

North Northamptonshire Shadow Executive Committee

At 6:00 pm on Thursday 25th March 2021
Held as a virtual meeting via Zoom

Item:

04

Present: -

Shadow Members

Councillor R Roberts (Leader of the Shadow Authority and Chair)
Councillor J Addison
Councillor T Partridge- Underwood
Councillor D Jenney
Councillor S North (From 19:03)

Councillor J Smithers (Deputy Leader of the Shadow Authority)
Councillor W Brackenbury
Councillor T Beattie
Councillor I Jelley
Councillor M Griffiths

Officers

R Bridge – Chief Executive
A Wylie – Monitoring Officer
C Hadley – Director of Children’s Services
G Holloway – Assistant Chief Executive
I Smith – Head of Service, Planning & Development, CBC
B Gordon – Service Development Officer, KBC
C Foster – Chief Executive, Northamptonshire Children’s Trust
E Freeman – Policy Officer
B Smith – North Northamptonshire Democratic Services

J Gotts – Executive Director Finance
L Hyde – Director of Transformation
J Waterworth – Assistant Director Assets & Environment
M Greenway – Community Partnerships Manager, ENC
M Hammond – Executive Director, KBC
K Purnell – Assistant Director Corporate & Community Services, NCC
J Conway – Head of Housing, KBC
L Hogston – Interim Head for Customer and Community Services, ENC
F McHugo – North Northamptonshire Democratic Services

Also in attendance – Councillor Hakewill, Councillor L Lawman, Councillor I McCord (West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority)

The Chair welcomed members and the viewing public to the meeting.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence received.

2. **Notifications of requests to address the meeting**

The Chair informed the meeting that two requests to address the meeting had been received. Councillor Lora Lawman, Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Climate Task & Finish Group, to introduce item 8 on the agenda and Councillor Ian McCord, West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority to address the meeting. A written question from Councillor Hakewill was also received.

Councillor Hakewill raised his question to the meeting.

“How many schools across North Northamptonshire will have to close on Election Day, May 6th 2021, to enable their premises to be used as Polling Stations and what is the additional total cost in North Northamptonshire for making the elections Covid safe?”.

The Chief Executive responded that 18 schools would be required to close and that the council would receive an allocation from cabinet funding to ensure the election was Covid-19 secure.

Councillor McCord addressed the meeting and wished North Northamptonshire success at the last meeting of the Shadow Authority. Achievements in establishing the two new councils were recognised and Councillor McCord shared hopes of a fresh start and bright future with the two councils forming trusting and collaborative relationships.

The Leader thanked Councillor McCord for his attendance and echoed wishes for success in the two new councils.

3. Members' Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 4th March 2021

The draft minutes of the Shadow Executive Committee meeting held on 4th March 2020 had been circulated.

Councillor J Smithers MOVED, and Councillor T Partridge Underwood SECONDED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The minutes of the Shadow Executive Committee meeting held on 4th March 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. PROGRAMME STATUS CLOSURE REPORT

The Director of Transformation introduced the verbal report and presented members with an outline of achievements. Most service areas had been RAG rated as green with a small number needing to be finalised in a short timescale in the couple of days preceding Vesting Day due to requirements.

The impact of Covid-19 was highlighted as a key consideration in analysis of savings achieved as resources were diverted to assist with the pandemic response. £36million of savings would be set to be achieved post Vesting Day.

The closing position of the Future Northants Programme indicated that all critical deliverables across all service areas were completed for day one of the new North Northamptonshire Council and a safe and legal status had been achieved. A list of future opportunities would be handed to the new council for consideration in future transformation programmes.

Councillor M Griffiths MOVED and Councillor I Jelley SECONDED the recommendations.

It was RESOLVED that:-

- i) The Programme Closure Report be noted.

6. Assets, Capital Schemes and Reserves Notifications – Earls Barton Parish Council, The Grange Sports Field

The report before members outline a report received from EBPC requesting that a capital grant of £800,000 be approved, in principle towards The Grange Sports Field. The

decision had been agreed at Borough Council of Wellingborough pending endorsement from the Shadow Executive.

