

Meeting: North Northamptonshire Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: Thursday 28th January 2021

Time: 7:00 pm

Venue: Virtual meeting via Zoom

Committee Membership:

Councillors Pengelly (Chair) Perry (Vice Chair), Beirne, Brown, Davies, Hakewill, Harrison, Henley, Lawman, Lee, McEwan, Rowley, Titcombe.

Substitute members: Cllr Kenneth Harrington, Cllr Christine Smith-Haynes, Cllr Geoff Simmons, Cllr Andy Mercer, Cllr Paul Marks

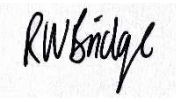
Members of the Committee are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed on the agenda.

The meeting will be available for the public to view live at the 'Democratic Services North Northants' You Tube channel:-
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcH_JAaHaMtqHDeMQEVXi2g/videos

This agenda has been published by Democratic Services.

Contact: democraticservices@northnorthants.gov.uk

Item	Subject	Officer Presenting Report	Page No
01	Apologies for non-attendance		-
02	Notification of requests to address the meeting		-
03	Members' Declarations of Interest		-
04	Minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2020		05 - 18
05	Chair's Announcements		-
Items requiring a decision			
06	Programme Status (Presentation)	Lisa Hyde	19 - 30
07	Task & Finish Group Updates a) Climate Change b) Blueprint c) Budget	Task & Finish Group Chair	31 – 34 35 – 40 To Follow
08	Forward Plan of Decisions December 2020 - March 2021 <i>To note the outline of decisions to be taken by the Executive or delegated to officers during the coming 4 month period.</i>		41 – 49
09	Work Programme: Shadow Overview & Scrutiny Committee - <i>To discuss any future items to be considered by Overview & Scrutiny and consider any amendments to the current workplan.</i>		Discussion Item

Exempt Items			
011	None notified		
Urgent Items			
012	To consider any items of business of which notice has been given to the Proper Officer prior to the meeting of the Shadow Executive and the Chairman considers to be urgent pursuant to the LGA 1972.		
013	Close of Meeting		
	<p>Rob Bridge, Chief Executive, North Northamptonshire Shadow Authority</p>  <p>Proper Officer 20th January 2021</p>		

Virtual Meetings

During the current Covid-19 pandemic, meetings of the Shadow Authority will be conducted via Zoom as virtual meetings. Those meetings which are normally accessible to the public will be live-streamed on YouTube at -

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcH_JAaHaMtqHDeMQEVXi2g/videos

Where there is a need for the Authority to discuss exempt or confidential business, the press and public will be excluded from those parts of the meeting only and will be unable to view proceedings.

Public Participation

The Shadow Authority has approved procedures for you to present petitions or request to address meetings of the Authority.

ITEM	NARRATIVE	DEADLINE
Members of the Public Questions	Questions may be submitted by members of the Public to meetings of the committee. The question must be in writing and submitted 2 clear working days prior to the meeting. There are no supplementary questions permitted, and no debate on questions or answers. A period of 30 minutes (Chair's Discretion) is allocated for Public Questions.	5:00 pm Monday 25 th January 2021
Members of the Public Agenda Statements	Members of the Public may make statements at meetings in relation to reports on the agenda. A request to address the committee must be received 2 clear working days prior to the meeting. The member of the Public has a maximum of 3 minutes to address the committee. A period of 30 minutes (Chair's Discretion) is allocated for Public Statements.	5:00 pm Monday 25 th January 2021
Other Shadow Members Questions	Written questions of up to 50 words maximum permitted. To be received at least 2 clear working days prior to the meeting. Chair's discretion on supplementary question. A period of 30 minutes (Chair's Discretion) is allocated for Other Shadow Members Questions.	5:00 pm Monday 25 th January 2021
Other Shadow Members Agenda Statements	Other Shadow Members may make statements at meetings in relation to reports on the agenda. A request to address the committee must be received 2 clear working days prior to the meeting. The Shadow Member has a maximum of 3 minutes to address the committee. A period of 30 minutes (Chair's Discretion) is allocated for Shadow Member Statements.	5:00 pm Monday 25 th January 2021

These procedures are included within the Shadow Authority's Constitution. Please contact democraticservices@northnorthants.gov.uk for more information.

Members' Declarations of Interest

Members are reminded of their duty to ensure they abide by the approved Member Code of Conduct whilst undertaking their role as a Shadow Councillor. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **relates to** a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, you must declare the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless granted a dispensation.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **relates to** other Registerable Interests, you must declare the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but must not take part in any vote on the matter unless you have been granted a dispensation.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **relates to** your own financial interest (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest) or **relates to** a financial interest of a relative, friend or close associate, you must disclose the interest and not vote on the matter unless granted a dispensation. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting.

Members are reminded that they should continue to adhere to the Authority's approved rules and protocols during the conduct of meetings. These are contained in the Authority's approved Constitution.

If Members have any queries as to whether a Declaration of Interest should be made please contact the Monitoring Officer at – Adele.Wylie@northnorthants.gov.uk

Press & Media Enquiries

Any press or media enquiries should be directed through the Authority's Communications Team to futurenorthants@northamptonshire.gov.uk

Public Enquiries

Public enquiries regarding the Authority's meetings can be made to democraticservices@northnorthants.gov.uk

North Northamptonshire Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee

At 7:00 pm on Thursday 10th December 2020

Held as a virtual meeting via Zoom

Present: -

Shadow Members

Councillor Mark Pengelly (Chair)
Councillor Mark Rowley
Councillor Ash Davies
Councillor J Hakewill

Councillor Victoria Perry (Vice Chair)
Councillor Lora Lawman
Councillor Greg Titcombe
Councillor Anne Lee

Officers

G Hammons – Interim Chief Finance Officer
A Wylie – Monitoring Officer

P Goult – North Northamptonshire
Democratic Services

M Dickinson – Kettering BC

L Hyde – Director of Transformation
L Hogston – East Northamptonshire
Council

B Smith – North Northamptonshire
Democratic Services

S Darcy – BC Wellingborough

Also in attendance: - Ms. L Buckingham

1. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor McEwan.

