVED: Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Approved the admission arrangements as detailed in Appendix A</li> <li>b) Approved the primary co-ordinated scheme as detailed in Appendix B</li> <li>c) Approved the secondary co-ordinated scheme as detailed in Appendix C</li> </ol> <p>REASONS RESOLVED: That The above are all statutory requirements</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS: None</p>
<p><b>Agenda Item 13</b>  <b>Disposal of former Collingtree</b></p>	<p>RESOLVED:  That Cabinet authorised the Assistant</p>

**Smallholding,  
Collingtree**

**Watering**

**Lane,**

Director Assets & Environment in consultation with the Executive Director Finance and Portfolio Holder for Finance to agree terms for the disposal of the former Collingtree Smallholding, Watering Lane, Collingtree and enter any documentation required to implement or in connection with this disposal, in accordance with paragraph 6.18 with any minor variations found to be necessary or expedient.

**REASONS RESOLVED:**

1. The land is not required in its current state by the Council to meet operational needs.
2. The site was being held with future residential development in mind.
3. The development will see a site identified within the Northampton Local Plan Part 2 brought forward for development within the identified plan period to support housing supply.
4. To comply with the obligations on the Council to obtain the best consideration reasonably obtainable in a freehold land disposal.
5. Disposal by means of a public works concession contract would allow the Council to secure assets which are valuable in delivery its statutory duties and policy goals, whilst delivering efficiencies.
6. To generate capital receipts and/or provide the Council with assets that

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:**

1. Option 1 - PLC housebuilder sale, 265 units
  - Known quantity.
  - Likely relatively quick delivery
  - Compared to other options.
2. Option 2 - SME-led with self-build
  - Develops house-builder market capacity.
  - Potentially quicker delivery.
  - Potentially more stable delivery across economic cycle.
  - More diverse character.
  - Assistance with self-build statutory duty.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Option 3 - PLC-led with SME and self-build <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Largely known quantity.</li> <li>• Similar benefits to 2, at smaller scale.</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Option 4 - PLC / SME / self-build and PRS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similar to 3 with provision of some dedicated PRS units (other events scaled down).</li> </ul> </li> <li>5. Option 5 - PLC / SME / self-build / PRS mix &amp; private sector care home <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similar to 4 with addition of care home (other elements scaled down).</li> </ul> </li> <li>5.B Option 5.B – As Option 5 + 20% increase in density <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As 5 but with additional housing delivery.</li> </ul> </li> <li>6. Option 6 - PLC / SME / self-build / PRS mix &amp; net zero carbon homes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As 4 but with lower carbon outcomes.</li> </ul> </li> <li>7. Option 7 - Self-build only <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potentially more stable delivery across economic cycle.</li> <li>• More diverse character.</li> <li>• Assistance with self-build statutory duty</li> </ul> </li> <li>8. Option 8 - PLC only including flats and extended through buffer zone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As 1 with increased numbers.</li> <li>• May be challenging to deliver due to lack of buffer zone.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<p><b>Agenda Item 14</b>  <b>Office Optimisation Phase 2 Costs</b></p>	<p>RESOLVED: Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approved the proposals for delivering Phases 2A (Towcester) and 2B (Northampton) of the Office Optimisation programme.</li> <li>2. Noted the £5 million (m) budget for the building works and £0.616m budget for IT equipment and works for Phase 2 of the Office Optimisation programme proposed in the draft budget.</li> </ol>



3. Authorised the Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children, Families & Education to consider the outcomes of consultation on relocation of Towcester Children's Centre and if justified to approve the relocation of the Children's Centre to the Forum.
4. Authorised the Assistant Director Assets & Environment in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance to:
  - a) Granted a lease of part of the Forum, Towcester to Towcester Town Council in its capacity as trustee of the Towcester Community Centre Trust (charity number 304254) as set out in 5.8. This lease would be at no rent but would be in exchange for the surrender of the lease held by the Trust over the current Towcester Community Centre.
  - b) Granted a lease of the 1992 Guildhall extension (except the parts of it retained with the historic Guildhall) and allied rights and agreements to a developer or occupier following a competitive disposal process.
  - c) Granted a lease of space at County Hall and an allied license to use the Council Chamber and other relevant spaces to Northampton Town Council.

