






Northamptonshire
County Council

Cabinet

Tuesday 10 March 2020

Agenda Pack Four for the following Cabinet reports:

 Denotes a key decision

Item No.	Subject	Page No	Responsible Cabinet Member	Contact name & Tel. no. (01604)
19. * 	Approval of the following updated Northamptonshire County Council policies on the Anti-Money Laundering Policy, the Counter Fraud Corruption Policy and the Whistleblowing Policy	3 – 64	Councillor Naden-Holey	Susan Zeiss 361799
20. * 	Northampton North West Relief Road	65 - 73	Councillor Smithers	Chris Wragg 364411



CABINET

10 MARCH 2020

SUSAN ZEISS, GENERAL COUNSEL

**CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR CORPORATE SERVICES:
COUNCILLOR SANDRA NADEN-HORLEY**

Subject:	Approval of the following updated Northamptonshire County Council policies on the Anti-Money Laundering Policy, the Counter Fraud Corruption Policy and the Whistleblowing Policy
Recommendations:	<p>That: Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approves the updated Anti-Money Laundering Policy; 2. Approves the updated Counter Fraud Corruption Policy; 3. Approves the updated Whistleblowing Policy; 4. Agrees that the above named Policies are published on the Council’s website and the Intranet; and 5. Agrees that delegated authority be given to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member with the responsibility for Corporate Services to approve any additional guidance related to the updated policies.

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to ensure that Northamptonshire County Council has up to date policies in relation to Anti-Money Laundering, Counter Fraud and Corruption and Whistleblowing and that those policies reflect the most recent guidance, practices and procedures.
- 1.2 Internal Audit and the Audit Committee have reviewed the Council’s policies and have concluded that they would benefit from updating. That task has been undertaken and the drafts have been attached to this report. The Policies will also be added to the Council’s website and the Intranet so that they are widely available.
- 1.3 The contents of the policies remain consistent with best practice in the relevant areas. Once approved the policies will be uploaded to the appropriate areas of the website and intranet and communicated as necessary and training provided.

2. How this decision contributes to the Council plan

The Council’s vision is for Northamptonshire to be a county where everyone looks after each other and takes responsibility, where the vulnerable are protected and

supported and where the people who can help themselves receive the assistance they need to stay independent and healthy.

This initiative helps the Council to deliver this vision through the following strategic priorities outlined in the Council Plan:

- Working in partnership with other public sector organisations (such as the seven district and borough councils, the local NHS bodies, and Northamptonshire Police).
- Using innovation to find better and more sustainable ways of delivering services ensuring they are efficient and affordable in the long term.
- Focusing resources on prevention and early intervention.
- Commissioning and procuring services and goods with partners.
- Utilising the Council's assets effectively.
- Reducing inequalities and disparity of opportunities.

3. Background

3.1 The council is required to have policies which deal with the issue of fraud and wrong doing within the Council and/or its partners. These policies assist the council by giving a clear direction to Officers, Councillors and contractors, partners and stakeholders of the expectation of their conduct and also sets out what to do if those same persons potentially identify wrongdoing within the Council and who to report it to.

3.2 The previous Anti-Money Laundering policy was reported to the Audit Committee in June 2019. The policy and the associated guidance notes have been updated to incorporate legislative changes.

3.3 The previous Counter Fraud Corruption policy was reported to the Audit Committee in June 2019. The policy and the associated guidance notes have been updated to incorporate legislative changes.

3.4 The previous Whistleblowing policy was reported to the Audit Committee in June 2019. The policy and the associated guidance notes have been updated to incorporate legislative changes.

4. Consultation and Scrutiny

4.1 Internal Consultation has been carried out within the Council with the following Groups, Teams, Members and Officers;

- a) Northamptonshire Leadership Team
- b) Corporate Leadership Team
- c) Cabinet Member with the responsibility for Corporate Resources
- d) Internal Audit
- e) Human Resources
- f) The Communications Team

- 4.2 Feedback from the above has not indicated any objection to the contents amendments have been made to tailor to the current organisational structure and provide clearer explanations.
- 4.3 External consultation has not been carried out as there is no legal requirement to do so for these types of policies which are just being updated.
- 4.4 Scrutiny has not been carried out in this instance as the Policies are a refresh/update. Therefore in this instance only consultation within the Council has taken place.

5. Equality Screening

- 5.1 There has not been an equality screening carried out for the reasons highlighted below:

Reason that no EqIA is required	✓ as appropriate
The paper is for information only	
The proposal/activity/decision has no impact on customers or the service they receive	✓
The proposal impacts upon staff but the proposed staffing changes will not affect the service that customers receive*	✓
Other (Please explain further)	

*Where a proposal affects staff, the appropriate HR processes will be followed, which have already been subject to the EqIA process and will be compliant with HR legislation

6. Legal

- 6.1 This report and the associated policies provide one of the sources for the Council's Annual governance Statement in order to meet the Council's responsibilities under the Accounts and Audit Regulations to maintain adequate and effective systems of control and risk the Council is required management. The Council is required to have effective arrangements in place to protect it from fraud. The Accounts and Audit Regulations require every local Authority to maintain an adequate and effective audit service that reviews the adequacy of governance, internal control and risk management.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 There could be severe financial implications if the policies are not followed which is why it is so important to communicate these policies to Officers, Members and external contractors, suppliers etc. It will ensure that there are safeguards in place in order to detect in particular fraudulent activity with public funds.

8. Risk and Business Continuity Management

- 8.1 LGSS as part of its Audit and Risk service provide a specialist Counter Fraud service to Northamptonshire County Council that is headed by the Head of Audit North. The audit team that works primarily on the Milton Keynes audit service also has audit officers that have significant counter fraud experience.

9. List of Appendices

- Appendix A – Anti – Money Laundering Policy
- Appendix B – Anti – Fraud and Corruption Policy
- Appendix C – Whistleblowing Policy

Author:	Name: Susan Zeiss Team: General Counsel
Contact details:	Tel: 07850 901293 Email: szeiss@northamptonshire.gov.uk
Background Papers:	None
Does the report propose a key decision is taken?	NO
If yes, is the decision in the Forward Plan?	NO
Will further decisions be required? If so please outline the timetable here	NO – this is an amendment to policy not to the overall policy framework
Does the report include delegated decisions? If so, please outline the timetable here	N/A
Is this report proposing an amendment to the budget and/or policy framework?	NO
Have the financial implications been cleared by the Strategic Finance Manager (SFM)?	(N/A)
Have any capital spend implications passed through Capital Programme governance procedures?	(N/A)
Has the report been cleared by the relevant Director?	YES Barry Scarr
Has the relevant Cabinet Member been consulted?	YES Cabinet Member: Councillor Naden-Horley
Has the relevant Scrutiny committee been consulted?	NO – Not required Scrutiny Committee:
Has the report been cleared by Legal Services?	NO – Not required
Have any communications issues been cleared by Communications and Marketing?	YES – the Report has been forwarded for review Name of officer: Katie Brown
Have any property Issues been cleared by Property and Asset Management?	N/A
Have the Procurement Implications below been referenced in the Paper: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you evidenced compliance with the Council's Contract Procedures Rules? 	N/A

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you made clear in this paper where you are seeking Cabinet to approve an exemption from the Contract Procedure Rules and detailed the risks and mitigations? • Have you identified any EU or UK legislative risks such as non-compliance with the Public Contract Regulations Act 2015, transparency and open competition? • Have you identified the procurement risks associated with a contract? 	
<p>Are there any community safety implications?</p>	<p>The proposed updated policy will assist the Council in its statutory duty to tackle crime and disorder in relation to fraud and wrong doing of the Authority and/or its partners/Stakeholders/Partners etc.</p>
<p>Are there any environmental implications:</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Are there any Health and Safety Implications:</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Are there any Human Resources Implications:</p>	<p>YES In relation to the three policies if there are reports of wrongdoing whatever the cause the Head of HR may be involved in the process (see attached policies).</p>
<p>Are there any human rights implications:</p>	<p>YES The Policies have been drafted with Human Rights implications in mind.</p>
<p>Constituency Interest:</p>	<p>ALL</p>

Anti-Money Laundering Policy

1.0 Introduction

The need for this policy derives from the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, the Money Laundering Regulations 2007 and the Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and Transfer of Funds (Information on the Payer) Regulations 2017. The Council's legal obligations impact on certain areas of the business and requires Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) to establish internal procedures to prevent the misuse of services to launder money. This policy details the controls to prevent and protect against money laundering and terrorist financing.

2.0 The Money Laundering Reporting Officer (MLRO)

The officer nominated to receive disclosures about money laundering activities is the LGSS Chief Internal Auditor. This post is currently held by the Monitoring Officer who can be contacted as follows:

General Counsel and Monitoring Officer
Northamptonshire County Council
One Angel Square
Angel Street
Northampton
NN1 1ED

Telephone: 0300 126 1000

In the absence of the MLRO, the Deputy s.151 officer is nominated to deputise as the MLRO until further notice.

3.0 Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all employees and contractors / agents of NCC. The policy sets out the procedures which all officers must follow where they suspect or know that a transaction involves money laundering.

If you Suspect Money Laundering

This policy provides detailed guidance to explain what money laundering is, how to spot it and the detailed submissions required to consider suspected instances of money laundering through Council Services.

It is detailed and the issues can be complicated.

If you need any advice, or wish to make a referral or to discuss your concerns please simply contact the Monitoring Officer (the Money Laundering Reporting Officer (MLRO)) on 0300 126 1000.

4.0 What is Money Laundering

Money laundering is how criminally obtained money or other assets are exchanged for money or assets with no obvious link to their criminal origins. It also covers money, however obtained, which is used to fund terrorism.

Money laundering can take many forms such as:

- Concealing, disguising, converting, transferring or removing criminal property from the UK;
- Entering into or becoming involved in an arrangement which you know or suspect facilitates the acquisition, retention, use or control of criminal property;
- Acquiring, using or possessing criminal property;
- Attempting or helping any of the above offences;
- Involvement in an arrangement which facilitates the control of money or property destined for, or the proceeds of, terrorism.

5.0 How to Detect Money Laundering

There is no one method of laundering money. For this reason, it is important that the Council (via its employees and contractors and agents) should be vigilant and alert to possible signs of money laundering through the Council's services.

At all times, you should;

- Be wary of cash transactions. 'Cash' for this purpose means notes, coins or travellers' cheques in any currency;

- Take care when commencing business with a new client (establish identity as per below where applicable);
- Be alert to the possibility of money laundering by a client or a prospective client;
- Keep records (as per below where applicable).

If you need any advice

Contact the Monitoring Officer who is the (the Money Laundering Reporting Officer (MLRO)) on 0300 126 1000

6.0 Council's Obligations

The Money Laundering regulations apply to specific persons, including certain institutions, auditors, accountants, tax advisers and legal professionals.

Strictly speaking, internal public sector services may not be covered by the legislation. However, public services are susceptible to money laundering activities and NCC must be able to demonstrate its compliance with the law in this area.

The Proceeds of Crime Act also creates offences relating to money laundering activities, as well as terrorist financing. Again public services may be targeted for this purpose and NCC must be able to demonstrate its compliance with this law.

NCC has therefore:

- appointed a Money Laundering Reporting Officer (the Chief Internal Auditor) to receive disclosures from employees of money laundering activities (their own concerns or that of someone else);
- implemented a reporting procedure where a person:
 - knows or suspects; or
 - has a reasonable ground for knowing or suspecting money laundering.
- Set out client identification procedures to be followed in certain circumstances
- Set down record-keeping procedures for the purposes of money laundering

All employees, contractors and agents of the public are therefore required to be familiar with the council's policy and to comply with the procedures set out in the following sections and particularly with the reporting procedure.

7.0 Reporting Procedures

This section explains what you **MUST** do where you become suspicious or know that there is a money laundering or terrorist financing activity going on and how your report will be dealt with by the MLRO.

Reporting to the MLRO

Contact the Monitoring Officer who is the MLRO on 0300 126 1000 at the earliest opportunity. Her office will assist you in completing the reporting form at App1.