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

A request to address the meeting had been received from Ms. L Buckingham in relation to the report on the draft Budget 2021/22 and the report on the Local Council Tax Support Scheme.

3. **Members' Declarations of Interest**

Members were invited to declare any matters of interest on items to be discussed during the meeting. No declarations were made.

4. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The draft minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on the 12th November 2020 had been circulated.

RESOLVED that: -

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 12th November 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Under this item, Councillor Henley wished it noted that the Committee were promised details of key performance indicators mentioned during the presentation on Children's Services to the Committee at its previous meeting. These had yet to be received. Officers would remind colleagues of the request for this information.

5. **Chairs Announcements**

There were no announcements on this occasion.

6. Draft Medium Term Financial Plan & Budget 2021/22

6 (a) General Fund Revenue Budget 2021/22 and MTFP

The Chair in introducing this item noted the complexities involved in putting together the draft Budget for 2021/22 and noted that the authority's allocation from Government was yet to be confirmed. It was further noted that the draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget proposals were yet to be issued; this would be considered in January 2021.

The Chair invited Ms. L Buckingham to address Committee on this report. Ms. Buckingham raised concern that the draft Budget included some inequalities relating to proposed fees & charges. Ms. Buckingham suggested that whilst fees & charges were to be harmonised across North Northamptonshire it was unclear if the level of service was also to be replicated across the area. Currently sovereign councils provided differing levels of service, was this to be standardised from Vesting Day. Ms. Buckingham suggested that there needed to be greater clarity for the public regarding what level of service they were likely to receive. In addition, Ms. Buckingham noted that concessionary fees & charges varied across sovereign councils e.g., concessions for the unemployed, senior citizens etc; was this to be standardised. The Chair thanked Ms. Buckingham for her contribution.

The Interim Chief Finance Officer (G Hammons) introduced the report which had been considered by the Shadow Executive Committee at its meeting on 7 December 2020. The Shadow Executive Committee had approved the draft Budget for consultation; the public consultation would commence on 11 December 2020 and conclude on 29th January 2021.

The results of both the public consultation, comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and officer's final proposals would be considered by the Shadow Executive Committee at its meeting on 10th February 2021. The Shadow Authority at its meeting on 25th February 2021 would have responsibility for agreeing the final budget and Council Tax Resolution.

The Interim Chief Finance Officer stressed the difficulties in preparing the budget proposals against a background of both reorganisation and the Covid-19 pandemic. The report detailed the process followed by officers in preparing the draft proposals.

As the Government's funding proposals for North Northamptonshire had yet to be received, officers where they were able had estimated income; these estimates would be reviewed and adjusted once the confirmed level of funding had been received.

It was further recognised that there were several risks identified whilst drawing-up the proposals. These included the potential for increased demand in both Children's and Adult Services, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the local government reorganisation process. Some proposals for mitigating these risks were included in the report.

The report before the Committee included an Executive Summary detailing the draft Revenue Budget 2021-22 and Medium-Term Financial Plan for North Northamptonshire Council. The proposed budget commenced the budget consultation process. Residents, local partners, and other stakeholders would have the opportunity to review the proposed budget and provide feedback during the seven-week consultation period. The draft budget would also be presented to the Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee for comment and there would be wider engagement with the elected members for North Northamptonshire.

After considering the outcomes of both the review by the Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the wider consultation feedback, the Shadow Executive Committee would consider the proposals in the draft final budget and the Council Tax Resolution report for 2021-22 for recommendation to the North Northamptonshire Shadow Authority budget meeting on 25th February 2021. The Council Tax Resolution report would contain the final information from all the precepting authorities required to propose the Council Tax for all areas of North Northamptonshire.

The budget report set out the latest estimated funding position, service budget pressures, key financial risks and challenges influencing the development of the new North Northamptonshire Council's financial plans for 2021-22 and the ongoing financial impact of those plans, together with the longer-term estimates of funding and spending requirements.

The draft budget for North Northamptonshire Council would provide a range of services to residents and businesses across the area including care to vulnerable adults and children, education, the disposal and collection of waste, household waste recycling, economic development, housing, and support for the homeless.

The report stated that the creation of a new single tier council provided the opportunity to transform and improve local services for the residents of North Northamptonshire. The Council would work with businesses and other partners to support economic recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic and promote growth and would support its communities and vulnerable people through its work with the voluntary and community sector. The draft budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan had been developed in that context.

The draft budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan which had been prepared continued the improvement journey set out in the Future Northants Programme Prospectus for Change with investment in transformation for services, particularly within adults and children's services. The budget approach had been to provide a 'safe and legal plus' transition from the sovereign councils through the Blueprint. There were resources for the most vulnerable to provide support through the current COVID-19 pandemic. The budget included efficiencies arising from a review of the senior management restructure and recognised these were uncertain times by setting aside resources to respond to unexpected pressures.

Members noted that the new Council would continue to face financial pressures. It was recognised nationally that there were significant budget pressures for local government, not only from the longer-term impact of COVID-19 on costs and income, but also Social Care demand and other cost pressures which pre-dated the pandemic.

Whilst the creation of the new Unitary Council created several opportunities to benefit the region, it was also recognised that there were some risks and costs, both upfront and legacy, associated with the implementation of local government reform.

The Spending Review announced by the Chancellor on 25th November 2020 set out the funding for local government at a national level for 2021-22. There was recognition of some of the pressures facing the sector, including COVID-19, however, a large proportion of the funding announced was one-off in nature. This, together with changes to the funding regime for local government planned from 2022-23 onwards, leads to a great deal of uncertainty when developing medium-term financial plans. The main ongoing resource made possible through the Spending Review was the ability to be able to increase Council Tax by up to 5%, inclusive of a 3% precept for Adult Social Care, for the next financial year.