The Director for Finance stated that the application remained an in principle grant and that requested funds would not be released until proof of other funding sources had been received. It was noted that the Football Foundation had expressed interest in the Local Authority match funding and formed part of the application.

Members supported the application and noted the potential benefits for increasing activity levels, promoting good moral within communities and improving mental health.

Councillors Griffiths and W Brackenbury expressed support for the report.

Councillor J Smithers MOVED, and Councillor T Partridge Underwood SECONDED the recommendations.

It was RESOLVED that:-

- (i) The decision by the Borough Council of Wellingborough to approve, in principle, the release of £800,000 as a grant towards 'The Grange Sports Field' development to be released when confirmation is received that other funding sources have been committed, be endorsed.

(Reason for Decision:- Consistency with the Assets, Capital Schemes and Reserves Notification process.)

7. Blueprint Change Requests

The report before members raised that it had been identified that there was no disaggregation treatment identified for the Schools Swim Service in either the West or North Blue Prints. It was outlined that the North would host the service for 12 months, with existing staffing in the service transferring across and maintain the relationship management of NSport for this initial period.

Members noted that disaggregation was not preferable at this time with the reinstating of sport and leisure facilities remaining a significant impact upon the authorities.

Councillor W Brackenbury MOVED, and Councillor T Beattie SECONDED the recommendations.

It was RESOLVED that:-

- (i) The changes requested to the Blueprint as outlined at Appendix A to the report be approved.

(Reason for Decision – to ensure a robust change management and recording process for the Blueprint for the new unitary authorities)

8. Climate Change Framework for North Northamptonshire

Councillor Lora Lawman introduced the report and outlined the cross-party work which had taken place over a series of 10 meetings and considered 110 public responses. The framework set out in the report highlighted actions members felt were a priority and should be attended to by the new Council urgently. The report recognised it is not feasible to take every potential action simultaneously, and suggested that the new Council look at actions to generate the most impact for the investment before taking decisions. The importance of continued community involvement and consultation going forward was highlighted.

Members expressed thanks to the Task & Finish group for the comprehensive report and echoed sentiments that the framework could sit at the heart of the council as a vital consideration for the community.

Councillor I Jelley MOVED and Councillor J Addison SECONDED the recommendations.

It was RESOLVED that:-

- (i) The Climate Change Framework, attached as Appendix A to the report, as the basis for implementing recommendations by the new Council after 1st April 2021, and for appropriate consultation be endorsed and approved

(Reason for Decisions – To fulfil the request of the Shadow Executive Committee in asking Scrutiny to consider proposing a strategy for tackling climate change for the new North Northamptonshire Authority)

9. North Northamptonshire Community Safety Partnership Plan 2021-22

The Community Partnerships Manager introduced the report and stated that the report would cover a short term period due to the new Council's need to establish the new working relationships. The plan would provide time for the new Council to become equipped to take this forward and gain a deeper understanding into the structure of Community Safety Partnership working. A medium – long term plan would be developed for future years.

Members noted that the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) is a statutory partnership, comprising of several 'responsible' partners and a wider membership involving the voluntary sector, housing providers and other bodies with a key role to play in making the local area safer and healthier.

Councillor M Griffiths MOVED and Councillor W Brackenbury SECONDED the recommendations.

It was RESOLVED that:-

- (i) Following due consideration the North Northamptonshire Community Safety Plan 2021-22 be adopted.

(Reason for Decision – To ensure the future North Northamptonshire Council's statutory duty to be a 'responsible' partner organisation in the local community safety partnership is endorsed. The plan is adopted by the local authority as required by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.)

10. Business Continuity Management & Strategy

The report set out the progress made in relation to drafting the North Northamptonshire Business Continuity Policy and Strategy document and highlighted key areas that need to be considered post vesting day to update and support the policy and strategy document.