1. Where you know or suspect or have reasonable grounds to know or suspect that a money laundering activity is taking place or has taken place, you must notify the MLRO IMMEDIATELY using the money laundering reporting form attached at appendix 1.
2. Similarly, where you believe your involvement in a matter may amount to a prohibited act under sections 327 – 329 of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (see relevant provisions at appendix 2), you must disclose this to the MLRO using the form attached at appendix 1.
3. You must still report your concerns even if you believe that someone else has already reported their suspicions of the same money laundering activity.

Warning: If you fail to report or disclose as above, you may be liable for prosecution for one or more offences.

After reporting to the MLRO you **MUST**:

- not voice your suspicion to the suspected person or any third party;
- not disclose to anyone the fact that you have made the report;
- not make any further enquiries into the matter yourself;
- not make any reference on the file of the report;
- do nothing further on the matter unless you receive specific, written consent from the MLRO to proceed.

Warning: If you fail to observe any of the above, you may be liable for prosecution for ‘tipping off’ or other offences.

If you need any advice

Contact the Monitoring Officer at Northamptonshire County Council (the Money Laundering Reporting Officer (MLRO)) on 0300 126 1000

Once the MLRO receives the report, he/she will;

1. note the date of receipt and confirm to you that she/he has received the report;
2. advise you of the timescale within which he/she expects to respond to you;
3. conduct a provisional investigation into the matter;
4. undertake such other reasonable enquiries as appropriate, seeking specialist legal and financial advice (if appropriate);
5. make a timely determination as below:
 - a. Where it is determined there are no reasonable grounds to suspect money laundering, he/she will record the reasons for the finding and give consent for the transaction to proceed.
 - b. Where it is determined money laundering is suspected he/she:
 - i. Will make a report to NCA (National Crime Agency), as soon as is practicable, and seek NCA’s consent whether to proceed with the transaction.
 - ii. Will advise the officer who made the report of any consent or refusal of consent from NCA.
 - iii. May give consent for the transaction to proceed where 7 working days have passed since the disclosure to NCA and no refusal notice has been given; or where although the refusal notice has been given, the moratorium period of 31 days has expired since the date of when the refusal notice was given.
 - iv. Take formal advice from the Service Director Legal and democratic Services IF there appears to be reasonable excuse for non- disclosure (e.g. legal professional privilege) to decide whether or not the matter should be disclosed to NCA.
 - v. Where the decision is made not to disclose to the NCA, he/she must record the decision and give consent for the transaction to proceed.

The MLRO commits an offence:

1. if without reasonable excuse, she/he fails to disclose to NCA as soon as is practicable suspected money laundering reported to him/her (except as set out at 5 b. iv above)
2. where after reporting to NCA:
 - he/she gives consent to an officer to proceed with the transaction without receiving such consent from NCA;
 - where he/she gives such consent before hearing from NCA and the period of 7 working days has not expired since she/he made the disclosure to NCA;
 - he/she gives such consent before the required moratorium period (of 31 days since the date of the refusal notice) has expired.

8.0 Client Identification Procedure

This section explains what you MUST do where you are involved in services identified as potential targets for money laundering or terrorist financing transactions. Verifying the identity of clients is a key process that reduces the risk of money laundering and terrorist financing.

8.1 Client/customer due diligence consists of:

- identifying the customer and verifying the client's identity on the basis of documents, data or information obtained from a reliable source;
- identifying a beneficial owner who is not a customer, where there is one, and taking adequate measures on a risk sensitive basis, to verify his/her identity;
- obtaining information on the purpose and intended nature of the business relationship.

8.2 You must conduct a 'customer due diligence' in the following circumstances:

- when establishing a new business relationship;
- when carrying out an occasional transaction (a transaction which amounts to €15,000 or more (approximately £10,000) which is carried out in a single operation or several linked operations, and which is carried out other than as part of a business relationship);
- when you suspect money laundering or terrorist financing, regardless of the amount involved;
- when you doubt the veracity or adequacy of documents, data or information previously obtained for identification purposes.

8.3 You must complete the verification of the identity of the client (or beneficial owner) before you establish the business relationship or accept / process the transaction.

8.4 You may however, complete such identity verification after establishing the business relationship only if it is necessary not to interrupt the normal conduct of business and there is little risk of money laundering or terrorist financing occurring, but provided that the verification is completed as soon as practicable after contact is first established.

8.5 You should obtain evidence of identity as follows:

8.5.1 For internal clients:

- Written instructions on NCC headed paper signed and dated by the appropriate person; or an email from the Council's internal email system.
- The evidence should be kept on file identifying that it is evidence of the client's identity.

8.5.2 For external clients:

- Written instructions on the organisation's official headed paper, duly signed and dated by the appropriate person/s (It must be clear what position the signing person/s hold/s within the organisation); or an email from the organisation's e-communication system that clearly identifies the sending company and person.
- The evidence should be kept on file identifying that it is evidence of the client's identity.
- Whenever dealing with a company, you must also verify the existence of the company. You must always request to be provided with the company's registration number which you can use to search for the company's existence at the companies house, and the registered address of the company.
- You must further ensure that the person instructing you has the authority from the company to do so.

When dealing with an individual, identity evidence will be key, verifiable documents such as Driving Licence, Passport or other reliable document.

It is very important that you do not take a tick box approach towards the client identification procedure. You must be satisfied with the authenticity of identification documents and where in doubt, please speak to your manager to see what other forms of identification you may request. The

MLRO is able to provide tools that verify the validity of identification documents.

- 8.6 Where satisfactory evidence of identity is not obtained from the outset or as soon as practicable (in the case of 8.5 above), then;
- You cannot establish a business relationship or carry out an occasional transaction with the client;
 - You cannot proceed any further with the transaction (if applicable);
 - You must consider whether you need to report the matter to the MLRO.
- 8.7 Where you are satisfied with the evidence of the identity and an ongoing business relationship is established with a client, you should still scrutinise transactions undertaken to ensure that they are consistent with your knowledge of the client or business and risk profile. You should also ensure that the identification documents are up to date.

9.0 Record Keeping Procedures

It is essential that records are properly kept to aid in any subsequent investigation which may be carried out and to demonstrate the Council has met its responsibilities. Each service must keep the following records for a period of five years beginning from the date when the occasional transaction is completed or business relationship ends:

- evidence of the client's identity
- all supporting records, originals or copies, relating to the transaction

The MLRO must keep all records of any reports or disclosures received by him/her, action taken and the outcome.

10.0 Review

This procedure will be kept under review and any amendments will be subject to consultation with staff representatives. It will be reviewed by the Council's Audit Committee on an annual basis.

APPENDIX 1

Report to Money Laundering Reporting Officer

Re: money laundering activity

To: The Monitoring Officer, NCC Money Laundering Reporting Officer

From:		Date	
	<i>[Insert name of employee]</i>		
Directorate		Ext/Tel No	
	<i>[Insert post title and section]</i>		

DETAILS OF SUSPECTED OFFENCE

<p>Name (s) and address (es) of person(s) involved: <i>[if a company/public body please include details of nature of business]</i></p>

<p>Nature, value and timing of activity involved: <i>[Please include full details e.g. what, when, where, how. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary]</i></p>

<p>Nature of suspicions regarding such activity: <i>[Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary]</i></p>

Nature of suspicions (cont'd):

[Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary]

--

Has any investigation been undertaken (to your knowledge)?

Yes No

[Please tick the relevant box]

If yes, please include details below:

--

Have you discussed your suspicions with anyone else?

Yes No

[Please tick the relevant box]

If yes, please specify below and where applicable, explain why such discussion was necessary:

Have you consulted any supervisory body's guidance (e.g. the Law Society) on money laundering?

Yes No

[Please tick the relevant box]

If yes, please specify below:

Do you have any grounds for believing that the matter should not be disclosed to NCA? (e.g. are you a lawyer and wish to claim legal professional privilege?)

Yes No

[Please tick the relevant box]

If yes, please set out full details below:

Are you involved in a transaction which may involve a prohibited act under sections 327 – 329 of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and which may require NCA’s consent?

Yes No

[Please tick the relevant box]

If yes, please set out the details below:

Please set out below any other relevant information:

Signed:.....

Dated:.....

Do not discuss the content of this report with the person/s you suspect to be involved in the money laundering activities described or with third parties. To do so may

constitute the offence of tipping off which carries a maximum penalty of 5 years' imprisonment.

THE FOLLOWING PART OF THIS FORM IS FOR COMPLETION BY THE MLRO

Date report received:

Date receipt of report acknowledged

CONSIDERATION OF DISCLOSURE:

Action Plan:

OUTCOME OF CONSIDERATION OF DISCLOSURE

Are there reasonable grounds for suspecting money laundering activity?

Yes No

[Please tick the relevant box]

If yes, please give reasons/details below:

If there are reasonable grounds for suspicion, will a report be made to NCA?

Yes No

[Please tick the relevant box]

If yes, please confirm date of report to NCA: and complete the box below:

Details of liaison with NCA regarding the report:

Notice Period: _____ to _____

Moratorium period: _____ to _____

Is consent required from NCA to any ongoing or imminent transactions which would otherwise be prohibited acts?

Yes No

[Please tick the relevant box]

If yes, please confirm full details below:

Date consent received from NCA:

Date consent given by you to the employee:

If there are reasonable grounds to suspect money laundering, but you do not intend to report the matter to NCA, please set out below the reason(s) for non- disclosure:

Date consent given by you to employee for any prohibited act/transaction to proceed:

.....

Other relevant information:

Signed: **Dated:**

This report should be retained for at least five years from the date when the occasional transaction or the business relationship to which it relates comes to an end.

APPENDIX 2

RELEVANT EXTRACTS FROM THE PROCEEDS OF CRIME ACT 2002

S.327 Concealing etc

(1) A person commits an offence if he—

- (a) conceals criminal property;
- (b) disguises criminal property;
- (c) converts criminal property;
- (d) transfers criminal property;
- (e) removes criminal property from England and Wales or from Scotland or from Northern Ireland.

(2) But a person does not commit such an offence if—

- (a) he makes an authorised disclosure under section 338 and (if the disclosure is made before he does the act mentioned in subsection (1)) he has the appropriate consent;
- (b) he intended to make such a disclosure but had a reasonable excuse for not doing so;
- (c) the act he does is done in carrying out a function he has relating to the enforcement of any provision of this Act or of any other enactment relating to criminal conduct or benefit from criminal conduct.

(3) Concealing or disguising criminal property includes concealing or disguising its nature, source, location, disposition, movement or ownership or any rights with respect to it.

S.328 Arrangements

(1) A person commits an offence if he enters into or becomes concerned in an arrangement which he knows or suspects facilitates (by whatever means) the acquisition, retention, use or control of criminal property by or on behalf of another person.

(2) But a person does not commit such an offence if—

- (a) he makes an authorised disclosure under section 338 and (if the disclosure is made before he does the act mentioned in subsection (1)) he has the appropriate consent;

- (b) he intended to make such a disclosure but had a reasonable excuse for not doing so;
- (c) the act he does is done in carrying out a function he has relating to the enforcement of any provision of this Act or of any other enactment relating to criminal conduct or benefit from criminal conduct.

S.329 Acquisition, use and possession

(1) A person commits an offence if he—

- (a) acquires criminal property;
- (b) uses criminal property;
- (c) has possession of criminal property.

(2) But a person does not commit such an offence if—

- (a) he makes an authorised disclosure under section 338 and (if the disclosure is made before he does the act mentioned in subsection (1)) he has the appropriate consent;
- (b) he intended to make such a disclosure but had a reasonable excuse for not doing so;
- (c) he acquired or used or had possession of the property for adequate consideration;
- (d) the act he does is done in carrying out a function he has relating to the enforcement of any provision of this Act or of any other enactment relating to criminal conduct or benefit from criminal conduct.

(3) For the purposes of this section—

- (a) a person acquires property for inadequate consideration if the value of the consideration is significantly less than the value of the property;
- (b) a person uses or has possession of property for inadequate consideration if the value of the consideration is significantly less than the value of the use or possession;
- (c) the provision by a person of goods or services which he knows or suspects may help another to carry out criminal conduct is not consideration.

S.332 Failure to disclose: other nominated officers

(1) A person nominated to receive disclosures under section 337 or 338 commits an offence if the conditions in subsections (2) to (4) are satisfied.

