

West Northamptonshire Council

Cabinet Minutes

14 September 2021

Cabinet Members Present:

Jonathan Nunn (Chair)	Fiona Baker
Lizzy Bowen	Rebecca Breese
Adam Brown	Matt Golby
Mike Hallam	Phil Larratt
Malcolm Longley	David Smith

Other West Northamptonshire Council Members Present:

Jamal Alhawabi	William Barter
Pinder Chauhan	Julie Davenport
Janice Duffy	Greg Lunn
Ian McCord	Dennis Meredith
Ken Pritchard	Bob Purser
Emma Roberts	Jake Roberts
Lisa Samiotis	Sue Sharps
John Shephard	Danielle Stone
Mike Warren	

West Northamptonshire Council Officers Present:

Ed Bostock	Democracy Officer
Simon Bowers	Assistant Director - Assets
Paul Hanson	Democratic Services Manager
Martin Henry	Chief Finance Officer
Sofia Neal-Gonzalez	Democracy Officer (minutes)
Rebecca Peck	Assistant Chief Executive
Sarah Reed	Executive Director of Corporate
Stuart Timmiss	Executive Director of Place & Economy
Catherine Whitehead	Monitoring Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE:

No apologies.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 13 - Councillor Adam Brown advised the committee and the MO that he had a business relationship with a food operator that was mentioned in the report.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN PUBLIC ON 13th July 2021

Amendments made for Item 14;

- Martin Mason, Managing Director of Trickers and the Chairman of Northampton Forward Board had not been given his title in the minutes.
- The project was to be scrutinised by a quantity surveyor not a quality surveyor.
- The s was removed from the end of meetings.

RESOLVED: That the minutes from the Cabinet meeting of the 8th June were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were public speakers on some items.

Item 05 Urgent Business

None

The Chairman invited Parish Councillor Yvonne Swallows to speak on item 16. Cllr Swallows made the following points:

- The committee was informed that Moulton parish council would be against the building of a new school on this site.
- There would be a substantial increase in traffic in the area, especially as the road chosen is a dead end. The A43 could also have an increase in the amount of traffic making roundabout access difficult, which would also make it more dangerous.
- The 'good transport and safe walking routes' idea would not work for this site.
- The school site chosen is next to woodland that could also be impacted.
- As an academy school with its own policies in place, the question as to whether the school could pick and choose who to admit was raised.
- The question of whether the council had looked into other sites was asked.
- The committee was reminded that Moulton already had a secondary school.

The Chair then invited Oliver Harris to speak on Item 16 on behalf of NSB as the Project Manager for the Trust. Mr Harris made the following comments.

- The committee was informed that Northampton Schools for Boy's is now a multi academy site.
- Proposals for other sites had been submitted, but it was noted that wherever the school is placed there would be an effect on the residents of that area.
- The need for transport adjustments was discussed as important.

- The committee was informed that NSB would attempt to mitigate impacts as far as possible.
- NSB has a good academic record, and it was felt that there would be no reason for the new school to not be the same.
- It was agreed that the support from the people of Moulton would be important.

The Chairman invited Andy Millechip to speak on item 11. Mr Millechip made the following comments;

- He questioned whether there was a need for further urban expansion into the open countryside.
- He noted the consultation paper provided had 8 options and questioned whether this meant further options were not looked at?
- One of the options presented had already had its planning application rejected, should these areas not now be put to one side?
- The map included within the report showed one of the areas earmarked had taken over Fox Hill country park.

Item 16 New secondary free school for northern Northampton

At the Chairman's invitation Councillor Baker presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. Councillor Baker made the following comments;

- A good case had been put forward and a good school had been chosen to lead this project.
- There had been several queries which were sent back to planning for responses.
- The committee and public were reminded that it was the job of the Council and of Councillor Baker to provide a secondary school.
- The Department of Education had completed a consultation with regards to the site.
- It was advised that as of September 2022 many extra spaces would be needed to accommodate students.

Councillor Larratt made the following comments.

- Meetings had taken place with local members, during which traffic implications had been discussed.
- It was agreed that it was important to keep traffic flowing in the area and try to avoid congestion.
- It was noted that access to the site would need to be looked at.

- There were concerns about young people crossing the A43 in order to get into the school grounds, as such the correct crossing facilities would have to be implemented.