Officers commented that the strategy would provide a starting point for the basis of a work programme which would identify future priorities and allow for a business impact analysis to be undertaken.

Councillor J Smithers MOVED and Councillor T Beattie SECONDED the recommendations

It was RESOLVED that:-

- i. The North Northamptonshire Council Business Continuity Management Policy and Strategy document as provided in Appendix A to the report be approved.
- ii. The areas within the policy that require further action and incorporation post vesting day be noted.

(Reason for Decisions –To accord with legislation or the policy of the Shadow Authority)

11. Emergency Plan/ Critical Incident Plan for North Northamptonshire

The report before members provided an overview of responsibilities under the CCA and the key points contained within the emergency plan. The emergency plan was developed using information and best practice from existing plans across Northamptonshire.

The officer presenting the report outlined that report set out the responsibilities in place, response arrangements and the role of responders. The service would be hosted by North Northamptonshire for a period of 1 year before review.

Members supported the approach and endorsed collaborative working across the county during the ongoing pandemic.

Councillor J Smithers MOVED and Councillor W Brackenbury SECONDED the recommendations

It was RESOLVED that:-

- (i) The Emergency Plan / Critical Incident Plan for North Northamptonshire be approved.

(Reason for Decision –To accord with legislation and the policy of the Shadow Authority)

12. Draft Enforcement Policy

The report before members set out the progress made in relation to drafting the North Northamptonshire Joint Enforcement Policy document and key areas that need to be considered post vesting day.

Officers outlined the aims of the Joint Enforcement Policy and communicated how the council would deal with non-compliance through enforcement procedures as outlined in Appendix A to the report.

Councillor T Beattie MOVED and Councillor I Jelley SECONDED the recommendations.

It was RESOLVED that:-

- i. The North Northamptonshire Council Enforcement Policy document as provided in Appendix A to the report. Be approved.
- ii. The areas within the policy that require further action and incorporation post vesting day be noted.

(Reason for Decision –To accord with legislation or the policy of the Shadow Authority)

13. Housing Policies

The recommendations to approve the Tenancy Policy, Tenancy Agreement and Aids and Adaptations Policy for Council Tenants were withdrawn at the meeting. Due to significant changes for Council tenants, further consultations were underway before consideration could be given.

The report before members set out the work undertaken to develop new policies and service-critical documentation for North Northamptonshire Council in Homelessness and Private Sector housing.

To ensure the Council met legal requirements, minimised the risk of legal challenge and all households could be offered the same level of service, members were asked to approve the recommendations which sought to harmonised policies across North Northamptonshire.

Members noted the step taken in working together and commended the work towards aligning and transforming the service,

Councillor J Smithers MOVED and Councillor M Griffiths SECONDED the recommendations.

It was RESOLVED that:-

- i. Approval be given to the homelessness policies covering the
 - homelessness prevention fund,

- temporary accommodation,
 - private rented sector access fund, and the
 - discharge of homelessness duties
- ii. The Private Sector Housing Policy be approved.

(Reason for Decisions – To ensure the Council complies with legal requirements, minimises the risk of legal challenge and that all households are offered the same level of high-quality assistance)

14. Council Tax Discount for Care Leavers

The report before members proposed a scheme to establish care leavers as a class for the purpose of Section 13A(1)(c) of The Local Government Finance Act 1992 and reduce their liability for council tax payments to nil between the ages of 18-21 years. From age 21 it was recommended that this would be assessed on a case by case basis up to the age of 25 years.

The officer presenting the report commented on the challenging transition out of care and increased likelihood of financial difficulties. The proposed reductions would allow care leavers to build self-reliance with the right support.

It was stated that the £25,000 cost of the scheme for 2021/22 would be funded through the general fund along with a £3,500 police contribution.

Members welcomed the report and commended the phased approach.

Councillor I Jelley MOVED and Councillor J Addison SECONDED the recommendations.

