



**West  
Northamptonshire  
Council**

## **Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in The Council Chamber, Lodge Road, Daventry, NN11 4FP on Wednesday 15 September 2021 at 6.00 pm.

- Present:** Councillor Danielle Stone (Chair)  
Councillor Sam Rumens (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Azizur Rahman  
Councillor Paul Clark  
Councillor Andrew Grant  
Councillor Mark Hughes  
Councillor David James  
Councillor Koulla Jolley  
Councillor Colin Morgan  
Councillor Ken Pritchard
- Substitute Members:** Councillor Keith Holland-Delamere (For Councillor Terrie Eales)  
Councillor Jamal Alwahabi (For Councillor Walter Tarasiewicz)
- Also Present:** Councillor Fiona Baker, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education  
Councillor Malcolm Longley, Cabinet Member for Finance
- Apologies for Absence:** Councillor Terrie Eales  
Councillor Rupert Frost  
Councillor Dennis Meredith  
Councillor Walter Tarasiewicz
- Officers** Martin Henry, Executive Director - Finance (Section 151 Officer)  
Cathi Hadley, Executive Director - Children's Services  
Sarah Reed, Executive Director - Corporate Services  
James Smith, Assistant Director - Finance (Strategy)  
Gus De Silva, Head of Procurement  
Maisie McInnes, Democratic Services Officer  
Tracy Tiff, Deputy Democratic Services Manager

### **8. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **9. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 6 July 2021 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

10. **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no announcements from the Chair.

11. **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

12. **Contract Management and Procurement**

At the Chair's invitation Gus de Silva, the Head of Procurement introduced himself and delivered the contract management and procurement update presentation to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Gus de Silva also highlighted social value within contract management and procurement.

The Head of Procurement concluded his presentation and invited the committee to ask any questions. Members asked for clarification on the role of procurement and commented on their work with regional and national groups. The Head of Procurement confirmed that the role of procurement was to ensure the Council follows compliance, and achieves best value when procuring goods and services, and the team were involved with regional groups in the East Midlands and national groups for networking and to gain information on procurement matters.

Members felt that the climate emergency needed to take precedence in decision-making surrounding procurement. The Executive Director of Finance confirmed that an overall strategy for procurement was being worked on and the procurement process for all new tenders would consider their environmental impact.

Members asked for an estimated number of contracts the Council currently held and if there were plans in place for these to be rationalised with larger contracts managing more goods and services within the Council to create fewer overall contracts. The Head of Procurement confirmed the Council had 890 contracts at present, which was higher compared to other Councils, and it was planned that a future exercise would be taking place within procurement to investigate the Council's current contracts as there may be some duplicated contracts following the merge to Unitary.

The Chair thanked the Head of Procurement for his presentation.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the presentation which would form background evidence gathering for its review on Social Value.

**13. Social Values Act 2013**

At the Chair's invitation, the Head of Procurement and the Executive Director of Corporate Services delivered the presentation on Maximising Social Value Opportunities to the Committee. The Executive Director of Corporate Services emphasised the importance of social value and how the Council could positively affect communities by considering socio-economic and environmental factors when planning and implementing decisions and processes. The Executive Director of Corporate Services also highlighted the notion of 'community wealth building', creating resilience in local communities by putting local people first and regenerating areas and creating employment opportunities and more.

Members discussed the concept of social value and debated how the wider economic, social and environmental impact of the Council's decision-making and work processes could be measured into tangible data evidence that could be analysed and reflect progress. Members also contemplated how social value could be embedded in the culture of West Northamptonshire Council and how social value could be monitored.

The Chair thanked the Head of Procurement and the Executive Director of Corporate Services for their presentation and for highlighting a really important area of work for the Council. The Chair felt the social value approach invited collaborative working and this was encouraging for local communities. The Chair confirmed that this presentation provided initial background information on the Social Values Act which provided information to inform the scrutiny work on social value.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the presentation that formed part of the evidence gathering for its scrutiny review – social value.
- (2) That further information regarding social value would be presented to the Committee in approximately three months' time in order for the Committee to continue with its scrutiny activity of Social Values.

