



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Cabinet

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Council Chamber, The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester, NN12 6AD on Tuesday 7 May 2024 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

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 Rosie Herring
Councillor Koulla Jolley
Councillor Bob Purser
Councillor Wendy Randall
Councillor Emma Roberts

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
Jane Carr, Director of Communities & Opportunities
Stuart Lackenby, Executive Director - People Services & Deputy Chief Executive
Stuart Timmiss, Executive Director - Place, Economy and Environment
Rebecca Wilshire, Director of Children's Services
Gillian Baldock, Political Assistant to the Conservative Group
Nick Henstock, Assistant Director - Highways
Josh West, Political Assistant to the Labour Group
Sally Burns, Director of Public Health

150. **Apologies**

None Received

151. **Declarations of Interest**

None

152. **Minutes**

The minutes from the Cabinet meeting of 16th April 2024 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

153. **Urgent Business**

None

154. **Chair's Announcements**

Councillor Herring would be joining Cabinet as the portfolio holder for housing.

155. **Response to Scrutiny Review of E-Scooters**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Phil Larratt presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. Members were advised that VOI were conducting reviews on parking, tandem riding and their complaints procedures. There would be option to terminate the contract at any time should the Council not be happy with the service.

Councillors made the following comments.

- It was suggested that issues reported to the Scrutiny chair had not been taken on board.
- The Council had been hindered by lack of Government direction.
- VOI had not given timeframes as to when they would deal with the issues raised.
- Cabinet were urged to bring forward the review.
- More monitoring was needed.
- Frequent reports on this programme were requested.

Councillor Phil Larratt advised that all recommendations had been taken on board, with regular all-member quarterly forums set up in order to discuss issues. The public concerns had been taken into account however, the scooters were important for the Council's green footprint and were also a form of low-cost travel.

The Chair noted that there were a large number of privately owned scooters.

RESOLVED: Cabinet:

- a) Endorsed the continuation of the E-Scooter trial

- b) Noted the further detail regarding the proposals made in the Place Overview and Scrutiny committee report presented at Cabinet in March 2024.
- c) Noted the update on the progress made in relation to these proposals.

156. **Northampton Town Centre Environmental Policy**

At the Chair's invitation Councillors David Smith and Phil Larratt presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. There had been wide consultation with stakeholders on the policy. The council was investing money in the town centre, so it was also important to improve its environment.

A councillor noted that it was important to have good communication with businesses. It was queried when the policy would be rolled out to include the Wellingborough Road area?

RESOLVED: Cabinet:

- a) Approved the new Policy for adoption by West Northamptonshire Council
- b) Endorsed the proposed communications campaign to promote the introduction of the policy
- c) Agreed delegated authority to Executive Director of Place, Economy, and Environment, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Engagement and Regulatory Services to:
 - i. make amendments to the policy as required, and
 - ii. extend the area(s) covered by the policy where this would be beneficial.

157. **Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-27: Delivery Plan, Year 1**

The Chair presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. Members were advised that after one year there would be a full review of the KPIs. The delivery plan fitted in with the Council's statutory obligations.

Councillors made the following comments.

- It was important to get the plan right as it concerned the most vulnerable residents.
- Would the council be able to deliver the 30 action points in a year?
- It was noted that rents had increased in the private sector.
- Could there be named officers listed on the plan.
- Central Government had not dealt with Section 21, which was a hindrance to councils.

The Chair noted that there would be named officers but they would not be listed in the public domain.

RESOLVED: Cabinet approved the West Northamptonshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2024-2027): Delivery Plan, Year 1.

158. **Commissioning of the Integrated Sexual and Reproductive Health services for West Northamptonshire**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Matt Golby presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. Members were advised there would be co-production with other public and voluntary partners.

The Chair noted that many of the reports presented during the meeting were about giving people the best start in life

A councillor advised that reassurance was needed with regards the Council's ability to meet targets

RESOLVED: Cabinet:

1. Approved the commissioning of integrated Sexual and Reproductive Health Services for West Northamptonshire.
2. Delegated authority to the Director of Public Health to initiate the commissioning process in consultation with the portfolio holder.