Stuart Timmiss noted that the site analysis had been one step in the programme, with the lease subject to planning and that all of the issues raised by members would be discussed.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet; authorised the Assistant Director Assets and Environment to enter into an Agreement for Lease which would commit the Council to granting a 125-year lease for the construction, and ongoing use, of the site for new secondary school at Wantage Farm, Moulton, Northampton, as set out in the report.

Item 06 – Quarter 1 Revenue Monitoring Report for the Financial Year 2021-22

At the Chairman's invitation Councillor Malcolm Longley presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated.

Councillor Bowen noted that the language used in the report made it look as if the savings made had been from cuts and not from productivity improvement. It was felt that it was important to note that NCC's recovery had been based on productivity.

Councillors made the following comments.

- The question of whether there were plans in place to deal with any gaps identified in the report was raised.
- An update on the suspense account was requested as it would give an indication as to the efficiency of the Council.
- It was queried as to why contingency had been placed against the highways overspend and not adult social services.
- With regards to vacancies within the finance team, how would this be dealt with in regards to overspend.
- A councillor queried why Covid funds that had been ring-fenced were being used.
- There had been little detail given with regards the overspend in Adult Social Care and the current care sector crisis.

Councillor Matt Golby made the following comments.

- The overspend that was shown in the report was that of the financial position this year.
- Assistance was being given to the care sector, updated figures could be provided if desired.
- The Adults directorate has the largest budget with regular updates provided.

- The committee and those present were reminded the Council was still dealing with an unprecedented situation.

Councillor Malcolm Longley made the following comments.

- Ring-fenced funds would only be used for the started purposes.
- So far £2.8 had been distributed amongst small business to aid in their recovery.

Martin Henry made the following comments.

- The committee was informed that there were various different funds related to Covid, and the report referenced many of these.
- There had been a £12.5-million-pound budget which was dedicated to Covid.
- Any grant funding that had not been allocated had been carried forward and earmarked with the intention to use it for covid issues, but many of those funds were not ring-fenced.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet;

- a. Noted the final outturn 2020-21 for all legacy Councils within West Northamptonshire in Appendix A;**
- b. Noted the estimated reserves and balances brought forward from each legacy Council within West Northamptonshire in section 5;**
- c. Noted the early review of 2021-22 financial progress and associated financial risks by Directorate;**
- d. Noted the deliverability assessment of West Northamptonshire Council savings requirement for 2021-22 and 2022-23 in Appendix D.**
- e. Agreed to the virement that transfers £2.0m from the central contingency budget to the Place directorate budgets that require this funding**

Item 07 – Q1 Capital Monitoring Report 2021-22

At the Chairman's invitation Councillor Malcolm Longley presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. Councillor Longley noted that the first quarter had been a difficult one as the predecessor authorities were coming together and this would take some time to sort out. There had been 122 projects bought over to WNC from the predecessor authorities. Councillors were invited to email Councillor Longley with any queries about any of the projects.

Councillors made the following comments.

- It was questioned what risks were attached to the Section 106 monies received.
- Supply chains had been affected due to Brexit and some capital had to be re-phased. It was questioned whether there had been inflationary pressures.
- How would the disposal policy be constructed with regards to assets?

- Alongside strategy, how could councillors build social capital in their areas?
- Could the asset list be made accessible to members if requested?
- It had been agreed that after OAS all major builds would be discussed with councillors. An update on Old Lion Court was requested, with input from scrutiny.
- Could there be an update on the re-development of Sponne Arcade.

Councillor Longley made the following comments.

- With regard to re-phasing and material costs it was noted that there was a fixed-priced contract and as such there would be a risk.
- Some projects had been re-evaluated.
- There was no update on the Sponne Arcade redevelopment.

Simon Bowers added that an asset list was available, it was however, not as robust as was wanted, but he would be happy to share on request. The committee was advised that there was process in place as to how to dispose of items.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet;

- a. Noted the provisional capital outturn position from all legacy WNC authorities for the financial year 2020-21**
- b. Noted the proposed capital carry forwards for the GF and HRA capital programmes as detailed in appendices A and B**
- c. Noted the latest capital budget and Medium Term Financial Plan for the GF and HRA**
- d. Noted the new schemes that have been approved since 1st April 2021 or are in the process of being approved**

Item 08 –Corporate Plan Performance Report - 2021-22 Q1

Chairman and Council Leader Councillor Jonathan Nunn presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. The committee was reminded that this was an evolving list with many services which included new processes.