It was RESOLVED that:-

- (i) The creation of a Council Tax Discount for Care Leavers Policy utilising its discretion under Section 13A(1)(c) of The Local Government Finance Act 1992; to enable the provision of a discount of up to 100% of the Council Tax that is due, to care leavers who live in North Northamptonshire aged 18 years up to their 25th birthday as detailed in Appendix A to the report be approved.

(Reason for Decision – To support the Council's Local Offer for Care Leavers)

15. Children's Trust Business Plan

The Chief Executive of Northamptonshire Children's Trust shared a presentation that set out the key parameters of the business plan for a one year period, as directed by the set requirements for the Children's Trust. It was outlined that a three year plan would be brought to council in December 2021.

The plan was developed in consultation with children and young people, partners, council colleagues, lead members and the Department for Education.

Members recognised the commitment of the Council in its role as a corporate parent and commended the passion and commitment evident in the business plan. It was noted that positive feedback had already been received from Penn Green Children's Centre.

Councillor J Addison MOVED and Councillor W Brackenbury SECONDED the recommendations.

It was RESOLVED that:-

- (i) The Northamptonshire Children's Trust Business Plan be approved.

(Reason for Decision – To ensure the requirements of the service delivery contract are met.)

16. Children's Trust Joint Arrangements

The Monitoring Officers report summarised the background of the Joint Arrangements and the context within the governance structure. The Support Services Agreement, Interface Agreement and the Implementation of the Joint Committee were outlined within the report.

The Monitoring Officer commented that the arrangements would set out in contract how the Council would work with the Children's Trust and assured members that appropriate democratic accountability had been considered. Members were assured that all key provisions were in place and the Monitoring Officer was satisfied with the level of protection for both the Council and service users.

Councillor T Partridge - Underwood MOVED and Councillor M Griffiths SECONDED the recommendations.

It was RESOLVED that:-

- i. The Children's Trust Governance Arrangements which became operational on 1st November 2021 be approved.
- ii. The structure of the joint arrangements between North and West Northamptonshire including:
 - a) Joint Committee
 - b) Joint Officer Board
 - c) Support Service Agreement and SLAs
 - d) The Interface Agreement

- e) The other documents necessary to enable the transition to the two new Councils including the Deed of Variation for the existing Service Delivery Contract between the Children's Trust and Northamptonshire County Council be approved.
- (i) Power be delegated to the Director of Children's Services to finalise the Supports Services Agreement, the Interface Agreement and any other documents necessary to give effect to the Children's Trust Governance arrangements prior to 1st April 2021 and make any necessary minor operational changes to enable the transition to the two Councils of North and West Northamptonshire.

(Reason for Decisions – To ensure that the Children's Trust arrangements can operate effectively across the two new Councils including the provision of support services to the Children's Trust and operation of the existing agreements.)

17. Equality Framework

The report before members set out the Council's commitment to advancing the equality of opportunity, fostering good relations, and elimination of discrimination, in its role as an employer, service provider, commissioner of services, educator, partner and community leader.

The Equalities Task and Finish Group had developed an equality, diversity and inclusion policy, and strategy to guide the Council's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion between 2021 and 2025.

Councillor T Partridge - Underwood MOVED, and Councillor I Jelley SECONDED the recommendation.

It was RESOLVED that:-

- i. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (Appendix A) for North Northamptonshire Council be approved
- ii. The Equality Strategy (Appendix B) for North Northamptonshire Council be approved
- iii. Authority be delegated to the Policy Officer (Equality & Diversity) to make any amendments requested and any other minor amendments required in consultation with the Chair of the Equalities Task and Finish Group.

(Reasons for Decisions- To allow North Northamptonshire Council to fulfil its Public Sector Equality Duty as required by the Equalities Act (2010) (see Legal implications at section 6) and prepare the Council to undertake further work after 1 April 2021.)

18. Shared Service Arrangements

The report before members summarised the background of the Shared Service Arrangements which had been outlined in the Blueprint agreed by the Shadow Authority at the meeting held 24 September 2020. Previous concerns over protection against disputes and termination of agreements had been addressed in the proposals. The Monitoring Officer assured members that appropriate indemnities were in place to protect North Northamptonshire Council in signing the agreements.

