



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Cabinet

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Council Chamber, The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester, NN12 6AD on Tuesday 16 April 2024 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 Bob Purser
Councillor Andre Gonzalez De Savage
Councillor Andrew Grant
Councillor Jonathan Harris
Councillor Keith Holland-Delamere
Councillor Rosie Humphreys
Councillor Peter Matten
Councillor Ken Pritchard
Councillor Emma Roberts
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)
Paul Hanson, Head of Democratic & Elections
Sofia Neal-Gonzalez, Democratic Services Officer
Jane Carr, Director of Communities & Opportunities
Stuart Lackenby, Executive Director - People Services & Deputy Chief Executive
Sarah Reed, Executive Director - Corporate Services
Stuart Timmiss, Executive Director - Place, Economy and Environment
Gillian Baldock, Political Assistant to the Conservative Group
Josh West, Political Assistant to the Labour Group

141. **Apologies**

None received

142. **Declarations of Interest**

None

143. **Minutes**

The minutes from the Cabinet meeting of 12th March 2024 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

144. **Chair's Announcements**

None

145. **Urgent Business**

None

146. **Carer Strategy**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Matt Golby and The Director of Public Health presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. Members were reminded that carers could be of any age. The strategy itself had been written with the help of carers known as experts by experience.

Councillors made the following comments.

- It was noted that nationally the value of unpaid workers was £162 billion.
- Most carers when asked simply needed to be supported.
- The co-production aspect of the report was praised.
- More information about how the strategy would be implemented was requested, a delivery plan was needed.
- How would young carers be identified, could schools and parish councils help with this?
- The price of respite places has increased.

Councillor Matt Golby agreed that a delivery plan was needed and advised that the strategy would be presented to Scrutiny for consideration.

The Executive Director of Adults, Communities and Wellbeing advised that the need to identify young carers had been discussed and officers were aware.

RESOLVED: Cabinet approved the 30-day carer strategy consultation.

147. **Proposed Drainage Byelaws for Flood Risk Management**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Phil Larratt presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. He advised Cabinet that flooding was a serious issue and it was important for the council to do everything it could to help residents recover from it. WNC is the land drainage and flood authority, which means it can create byelaws. Members were advised that Full Council would decide whether to apply the byelaws.

Councillors made the following comments.

- Would the new byelaws be enforced properly?
- It was important to keep the biodiversity of areas in mind when looking for flooding solutions.
- Failure to maintain the waterways has an adverse effect on those living further down the valley.
- If the public are expected to report issues, would there be signage in place to provide them with the relevant information.
- How would the byelaws deal with drainage infrastructure?
- When would the new Flood Team be fully functioning?

Councillor Phil Larratt made the following comments.

- The byelaws would be enforced.
- There had been difficulty recruiting to the Flood Team due to the specialist skills required, there were currently two outstanding positions

RESOLVED: Cabinet approved the principle of making the land drainage byelaws as set out in Appendix A.

148. **Consultation draft Parks Development Strategy**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Phil Larratt presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. It was noted that the parks within WNC were great assets, but many had limited provision. There were various outdoor learning opportunities within the parks which were a credit.

Sally Keeble made the following comments.

- Swan Haven was a great example of an urban park that tackled disadvantage and provides access for pushchairs, bikes, and wheelchairs.
- The park also dealt with the effects of climate change with a surface water drainage system, which had only been referenced twice in the report.
- Although an urban park, the lakes and stream had always been there.
- Reed beds had been installed but not managed properly, it would take capital to correct this.
- The delivery dates for proposed works needed to be brought forward as areas had already deteriorated badly.

Councillors made the following comments.

- Were parish councils aware of the proposed consultation?
- New signage would be a positive change.
- There was a need for adult play/exercise equipment.
- Local interest groups should be involved.
- Northants boasts a rich cultural heritage, it was important to capitalise on that.
- The timescales were a concern, some issues need tackling as soon as possible.
- It was suggested the strategy had no sense of community inclusion.
- It was noted that there had been no alignments made to other areas, such as Public Health.
- The University of Northampton had spoken to 60 individuals about the benefits of parks and outdoor spaces, this had not been mentioned in the report.

Councillor Matt Golby agreed that green open spaces were important for a person's health.

Councillor Adam Brown noted that the toilet block facilities in Abington Park had been approved. The lack of progression needed to be looked at.

Councillor Phil Larratt made the following comments.

- The goal would be for all parks to be green flag parks.
- All ideas would feed into the consultation, and if needed timescales could be looked at.
- Councillors were advised that the document was a first draft and that Parish councils would be informed.

RESOLVED: Cabinet approved the draft Parks Development Strategy for public consultation.

149. **Director of Public Health Report 2023**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Matt Golby and the Director of Public Health presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated.

The Director of Public Health advised that the report was an independent and produced every year. The report cuts across all portfolios and the case studies included were very informative. The route map found within the report was mentioned, this flagged differences between life expectancy and healthy life expectancy within difference areas of Northants. More work was needed to be done in order to better understand the inequalities.

Councillor Matt Golby noted the amount of good work that was going on within Public Health.

Councillors made the following comments.

- The Health Inequalities and figures found in the report were a concern. With stark differences between affluent and less affluent areas.

- There had been an increase in the number of fatalities and serious injuries occurring on the county's roads.
- How was the Council encouraging residents to move more? It was questioned whether more cycle paths could help with this?
- The work of LAPS needed to be better understood.
- Did the council have any information regarding the quality of life for young people. The percentage of children living in low-income homes had increased by 42%.
- Members were advised that for the first time, according to the CEO of the Citizens Advice Bureau, 60- to 80-year-olds were voicing concern about the lack of food or money.

The Director of Public Health agreed that the difference in life expectancy was shocking, and that the council needed to look at how it could help, it was however not a quick fix. The cost-of-living situation had increased the struggle of some families and the Council was trying to target those families.

Councillor Matt Golby advised Public Health were aware of what the issues were and had been working through them.

Councillor Adam Brown paid tribute to the Director of Public Health and her team for all the work undertaken.

RESOLVED: Cabinet;

- 1. Noted the contents of the report and recommendations made.**
- 2. And the Board noted the progress made with regard to the recommendations in the previous annual report.**

The meeting closed at 7.40 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____