In the face of these challenges, risks, and uncertainties over the short and medium term, the five predecessor councils had assisted to develop initial draft revenue budget plans for consultation which covered the period up to 2024- 25. These plans would need to be continually reviewed, monitored, and assessed, including post Vesting Day.

The draft budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan incorporated the initial financial benefits and economies of scale arising from amalgamating five councils into one. There would be further opportunities for savings in the future as service provision continued to be reviewed and transformed building on the work already undertaken as part of the Future Northants Programme.

However, the Council continued to face a forecast funding gap of £18m for 2021-22 having incorporated the Spending Review announcements where there was most certainty, financial benefits arising from economies of scale and government flexibilities for spreading the collection fund deficit over the three years 2021-22 to 2023-24.

To help maintain and protect levels of service provision the Shadow Authority would consult on a core Council Tax increase of 1.99% which was up to the level set by the government without triggering a referendum and utilising the allowable social care precept increase of 3% in full. The overall increase in Council Tax would be 4.99%. This would contribute around £8m per annum and would represent a Band D level of Council Tax for North Northamptonshire Council of £1,532.90 in 2021/22, equivalent to £29.48 per week. This Band D figure did not include the Council Tax for individual town and parish councils or the Council Tax set for fire and police by the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

Members were reminded that the County Council's Band D Council Tax level was the lowest in the country for a County Council in 2020-21. The Council Tax for the Unitary Authority from 2021-22 would consist of both the County Council's precept requirements and a harmonised amount for the District and Borough Councils across the North, so that there is a single level of Council Tax for the new Unitary Authority. Based on 2020-21 Council Tax levels this would result in the North Northamptonshire Unitary Band D being in the lowest quartile for England.

To help put this into context the report indicated that the national average for a unitary council's Band D in 2020-21 was £30.17 per week which is £2.12 (or 7.5%) higher than the 2020-21 rate in North Northamptonshire (applying this average Band D level, the additional yield would have been around £12.2m). Council Tax income was key to the ongoing financial sustainability of the Council and the delivery of vital services to its residents alongside investment in its Neighbourhoods.

After the proposed increase in Council Tax there was still a funding gap to bridge of around £10m for 2021-22. To fund the remaining gap the Council would continue to work with government to receive a fair financial settlement. The Local Government Finance Settlement was expected to be announced in mid-December, and alongside this the Council would continue to develop ways in which it could produce a balanced budget for 2021-22 and over the medium term.

Following the consultation on the draft budget the full suite of budget reports would be presented to the Shadow Executive Committee on 10th February 2021. This would include

the Revenue Budget 2021-22 and Medium-Term Financial Plan, the Housing Revenue Account Budget 2021-22, the Capital Strategy and Capital Programme, and the Treasury Management Strategy. The Draft Housing Revenue Account Budget 2021-22 would be considered by the Shadow Executive Committee on 7th January 2021 before consultation with the Tenants Forums in Kettering and Corby. These reports together would provide a framework for revenue and capital planning for 2021-22 and into the medium term. These budget reports, including the Council Tax Resolution would be considered by the Shadow Authority on 25th February 2021.

The budget timetable was set out in the table included within the report. Consultation would commence on 11th December 2020 and conclude on 29th January 2021.

It was noted that the North Northamptonshire Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget Task and Finish Group (NN MTFP & Budget T&F Group) established a set of guiding principles to steer the budget setting process. The key themes underpinning the draft 2021-22 budget as established by the NN MTFP & Budget T&F Group were as follows:

- Being safe, legal, and compliant;
- Resources are focussed on priorities;
- A financially balanced budget for 2021-22 and over the medium term;
- Value for money provided to the taxpayer and rent payer;
- An acceptable level of risk which is proactively managed; and
- Transparent decision making.

The Interim Chief Finance Officer indicated that it was currently proposed to provide an update to the Shadow Executive Committee on the Budget proposals on the 7th January 2021, once the Government's final settlement was known, and officers had assessed its impact on the current draft proposals. A further update briefing to Overview and Scrutiny Committee would also need to be arranged.

Councillor Hakewill noted that the report indicated the level of proposed Council Tax was likely to be among the lowest within the country; this was not dissimilar to the current NCC position. Councillor Hakewill raised concern that the county was an area of growth, with increasing demand on council services. Councillor Hakewill requested that information be circulated outside of the meeting showing where North Northamptonshire would sit in terms of the level of Council Tax in comparison with other similar local authorities.

The Interim Chief Finance Officer would make benchmarking information available to Members in relation to where the proposed North Northamptonshire Council Tax amount would be positioned; this was likely to be in the lower quartile.

Councillor Henley noted that the proposals included gaps, where further detail was required. Councillor Henley hoped that complete information would be made available well before the Shadow Authority were requested to set the Budget 2021/22 in February.

Councillor Henley also queried on what the financial arrangements would be for "host" and "lead" authorities in terms of ensuring that there was appropriate payment for services provided. Councillor Henley was querying what work had been undertaken on disaggregating the NCC Balance Sheet.

The Interim Chief Finance Officer explained that the principles relating to the disaggregation of the NCC Balance Sheet and the aggregation of district councils had been agreed by the Shadow Executive Committee at its meeting in August 2020. Work was still ongoing to reach

a final assessment, understanding that some historic financial accounts were yet to receive final sign-off from auditors.

In relation to “host” and “lead” authorities, budgets were to be split between North and West, however Service Level Agreements and governance arrangements were being developed. Once confirmed it would enable an authority to transfer funding to the other where a service was being provided on their behalf.

Councillor Lee commended the reference in the report to the impact of Covid-19 on mental health and the need for increased funding. Councillor Lee noted the need to ensure appropriate funding for Addiction Services; there was a heavy reliance on the voluntary sector.

Councillor Lee also noted that whilst funding for environmental projects was detailed in the report this was a modest amount. Given that the budget was to be measured against the new authority’s intention to address Climate Change Councillor Lee was concerned that the amount currently allocated was insufficient.