- (2) The first condition is that he knows or suspects that another person is engaged in money laundering.
- (3) The second condition is that the information or other matter on which his knowledge or suspicion is based came to him in consequence of a disclosure made under section 337 or 338.
- (4) The third condition is that he does not make the required disclosure as soon as is practicable after the information or other matter comes to him.
- (5) The required disclosure is a disclosure of the information or other matter—
 - (a) to a person authorised for the purposes of this Part by the Director General of the National Criminal Intelligence Service;
 - (b) in the form and manner (if any) prescribed for the purposes of this subsection by order under section 339.
- (6) But a person does not commit an offence under this section if he has a reasonable excuse for not disclosing the information or other matter.

S.333 Tipping off

- (1) A person commits an offence if—
 - (a) he knows or suspects that a disclosure falling within section 337 or 338 has been made, and
 - (b) he makes a disclosure which is likely to prejudice any investigation which might be conducted following the disclosure referred to in paragraph (a).
- (2) But a person does not commit an offence under subsection (1) if—
 - (a) he did not know or suspect that the disclosure was likely to be prejudicial as mentioned in subsection (1);
 - (b) the disclosure is made in carrying out a function he has relating to the enforcement of any provision of this Act or of any other enactment relating to criminal conduct or benefit from criminal conduct;
 - (c) he is a professional legal adviser and the disclosure falls within subsection (3).
- (3) A disclosure falls within this subsection if it is a disclosure—
 - (a) to (or to a representative of) a client of the professional legal adviser in connection with the giving by the adviser of legal advice to the client, or
 - (b) to any person in connection with legal proceedings or contemplated legal proceedings.

(4) But a disclosure does not fall within subsection (3) if it is made with the intention of furthering a criminal purpose.

S.334 Penalties

(1) A person guilty of an offence under section 327, 328 or 329 is liable—

(a) on summary conviction, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or to a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum or to both, or

(b) on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 14 years or to a fine or to both.

(2) A person guilty of an offence under section 330, 331, 332 or 333 is liable—

(a) on summary conviction, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or to a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum or to both, or

(b) on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years or to a fine or to both.

S.335 Appropriate consent

(1) The appropriate consent is—

(a) the consent of a nominated officer to do a prohibited act if an authorised disclosure is made to the nominated officer;

(b) the consent of a constable to do a prohibited act if an authorised disclosure is made to a constable;

(c) the consent of a customs officer to do a prohibited act if an authorised disclosure is made to a customs officer.

(2) A person must be treated as having the appropriate consent if—

(a) he makes an authorised disclosure to a constable or a customs officer, and

(b) the condition in subsection (3) or the condition in subsection (4) is satisfied.

(3) The condition is that before the end of the notice period he does not receive notice from a constable or customs officer that consent to the doing of the act is refused.

(4) The condition is that—

- (a) before the end of the notice period he receives notice from a constable or customs officer that consent to the doing of the act is refused, and
 - (b) the moratorium period has expired.
- (5) The notice period is the period of seven working days starting with the first working day after the person makes the disclosure.
- (6) The moratorium period is the period of 31 days starting with the day on which the person receives notice that consent to the doing of the act is refused.
- (7) A working day is a day other than a Saturday, a Sunday, Christmas Day, Good Friday or a day which is a bank holiday under the Banking and Financial Dealings Act 1971 (c. 80) in the part of the United Kingdom in which the person is when he makes the disclosure.
- (8) References to a prohibited act are to an act mentioned in section 327(1), 328(1) or 329(1) (as the case may be).
- (9) A nominated officer is a person nominated to receive disclosures under section 338.
- (10) Subsections (1) to (4) apply for the purposes of this Part.

S.336 Nominated officer: consent

- (1) A nominated officer must not give the appropriate consent to the doing of a prohibited act unless the condition in subsection (2), the condition in subsection (3) or the condition in subsection (4) is satisfied.
- (2) The condition is that—
- (a) he makes a disclosure that property is criminal property to a person authorised for the purposes of this Part by the Director General of the National Criminal Intelligence Service, and
 - (b) such a person gives consent to the doing of the act.
- (3) The condition is that—
- (a) he makes a disclosure that property is criminal property to a person authorised for the purposes of this Part by the Director General of the National Criminal Intelligence Service, and
 - (b) before the end of the notice period he does not receive notice from such a person that consent to the doing of the act is refused.
- (4) The condition is that—

- (a) he makes a disclosure that property is criminal property to a person authorised for the purposes of this Part by the Director General of the National Criminal Intelligence Service,
 - (b) before the end of the notice period he receives notice from such a person that consent to the doing of the act is refused, and
 - (c) the moratorium period has expired.
- (5) A person who is a nominated officer commits an offence if—
- (a) he gives consent to a prohibited act in circumstances where none of the conditions in subsections (2), (3) and (4) is satisfied, and
 - (b) he knows or suspects that the act is a prohibited act.
- (6) A person guilty of such an offence is liable—
- (a) on summary conviction, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or to a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum or to both, or
 - (b) on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years or to a fine or to both.
- (7) The notice period is the period of seven working days starting with the first working day after the nominated officer makes the disclosure.
- (8) The moratorium period is the period of 31 days starting with the day on which the nominated officer is given notice that consent to the doing of the act is refused.
- (9) A working day is a day other than a Saturday, a Sunday, Christmas Day, Good Friday or a day which is a bank holiday under the Banking and Financial Dealings Act 1971 (c. 80) in the part of the United Kingdom in which the nominated officer is when he gives the appropriate consent.
- (10) References to a prohibited act are to an act mentioned in section 327(1), 328(1) or 329(1) (as the case may be).
- (11) A nominated officer is a person nominated to receive disclosures under section 338.

S.337 Protected disclosures

- (1) A disclosure which satisfies the following three conditions is not to be taken to breach any restriction on the disclosure of information (however imposed).
- (2) The first condition is that the information or other matter disclosed came to the person making the disclosure (the discloser) in the course of his trade, profession, business or employment.

(3) The second condition is that the information or other matter—

- (a) causes the discloser to know or suspect, or
- (b) gives him reasonable grounds for knowing or suspecting,

that another person is engaged in money laundering.

(4) The third condition is that the disclosure is made to a constable, a customs officer or a nominated officer as soon as is practicable after the information or other matter comes to the discloser.

(5) A disclosure to a nominated officer is a disclosure which—

- (a) is made to a person nominated by the discloser's employer to receive disclosures under this section, and
- (b) is made in the course of the discloser's employment and in accordance with the procedure established by the employer for the purpose.

S.338 Authorised disclosures

(1) For the purposes of this Part a disclosure is authorised if—

- (a) it is a disclosure to a constable, a customs officer or a nominated officer by the alleged offender that property is criminal property,
- (b) it is made in the form and manner (if any) prescribed for the purposes of this subsection by order under section 339, and
- (c) the first or second condition set out below is satisfied.

(2) The first condition is that the disclosure is made before the alleged offender does the prohibited act.

(3) The second condition is that—

- (a) the disclosure is made after the alleged offender does the prohibited act,
- (b) there is a good reason for his failure to make the disclosure before he did the act, and
- (c) the disclosure is made on his own initiative and as soon as it is practicable for him to make it.

(4) An authorised disclosure is not to be taken to breach any restriction on the disclosure of information (however imposed).

(5) A disclosure to a nominated officer is a disclosure which—

(a) is made to a person nominated by the alleged offender’s employer to receive authorised disclosures, and

(b) is made in the course of the alleged offender’s employment and in accordance with the procedure established by the employer for the purpose.

(6) References to the prohibited act are to an act mentioned in section 327(1), 328(1) or 329(1) (as the case may be).

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Corporate Anti-Fraud and Corruption

FORWARD

Northamptonshire County Council is committed to the highest standards of financial probity and takes its duty to protect the public funds it administers very seriously.

This is Northamptonshire County Council's Anti-Fraud Policy. It provides a clear framework for the Council to investigate suspected fraud thoroughly, to prosecute wherever the evidence supports such action and seek recovery of defrauded monies through all possible legal means. This policy also applies to the Bribery Act 2010.

The Council administers significant public funds and is sometimes targeted by persons wishing to defraud the public purse. This policy, and the structures maintained by the Council, demonstrates that we will make every effort to identify attempts to defraud the public purse and will robustly pursue individuals responsible.

The Council, through this policy, has adopted a zero tolerance towards fraud including:

- The referral of matters to the Police for investigation wherever appropriate and the full recovery of fraudulently obtained public funds by all legal means
- The prosecution of persons responsible for defrauding the Council including prosecution through civil and criminal courts in the Council's own name or through the Police etc.
- The termination of contracts with partners and contractors
- The dismissal of employees proven to have defrauded or who have attempted to defraud the Council, including where an employee is complicit with another person's attempts to defraud the Council

The Council requires all partners and contractors to assist in this role and cooperate with any fraud investigation undertaken by authorised officers. This policy also applies to schools staff.



1.0 Introduction

1.1 The authority has always prided itself on setting and maintaining high standards and a culture of openness, with core values of fairness, trust and value. This policy fully supports the authority’s desire to maintain an honest authority, free from fraud and corruption. The authority aims to provide community leadership and quality services in this area.

1.2 In carrying out its functions and responsibilities, it is expected that elected members and employees at all levels will adopt the highest standards of propriety and accountability. This has been achieved by leading by example and by an understanding of and adherence to rules, procedures and agreed practices. These standards are also expected from organisations that have dealings with the authority (e.g. suppliers/contractors).

1.3 The authority demonstrates clearly (through this policy) that it is firmly committed to dealing with fraud and corruption and no distinction will be made for perpetrators inside (members/governors and employees) or outside the authority. In addition, there will be no distinction made in investigation and action between cases that generate financial benefits and those that do not.

1.4 This policy document embodies a series of measures designed to frustrate any attempted fraudulent or corrupt act and the steps to be taken if such an act occurs. For ease of understanding, it is separated into the following sections:

Culture	Section 2
Prevention	Section 3
Deterrence	Section 4
Detection and investigation	Section 5
Awareness and Training	Section 6
Publicity	Section 7

1.5 The authority is also aware of the high degree of external scrutiny of its affairs by a variety of bodies such as its external auditors, inspection bodies, the Local Government Ombudsman, HM Revenue & Customs. These bodies are important in highlighting any areas where improvements can be made.

1.6 Fraud is commonly defined as:



FRAUD – “The intentional distortion of financial statements or other records by persons internal or external to the authority which is carried out to conceal the misappropriation of assets or otherwise for gain”.

In addition, fraud can also be defined as:

“The use of deception with the intention of obtaining an advantage, avoiding an obligation or causing loss to another party.”

1.7 Bribery and Corruption may be defined as:

“A bribe is a financial or other advantage that is offered or requested with the intention of inducing or rewarding the improper performance of a relevant function or activity, or with the knowledge or belief that the acceptance of such an advantage would constitute the improper performance of such a function or activity.”

1.7.1 The Bribery Act 2010 (as amended) places responsibilities and powers on organisations such as Local Authorities.

1.7.2 There are 3 key sections of the Act which need to be considered for the purposes of this document, which are:

- Section 1, which deals with bribing another person by money, payment in kind, or goods and services.
- Section 2, the act of being bribed. This relates to individual officers and could lead to prosecution.
- Section 7, failure of a commercial organisation to prevent bribery. For this section, a “relevant commercial organisation” means an entity that carries on a business and current indications are that this includes Local Authorities. This section also includes persons associated with the organisation, such as agency workers, suppliers and contractors.

1.7.3 Under the legislation, an organisation has a defence if it can show that it has adequate bribery prevention procedures in place, which are informed by the following 6 principles:

- 1) Proportionality – the action an organisation takes should be proportionate to the risks it faces and the size of the business.
- 2) Top Level Commitment – A culture needs to be evident in which bribery is never acceptable. This can be shown via leadership statements, training and procurement expectations.
- 3) Risk Assessment – to include proportionate risk management perhaps via training, newsletters, procurement controls and inclusion within organisational policies such as this one.



- 4) Due Diligence – i.e. knowing who the organisation is dealing with.
- 5) Communication – communicating policies and procedures by training and general awareness including how occurrences should be investigated and by whom.
- 6) Monitoring and Review – to ensure policies, training and awareness are relevant and updated and by nominating a responsible officer.