A few minor drafting errors were recorded for the Monitoring Officer to amend.

Councillor T Partridge - Underwood MOVED, and Councillor T Beattie SECONDED the recommendation.

It was RESOLVED that:-

- i. The Inter Authority "Administrative Agreement", Appendix A to the report be approved and authority be delegated to the Leader in consultation with the Chief Executive to make any necessary amendments, finalise and execute the Agreement prior to 31st March 2021.
- ii. The Governance Arrangements Agreement attached at Appendix B to the report be approved and authority be delegated to the Leader in consultation with the Chief Executive to make any necessary amendments, finalise and execute the Agreement prior to 31st March 2021.
- iii. The draft Service Schedules attached at Appendix C in the report, included within the Inter Authority Agreement be noted and the format of the Schedules be approved.
- iv. Authority be delegated to the Leader in consultation with the Chief Executive to finalise Service Schedules to be completed before 31st March 2021

(Reason for Decisions – To ensure that governance arrangements are in place with regard to service delivery between the councils and that this is captured in agreements. Delegated authority is required to ensure that the agreements are completed prior to Vesting Day.)

19. North Northamptonshire Constitution Executive Functions

The monitoring officer presented the report to members which outlined the requests for approval of Executive functions following the Council approval of the Constitution at its meeting of 25 February 2021.

The work of the Task & Finish Group was commended.

Councillor J Smithers MOVED, and Councillor T Beattie SECONDED the recommendation.

It was RESOLVED that:-

- (i) The executive elements of the Constitution to include;
 - a) Creation of Executive Advisory Panels and the relevant constitutional provisions
 - b) Establishment of a Shared Services Joint Committee
 - c) Establishment of a Children's Trust Joint Committee
 - d) Officer Scheme of Delegationbe approved.

(Reason for Decisions – North Northamptonshire Council is required to have a Constitution. It is essential that there are appropriate delegations and governance arrangements to allow services to be delivered.)

20. Risk Management Strategy

The Director for Finance introduced the report which outlined the strategy for managing financial risks. Members noted this as an ongoing whole council responsibility and that change, transformation and partner working needed to be proportionate with appropriate management plans in place. Following Vesting Day, a Strategic Risk Register would be drafted from the risk information held by each Council but approval was needed to operate and evolve a Risk Register during 2021/22.

Councillor T Partridge - Underwood MOVED, and Councillor T Beattie SECONDED the recommendation.

It was RESOLVED that:-

- (i) The Risk Management Strategy 2021-22, attached as Appendix A to the report, be approved.

(Reason for Decision – To enable the consolidated of risk information from each sovereign Council to be considered as part of this and the first draft Risk Register, prepared in accordance with provisions to best meet the Council's needs.)

21. Motion to exclude the press and public.

The Chair confirmed that one item of exempt business was to be considered and proposed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during consideration of item 8, 'Assets, Capital Schemes Notification Process – Disposal of Doddington Road development site.

Councillor J Smithers MOVED and Councillor T Partridge – Underwood SECONDED the proposal.

It was RESOLVED that:-

- (i) The public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business, 'Assets, Capital Schemes and Reserves Notification', in accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, because exempt information may be disclosed

22. Assets, Capital Schemes Notification Process –Disposal of Doddington Road development site.

The Director for Finance introduced the report and informed members that an agreement had been made in principle which required endorsement from the Shadow Executive Committee.

Councillor Griffiths stated a prior involvement with the site and abstained from voting.

Councillor I Jelley MOVED and Councillor D Jenney SECONDED the proposal.

It was RESOLVED that:-

- (i) The decisions made by the Borough Council of Wellingborough at its Resources Committee meeting held 24th February 2021 be endorsed.

(Reason for Decision:- Consistency with the Assets, Capital Schemes and Reserves Notification process.)

23. Close of Meeting

Meeting closed at 19:55