Councillor Golby made the following comments.

- It was noted that with regards to 'life chances' most of the data was not yet available. It was hoped that more information could be provided in the next quarter.
- A list of commentary could be provided if anyone would like to see it.

Councillors made the following comments.

- Could more information be given with regard to the number of trees that have been planted as part of the Council's green and clean incentive.

- Some of the data provided, such as the percentages of referrals from Children's Services was now old. The committee was asked when new data would be available.
- At several points in the report 'West Northants Data not available' is stated. The question of when this would be available was raised.
- Scrutiny briefings for the Children's Trust were requested.

Councillor Fiona Baker that dates had been set for the Children's Trust scrutiny meeting and a meeting with the Chief Executive of the Children's Trust was being arranged.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet noted the contents of the report.

Item 09 – Quarter 1 Transformation Update

Chairman and Council Leader Councillor Jonathan Nunn presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. It was noted that transformation had become part of the culture of the Council with key pieces of work already underway.

Councillors made the following comments.

- It was noted that equality impact, diversity and climate hadn't been mentioned much in the report.
- What had been the cost of the electronic management system, and what had been achieved by its purchase?
- Future ways of working was mentioned which included restructure, could this mean potential redundancies?

The Executive Director of Corporate made the following comments.

- The committee was advised that every directorate had a large amount of projects to put in place and the next report would be more detailed.
- Work was being done on apprentice opportunities.
- The electronic management system was a low level cost and had allowed more project management to take place.

Catherine Whitehead advised that she would be taking tour of management teams to discuss governance issues.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet; noted the contents of the report.

Item 10 – Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Report Analysis 2020-21

At the Chairman's invitation Councillor Mike Hallam presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated.

Councillor Bob Purser noted that the report had not highlighted what the council had learned from previous complaints.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet; noted the content and recommendations of the Ombudsman's reports

Item 11 – West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan: Spatial Options Consultation and Statement of Community Involvement and West Northamptonshire Local Development Scheme

At the Chairman's invitation Councillor Rebecca Breese presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. The report presented an explanation of the scale of the housing requirements. The committee was advised that there were a number of potential options. All of the options presented had been informed by any feedback that had been received. It was advised that further technical work was required and no firm decisions had been made yet and that consultations would take place on an 8-week timeframe starting in November. Several background reports would be presented and all responses brought back to Cabinet.

Councillors made the following comments.

- It was accepted that there would be a large amount of growth in the south of the county.
- It was queried as to why there had been no involvement of ward members so far, and why officers who do not know the area well would make the decisions.
- It was noted that the author of the report did not seem to be familiar with the south of the county.
- The committee was reminded that the Cambridgeshire – Oxford Arc had not yet been defined.
- It was accepted that this had been a consultation, but it was queried whether views from residents about this would be taken into consideration. Could there be a delay to look at other options?
- The committee was reminded that consideration should also be given to transport, specifically public transport.
- There had been concerns that this could transform the character of the area, and was felt to be very pro-Northampton, with not much consideration given to outside areas.
- The report had advised that 33,000 new homes were needed and that half of these would be built in the countryside, there had been no urban capacity proposed in the report.

- It was noted that the proposed development in south Northants would increase the proximity of Towcester and Northampton, with many of the roads in the area already at capacity.
- It was felt that the local development scheme should ensure conformity and that an urgent review must take place.
- The Fraser Road development was mentioned.
- The committee was reminded that climate change should be discussed, as there needed to be radical changes made.
- It was asked if the new settlements could include a transit site for travellers as needs had not been met in this area.
- It was felt that there could have been further information on social values included in the report.

Councillor Rebecca Breese made the following comments.

- The process would be a very detailed one and many workshops had taken place with the previous authorities.
- The importance of transport, and specifically public transport, was understood.
- All concerns and comments would be taken on board.
- It was noted that this would be a large development scheme and several planning documents would be coming forward for investigation.
- It was advised that the best way to have concerns noted would be to contact the investigators directly.
- It was stated that the Fraser Road development was not on the plan and as such not due for debate.
- The committee was informed that all options would be taken into account.
- The spatial planning framework had been used as a tool during this process.