1.7.4 Defence against bribery charges under the act, therefore, should be considered adequate if the organisation has the following in place:

- Risk awareness and preparation
- Adequate communication and senior management buy-in
- A zero-tolerance culture
- Adequate education and training
- An audit trail and integration with counter fraud processes

1.7.5 The penalties for individuals under this legislation can, on conviction on indictment, be as high as a prison term of 10 years, or a fine or both (although under section 7 a guilty person is only liable to a fine). The organisational consequences may include disbarment from contract tenders, reputational and financial risk exposure, and adverse publicity.

1.8 Other risk areas which need to be considered and are covered by this policy include:

- **Facilitation payments** – i.e. payments designed to make things happen but which do not secure agreement.
- **Gifts and Hospitality** – genuine low-level hospitality is deemed acceptable, but it is imperative that corporate registers are kept up to date and all staff must make declarations of interest.
- **Disclosures of Interests** – and “the failure to disclose an interest in order to gain financial or other pecuniary gain.”

2.0 Culture

2.1 The culture of the authority has always been one of the highest ethical standards, probity, openness and the core values of fairness, trust and value support this. The authority’s culture therefore supports the opposition to fraud and corruption.

2.2 The prevention/detection of fraud/corruption and the protection of the public purse are everyone’s responsibility and of paramount importance to the authority.

2.3 The authority’s elected members, school governors and all employees play an important role in creating and maintaining this culture. They are positively



- 2.4 encouraged to raise concerns regarding fraud and corruption, immaterial of seniority, rank or status, in the knowledge that such concerns will, wherever possible, be treated in confidence. To that effect, the Council has adopted a Whistleblowing Policy.
- 2.5 The definitions of Fraud and Corruption are by their nature technical and have their basis in the Fraud Act which became law on 15th January 2007. A more practical definition is where the Council's assets, including money, are dishonestly obtained by someone not entitled to them. Examples include:
- theft of cash or assets;
 - obtaining access to services to which the person is not entitled e.g. obtaining a Council house or disabled blue badge;
 - falsifying information or documentation e.g. timesheets, overtime, expenses, qualifications etc.;
 - dishonesty between officers and management/head teachers;
 - the deliberate concealment of information required by the Council e.g. convictions or activities inconsistent with the Council's duties and responsibilities;
 - Defrauding welfare payments, such as Housing Benefit, Council Tax benefit and Council Tax Single Person Discounts etc.
- 2.6 The authority will ensure that any allegations received in any way, including by anonymous letters or phone calls, will be taken seriously and investigated in an appropriate manner, subject to the requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998 and other statutory provisions.
- 2.7 The authority will deal firmly with those who defraud the authority, or who are corrupt, or where there has been financial malpractice. There is, of course, a need to ensure that any investigation process is not misused and, therefore, any abuse (such as raising malicious allegations) will be dealt with as appropriate.
- 2.8 When fraud or corruption have occurred because of a breakdown in the authority's systems or procedures, Directors will ensure that appropriate improvements in systems of control are implemented to prevent a reoccurrence.
- 2.9 In certain circumstances, and where appropriate, a commercial settlement between the Council and an employee may be deemed necessary as a way of disposing of a case. This should only be undertaken following agreement by the Chief Executive and the Monitoring Officer.



3.0 Roles

ROLES	
<p><u>Elected Members and School Governors</u></p>	<p>As elected representatives, all members of the authority have a duty to citizens to protect the authority from all forms of abuse. This is done through this anti-fraud and corruption policy and compliance with the national code of conduct for members, the authority’s Financial Regulations, Constitution and the relevant legislation.</p> <p>Elected members sign to the effect that they have read and understood the national code of conduct when they take office. Conduct and ethical matters are specifically brought to the attention of members during induction and include the declaration and registration of interests. The Council’s Monitoring Officer advises members of new legislative or procedural requirements.</p> <p>Members and Governors are required to apply the principles of good governance regarding their own affairs and when acting for the Council, including: declaring pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests; declaring the potential for a conflict of interest; and recording the receipt of all gifts and hospitality. Members and governors must provide leadership by example in demonstrating the highest standards of probity and conduct so as to create the right anti-fraud culture throughout Northamptonshire County Council.</p>
<p><u>Audit Committee</u></p>	<p>The Audit Committee and its members have specific responsibility re: the oversight of the Council’s governance arrangements, in respect of the adequacy of control systems to prevent and detect fraud.</p> <p>The Audit Committee receives periodic reports from Internal Audit on suspected and proven frauds, and monitors those systems of control applicable to that area, making recommendation to Council where improvement is required.</p>
<p><u>NLT/ Directors :</u></p>	<p>NLT / Directors are responsible for the communication and implementation of this policy in their work area. They are also responsible for ensuring that their employees are aware of the Financial Regulations and other policies, and that the requirements of each are being met in their everyday business activities.</p> <p>NLT / Directors have responsibility to ensure that effective systems of control are in place corporately and within their directorate to both</p>

	<p>prevent and detect fraud, and that those systems operate properly.</p> <p>NLT / Directors are required to submit an annual self-assessment of those processes for inclusion within the Council’s Annual Governance Statement.</p> <p>NLT / Directors must provide leadership by example in demonstrating the highest standards of probity and conduct so as to create the right anti-fraud culture throughout Northamptonshire County Council. NLT / Directors are expected to strive to create an environment in which their staff feel able to approach them with any concerns they may have about suspected irregularities.</p>
<p><u>Heads of Service/Managers</u></p>	<p>Managers at all levels are responsible for the communication and implementation of this policy in their work area. They are also responsible for ensuring that their employees are aware of the Financial Regulations and other policies, and that the requirements of each are being met in their everyday business activities.</p> <p>Managers of all levels must provide leadership by example in demonstrating the highest standards of probity and conduct so as to create the right anti-fraud culture throughout Northamptonshire County Council. Managers of all levels are expected to strive to create an environment in which their staff feels able to approach them with any concerns they may have about suspected irregularities.</p> <p>Heads of Service and Managers must ensure that special arrangements will apply where employees are responsible for cash handling or are in charge of financial systems and systems that generate payments, for example payroll, the integrated benefits computer system or council tax. Managers must ensure that relevant training is provided for employees. Checks must be carried out at least annually to ensure that proper procedures are being followed, in order to inform the directorate annual self-assessment.</p> <p>The authority recognises that a key preventative measure in dealing with fraud and corruption is for managers to take effective steps at the recruitment stage to establish, as far as possible, the honesty and integrity of potential employees, whether for permanent, temporary or casual posts. The authority’s formal recruitment procedures (which contain appropriate safeguards on matters such as written references, verifying qualifications held, and DBS checks undertaken on employees working in regulated activity with children and vulnerable adults) will be adhered to during this process. In line with the Council’s Fraud Response Plan (confidential Internal document only), management investigations into disciplinary matters must liaise with Internal Audit regarding any potential fraud or corruption implications of the conduct / investigation. If a member of staff raises concerns regarding suspected fraud, the line manager must inform the Chief Internal Auditor or contact Internal Audit immediately. Line managers should only undertake discreet preliminary enquiries which</p>

	<p>should be restricted to the basic facts required to determine whether there are any grounds to the allegation. The handling of evidence at the early stages of an investigation can be critical to the outcome of the investigation and advice must be sought from the Chief Internal Auditor to ensure evidence is safeguarded and not compromised. No action should be taken which may alert those suspected of involvement.</p>
<p><u>Internal Audit and Corporate Anti-Fraud Team</u></p>	<p>The Head of Audit (in consultation with the Head of HR / Interim Executive Director of Corporate Services) shall determine whether a concern / suspicion regarding fraud requires investigation by Internal Audit.</p> <p>Internal Audit plays a vital preventative role in trying to ensure that systems and procedures are in place to prevent and detect fraud and corruption. The Internal Audit Investigators liaise with management to recommend changes in procedures to prevent further losses to the authority.</p> <p>The Internal Audit service shall report to NLT and the Audit Committee regarding the application of the zero tolerance statement within this policy. Furthermore, the Internal Audit Investigators shall investigate all cases of suspected irregularity in accordance with the requirements of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, Human Rights Act 1998, Fraud Act 2006, Bribery Act 2010 and other relevant legislation. In all cases where employees are involved, they will work with HR and appropriate senior management to ensure that correct procedures are followed and adhered to.</p>
<p><u>Employees</u></p>	<p>Each employee is governed in their work by the authority’s Constitution and Financial Regulations and other codes of conduct and policies (Code of Conduct; Health and Safety; IT security and so on). Included in these are guidelines on gifts and hospitality and codes of conduct associated with professional and personal conduct and conflicts of interest. These are issued to all employees when they join the authority or will be provided by their manager.</p> <p>In addition to the above, employees are responsible for ensuring that they follow the instructions given to them by management, particularly in relation to the safekeeping of the assets of the authority. These will be included in induction training and procedure manuals.</p> <p>Employees are expected always to be aware of the possibility that fraud, corruption or theft may exist in the workplace and be able to share their concerns with management. Concerns should be raised, in the first instance, directly with the supervisor/business unit manager. Employees who feel unable to report to their line management should contact the Chief Internal Auditor directly, telephone the Whistleblowing Hotline or email address. Should there be a preference to make an anonymous notification, then they should refer to the Council’s Whistleblowing Policy which gives details of the Monitoring Officer with whom they can discuss</p>

	<p>their concerns.</p> <p>All employees must ensure that they avoid situations where there is a potential for a conflict of interest. Such situations can arise with externalisation of services, internal tendering, planning and land issues etc. Effective role separation will ensure decisions made are seen to be based upon impartial advice and avoid questions about improper disclosure of confidential information.</p>
<p><u>External Audit</u></p>	<p>Independent external audit is an essential safeguard in the stewardship of public money. This role is delivered through the carrying out of specific reviews that are designed to test (amongst other things) the adequacy of the authority’s financial systems, and arrangements for preventing and detecting fraud and corruption. It is not the external auditor’s function to prevent fraud and irregularity, but the integrity of public funds is at all times a matter of general concern. External auditors are always alert to the possibility of fraud and irregularity, and will act without undue delay if grounds for suspicion come to their notice. The external auditor has a responsibility to review the authority’s arrangements to prevent and detect fraud and irregularity, and arrangements designed to limit the opportunity for corrupt practices.</p>
<p><u>External Bodies</u></p>	<p>Internal Audit has arranged, and will keep under review, procedures and arrangements to develop and encourage the exchange of information on national and local fraud and corruption activity, in relation to local authorities with external agencies such as: police, county, unitary and district council groups, the external audit service, Department of Work and Pensions and other government departments.</p>
<p><u>Contractors and Partners</u></p>	<p>Contractors and partners have a responsibility for the communication and implementation of this policy within their organisation. They are also responsible for ensuring that their employees are aware of the Council’s Financial Regulations, Whistleblowing and other policies, and that the requirements of each are being met in their everyday business activities.</p> <p>Contractors and partners are expected to create an environment in which their staff feel able to approach them (or the Council directly) with any concerns they may have about suspected irregularities. Where they are unsure of the procedures, they must refer to the relevant Director for that area or may approach the Head of Audit directly on any Whistleblowing issue.</p>
<p><u>Stakeholders and Customers</u></p>	<p>Whilst this policy is primarily aimed at implementing the necessary culture and processes within the Council, its stakeholders and customers may become aware of issues that they feel may indicate fraud. They should refer to the Council’s complaints procedure, or they can contact the Head of Audit to discuss their concerns directly.</p>

4.0 Deterrents

4.1 Prosecution

Each case will be considered on its merits.