Councillor Henley suggested that whilst a 4.99% increase in Council Tax was being quoted in the report, the reality was that the increase would vary across the existing sovereign council areas, with a 2% increase in Kettering, 4% in Corby and 6% in Wellingborough and East Northamptonshire.

The Interim Chief Finance Officer explained that the Shadow Executive Committee at its meeting in August had agreed to adopt an approach to address the need to harmonise Council Tax across North Northamptonshire.

Councillor Henley queried the detailed collection level of Council Tax within the report, and whether this was too high. The Interim Chief Finance Officer agreed that this was a potential risk area, together with the potential economic impact of Covid-19 on both domestic and business rates.

Councillor Hakewill requested whether the figure for the NCC element embedded-in the proposed Council Tax could be provided at some point. Councillor Hakewill also suggested that the reports tabled in August needed to be made available during the public consultation process, in order that these could be cross-referenced with the budget proposals.

Councillor Hakewill also indicated that he had circulated to Members prior to the meeting a discussion paper which highlighted the potential impact of current arrangements between KBC and Kettering local councils on future harmonisation and raised concern regarding the potential for double taxation.

The Interim Chief Finance Officer would provide information regarding the NCC element outside of the meeting, as that detail was not to hand. In relation to the consultation process this included explanation of the harmonisation proposal including links to previous reports and resolutions made on that issue. In relation to the service and financial relationship between the new unitary and local councils, it was recognised that there may be a need for harmonisation across the area, however this would not be completed by Vesting Day and would need to be addressed by the new authority.

Councillor Hakewill suggested that the matter should be addressed as soon as possible, otherwise parts of North Northamptonshire may end up subsidising services within the current Kettering area.

Councillor Perry felt that the Committee needed to agree their strategy for scrutinising the draft Budget and avoid getting into too much fine detail at this point.

Councillor Henley raised a query regarding fees & charges and sought clarification that the report before Members formed part of the consultation process. Councillor Henley was concerned that the details on fees & charges did not include comparison with current fees. Officers confirmed that in the consultation paper there would be links-back to sovereign council's fees & charges so the public would be able to compare. Officers further confirmed that further work on harmonising fees & charges was to be undertaken over coming weeks.

6 (b) Capital Strategy and Programme

The Interim Chief Finance Officer (G Hammons) introduced the report which had been considered by the Shadow Executive Committee at its meeting on 7 December 2020. The Shadow Executive Committee had approved the draft Capital Strategy and baseline Capital Programme for public consultation

The report before Committee set out the Capital Strategy and baseline Capital Programme as at the end of November 2020 leading to consideration of the Final Programme by the North Northamptonshire Shadow Authority, for approval on 25th February 2021 alongside the Council's Revenue Budget Report.

The Capital Programme proposed investment of about £200m over the next 4-years. This included currently approved schemes (£54m), potential for new identified projects (£99m) and the HRA Capital Programme (£48m).

The report identified the key factors and challenges influencing the development of North Northamptonshire Council's future commitments for 2021-22 and beyond, and the governance process in place to successfully manage the review and approval of new schemes moving forward.

This would form part of the 7-week public consultation alongside the Draft Budget proposals following review by Shadow Executive Committee and by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. After considering the outcomes of both the Overview and Scrutiny review and the feedback received from local partners and the public, the Shadow Executive Committee would recommend the proposals in the Final Capital Programme and Final Budget to the North Northamptonshire Shadow Authority meeting on 25th February 2021.

The report presented a draft Capital Programme for 2021-25 including the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme 2021-25 and a Baseline Development Pool based on the Capital Strategy principles agreed by the newly appointed senior officers, the North Northamptonshire Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan Task and Finish Group (NN Budget & MTFP T&F Group) and Shadow Executive Committee.

The full suite of budget reports would be presented to the Shadow Executive Committee on 10th February 2021, which would include the Revenue Budget 2021-22 and Medium-Term Financial Plan; the Housing Revenue Account Budget 2021-22; the Capital Strategy and Capital Programme; and the Treasury Management Strategy. These reports together would provide a framework for revenue and capital planning for 2021-22 and into the medium term.

North Northamptonshire Council had not yet established a Corporate Plan. The North Northamptonshire Budget & MTFP Task and Finish Group established a set of guiding principles to steer the budget setting process.

The key principles underpinning the Capital Strategy in compiling the Capital programme were as follows:

- The delivery of a Medium-Term Capital Programme which is affordable and sustainable, ensuring that the Council's internal resources and application of external borrowing are utilised to fund capital expenditure where it supports the delivery of the Council's financial sustainability and where there are statutory requirements such as health & safety;
- The Capital Strategy should make explicit the links to, and integration with, the Council's other strategies. New capital investment will only be permitted if it contributes to the achievement of the Council's corporate priorities;
- The use of external funding is prioritised against the areas of greatest need, in the main supporting highways maintenance, the delivery of education places, the Corby Town Plan and Tresham Garden Village within North Northants. In the current financial climate priority will be given to schemes that also deliver transformation and/or revenue savings;
- Maximisation of the use of the Council's assets, and where possible working with local partner organisations to maximise the efficiency of assets across the public sector and North Northants;
- Take into account external influences such as the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership, Oxford Cambridge Arc, Health, and joint working with other partner authorities etc;
- Key integration and links with the council's other corporate strategies including Corporate Plan, Treasury Management, Investment Strategy, and Asset Management Plan;
- Set out the Council's regeneration and economic development ambition and additional objectives;
- Set out the governance and risk management arrangements.

The Spending Review at the end of November announced £100 billion of capital spending next year to kickstart growth and support jobs. Schools, hospitals, and transport scheme projects would receive multi-year funding certainty, and the government would centre its spending around three objectives: economic recovery, 'levelling-up' and meeting the UK's net zero emissions target by 2050. £7.1 billion of Housing investment was also announced over a 4-year period to unlock up to 860,000 homes through capital grants and loan financing. The impact for North Northamptonshire was not yet known but would become clearer before the Final Capital Programme was set in February 2021.