Councillor Phil Larratt agreed with the importance of connectivity and with cars being the default means of transportation, the infrastructure to go with this would be important.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet.

- a. Approved the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan: Spatial Options Consultation Paper (Appendix A) for the purposes of public consultation as set out in this report.**
- b. Approved the West Northamptonshire Local Development Scheme (Appendix B) which is to have effect upon expiry of the call-in period for Cabinet decisions.**
- c. Noted the responses to the consultation on the draft Statement of Community Involvement and adopts the Statement of Community Involvement with the amendments set out in Appendix C.**
- d. Delegated to the Assistant Director: Growth, Climate and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Built Environment**

and Rural Affairs, authority to make minor editorial and presentational changes to the above documents in their final published form

Item 12 – A422 Farthinghoe Bypass

At the Chairman's invitation Councillor Phil Larratt presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. The committee was informed that there had been clear support for the bypass, specifically the northern route, and this had been shared with local ward members. The paper outlined the next steps and the issues that were raised during consultation. Lessons had been learned and the project had been undertaken in a robust, safe and sensible way and would not be rushed. Once the route is agreed then a business case would be developed, with the opening estimated for 2028. Officers had been asked to consider interim options due to it being a dangerous area with narrow roads and footpaths, this could also help with the business case and could add to the economic case. The committee was assured that every opportunity was being taken to secure investment.

Councillor Adam Brown noted that the timescales were frustrating but that Cabinet and WNC were putting their whole weight behind it.

Councillors made the following comments.

- The bypass was important and it was good to see interim measures were being looked at.
- It was noted that the report had stated that costs could rise, this had been laid out for people to see easily.
- Could WNC also look at other areas where roads had outlived their purpose?

Councillor Phil Larratt agreed that it was important to be honest about costs and that further information should be available in about a months' time.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet; received the results of the recent consultation on the A422 Farthinghoe Bypass and agreed the timescales for further work.

Item 13 – Regulatory Services Statutory Plans 2021-22

At the Chairman's invitation Councillor David Smith presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. It was advised that Covid had had some impact and services were now getting up to speed. The report had also advised that work was being carried out with food standards agencies.

A Councillor noted that there were currently 340 outstanding inspections and there had been no details in the report about getting this number down.

The Executive Director of Place & Economy advised that many of the officers had been doing work that wasn't in their remit during Covid, and as such some objectives had not been met. This would be continually monitored.

Councillor Adam Brown advised the committee and the MO that he had a business relationship with a food operator that was mentioned in the report.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet;

- A. Approved the Food Safety Service Plan for the year 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022**
- B. Approved the Food and Feed Standards Service Plan for the year 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022**
- C. Approved the Spray Paint Enforcement Plan for 2021-22**
- D. Approved the Tobacco Enforcement Plan for 2021-22.**

Item 14 – Hellidon Conservation area, Spratton Conservation area, Article 4(1) Directions for conservation areas at Weedon Bec, Flore, Everdon, Little Everdon, Staverton, Kilsby, Welford and Pitsford (2021)

At the Chairman's invitation Councillor Phil Larratt presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. The committee was informed that several amendments would be made to the reports. The importance of Article 4 was discussed which would allow features of historical value to be looked at case by case. It was noted that Daventry District Council had been the authority to make the most use of this article in the past.

A Councillor asked what WNC could do to ensure that the same level of care was given to historical urban areas.

Councillor Rebecca Breese noted that residents take pride in their communities if well designed.

Councillor Adam Brown advised that the process had started in NBC and that if necessary the process could be stopped; this would be a decision for Cabinet.

Councillor Phil Larratt advised that conservation areas had recently been looked at using article 4, and that parish councils would have a key role in this.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet;

- a) Endorsed that the conservation area boundaries as set out in appendix E be designated as conservation areas.**
- b) Endorsed that the proposed changes to the Hellidon conservation area appraisal and management plan and Spratton conservation area appraisal**

and management plan in response to representations, as set out in appendices A to D be approved.