159. **Options for Contracting Arrangements and Service Delivery model for 0-19 Health Visiting and School Nursing Services**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Matt Golby presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. Members were advised that the proposed integrated unit would be staffed by both clinical staff and WNC colleagues. This contract promoted integrated working, but required further development and staff consultation.

Councillors made the following comments.

- Would there be a two-tier system with different terms and conditions for staff?
- Would trade unions be involved in the consultation?
- How would the Council ensure the continuity of staff? It was felt this could be important for the mental health of young people.
- What would WNC put in place to engage with non-engaging families?
- Could an anti-poverty subheading be added to all Cabinet reports?

Councillor Matt Golby advised that he viewed this new contract as a way to re-set the department and that it did align with the early intervention and help strategy.

The Director of Public Health advised that the new model would help to focus and target families that needed the most help.

Councillor Fiona Baker noted that the Education team had been at every briefing.

The Executive Director of Executive Director Adults, Communities and Wellbeing advised that multi-agency teams would allow WNC to deliver better outcomes.

The Chair agreed to looking into the addition of an anti-poverty subheading on Cabinet reports.

RESOLVED: Cabinet:

1. Supported Option 2.2 as the new contractual model to commission the 0-19 service from 1st April 2025.
2. Delegated authority to the Director of Public Health (DPH) to commissioning in consultation with the Adult Social Care and Public Health portfolio holder , and Children's Portfolio holder on this commissioning, procurement, and mobilisation of the new service from April 2025.

160. **Household Support Fund (HSF) 5 Proposal: Distribution of Funds and Recipients for HSF5**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Matt Golby presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. Members were reminded that the HSF was not permanent but that discussions were ongoing regarding long-term support after the funding has ended.

Councillors made the following comments.

- Thousands of families would be affected once the funding stops.
- There was currently no plan in place with how to help families when the funding is no longer there.

Councillor Matt Golby advised that there had been discussion with anti-poverty groups, and that WNC would continue to lobby for further funding.

RESOLVED: Cabinet;

- a) Noted that the Household Support Fund (5) investment is to be managed locally.
- b) Approved the provisional scope and Diversity of Distribution as set out in section 4 of this report.
- c) Approved the control and oversight approach to be undertaken through the existing WNC Public Health team.
- d) Authorised any funds that have not been assigned or committed to by 30th September 2024 according to the distribution methodology set out in section 4, to be redistributed in line with the wider Department for Work and Pensions Guidelines.

161. **Proposed Changes to the Home to School Transport Policy**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Phil Larratt presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. Members were advised that the changes should be

implemented from September this year. There had been a £2.8 million overspend on school transport with the current policy not having been reviewed for 10 years. The personal transport budget was discussed, it was noted that many parents/carers were not aware of it. It was confirmed that transport would be provided by WNC under exceptional circumstances. Support would be offered for young adults aged 16-19 who undertake apprenticeships, this would however not cover transport to the workplace.

Simon Frazer, Principle of Guilsborough Academy made the following comments:

- The need for a review was recognised.
- WNC does not have a statutory requirement to provide transportation, however, the students have a statutory requirement to attend the school.
- The community is a rural one, with only a small number of children living locally.
- The change would see a 66% increase in costs for families.
- There could be an increase in the volume of traffic which in turn would affect emission levels in the county.
- Families should not have to pay for the Council's inactivity.
- There could be a phased increase. This would allow families to budget, or a monthly payment plan.

Members of West Northants Voices in Partnership/WNVP made the following comments.

- It was suggested that the proposed increase stemmed from a Council oversight.
- SEND children have less choice in schools and modes of transportation they can use.
- WNC was urged to reconsider the increase and look for a fairer solution.

Councillors made the following comments.

- This decision could have the potential of make families poorer.
- If parents can't pay for transport, this could mean that children don't attend school.
- Extending to include 16–19-year-olds in apprenticeships was a positive, however these students also have to go to a work setting as part of their learning.
- Phasing in opportunities need to be looked at.