4.2 Disciplinary Action

- 4.2.1 Theft, fraud and bribery and corruption are serious offences against the authority and employees will face disciplinary action if there is evidence that they have been involved in these activities. Disciplinary action will be taken, if appropriate, in addition to criminal proceedings, depending on the circumstances of each individual case, but in a consistent manner, after consultation with the relevant Director and if appropriate the Head of HR /Executive Director of Finance / s.151.
- 4.2.2 Disciplinary action will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's disciplinary policy and procedure with each case considered on its merits.
- 4.2.3 Members will face appropriate action under this policy if they are found to have been involved in theft, fraud or corruption against the authority. Action will be taken in addition to, or instead of, criminal proceedings, depending on the circumstances of each individual case, but in a consistent manner. If fraud concerns relate to an elected Member, the Chief Internal Auditor will inform the Council's Monitoring Officer and Chief Executive and matters, if not referred to the police, will be referred to the Standards Committee or appropriate group leader.
- 4.2.4 Members or employees involved in fraud, theft or corruption that does not involve the Council or its finances may still be subject to the above action, if it is considered to undermine the Council and its reputation.

4.3 Publicity

- 4.3.1 The Council recognises the key role that publicity of fraud cases plays in deterring other attempts to defraud the Council. To that effect, a Publicity Policy is shown in Section 7 A of this policy which sets out these measures in detail.
- 4.3.2 The authority's Communications Service will optimise the publicity opportunities associated with anti-fraud and corruption activity within the authority. Communications will also try to ensure that the results of any action taken, including prosecutions, are reported in the media. The service will maintain close working relationships with all areas involved in anti-fraud work, but particularly the Monitoring Officer and Internal Audit.
- 4.3.3 In all cases where financial loss to the authority has occurred, the authority will seek to recover the loss and advertise this fact.



- 4.3.4 All anti-fraud and corruption activities, including the update of this policy, will be publicised in order to make employees and the public aware of the authority's commitment to taking action on fraud and corruption when it occurs.
- 4.3.5 Regular reports will be made to the Audit Committee about countering fraud and corruption activities and their success.

5.0 Detection and Investigation

- 5.1 All staff, Members and any other stakeholders in Council services have a vital role in identifying potential fraud or corruption. It is not the responsibility of those groups to investigate their suspicions, as this may undermine a case to be pursued, but all parties play a key role in bringing such concerns to the Council's attention for a proper and thorough investigation to be undertaken.
- 5.2 Management, are in the best position to become aware of any problems that could indicate fraud or theft etc. Management are also best placed to ensure that systems of internal control are in place and operating and thus are ideally placed to identify weaknesses or failures that may be exploited. Internal Audit can provide advice and assistance in this area.
- 5.3 Employees are also ideally placed to detect fraud, theft or corruption. Employees are encouraged to discuss concerns with their line manager.
- 5.4 Internal Audit plays an important role in the detection of fraud and corruption. Included in the Audit Plan are reviews of system financial controls and specific fraud and corruption tests, spot checks and unannounced visits. Internal Audit operates in accordance with best practice, including the adoption of a formal Audit Manual in line with CIPFA best practice. This includes suitable processes to provide assurance to management on the adequacy of systems of internal control including the completion of follow ups for previous recommendations.
- 5.5 In addition to Internal Audit, there are numerous system controls in place to deter fraud and corruption, but it is often the vigilance of employees and members of the public that aids detection. In particular, the Council's Corporate Anti-Fraud Team are involved in the reactive and proactive investigation of specialised areas, such as Council Tax, Social Housing Tenancy Fraud, and transport-related fraud.



- 5.6 In some cases frauds are discovered by chance or ‘tip-off’ and arrangements are in place to enable such information to be properly dealt with, in accordance with the requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.
- 5.7 All suspected irregularities are required to be reported (verbally or in writing) either by the person with whom the initial concern was raised or by the originator. This is essential to the policy, and:
- ensures the consistent treatment of information regarding fraud and corruption;
 - facilitates a proper and thorough investigation by an experienced audit team, in accordance with the requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.
- 5.8 This process will apply to all the following areas:
- a) fraud/corruption by elected members
 - b) internal fraud/corruption
 - c) other fraud/corruption by authority employees
 - d) fraud by contractors’ employees
 - e) external fraud (the public).
- 5.9 Cases under a) will be referred to the Council’s External Auditor and the Council’s Monitoring Officer for consideration of action via the Police or the Northamptonshire County Council Standards Committee.
- 5.10 In accordance with basic legal concepts any person who witnesses or discovers a criminal act has the right to refer concerns directly to the Police.
- 5.11 Any decision to refer a matter to the police will be taken by the Head of Internal Audit in consultation with the Head of HR / Interim Executive Director of Corporate Services and/or Chief Executive and relevant Director. The authority will normally wish the police to be made aware of, and investigate independently, offenders where financial impropriety is discovered.



- 5.12 Depending on the nature of an allegation under b) to e), the Head of Audit will normally work closely with the relevant Director concerned to ensure that all allegations are thoroughly investigated and reported upon.
- 5.13 The authority's Fraud Response Plan (confidential internal document only) and disciplinary procedures will be used to facilitate a thorough investigation of any allegations of improper behaviour by employees. The processes as outlined in paragraph 4.2.3 will cover members.

6.0 Awareness and Training

- 6.1 The authority recognises that the continuing success of this policy and its general credibility will depend in part on the effectiveness of programmed training and an awareness of elected members and employees throughout the authority.
- 6.2 To facilitate this, it is intended that a programme of anti-fraud awareness training in the form of workshops, possibly incorporating interactive means, will be rolled out across the Council. There will still be specialist training for certain elected members and employees.
- 6.3 Full copies of the anti-fraud and corruption policy and whistleblowing policy are on the Council's intranet.
- 6.4 Key to effective awareness (and deterrence) is a formal and comprehensive system of feedback to provide outcome information to the person who originally referred concerns. Whilst confidentiality must be respected (including the Data Protection Act and Human Rights Act provisions) every referral should be concluded and the outcome communicated to the person making the original referral.
- 6.5 Anti-fraud services will also maintain management information to show:
 - How frauds are identified
 - Which type of frauds were affected
 - Any patterns or themes detected
 - New fraud issues highlighted
 - Prevention measures



7.0 Publicity

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 Northamptonshire County Council has adopted this policy to address anti-fraud and corruption issues enhancing public confidence in the administration of taxpayers' money.

7.1.2 This Corporate Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy, and particularly this Publicity section, aims to:

- a. Make clear the connection between saving public monies and the fraud work that achieves this;
- b. Dispel the belief held in some quarters that fraud is a victimless crime;
- c. Demonstrate consistent action is taken for both complex frauds and the perceived lower-level frauds;
- d. Ensure that tough action taken against persons who commit fraud is utilised as an effective deterrent to others;
- e. Alter perceptions of this area of work to move from an image of petty bureaucracy or snoopers to one of professional public funds watchdog;
- f. Ensure that action taken is consistent with Northamptonshire County Council policies and legislative provisions as well as being in the public interest.

7.1.3 This policy covers the methods by which the work of the Anti-Fraud services within Northamptonshire County Council will be promoted, including the publicity associated with specific cases.

7.2 Publicity Categories

7.2.1 Publicity takes many forms, including:

- Leaflets
- Posters
- Press Releases / Articles
- Advertisements
- Intranet or Internet media



7.2.2 It is imperative that all available forms are optimised to promote an anti-fraud culture throughout the organisation and to the public. However, great care is needed to ensure that publicity in relation to anti-fraud work is positive and does not undermine the service or reinforce the negative perceptions of this area of work.

7.2.3 Thus publicity needs to focus on 3 key areas :

- a. Proactive work of Anti-Fraud services, e.g. a day in the life of a Fraud Investigator;
- b. Specific Cases pursued by Anti-Fraud services, e.g. specific prosecutions / convictions sought;
- c. Reactive responses to Media enquiries.

7.3 Proactive Publicity – Work of Anti-Fraud Services

7.3.1 This area of work is essential to promote the work of the services and ensure that others are aware of this work, and thus deterred from attempting fraud. The aim of this publicity is to increase the profile of anti-fraud work across Northamptonshire County Council and the wider community, in order to promote the referral processes and deter fraud.

7.3.2 Intranet pages are maintained which set out details as to how to contact the Internal Audit Investigators and how to report fraud. The site also provides links to relevant policies.

7.3.3 Any leaflets and posters used for Fraud Awareness purposes shall be reviewed annually to reflect any necessary changes.

7.3.4 It is intended that Fraud Awareness training shall be part of the Council's Corporate Training/Induction system.

7.3.5 In addition to the above, the work of Anti-Fraud services shall be promoted periodically both within the Council and to the general community.

7.3.6 For high profile cases prosecuted, the publicity shall consider whether the work of Anti-Fraud services shall be promoted e.g. volumes of cases referred; investigated; prosecuted; convicted etc.

7.4 Specific Cases

7.4.1 Great care must be taken when publicising any specific case of fraud, theft or corruption. Data Protection Act and Human Rights Act provisions are key legal protections provided to those suspected of committing such offences, and must not be breached by the Council's attempts to promote anti-fraud work.

7.4.2 However, the publicity attached to any specific case is a necessary element of



promoting the deterrent effect of anti-fraud work, as it demonstrates actual instances and consequences to individuals.

- 7.4.3 Any decision that the Council should prosecute an individual, individuals or organisation(s) must be taken following the formal quality assurance procedure.
- 7.4.4 Any decision to pursue prosecution will be taken on the basis of professional advice, the merits of the case itself and any applicable guidelines relevant.
- 7.4.5 All prosecutions should include a consideration of publicity issues and ensure that the Council's Communications Service are involved / aware of the issue so that the Council can adopt a proactive publicity strategy and avoid the need to react to press enquiries.
- 7.4.6 A specific decision will be taken and recorded by the Head of Service to issue a press release for any specific case. In all other cases, a press statement / position shall be prepared to address any potential press enquiry.
- 7.4.7 Press releases shall be prepared that promote the Council's Anti-Fraud policy and maximise the deterrent effect of prosecutions.

7.5 Reactive Responses to Media Enquiries

- 7.5.1 Ideally the above measures aim to minimise the need for this, where the Council proactively provides relevant information to promote anti-fraud through local (and possibly national) media.
- 7.5.2 Press queries will arise on some occasions and it is essential that they are responded to in such a way as to promote the anti-fraud policy of the Council.
- 7.5.3 Responses to Press queries regarding specific individuals must not breach Data Protection or Human Rights legislation.

7.6 Review

This procedure will be kept under review and any amendments will be subject to consultation with staff representatives. It will be reviewed by the Council's Audit Committee on an annual basis.

Northamptonshire County Council Whistleblowing Policy

March 2020

THE COUNCIL WANTS YOU TO BE CONFIDENT THAT YOUR CONCERNS WILL BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY AND THAT YOU WILL BE PROTECTED FROM VICTIMISATION OR BULLYING OR HARRASSMENT IF YOU RAISE A CONCERN.

If you have a concern about the Council's services please read this policy. You may think this policy does not apply to the concern you have – IT DOES, we can give confidential advice about ANY concern you may have regarding the Council and its services.

If you want to informally / confidentially discuss this policy or your concerns you can contact the Monitoring Officer for Northamptonshire County Council on 0300 126 1000 or the Chief Internal Auditor on :

The details of such discussions will not be released to anyone else within the Council without your express consent and meetings can be held at a time and place of your choosing.

Or

The Council have commissioned the services of Expolink who provide an anonymous, confidential and free 24-hour telephone service related to 'protected disclosure' issues. Expolink can be contacted on 0800 731 6202.

Or

Public Concern At Work on 0207 404 6609 or helpline@pcaw.co.uk
PCAW are an independent charity and information provided to PCAW is protected under the Public Interest Disclosures Act. Their helpline is where their lawyers provide confidential advice free of charge.

Or

The Council's external auditors Cryan2@uk.ey.com

You may also wish to contact your trade union for advice or support in making a whistleblowing disclosure.