**14. The Children's Trust Budget**

At the Chair's invitation, the Assistance Director of Finance delivered the presentation on the Establishment of the Children's Trust to the Committee.

Members discussed the presentation and felt that a presentation on the topic of children receiving care in Northamptonshire would be beneficial for the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Director of Finance for his presentation and asked if the full budget could be presented at a future meeting and if this could be benchmarked so that members could see the position of the Children's Trust compared to other organisations. The Chair also invited the Director of the Children's

Trust to a future meeting to present their business plan for the Trust to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the presentation be noted.
- (2) That the Business Plan for the Children's Trust be considered by Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee at a future meeting to be determined.

15. **Q1 Revenue Monitoring Report 2021-22**

At the Chair's invitation, the Executive Director of Finance presented the report and explained that the budget had been presented to Cabinet on 14 September 2021. The report was the Council's first public financial report since the move to Unitary and potential changes to the report were to be expected.

The Executive Director of Finance presented the report and highlighted the salient points:

- Table 1 on page 11 outlined the forecast outturn for 2021-2022 by directorate and set out the service pressures for each respective area
- The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) new build programme demonstrated a balanced budget position as reflected on page 12
- In section 6 of the report in table 3, the financial status of the legacy authorities was outlined showing the carried forward balances and actual expenditure and income for 2020-21 prior to being audited.
- Following on from the financial status, table 14 on page 14 reflected the general fund balance and level of reserves for the authority with a grand total of £170m earmarked reserves.
- Section 7 of the report contained a narrative on the financial position on each directorate within the Council
- Section 8 of the report contained a Covid-19 summary with the financial pressures associated with delivering services during the pandemic outlined in table 6
- Finally, table 7 highlighted the Council's savings proposals by directorate for 2021-22.

Members discussed the report and asked questions on the red savings variant contained in the report. The Executive Director of Finance responded that the red rating demonstrated those projected savings which may be undeliverable and in this case the Council would write these savings off and source other areas where savings could be made across the Council. He explained that procurement was currently looking at the contract register where potential savings could be made.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the Quarter 1 Revenue Monitoring Report for 2021-22 and would continue to provide scrutiny input into regular Revenue Monitoring Reports at future meetings.

16. **Work Programming Event**

The Deputy Democratic Services Manager confirmed the date of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Event that would take place at the Guildhall in Northampton on 14 October 2021 at 6pm. She summarised that the Cabinet members were invited to the event to inform the Committee of their current priorities working in the Council which could help inform the work that Scrutiny wished to undertake this year.

The Deputy Democratic Services Manager informed the Committee that a survey had been circulated inviting the wider public to engage with the Council and make suggestions on areas that Scrutiny could impact. A press release advertising the survey would also be issued, and the survey would be disseminated in the various Council buildings and shared on social media. The survey had currently received 30 responses so far with comments that would be taken forward to the work programme event.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That it be agreed to hold a Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programming Event on Thursday 14 October 2021 at 6pm, Guildhall, Northampton.

17. **Short Term Work Programme 2021/2022**

The Deputy Democratic Services Manager highlighted the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2021-2022 and explained that as members felt that additional meetings would be required for the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee following on from the earlier presentations, the work programme would be amended to reflect these extra meetings. The work programme event scheduled for the 14 October 2021 would also inform the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny work programme as the Committee decided which areas it wished to investigate.

The Deputy Democratic Manager confirmed that the next Corporate Overview and Scrutiny meeting would discuss the following topics: school budgets, transformation and performance scrutiny and the meeting would take place at the South Northants area office on 8 November 2021.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the work programme and the date of the next meeting on 8 November 2021 at the South Northants area office.

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm

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

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