HM Treasury ran a consultation on the future lending terms of the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) with the aim of developing a proportionate and equitable way to prevent local authorities from using PWLB loans to buy commercial assets primarily for yield, without impeding their ability to pursue service delivery, housing, and regeneration under the prudential regime as they did now. The outcome was that PWLB would no longer lend to local authorities that planned to buy commercial assets primarily for yield. PWLB would still be available to all local authorities for refinancing.

The Council wished to invest in regeneration and economic development schemes, and this was included in the Development Pool with further work to be undertaken as the strategy developed alongside the overall council priorities and objectives post Vesting Day.

Councillor Hakewill queried the absence of information relating to Reserves. In addition, within the report there were details of currently identified risks with reference to the use of Reserves being a potential source of mitigation. Councillor Hakewill sought more detail

regarding Reserves and suggested that the identified risks (particularly those with a RED rating) form the focus of scrutiny going forward.

The Interim Chief Finance Officer confirmed that identifying the level of Reserves formed part of the work being undertaken on balances which was ongoing. An update on this would be provided during the budget-setting process. It was recognised that this information needed to be provided prior to the Shadow Authority approving the budget.

The Chair raised the issue of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The Interim Chief Finance Officer confirmed that work was being undertaken on formulating a draft budget for 2021/22 and for the medium-term. A report would be submitted to the Shadow Executive Committee in January, to be followed by consultation with the tenant forums in Corby and Kettering.

The Chair registered his thanks to officers for the work in preparing the budget reports, and fully appreciated the difficult circumstances faced due to LGR and Covid-19.

Councillor Perry suggested the establishment of a Task and Finish Group to focus on the significant issues, particularly those where the new authority needed to be “safe and legal”. Councillor Perry suggested that the Group focus on the statutory services. It was suggested that the Group be opened-up to the wider Shadow Authority membership, and that the Liberal Democrat Group be invited to participate.

The Chair stressed that the role of the Group would be to act as a “critical friend” on the budget, and support ensuring a “safe and legal” budget could be set. The Chair suggested that the Group meet prior to Christmas and conduct a scoping meeting, with further meetings held during January.

Councillor Pengelly MOVED and Councillor Rowley SECONDED the recommendation to establish a Task and Finish Group.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) A Budget Task and Finish Group be established to consider a response to the draft Budget 2021/22, the Housing Revenue Account 2021/22, and the Medium-Term Financial Plan;
- (ii) The Group to be chaired by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Councillor Pengelly) together with the following membership: -

Conservative Members x 4
Labour Member x 1
Liberal Democrat Member x 1
Independent Group Member x 1

7. Local Council Tax Support Scheme

The Chair invited Ms. L Buckingham to address Committee on this report.

Ms. Buckingham raised concern that there had been no mention in the consultation document relating to any potential impact on war widows; this had been highlighted in the West’s consultation. In addition, Ms. Buckingham was concerned that there was no

discussion of a Discretionary Fund being established. Ms. Buckingham commented that there would be real hardship on some households should the proposals go through, particularly where there would be a significant reduction in support.

The Chair thanked Ms. Buckingham for her contribution.

(Ms. Buckingham was removed from the virtual meeting at this point).

The ENC Interim Head of Customer & Community Services (L Hogston) introduced the report. The report before Members provided the Committee with an analysis of the outcome of the Council Tax Support Scheme public consultation. The Authority had received 409 survey responses in total.

On the 8th October 2020, the Committee had been presented with a report detailing the proposed North Northamptonshire Council Tax Support Scheme 2021/22 for consultation. The Committee requested that the outcome of the consultation was presented to the Committee prior to the Shadow Executive deciding on the scheme at their meeting on the 7th January 2021.

An 8-week consultation ran for the period 5th October 2020 to 30th November 2020. This was more than the required statutory 6 weeks as Members of the task and finish group recognised that the proposed changes could have a significant impact on vulnerable people and therefore wanted to do more consultation than the minimum required. Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee also fully supported the longer consultation period. Details of the consultation methodology used were detailed in the report before the Committee.

The appendix accompanying the report provided an analysis of the results. In total 409 survey responses had been received. The appendix illustrated the demography of the respondents, the level of support for each proposal, a summary of comments etc.

Seven separate proposals were outlined in the consultation. Respondents were asked for each proposal whether they; strongly agree, tend to agree, neither agree nor disagree, tend to disagree, or strongly disagree. They were also given the option 'don't know'. A summary of the response received to each proposal was included in the appendix: -

- Proposal 1: Almost half of the respondents agreed with the proposal to harmonise the minimum Council Tax contribution to 25% of Council Tax liability for working age people. 39% disagreed and 11% did not have an opinion
- Proposal 2: Exactly half of the respondents agreed with the proposal to remove the award of a family premium when assessing entitlement to LCTSS. 21% disagreed and 23% did not have an opinion.
- Proposal 3: More than half of the respondents agreed with the proposal to limit the child allowance to two children. Just over a quarter disagreed and 14% did not have an opinion.
- Proposal 4: Just under half of the respondents agreed with the proposal to restrict backdating to 1 calendar month. 32% disagreed and 15% did not have an opinion.
- Proposal 5: 68% of the respondents agreed with the proposal to restrict temporary absence outside of the UK to 4 weeks. 15% disagreed and 13% did not have an opinion.
- Proposal 6: 41% of the respondents agreed with the proposal to remove entitlement to the Severe Disability Premium (SDP) where a person is paid Universal Credit (Carer's Element) to look after them. 34% disagreed and 16% did not have an opinion.

- Proposal 7: 44% of the respondents agreed with the proposal to remove the WRAC for new Employment and Support Allowance claimants. 20% disagreed and 27% did not have an opinion.

As the consultation period had only recently ended, officers had only been able to provide a full breakdown and analysis of responses to Proposal 1. This was included with the report. The Head of Customer & Community Services confirmed that breakdowns and analysis of the other proposals was underway, and this would be circulated to Members outside of the meeting.