- c) Endorsed that further minor editorial changes be made to the Hellidon conservation area appraisal and management plan and Spratton conservation area appraisal and management plan including to reflect the fact that the documents will be in their final adopted form.
- d) Endorsed that the conservation area appraisal and management plans for Hellidon and Spratton be adopted as a supplementary planning documents.
- e) Endorsed the local list entries for Hellidon and Spratton set out in appendix F.
- f) Endorsed that article 4(1) directions for Hellidon and Spratton, in accordance with the proposals in the conservation area appraisal and management plans, be made subject to consultation (appendices G and H).
- g) Agreed to “make” the article 4(1) directions contained at appendix J.
- h) Agreed to consult upon the article 4(1) directions contained at appendix J

Item 15 - Innovative Flood Resilience Project

At the Chairman’s invitation Councillor Phil Larratt presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. The flood tool kit was mentioned as a way to help people prepare should flooding occur, various solutions were discussed in the report, such as nature based solutions, flood wardens and making properties more resilient. There had been discussions between the council and Anglian Water.

Councillors made the following comments.

- Some areas such as Far Cotton had not been mentioned in the report. Would Far Cotton be first on the list to receive assistance of any flood money received from the government.
- The flood mobile had been useful, with regards to further resilience would there be grants provided for people to put these practices into place.
- The committee was asked whether flood proofing would be more green.

Councillor Pinder Chauhan noted that this money had been allocated to flood resilience as it could be the only funding they receive.

The Assistant Director Assets noted that the funding had been given specifically for flood resilience and a more permanent solution would be required for Far Cotton.

Councillor Phil Larratt noted that the report was not about stopping flooding but about community resilience.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet;

- a. **Noted the work to date on securing £6.2m of Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme grant allocation for West**

Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire, and the next steps required to progress the project.

- b. Approved the use of the ring-fenced Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme grant funding of £6.2m to deliver innovative flood resilience measures across the two catchments, one in each of West Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire, as set out in the report**

Item 17 Re-procurement of facilities management contracts

At the Chairman's invitation Councillor Malcolm Longley presented the report copies of which had been previously circulated. The committee was informed that there were many contracts coming together and that WNC were keen to get the best option.

A councillor made the following comments.

- There had been no mention of the analysis of cost consequences.
- Social value and climate impact had not been mentioned in the report.

Councillor Adam Brown noted that the National Insurance rise would impact the council financially.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet; approved the re-procurement of the facilities management service and maintenance contracts as set out in the report

Item 18 Extension of 78 Derngate Charles Rennie Mackintosh Museum – Northampton Towns Fund

At the Chairman's invitation Councillor Lizzy Bowen presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. The money offered to WNC for this project had been one of the largest in the UK. The committee was advised that the council would need to provide £400,000 for the project the rest would come from the Towns Fund.

The project would include an extension to the building and garden path creating an educational garden route. The Council had provided a robust business case in order to secure this funding. The committee was informed that the museum itself had been required to find some of its own funding, which they had done.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet;

- a) Approved the business case for the Extension of 78 Derngate project, in order to draw down on £400,000 of Towns Funding.**
- b) Delegated authority to the Head of Major Projects and Regeneration to finalise the Grant Funding Agreement with 78 Derngate Trust.**

Item 19 Variation to Agreement to Lease of Stable Block at Delapre Abbey

At the Chairman's invitation Councillor Malcolm Longley presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet; That delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director Assets and Environment to vary the terms of the agreement for lease between the Council and the Delapre Abbey Preservation Trust relating to the 19th Century Stable Block, as set out in the report

Item 20 Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022-23

At the Chairman's invitation Councillor Malcolm Longley presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated.

Councillor Fiona Baker advised on the care leavers council tax reduction as some of the tasks they had been asked to complete were not achievable.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet;

- a. **Noted the contents of this report**
- b. **Approved, for consultation purposes only, the LCTRS outlined in this report for West Northamptonshire for the year 2022-2023**

Item 21 Proposal for Capital Funding to replace the Library Management System and associated hardware

The Chairman advised the committee that the appendix to this item was exempt and should anyone wish to discuss it then the committee would have to go into private session.

At the Chairman's invitation Councillor Adam Brown presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. The committee was informed that Library Management System would end next year and as such it was important for a new contract to be in place. The council would not be filling its statutory requirements if the contract were not put into place.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet; Considered and approved the proposal to capital fund the replacement of the Library Management System and associated hardware.



There being no further business, the meeting ended at 9:35pm