**RESONS RESOLVED:**

1. To deliver efficient, effective, and economical services for the people and businesses of West Northamptonshire.
2. To enable the Council to reduce revenue expenditure and maximise opportunities to generate revenue and/or capital income without adversely affecting services.
3. To make best use of the assets the Council would retain direct use of.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:**

There are a very large number of possible options and sub-options, meaning it would not be productive to list them all here. Given the work undertaken to date it is

	<p>suggested that the key choice is whether to proceed with the schemes at all, and if so whether to proceed in Northampton on the basis that Angel is the main office base, with use made of space at County Hall and the historic Guildhall as described above.</p>
<p><b>Agenda Item 15</b>  <b>Procurement of bus shelter advertising franchise contract</b></p>	<p>RESOLVED: Cabinet;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Authorised procurement of a new bus shelter advertising contract.</li> <li>2. Endorsed the proposal that WNC funds the provision of new shelters, subject to the Director of Finance approving the use of capital once the actual costs are known.</li> </ol> <p>REASONS RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provided one consistent approach to providing and maintaining bus shelters.</li> <li>2. To maximise the potential for advertising revenue whilst respecting the Council's advertising policy, which seeks to balance commercial and policy (particularly public health) objectives.</li> <li>3. To comply with public procurement law.</li> <li>4. To enable the Council to add or remove bus shelters when it considers it needs to do so.</li> </ol> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Option 1: Take no action. This would involve leaving shelters under their current arrangements, including the expired AdShel contract (or alternatively definitively ending that contract and leaving any remaining shelters for WNC to maintain).</li> <li>2. Option 2: WNC providing shelters itself, and separately selling advertising space. To be attractive, this would require WNC to be as efficient in delivering and maintaining shelters as the operators are, and as effective at selling advertising as the operators. This appears unlikely.</li> <li>3. Option 3: Procuring an advertising concession contract as set out above. This appears capable of delivering the</li> </ol>

	<p>service with the greatest efficiency. There are two sub-options which need consideration:</p> <p>Option 3A: WNC does not fund shelter provision except where it instructs new shelters not proposed by the operator. This would require operators to fund all capital costs, reducing revenue benefits. It would also leave unresolved the issue of managing the risk of the need for mass replacement of AdShel shelters.</p> <p>Option 3B: WNC funds all new shelter provision (including the mass replacement of AdShel shelters if required). This should maximise revenue benefits, and also provides a simple mechanism to address the risk of needing to replace the AdShel shelters.</p> <p>4. Option 4: Procuring several contracts. There is no obvious benefit of operating more than one contract. Such an approach would be likely to reduce operator interest and lose economies of scale.</p>
<p><b>Agenda Item 16</b> <b>New Public Mortuary</b></p>	<p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Noted the proposed budget of £9.4 million (m) for construction of a new public mortuary.</li> <li>2. Authorised procurement of works for the new public mortuary.</li> <li>3. Approved the Business Plan at Appendix A.</li> <li>4. Approved a one-off revenue budget of £0.125m to cover service transition costs.</li> <li>5. Authorised the Director Legal &amp; Democratic in consultation with the Assistant Director Assets &amp; Environment and the Executive Director Finance to enter into long-term contracts with public bodies for the Council to provide mortuary services and to certify them under Section 2 of the Local Government (Contracts) Act 1997.</li> <li>6. Authorises the Assistant Director Assets &amp; Environment in consultation</li> </ol>

with the Director Legal & Democratic and Executive Director Finance to enter into leases or licenses to occupy property and any related agreements in connection with agreements under 5

#### REASONS RESOLVED:

1. The Council, as the responsible authority for the Northamptonshire Coroner's Area, needs to ensure there is sufficient, secure and suitable provision for the storage of bodies and the conduct of post mortems.
2. To improve the experience for those who are bereaved and who currently have limited access to or poor facilities for viewing their loved ones.
3. Investment in a new public mortuary would remove the need for investment in The Leys temporary mortuary.
4. To achieve net savings for the Council and support wider good use of public resources.
5. To enable, if agreement is reached, efficient entry into contracts for the provision of mortuary services with local NHS providers and/or other public bodies requiring these services, thereby maximising value for money and minimising risk.

#### ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

1. Option A: No further action. This would leave the current situation to continue, with services at risk and no opportunity for savings.
2. Option B: WNC proceeds to deliver the new mortuary. This would involve the typical risks in a construction project and also those risks around demand for use of the spare capacity, but would resolve the existing service delivery risks and create opportunities for savings.
3. Option C: WNC promoted a mortuary in arrangement with the private sector. There are a range of forms of this, from something akin to a PFI contract to a

	<p>'block booking' by WNC anchoring a new private sector facility. All versions would involve significant additional complexity and restrict future flexibility, as well as being likely to result in higher costs.</p>
<p><b>Agenda Item 18</b> <b>Strategic Acquisition</b></p>	<p>RESOLVED: The recommendation that was set out in the report was agreed by Cabine</p>