In relation to the issue raised by the public speaker regarding any potential impact on war widows, the Head of Customer & Community Services explained there was already a consistent policy among sovereign councils of discounting war widow's pension in any assessment; it was being proposed that policy would continue.

Councillor Henley queried whether it had been ascertained whether legal advice had been sought regarding whether it was legal for the recent consultation to only include one option for public comment. Councillor Henley was concerned that there was not a range of potential options provided in the consultation document. The Head of Customer & Community Services confirmed that legal advice had been sought and received, and that the Authority could consult on its preferred scheme only of 25%.

The Head of Customer & Community Services confirmed that if because of the consultation exercise there were alternative proposals submitted for consideration these would be presented to the Shadow Executive Committee, who may determine to agree an alternative scheme.

Councillor Henley felt that given the responses, and the fact that alternative options were not included in the original consultation, he felt that it did not provide adequate support for alternatives. Councillor Henley would have preferred to see the public provided with a range of options to comment upon.

Councillor Hakewill stated that during Dorset's LGR, their SCO included the provision for their harmonisation of Council Tax Support to be phased in. Councillor Hakewill wondered whether this was still an option.

The Head of Customer & Community Services stated that MHCLG had confirmed that North Northamptonshire could take up to 24 months to phase-in a harmonised scheme, however if it were practicable to introduce a harmonised scheme on Vesting Day then the authority could do so. The Shadow Executive Committee had agreed a draft scheme, this had been consulted upon, the results of the consultation would be considered by Members, and if agreed could be introduced by 1st April 2021.

The Monitoring Officer further confirmed that allowing a differential scheme across the Authority may leave the new council open to challenge on equalities grounds, given that citizens in one part of North Northamptonshire would receive different levels of support from those in another part of the area. Officers felt that it could be proven it was practicable to introduce a harmonised scheme and that a charge of inequality in this matter from citizens in North Northamptonshire could be prevented.

The Chair suggested that it was still possible to phase-in the new Scheme, and that an alternative proposal could be submitted to the Shadow Executive Committee for consideration.

Councillor Perry suggested that the Committee try to agree a consensus response, or at least agree a list of observations, to submit to the Shadow Executive Committee as

Overview and Scrutiny's response to the consultation. This could be presented at the appropriate meeting of the Shadow Executive Committee.

Councillor Perry proposed that the comments and observations made by the Committee be collated and formatted in a response to go forward to the Shadow Executive Committee.

Councillor Perry indicated that she was not supportive of a Discretionary Fund but had previously sought information regarding the financial support and guidance available to residents currently provided by sovereign councils. Sovereign councils did provide financial advice to those who were struggling, and Councillor Perry sought the level of resource provided be quantified for Members information.

The Head of Customer & Community Services agreed to collate information from sovereign councils on what current levels of resource existed to provide financial advice to customers and seek assurance that existing resources and agreements be carried forward post-Vesting Day. It was confirmed that one of the current LGR workstreams were considering this matter, but it was intended that existing levels of support be maintained for the near future.

Councillor Lee expressed her support for a Discretionary Fund given the potential hardship caused to some residents by the potential change.

Councillor Hakewill again expressed support for a phasing-in of any changes. Councillor Hakewill noted that there would be a particularly negative impact on claimants in Corby. Councillor Hakewill suggested that in the past it had been usual for some form of mechanism to assist those most vulnerable during the initial stages of any phasing-in. Councillor Hakewill suggested that MHCLG be approached to ask whether a phasing-in would be permitted.

Councillor Rowley felt that given the consultation responses, and that it was practicable to introduce a uniform scheme by Vesting Day, that the proposal be supported. Whilst appreciating the detrimental impact on claimants in Corby the Shadow Authority had conducted a survey and the results were clear. The new authority would therefore be "safe and legal" and mitigate against any challenge being successful.

Councillor Henley reminded the Committee that if the current proposal were agreed claimants in Wellingborough and East Northamptonshire would also pay more, not just in Corby, although the potential increase was less in those areas. Councillor Henley felt that given the current local economy increases would be difficult for many people, and the economic situation may worsen. Councillor Henley noted that the collection rate was estimated to decrease from 98.5% to 98%, which he felt was optimistic. Councillor Henley felt that a phased approach would be the best approach, and again raised concern regarding the lack of options provided in the consultation paper.

In conclusion it was agreed that the Chair and Vice Chair meet to summarise the points raised by the Committee, in order that these be presented to the Shadow Executive Committee at the appropriate meeting.

The Chair thanked the Head of Customer & Community Services for her report.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The Committee noted the outcome of the consultation process; and
- (ii) Agreed that the Chair and/or Vice Chair make representations to the Shadow Executive Committee based on the discussions during the meeting.

8. Programme Update

The Director of Transformation (L Hyde) introduced the report. The report provided an update on the preparations for Vesting Day and the creation of the new unitary council, North Northamptonshire Council.

The Update report included a summary on Programme Status, Day 1 Assurance, Change Management, Communication and Engagement and a Finance Monitoring Report (introduced by the Interim Chief Finance Officer).

The Committee noted on the Programme Status Summary that Adults had now moved to GREEN with Finance moving to AMBER. In relation to Finance the impact of the failure to closedown previous years accounts was highlighted.

Children's Services was still AMBER. The Children's Trust was now live, but still currently in the "stabilisation phase".

Under Corporate, it was noted the proposals around Tier 1-3 staffing were being implemented and the disaggregation of staff where appropriate. Until these staffing issues were complete Corporate would remain as AMBER.

The Interim Chief Finance Officer introduced the regular Budget Monitoring report. The report indicated under Investment that there was currently a projected £190k underspend. In respect of Benefit Realisation there was a negative variance of £548k reported. The overall variance of £358k had decreased by £58k since the previous report. The report indicated that those savings not delivered in 2020/21 would be delivered in later years.

The report also included a projected outturn position of sovereign councils. It was noted that following receiving a Government grant that NCC were reporting a projected surplus of £3.6m. Among district councils, despite receiving some additional Government funding, the impact of Covid-19 and other pressures would see the need for efficiency savings and/or the need to draw on Reserves.