Policy Owner

Post: General Counsel and Monitoring Officer
Tel: 0300 126 1000

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This policy seeks to provide a process that gives anyone with a concern about the Council the confidence to bring that concern to our attention.
- 1.2 All officers, councillors and partners have a responsibility to protect the Council's interests through the proper adherence to this policy. This is required for reasons of open and accountable governance, stakeholder trust and compliance with U.K. and E.U. law.
- 1.3 Northamptonshire County Council operates within legal requirements and regulations and expects its employees to co-operate in this by adhering to all laws, regulations, policies and procedures. Any employee becoming aware of inappropriate conduct is obliged to report this activity. This policy also applies to contractors, consultants, partners and agency staff and other stakeholders including Councillors.
- 1.4 Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within the Council. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the Council. Councillors, customers and stakeholders are also in a position to identify concerns that affect Council services and need to be addressed.
- 1.5 Individuals with a concern may fear that they will be victimised or harassed if they raise the concern. In these circumstances it may feel easier to ignore the concern. However, such concerns should not be ignored and suspicions of malpractice should be reported.
- 1.6 It is recognised that certain cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis but in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act this policy seeks to provide a transparent method for dealing with concerns. Whistleblowers can have confidence through this policy that they have the fullest protections afforded by the Public Interest Disclosures Act.
- 1.7 Specifically the code of practice set out in this policy makes it clear that staff and others can make reports without fear of reprisals and sets out what protections are in place under this policy. This Code is intended to encourage and enable concerns to be raised within the Council so that they can be addressed, rather than overlooking problems or raising them outside the Council.
- 1.8 The Council is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment the Council encourages employees, customers, contractors, employees of subsidiaries, stakeholders or any other person with serious concerns about any aspect of the Council's work to come forward and voice those concerns. This process is commonly referred to as "whistle blowing".

2. AIMS AND SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

2.1 This policy aims to:

- Encourage and enable any person to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns
- Provide avenues for any person to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken
- Ensure everyone making a referral receives a response to their concerns
- Describe how to take the matter further if dissatisfied with the Council's response
- Reassure anyone making a referral that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation.

2.2 The Whistleblowing Policy is intended to cover any concerns that fall outside the scope of other policies. **Concerns** that could be raised under the policy include:

- Sexual, physical or emotional abuse of clients or other individuals
- Conduct which is an offence or a breach of law
- Disclosures related to miscarriages of justice
- Health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as employees
- Damage to the environment
- Unauthorised use of public funds
- Action that is contrary to the Council's financial procedures or contract regulations
- Possible fraud, corruption or financial irregularity
- Action that is against the Council's Standing Orders and policies
- Practice that falls below established standards or practice
- Other improper or unethical conduct.

2.3 If a member of staff is uncertain how best to raise any concern, it may be raised initially under this policy. If a concern is raised which does fall under the scope of another corporate policy, the concern will then be referred for investigation in line with the relevant policy guidance.

2.4 The concern may be something that makes a person feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards, their experience or the standards to which they believe the Council subscribes. If in doubt, please contact either the contact on the front cover of this policy or Public Concern at Work to have a confidential discussion.

2.5 For the avoidance of doubt, if you have concerns that any person may be being mistreated / abused you can discuss your concerns in confidence with the General Counsel and Monitoring Officer.

2.6 There are existing procedures in place, which must be followed, to enable staff to lodge a grievance relating to their own employment, customers to complain about the service they receive and regarding concerns whether councillors have breached the National Code of Conduct. The Whistleblowing Policy should not be used for such concerns; however, advice can be obtained from the General Counsel and Monitoring Officer if you have any doubts.

2.7 For the avoidance of doubt, this policy applies to all employees, councillors, contractors, consultants, schools, agency staff and other stakeholders who are acting on behalf of, or in partnership with, the Council.

- 2.8 Any disclosure of information that, in the reasonable belief of the worker, is made in the public interest, shall be deemed a qualifying disclosure.
- 2.9 This policy incorporates the provisions that are required from the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

3. HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN

- 3.1 When an individual wishes to raise a concern, he or she will need to identify the issues carefully. They must be clear about the standards against which they are judging practice. Whilst not exhaustive they should consider the following:
- Is it illegal?
 - Does it contravene professional codes of practice?
 - Is it against government guidelines?
 - Is it against the Council's guidelines?
 - Is it about one individual's behaviour or is it about general working practices?
 - Does it contradict what the employee, councillor, contractor, consultant, agency staff or other stakeholder has been taught?
 - Has the individual witnessed the incident?
 - Did anyone else witness the incident at the same time?
- 3.2 Concerns from staff should normally be raised with their immediate manager, in the first instance. Similarly, non-employees (e.g. agency workers or contractors) should raise a concern in the first instance with their contact within the Council, usually the person to whom they directly report.
- 3.3 In some cases, the nature or sensitivity of the concern means that this may not always be appropriate. If a person feels they cannot raise their concern with their immediate manager they are able to go directly to the Chief Internal Auditor. They may also do so if, having raised a concern with the immediate manager/contact, they feel there has not been an appropriate response.
- 3.4 Others wishing to raise a concern should consider whether to raise that concern directly with the relevant senior officer of the service involved or use the Council's existing Complaints process. Details of all such contacts can be found on the Council's website.
- 3.5 Given the possible contractual issues, Annex A of this policy gives specific guidance to contractors and partners of the Council in raising such concerns.
- 3.6 Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. Anyone who wishes to make a written report should give the background and history of the concern (giving relevant dates if possible) and the reason why they are particularly concerned about the situation.
- 3.7 If the individual wishes, they may ask for a private meeting with the person to whom they wish to make the complaint and can be accompanied if they wish. An employee may invite their trade union or professional association representative, work colleague or legal representative to be present during any meetings or interviews in connection with the concerns they have raised.

- 3.8 When making a complaint verbally, the individual should write down any relevant information and date it. They should keep copies of all correspondence and relevant information.
- 3.9 It should be noted that often the earlier a concern is expressed the easier it is to take appropriate action.
- 3.10 The individual should ask the person to whom they are making the complaint what the next steps will be and if anything more is expected from them.
- 3.11 Although a person is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation that is made, it will be necessary to demonstrate that there are sufficient grounds for concern. It is not necessary for any person to undertake investigations into their concern prior to contacting the Council, as this may undermine any ultimate action needing to be taken.
- 3.12 Advice and guidance on how specific matters of concern may be pursued can be obtained from the Council's Internal Audit Service. Phone 01908 254230. Alternatively staff may wish to get confidential advice from their trade union or professional association
- 3.13 Staff may wish to consider discussing their concerns with a colleague first and may find it easier to raise the matter if there are two (or more) of them who have had the same experience or concerns.
- 3.14 Where a person feels that they cannot approach anyone in the Council, they may wish to report their concerns through the external independent reporting scheme called Public Concern At Work. PCAW are an independent charity providing a legal advice service designated by the Bar Council and information provided to PCAW is protected under the Public Interest Disclosures Act. Their helpline number is 0207 404 6609. Their email is helpline@pcaw.co.uk, where their lawyers provide confidential advice free of charge.
- 3.15 An individual who is the subject of an investigation may be made aware that an issue has been raised but this will be entirely dependent on the nature of the issue. This point will be superseded where necessary in order to allow the subject to provide a defence.

4. SUPPORTING THE INDIVIDUAL TO RAISE A CONCERN

4.1 Harassment or Victimisation

- 4.1.1 The Council recognises that the decision to raise a concern can be difficult, not least because of the fear of reprisals.
- 4.1.2 The Council will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect individuals who raise concerns. This does not mean that if the individual is already the subject of disciplinary or redundancy procedures, that those procedures will be halted as a result of raising a concern under this policy.
- 4.1.3 It is the clear instruction to those officers (through this formal policy) of the Council who liaise with whistleblowers that they shall not release information to identify a whistleblower to any person within the Council and will only release those details to a proper person outside the Council when there is a legal requirement to do so, e.g. a court order. The only exception to this shall be where the whistleblower themselves gives written permission to do so.

- 4.1.4 Any person applying pressure upon such officers to identify whistleblowers shall be subject to the same provisions as outlined in 4.1.6 below.
- 4.1.5 Where a whistleblower alleges they are / have been victimised / harassed as a result of raising a concern, that matter shall be reported to Chief Executive or S151 Officer. Such allegations shall be investigated by the Chief Internal Auditor or the Council's Monitoring Officer. The Council's Monitoring Officer may instruct an independent investigator/the internal Audit Fraud Investigator to investigate a matter on their behalf. Where the investigations may identify (either indirectly or directly) the whistleblower, the way forward shall be agreed with the whistleblower and any resultant action confidentially reported to the Chair of the Audit Committee.
- 4.1.6 Each case will be considered on its merits. Any incident of victimisation or harassment of someone who has made a referral under this policy would normally be considered:
- A matter of Gross Misconduct if done by an employee of the Council
 - A matter for the Council to consider termination of a contract if done by or at the request of a contractor. If there are concerns that a contractor is victimising, or has victimised, a whistleblower an independent review may be requested
 - A matter that could affect the service provided to a customer if done by or at the request of that customer.

4.2 Confidentiality

- 4.2.1 All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal the identity of the person highlighting the concern if that is the wish of the individual.
- 4.2.2 Individuals are encouraged to put their name to any allegation. The Council will do its best to protect the individual's identity when they do not want their name disclosed. It must be appreciated that the investigation process may reveal the source of the information, and a statement by the individual raising the concern may be required as part of the evidence.
- 4.2.3 At the appropriate point in any investigations the subject of the allegation may be made aware of the allegation in order to provide a defence. In these cases the identity of the Whistle-blower will not be divulged to the subject of the allegation or their representatives unless the Whistle-blower gives written consent to do so to the investigating officers.

4.3 Anonymity

- 4.3.1 Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be considered at the discretion of the Council. In exercising this discretion, the factors to be taken into account would include:

Seriousness of the issue

Credibility of the concern

Likelihood of being able to obtain the necessary information

4.4 Untrue Allegations

- 4.4.1 Any individual who makes an allegation in good faith which is not subsequently confirmed by the investigation, will have no action taken against them and will continue to have protection under this policy from victimisation or harassment.
- 4.4.2 If, however, an individual makes malicious or vexatious allegations, action may be taken against them.

5. HOW THE COUNCIL WILL RESPOND

- 5.1 In order to protect individuals and the Council, an initial review will be carried out to decide whether a full investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations, which fall within the scope of specific procedures (for example, child protection or discrimination issues), will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.
- 5.2 It should be noted that some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. Equally some issues may be investigated without the need for initial enquiries. If urgent action were required, this would be taken before any investigation is conducted.
- 5.3 The action taken by the Council will depend on the nature of the concern. Where appropriate, the matters raised may be:
- Investigated by management, Internal Audit, HR, or other appropriate person
 - Referred to the External Auditor
 - Referred to the police
 - The subject of an independent inquiry.
- 5.4 The Council will send an initial acknowledgement of receipt of concern within a couple of days and will then write to the person raising the concern within 10 - 14 working days (i.e. initially the individual or representative with whom the report was lodged as set out in Sections 4.1 and 4.2):
- Acknowledging that the concern has been received
 - Indicating how it proposes to deal with the matter
 - Giving an indication of when a final response or update will be provided
 - Telling the person whether any initial enquiries have been made
 - Supplying the person with information on staff support mechanisms and
 - Telling the person whether further investigations will take place and, if not, why not.
- 5.5 Every effort will be made to resolve the matters raised as soon as possible, in the interests of the Council, the person raising the concern and the person(s) being

investigated. The amount of contact between the officers considering the issues and the person raising the concern will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, further information may be sought from the person raising the concern.

- 5.6 Where any meeting is arranged, staff have the right, if they so wish, to be accompanied by a trade union or professional association representative or a work colleague who is not involved in the area of work to which the concern relates.
- 5.7 The Council will take appropriate steps to minimise any difficulties, which a person may experience as a result of raising a concern and provide advice and support should they be required to give evidence, e.g. at a disciplinary hearing. Such support may include the ability to give evidence via video link.
- 5.8 The Council accepts that the person raising a concern needs to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. Thus, subject to legal constraints, the person raising the concern may be kept informed as the investigation progresses unless they have requested otherwise. At the very least they should receive an update on the investigation by the date implied by the estimated response time given in section 5.4

6. HOW THE MATTER CAN BE TAKEN FURTHER

- 6.1 Any individual has the right and responsibility to refer a concern to the Police if they suspect a criminal act.
- 6.2 This policy is intended to provide an avenue to raise concerns within the Council. The Council hopes that those using this process will be satisfied with the way their concerns are treated and any investigations that may be carried out. However, if they are not satisfied and feel it right to take the matter outside the Council, the matter can be raised with:
 - Public Concern At Work on 0207 404 6609 or helpline@pcaw.co.uk
 - Relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations
 - A solicitor.
- 6.3 In taking advice from sources outside the Council, a person must ensure that, so far as possible, it is raised without confidential information being divulged and would, other than in exceptional circumstances, be expected to have exhausted the internal routes available first.
- 6.4 If an individual wishes to complain to the Council about how the investigation of their concerns was carried out, they should address their complaint directly to the Head of Human Resources, the Chief Internal Auditor or the Monitoring Officer. The Head of Human Resources, Chief Internal Auditor and the Monitoring Officer will then notify the Chief Executive that a complaint has been made regarding a whistleblowing investigation, determine which service is best placed to deal with the complaint, and appoint an appropriate officer to deal with the complaint. In deciding who should deal with the complaint the following should be considered:
 - Which officer and service conducted the whistleblowing investigation;
 - Which service has the most independence and objectivity in relation to the original investigation; and
 - The skills needed to deal with the complaint.