Councillor Phil Larratt advised that idea of phasing was not an option as the policy needed to be addressed now. WNC would try to accommodate those families that need help. It was acknowledged that allowing students to access and study the courses they wanted was very important. Cycling access was being investigated and WNC was hoping to secure Government funding. Members were advised that the situation would be kept under review.

The Chair noted that at times uncomfortable decisions needed to be made and that the council was aware of the effect this would have on families and would attempt to mitigate these as much as possible

RESOLVED: That Cabinet;

- a) Approved the Revised Post-16 Transport Policy attached in Appendix B incorporating the changes outlined in this report and for this to be implemented and apply from the academic year starting in September 2024.
- b) Provided delegated authority to make any changes to the policy which are necessary to ensure it remains compliant with

162. **Procurement of a Contract for the Operation and Maintenance of Gayton Closed Landfill - Leachate Treatment Plant**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Phil Larratt presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. Cabinet was asked to approve the recommendations.

RESOLVED: Cabinet:

- a) Approved the commencement of procurement for a new contract for the Operation and Maintenance of Gayton Closed Landfill – Leachate Treatment Plant (LTP).
- b) Agreed to delegate authority to the Executive Director for Place, Economy and Environment in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste Services to:
 - i. Finalise the specification for the contract; and
 - ii. Take decisions related to the procurement processes, to enable them to progress as planned; and
 - iii. Award the contract, provided the procurement reaches a satisfactory conclusion.

163. **Procurement and Implementation of WNC Education Services Case Management System**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Fiona Baker presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. The current system had been provided by NCC the new system would extend the contract for WNC. Approval was from Cabinet was requested.

RESOLVED: Cabinet;

- a) Agreed to proceed with the procurement of a Case Management System for Education Services in WNC, at an estimated contract cost, including licences, hosting, and annual fees, of up to £300k per annum for up to seven years (totalling £2.1m).
- b) Agreed to an additional estimated one-off funding of £950k to implement the Case Management System for Education Services, over a period of two years.
- c) Delegated authority to the Executive Director of People Services, in liaison with the Executive Director of Finance and the Cabinet Member for Children, Families, Education and Skills, to take forward these recommendations to procure and

implement the Case Management System and to utilise the most appropriate funding source for the implementation costs.

164. **Northampton Markets Development Plan**

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

Councillors made the following comments.

- The cross-party group set up in 2021 had had no communication about this issue.
- Market stall holders already pay for their pitch, they should not have to provide business plans.
- It was questioned why there had been no communication with the market traders for some time.
- It was asked whether WNC was doing the upmost to ensure that the market traders return to the market square.

Councillor Daniel Lister advised that there had been regular communication with the market traders

RESOLVED: Cabinet;

1. Approved the Northampton Markets Development Plan attached at Appendix A.
2. Granted ongoing approval for procurement of specialist and event market operators.
3. Resolved to acknowledge that without prejudice to the Council's existing market rights, howsoever acquired (including by charter, letters patent, or otherwise) the Council continues to operate its Northampton markets under the Food Act 1984 as applied by the Northampton Act 1988.

165. **Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Transformation Programme**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Fiona Baker presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. There had been unprecedented pressure on SEND teams with no reduction in the support required. New specialist school spaces were being created, the proposals within the report should provide a kick start to the transformational programme. The strengthening of early interventions could help reduce future crisis work and would invest in the future of the department.

Councillors made the following comments.

- A long-term strategy for future investment was needed.
- Early intervention was important.
- The SEND task and finish group should be involved going forward.

- There had been a lack of socialisation for some children due to the COVID epidemic.

The Executive Director Adults, Communities and Wellbeing advised that the intent of the programme was to work with children sooner. It was important for WNC to understand the needs of local children

REASONS: Cabinet approved the implementation of the SEND and AP Transformation Programme as described in the report including the delegation for the usage of £1.35m of Exceptional Financial Support to Executive Director People, in consultation with the Cabinet member for Children to fund the interventions described in section 6 of the report.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____