Further Government funding had been announced but was yet to be incorporated in the report. The report did not include potential losses from reduced Council Tax and Business Rates, which would not be formally reported until 2021/22.

The report indicated that there remained significant financial risks in relation to the outturn position of sovereign councils.

It was noted that of a total of £84.448m savings, £34.907m had been delivered in 2019/20, and LGR was on track to deliver £13.993m during 2020/21. A further £35.608m would need to be delivered post-Vesting Day.

Councillor Henley queried on the update position relating to the Programme Status Summary, given that the report was a few weeks old. The Director stated that there was no estimated direction of travel towards RED, but likely to be AMBER. The Director stated that the programme was now entering into a complex phase as the project moved towards Vesting Day.

Councillor Hakewill sought clarification that the Government were not provide additional grant to cover loss of income by councils in relation to commercial investments. The Interim Chief Finance Officer confirmed that Government were not covering commercial losses and councils would need to cover this loss from efficiency savings and/or draw-down from Reserves.

The Chair commented that there was still confusion among some staff, particularly in relation to the provision of services by LGSS and whether some staff in North Northamptonshire may need to be subject to TUPE to host and lead authorities.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The high-level Programme Delivery Status report be noted;
- (ii) The update on Change Readiness be noted;
- (iii) The Communication and Engagement update be noted; and
- (iv) The Finance Monitoring report be noted.

9. Forward Plan of Decisions December 2020-March 2021

A copy of the Forward Plan of Decisions for the period December 2020 – March 2021 had been circulated to Members with the agenda.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The Forward Plan of Decisions be noted.

10. Work Programme – Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor L Lawman provided a brief update on the work of the Climate Change Task and Finish Group, which had met on three occasions to date. Progress was being made and a framework document would be presented to the Committee in January 2021.

Councillor Lee noted that due to the tight timescales, two items in the original scoping report of the Group had to be discarded. Councillor Lee registered her concern at this.

It was further noted that an email drop box had been established for the Group, where interested parties could register their views and representations to the Group. This needed to be widely advertised; Democratic Services would liaise with colleagues in Communications on this matter.

The Joint Democratic Services Manager (P Goult) updated the Committee on the Blueprint Task and Finish Group. A scoping meeting had been held. Three areas for scrutiny had been identified. The next meeting of the Group would discuss Housing Standards for both public and private sector provision; the Group would meet w/c 14 December 2020.

Under this agenda item, the Chair indicated that he may wish to propose that the Committee receive representations at a future meeting from Human Resources and the trade unions on the impact of LGR on staff.

11. Exempt Items

There were no exempt items discussed.

12. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items discussed.

13. Close of Meeting

Meeting closed at 9:29 pm.



Director of Transformation Update

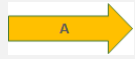
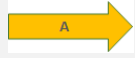
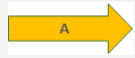
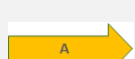

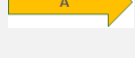


Overview and Scrutiny – January 2021

Contents

1. Programme Status Summary – shared via NN Shadow Executive on 7th January 2021
2. Change Management
3. Communication and Engagement
4. Update since Shadow Executive on 7th January
5. Critical Deliverables
6. Finance Report – Glenn Hammons

Programme Status Summary

Presented to Shadow Executive on 7th January

Programme	Programme Lead	Status	Commentary	Estimated direction of travel for next period
Place North	Martin Hammond	A	Risks around resources for Housing work as SMEs are also working on BAU and COVID.	
Place West	Jane Carr	A	Risks around Trading Standards move out of Wootton Hall after disaggregation and risk of increased associated costs.	
Finance	Barry Scarr	A	Risks around resources for configuration work before Vesting Day and closedown work after.	
Corporate	Martin Cox	A	TU negotiations remain high risk, along with some risks around ERP, SLAs and GDPR issues. Considerable mitigation work has taken place where possible this month.	
Children's	Cathi Hadley	A	Issues around recruiting to new split functions remain but are mitigated by a new proposed Day 1 structure. Work is ongoing for agreeing support service dependencies with the Trust.	
Adults	Anna Earnshaw	G	Some issues around splitting Eclipse and Cygnum into N and W with appropriate IG but team is working well with suppliers to resolve these issues in good time, with suitable mitigation plans in place if needed.	
ICT	Richard Ellis	A	Risks emerging around Data Sharing Agreements and around NCC's ability to roll out MS365 due to legacy NCloud issues. Mitigation underway with NCloud healthcheck and a programme of hardware upgrades across the estate.	
Customer Contact/ Digital	Richard Ellis	G	Minor risks articulated but under control. Mainly around SME resources needed for implementation of new brands and content approaching Vesting Day	

Change Managers' Update

Change manager action	Impact achieved
CM facilitated BBC Radio Northampton interview about community hubs https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p08wjwyb	Achieved wider awareness of the positive transformation in Northamptonshire Adult social care through the media to citizens, partners members and local government workforce.
Wrote article for NHCP Newsletter to keep Health Partners updated on new ways of working in Adult Social Care https://northamptonshirehcp.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/NHCP-Newsletter-November-2020-FINAL.pdf	Increased awareness of the changes to ways of working which provided opportunities for new conversations to take place which has strengthened the trust between partners.
Facilitated Change Champions feed back on new ways of working to Acting Director Adult Social Care	Change Champions had a platform with their Acting Director giving them a new forum to engage in 2-way dialogue with their senior leader.
Gathered information and completed case studies to highlight the positive results of the new way of working in Adult social care	Demonstrated best practice and insight into the power of positive change in a relatable environment to encourage fellow change champions to embrace and adopt the changes.
CM retained and recruited Eclipse Super Users and co-ordinated training activity. This commenced 23 rd November	Retaining super users from CareFirst to Eclipse has strengthened colleagues knowledge, skills and confidence for the smooth transition to Eclipse. Super users feel valued and invested in.
Engaged Trading Standards colleagues to understand how they will manage disaggregation to manage the impact of the change.	Colleagues going through disaggregation felt listened to and supported. Improved awareness and perception of the change and provided a feedback loop back into the programme.
Supported the move to MS365 via Change Champions, providing essential information and FAQs.	Users felt informed, assured and confident about the change with a trusted single point of contact for support if required. Successfully moved 7.5 million emails, 786 personal inboxes, 293 shared email inboxes. Respond and adapt quickly to circumstances to realise the benefits of change.
Supported the collation and publication of North Engine Room content, set up a storyboard and arranged filming for the virtual engine room tour.	Prepared colleague and member content for the North unitary authority to ensure a succinct and consistent level of information and understanding about the FN programme and give a foundation for the vision and culture of North Northants.