- 6.5 This is separate to the Council's corporate complaints procedure, which assumes that a complaint should first be dealt with by the relevant service area, as the service area is likely to have been involved in the investigation. The review of a complaint regarding a whistleblowing investigation will be reported to a Director.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 7.1 The responsibility for the operation of this policy rests with the Monitoring Officer and Directors to ensure all staff are fully aware of its provisions. The Chief Internal Auditor must be advised of all referrals so that an annual report to the Council's Audit Committee can be compiled.
- 7.2 Investigations should be undertaken by appropriate officers with expertise and will be dependent upon the issue raised. Internal Audit and Human Resources will jointly ensure that investigations are swift and effective and undertaken by someone with relevant skills and experience. Internal Audit and Human Resources (HR) will act as the corporate services who maintain records of all referrals and subsequent investigations received by the Council.

Additionally:

- 7.3 Internal Audit will lead on all financial referrals, including those where there are significant financial implications to an allegation. The Audit team will ensure that concerns raised through the informal process are logged and trends identified.
- 7.4 Human Resources will lead on allegations regarding serious misconduct of Council employees. The HR team will advise and support employees involved in the investigation process, to ensure that such processes are fair and supportive to all those involved.
- 7.5 The Monitoring Officer will lead on allegations regarding misconduct of Councillors and any issues where there is alleged unlawfulness or criminality.
- 7.6 As the Monitoring Officer has a statutory obligation to take action to avoid the Council acting unlawfully, officers are required to inform the Monitoring Officer of any whistleblower report received. This will be treated with appropriate confidentiality in line with investigations.
- 7.7 Employees: In all contracts of employment there is an implied understanding of mutual trust and confidence between the employer and employee. All employees, therefore, have a responsibility to raise concerns about work and they may do so in the manner described in this policy.
- 7.8 Line managers: Must create an open and fair culture within their area of responsibility and ensure that staff concerns are listened to and action taken where necessary. Line managers are responsible for ensuring that there is a safe environment for staff to raise their concerns and that there is no retribution as a result of someone raising their concerns.
- 7.9 Audit Committee: is responsible for assuring the Council that the risks across the Council are being identified and managed. It is therefore responsible for ensuring that this policy is robust and for ensuring that the principles within this policy are upheld.

8. HOW THE POLICY WILL BE MONITORED

- 8.1 The Council has a responsibility for registering the nature of all concerns raised and to record the outcome. The Council's Internal Audit Service will produce an annual report to the Audit Committee, which will identify any patterns of concern and assess the effectiveness of the policy.
- 8.2 This policy will be publicised via the Council's website and specifically:
- Every new employee will be advised to familiarise themselves with the policy when joining the Council;
 - Every contract will require the contractor to communicate the policy to their staff and adopt its provisions when working for the Council;
 - Every employee of a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) owned by the council will be provided a copy of the policy when joining the LLP, together with training on the whistleblowing procedures of their organisation and the circumstances where each policy will apply;
 - All newly elected members shall be provided a copy of the policy.
- 8.3 An annual survey will be undertaken by Internal Audit to gauge the awareness of the policy and individual whistleblowers will be asked more detailed questions about their perceptions of the policy in practice.

9. REVIEW

- 9.1 This procedure will be kept under review and any amendments will be subject to consultation with staff representatives. It will be reviewed by the Council's Audit Committee on an annual basis.

Procedure for Contractors / Partners, including employees of subsidiaries

1. This procedure is for Contractors who want to raise a concern and once a concern is raised it will be treated in line with the main policy.
2. As a first step contractors should normally raise concerns with their manager, who will then inform the lead Council officer who is dealing with that particular contract. If contractors do not have a manager, they should raise their concerns direct with the lead Council officer. This depends on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the malpractice. For example, if contractors believe that their manager or lead Council officer is involved, they should approach the Monitoring Officer. Otherwise, the lead Council officer receiving notification of concerns under this policy will inform the Executive Director of LGSS Law Limited that a confidential report has been received and provide a copy. If the concern relates to financial irregularities or failures of financial controls the lead Council officer receiving the report will also immediately notify the Chief Internal Auditor or the Executive Director of Finance - s.151.
3. Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. Individuals who wish to make a written report are invited to use the following format:
 - The background and history of the concern (giving relevant dates if possible);
 - The reason why the individual is particularly concerned about the situation.
4. It should be noted that often the earlier a concern is expressed the easier it is to take appropriate action.
5. Advice and guidance on how specific matters of concern may be pursued can be obtained internally from the Internal Audit Service. Alternatively contractors may wish to get confidential advice from their trade union or professional association.
6. Contractors may wish to consider discussing their concerns with a colleague first and may find it easier to raise the matter if there are two (or more) of you who have had the same experience or concerns.
7. Contractors may invite their trade union or professional association representative or work colleague to be present during any meetings or interviews in connection with the concerns they have raised.

[For use by the Monitoring Officer, Chief Internal Auditor and or Head of HR]

General Survey

- (1) Have you thought about using the Whistleblowing Policy in the last 12 months?
- (2) If yes, but you didn't make a referral, what prevented you?
- (3) On a scale of 1-10 (with 10 being perfect) how would you rate the policy in meeting the needs of someone who has concerns about the Council's services?
- (4) If you answered less than 10, what can we do to change so that you would score 10?

Specific Survey for those who have raised a concern

- (1) On a scale of 1-10 (with 10 being perfect) how good do you feel the Council's Whistleblowing arrangements are?
- (2) If you answered less than 10, what can we do to improve so that you would have scored a 10?
- (3) Were you able to obtain sufficient advice before making your referral?
- (4) Did you use normal management structures or the corporate officers?
- (5) Were your concerns properly addressed?
- (6) Were the implications of a referral (e.g. confidentiality and timescales) explained to you?
- (7) Were you provided with regular feedback (if you wanted it)?
- (8) If you asked for confidentiality was that effectively provided?
- (9) Do you feel you suffered harassment, victimisation or any other negative consequence from raising your concern?



CABINET

10 MARCH 2020

DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTOR OF ADULTS, COMMUNITIES AND WELLBEING: ANNA EARNSHAW

**CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR PLACE AND HIGHWAYS:
COUNCILLOR JASON SMITHERS**

Subject:	Northampton North West Relief Road
Recommendations:	<p>That Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agrees that, subject to a grant of planning permission for the scheme by the Development Control Committee, delegated authority be given to the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Adults, Communities and Wellbeing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Place & Highways, to acquire the land necessary for the construction of the scheme, including if necessary a Compulsory Purchase Order, as outlined in section 6 of this report. 2. Agree to award a Design & Build Contract for the scheme to Balfour Beatty Civil Engineering Limited, subject to a break clause exercisable by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Adults, Communities and Wellbeing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways & Place before progress to Stage 2, as set out in Section 7 of this report; 3. Supports capital investment for the scheme as set out in Section 8 of this report.

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To agree the next steps in the delivery of the Northampton North West Relief Road.

2. How this decision contributes to the Council plan

The Council’s vision is for Northamptonshire to be a county where everyone looks after each other and takes responsibility, where the vulnerable are protected and supported and where the people who can help themselves receive the assistance they need to stay independent and healthy.

This initiative helps the Council to deliver this vision through the following strategic priorities outlined in the Council Plan:

- Working in partnership with other public sector organisations (such as the seven district and borough councils, the local NHS bodies, and Northamptonshire Police).
- Commissioning and procuring services and goods with partners.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Northampton North West Relief Road will be a single carriageway road (with land secured for future dualling) linking the A428 Harlestone Road with the A5199 Welford Road. The road will improve the highway network and help to address traffic problems in parts of northern Northampton and surrounding villages. By providing additional capacity, the road will help to enable development including the major Sustainable Urban Extensions at Buckton Fields, Dallington Grange and Northampton West.
- 3.2 The section from the A428 to a roundabout near Grange Farm, just south of the railway line, will be constructed by the developers of Dallington Grange, and the first part of this section has already been constructed as part of the Harlestone Gate development. The County Council will be responsible for building the section of road across the railway line to reach the A5199 Welford Road, together with a short linking section providing a new river crossing for the A5199.
- 3.3 A plan showing the location of the scheme is at Appendix 1.
- 3.4 A preferred route for what then formed part of the Northampton North West Bypass was agreed in 1988, but the scheme was abandoned in 1998. However, following the designation of additional growth sites, the need for the scheme was identified in the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, and Cabinet decided in January 2016 that the scheme should be one of the County Council's next priorities for major road schemes.
- 3.5 A preferred route was agreed by Cabinet in October 2018, and work then commenced on the preparation of a planning application and environmental statement which were submitted to the County Council's planning service in May 2019. Further information has been requested by the County Council's planning service and it is expected that the application will be considered by the Development Control Committee in July 2020.

4. Consultation and Scrutiny

- 4.1 Consultation on the route of the road was undertaken between June and August 2017 alongside consultation for the Northampton Northern Orbital Route. The results of this consultation were reported to Cabinet in October 2018.
- 4.2 64% of those responding to the consultation supported the need for the North West Relief Road. A number of respondents commented on potential flooding, noise and visual impacts and the severance of rights of way or thought that the road should be built as a dual carriageway. There was also significant concern expressed about possible traffic impacts due to the road opening before the Northern Orbital Route, and that the two roads should be built at the same time. However, there were very few suggestions that an alternative route would be more advantageous.

4.3 Further public consultation has been, and will be, undertaken by the County Council's planning service as part of their consideration of the planning application. This will be reported to the Development Control Committee when they consider the application.

5. Alternative Options Considered

5.1 The scale of growth which is taking place at a number of sites around the west of Northampton means that new road infrastructure is needed, particularly for orbital movements. The options for a new crossing of the Brampton Arm of the River Nene north of Mill Lane are limited as the lack of gaps in the urban fabric where a new road could be fitted means that the first suitable crossing point has to be in the vicinity of the A5199. In addition, even before designation as a 'preferred route', the broad alignment of the road had been well understood and had been built into the planning of Dallington Grange and the design of the golf course north of the railway line.

5.2 As the shortest distance between the section of road being constructed by Dallington Grange and the A5199, any alternative would be more expensive. Consequently, only one alignment was presented as part of the 2017 consultation, although this differed from the previous preferred route in not crossing the river valley. The presented option crossed over the railway, the alternative of crossing under the railway being dismissed due to flood risk, objections from Network Rail and greater cost.

5.3 Following the 2017 consultation, further work was undertaken on the vertical alignment of the road to reduce the height of the embankments as far as possible, thereby minimising the visual impact and reducing construction costs. Detailed consideration of the design of the junction with the A5199 identified that in order to build an appropriately sized junction within the constraints of the flood plain and existing listed A5199 bridge, a new section of road should be constructed over the river valley connecting the new A5199/Sandy Lane/Relief Road roundabout with a new A5199/Brampton Lane roundabout.

5.4 The October 2018 Cabinet report set out the alternative costs of delivering the scheme as a single or dual carriageway, while noting that the funding identified for the scheme was only sufficient to build a single carriageway. As identified in that report, additional sources of funding were explored. However, the anticipated West Northamptonshire Growth Deal did not come to fruition, and the scheme did not fall within the remit of Major Road Network funding. Therefore the scheme has been progressed as a single carriageway, although the intention is to secure the land required for future dualling.

6. Land purchase

6.1 Discussions have been taking place with the owners of the land required for the scheme, and it is hoped that agreement can be reached for a negotiated purchase. However, in case agreement cannot be reached, Cabinet approval is sought for the commencement of Compulsory Purchase Order proceedings.

7. Procurement

- 7.1 Balfour Beatty Civil Engineering Ltd have been selected through the Midland Highways Alliance framework to deliver the County Council scheme on a Design & Build basis. Given the scale of the earthworks and bridge construction on the scheme, awarding a Design & Build contract is considered to represent a lower risk to the Council than award of a conventional construction contract.
- 7.2 The award of the contract will be in two stages. Under the Stage 1 appointment, Balfour Beatty will undertake the detailed design and prepare the construction programme for the scheme. At the end of Stage 1, they will prepare a target price for construction, and should this be acceptable the intention is to continue their award to construct the road under Stage 2, providing planning permission has been granted and the land secured.
- 7.3 Should the target price be unacceptable, then it will be necessary to go out to tender to procure a new contractor, introducing further costs and delays.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 The intention is that the first section of the North West Relief Road between the A428 and Grange Farm will be delivered by the developers of Dallington Grange at no cost to the County Council. This is a condition of the resolution to grant planning permission to that development by Northampton Borough Council, subject to a Section 106 agreement. It is expected that the Section 106 agreement will be signed and the planning permission issued in March 2020. The developers will also be required to provide the land necessary so that the road can be dualled at a future date should that be required by future traffic growth.
- 8.2 The County Council (and successor West Northamptonshire Council) will be responsible for delivering the North West Relief Road between Grange Farm and the A5199. While it is a relatively short stretch of road, the costs are escalated considerably by the need for bridges over the railway line and river valley and the need to mitigate flood plain issues.
- 8.3 Scheme preparation funding of £3.090m towards the County Council section of road was agreed by Cabinet in October 2018 using £588k of Section 106 funding and £2.502m of Northampton Borough Council funding.
- 8.4 The County Council have been allocated £7.93m of SEMLEP Local Growth Deal funding towards the scheme. In order to release this funding, the scheme has been subject to a Major Scheme Business Case, including a value for money appraisal, in accordance with the Department for Transport's procedures. The business case, which has been independently reviewed, shows that the scheme represents very good value for money.
- 8.5 Northampton Borough Council has committed future S106 and CIL income from Dallington Grange and other sites benefiting from the NWRR to cover the balance of the construction costs however the funds will be received over a long build out period.

8.6 The business case includes a current total scheme cost of £32.532m. The intention is that value engineering during the Stage 1 appointment of Balfour Beatty will reduce this cost to £28m. However, in order to release their Local Growth Funding SEMLEP require the County Council to underwrite the costs of the scheme at the £32.532m figure.

8.7 The SEMLEP Board have agreed to provide their funding subject to:

- The passage of this Cabinet report agreeing to progress the scheme, and making the funding commitment at £32.532m.
- Northampton Borough Council issuing the planning permission for Dallington Grange and signing the S106 agreements.
- The Development Control Committee issuing the planning permission for the North West Relief Road.

8.8 In order to find the required total funding commitment of £32.532m, it will be necessary for the County Council and/or the new West Northamptonshire Council to guarantee to provide a net capital funding contribution towards the scheme.

8.9 However, the Councils will be incurring a significant financial commitment by the need to forward fund the scheme in advance of the receipt of Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions. Therefore, the objective is for the expenditure to be limited to the £28m figure which is expected to be achieved through value engineering.

8.10 Further details of the scheme costs and funding are contained in Appendix 2 which is not for publication by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

8.11 The scheme and the associated capital expenditure were reviewed at NCC's Capital Approvals Board on 6th February and recommended for inclusion in the Monthly Capital Report elsewhere on this Cabinet agenda in order to secure approval for promotion from the Development Pool into the committed Capital Programme

9. Next Steps

9.1 Subject to the confirmation of the SEMLEP funding and the grant of planning permission by the Development Control Committee, the intention is to award the Stage 2 of the Design & Build construction contract and exercise the land options, so that construction can begin in late September 2020.

9.2 While a detailed construction programme forms an output of the Stage 1 Design & Build contract, the expectation is that the scheme will open for traffic in Summer 2022.

10. Equality Screening

Equalities Impact Assessments for the scheme can be found at:
[http://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/council-and-democracy/equalities/equality-impact-assessments-eqias/Pages/environment,-planning-and-transport-equality-impact-assessments-\(eqias\).aspx](http://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/council-and-democracy/equalities/equality-impact-assessments-eqias/Pages/environment,-planning-and-transport-equality-impact-assessments-(eqias).aspx)

11. Risk and Business Continuity Management

a) Risk(s) associated with the proposal

Risk	Mitigation	Residual Risk
Planning permission not granted for road	Further work is being undertaken to improve robustness of planning application	Amber
Developer part of road not constructed	Draft Section 106 agreement requires developer section of road to be complete by	Amber
Value engineering target of £28m not met.	Target based on work already undertaken. Funding package is £32.532m	Amber
SEMLEP funding to be spent by March 2021	Start construction as soon as possible.	Amber

b) Risk(s) associated with not undertaking the proposal

Risk	Risk Rating
Impacts of development not mitigated	Amber
West Northamptonshire housing targets not met	Red
SEMLEP funding lost	Amber

12. List of Appendices

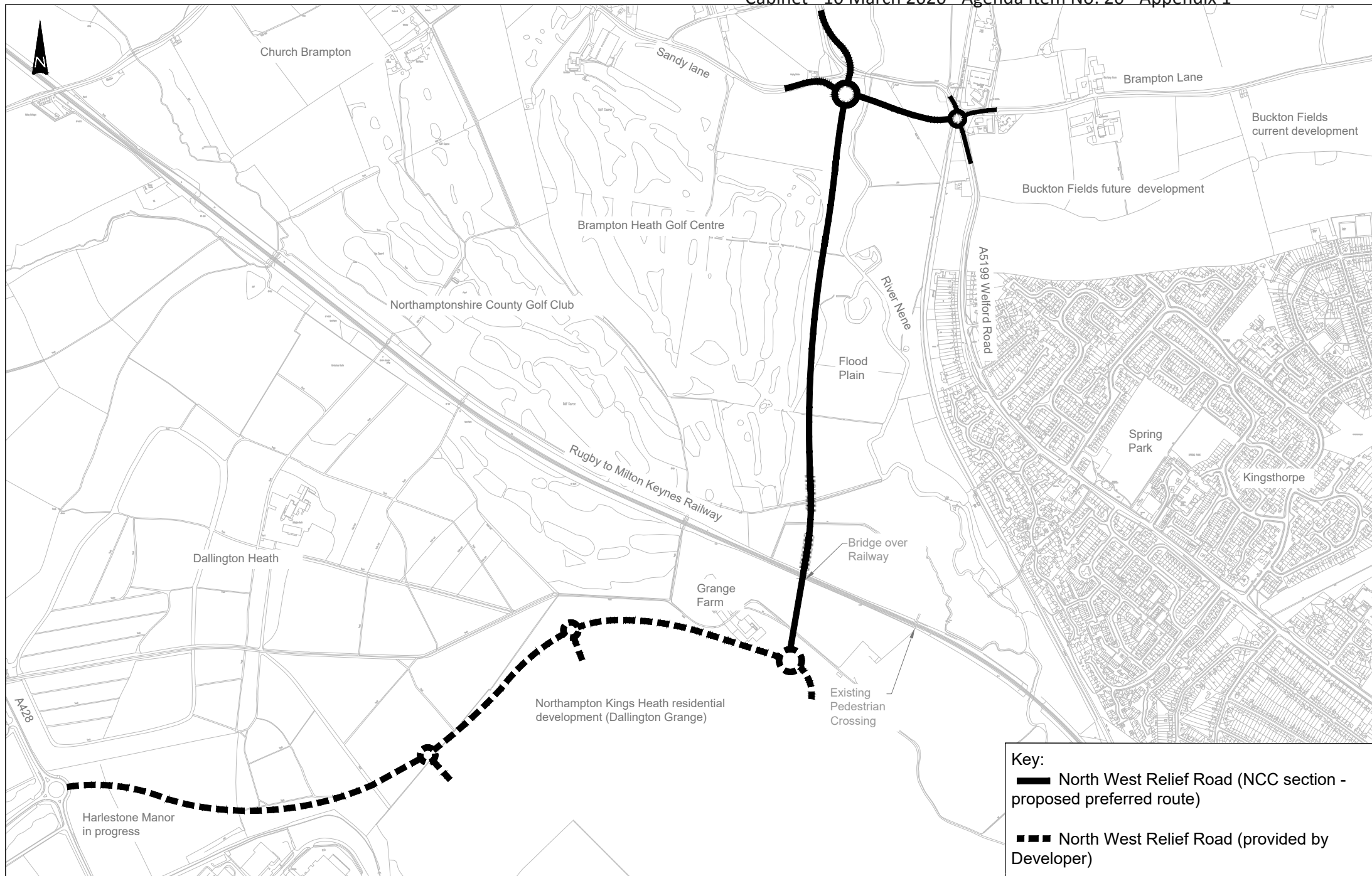
Appendix 1: Plan of scheme

Appendix 2: Details of Scheme Costs and Funding – Not for publication by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

Author:	Name: Chris Wragg Team: Transport Planning & Development
Contact details:	Tel: 01604 364411 Email: cwragg@northamptonshire.gov.uk
Background Papers:	Cabinet 12 January 2016 Item 11: Enabling Growth – Major Road Schemes Review Cabinet 6 September 2016 Item 12: Northampton North West Relief Road and Northampton Northern Orbital Route Northampton Borough Council Cabinet report 12 September 2018 Item 8: North West Relief Road Cabinet 9 October 2018 Item 11: Northampton North West Relief Road

Does the report propose a key decision is taken?	YES
If yes, is the decision in the Forward Plan?	YES
Will further decisions be required? If so please outline the timetable here	None apparent.
Does the report include delegated decisions? If so, please outline the timetable here	Land acquisition – July 2020 Progress to Stage 2 Design & Build Contract – August 2020
Is this report proposing an amendment to the budget and/or policy framework?	NO
Have the financial implications been cleared by the Strategic Finance Manager (SFM)? Have any capital spend implications passed through Capital Programme governance procedures?	YES Name of SFM: Rosemary Pallot YES
Has the report been cleared by the relevant Director?	YES Name of Director: Anna Earnshaw
Has the relevant Cabinet Member been consulted?	YES Cabinet Member: Cllr Jason Smithers
Has the relevant scrutiny committee been consulted?	NO Scrutiny Committee: Environment, Development & Transport
Has the report been cleared by Legal Services?	YES Name of solicitor: Debbie Carter-Hughes
Have any communications issues been cleared by Communications and Marketing?	YES Name of officer: Liam Beasley
Have any property Issues been cleared by Property and Asset Management?	YES Name of officer: James Wheeler
Have the Procurement Implications below been referenced in the Paper: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you evidenced compliance with the Council's Contract Procedures Rules? • Have you made clear in this paper where you are seeking Cabinet to approve an exemption from the Contract Procedure Rules and detailed the risks and mitigations? • Have you identified any EU or UK legislative risks such as non-compliance with the Public Contract Regulations Act 2015, transparency and open competition? 	YES Name of officer: Gus De Silva (This should be Head of Procurement)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you identified the procurement risks associated with a contract? 	
Are there any community safety implications?	None apparent
Are there any environmental implications:	YES. An Environmental Statement has been produced in support of the planning application for the scheme and can be found at https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-applications/current-planning-applications/Pages/19-00045-ccdful-north-west-relief-road.aspx
Are there any Health and Safety Implications:	YES. There are health and safety implications to the construction of such a major scheme. There has already been some consideration of these as part of the scheme design and they will be considered in more detail as the construction programme is progressed.
Are there any Human Resources Implications:	NO
Are there any human rights implications:	YES. Compulsory purchase of land may be required for the scheme.
Constituency Interest:	Dallington Spencer – Cllr Gareth Eales Kingsthorpe North – Cllr Sam Rumens Kingsthorpe South – Cllr Jane Birch Moulton – Cllr Judith Shepherd



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