Change Managers Update

You said – We did!



You said: manager engagement (below Tier 3) could be improved, increased focus on move to unitary

We did : a managers' toolkit and change management framework is in development and the upcoming change champion workshops will equip them to engage managers

You said: the impact of Tier 1-3 consultation activities may lead to disengagement

We did: further analysis and engagement with HR required to assess potential impact. Create support mechanisms

You said: loss of subject matter expert knowledge associated with the outcome of Tiers 1-3 consultation activities could adversely impact delivery timelines

We did: greater understanding of the support available to this group needed. Change Managers to link in with HR and seek further clarity around other opportunities to retain colleagues

You said: lack of clarity around operational aspects of hosted services is causing concern among the workforce

We did: collaborate with Comms to improve communications around working assumptions and principles of hosting. Change managers can support creation of messaging and distribution via change champions

Communications and engagement

Recent activity

- Publishing and promoting new authority logos – all audiences
- All-staff comms on future council structures
- Support for MS 365 roll out
- Shadow Execs' approval of Day One rebranding priorities
- Developing and delivering comms plans for budget consultations
- Working on videos with Anna and Rob
- Implementation focuses:
 - Working with change managers around comms and engagement approaches
 - Showcasing transformation – Adults hubs coverage
 - Scoping Day One Readiness campaign

Next steps

- Developing a one-stop-shop online hub for FN info and updates
- Designing programme and comms plan-on-a-page/timeline visual
- Support for the Housing Allocation consultation launches
- Ongoing support for Day One branding decision-making process
- Ongoing support for development of vision / values
- Ongoing support for North and West leadership
- Development of Day One Readiness campaign (100 Days to go – 22nd December)

Update since Shadow Executive on 7th January 2021

Adults

Work continues with Eclipse (ICT) suppliers to split the systems for North & West.

Children's

Support services' dependency assessment is now complete.

Recruitment to senior roles is underway.

Corporate

Trade Union engagement regarding staff Terms & Conditions continues.

Inter Authority Agreements between North & West under development.

GDPR/Information Governance – work continues including recent engagement with the Information Commissioner Officer (ICO) and consideration of processes to mitigate risks

ERP – good plans in place to rollout the system – e.g. running a parallel payroll process.

Customer and Digital

Resources identified to support the customer & digital programme.

ICT

Working with Adults ref Eclipse issues described above.

All North authorities now migrated to MS365

NCC last nCloud environment being reviewed to remove risk to MS365 migration.

Specialist skills being brought in as required e.g. Cyber Security.

Update since Shadow Executive on 7th January 2021

Finance

Staff resources identified for closedown of sovereign authorities' accounts after Vesting Day.

Place North

Considerable progress made on Housing issues.

Identification of proposed member accommodation in case virtual meetings not extended by regulations from April 2021.

Service Level Agreement work progressing with Registration Service regulator to ensure uninterrupted delivery after Vesting Day.

Change Management

14 "Facts about" sheets for staff published, covering a range of topics including TUPE, Office accommodation Day 1, Devices, MS365

A further 16 in production for end of Jan, covering ERP - payslips/P60s, booking annual leave, pay dates, host and services delivered as lead authorities.

Over 500 hits since launch

Feedback so far: Easy to access, nice and simple to understand, we want more.

An example of the ICT and Systems information is on the next slide.



Your first day at North/West Northamptonshire Unitary Council



Easily call any colleague using Teams!

Same login

Login

Username:

Password:

NEW



Email address
name.surname@northnorthants
name.surname@westnorthants

NEW



Search for colleagues using first name, surname.

Same IT equipment



Same Contact Numbers for Helpdesk

NEW



New IT Helpdesk Portal

Same printing processes



NEW



ERP Gold
New HR and Finance system enabling self-service for all managers and employees

Same room booking system

NEW



Access to rooms in different buildings and locations

NEW



Intranet
A new central hub for information and 'how-to' guides.

NEW



New IT Acceptable Use Policy
Please make sure that you have read it.

Microsoft 365

- Word
- Excel
- PowerPoint
- OneDrive
- OneNote
- SharePoint
- Teams
- Outlook

Critical Deliverables

- Less than 50 working days to Vesting Day
- Team now focused on the final sprint
- Twice weekly Stands Ups for the Programme Team to ensure progress
- Identified the final critical deliverables into a single “Day One” focused plan.
- Daily monitoring of progress across the Programme
- Resourcing Rapid Response Team (North)
- Hotline for Members, staff and customers to report any Day One issues
- Identified Liaison who will prioritise and be solution focused

Finance Report Summary

Glenn Hammons



This page is intentionally blank

NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SHADOW AUTHORITY

SHADOWOVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

28TH January 2021

Report Title	Progress report by the Climate Change Task and Finish Group
Report Author	Martin Hammond, Executive Director, Kettering BC, martin.hammond@kettering.gov.uk

List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update the committee on the work of the task and finish group so far and to seek an extension to the timetable for completing its report.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report sets out that the task and finish group are part way through their evidence gathering and consideration of the issues inherent in devising a climate change strategy, and they need more time to complete the task. A revised timetable is set out for the Committee's consideration. The report also summarises the work that has been done so far, and proposes an outline shape for the strategy itself.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That the committee is recommended:-
- a) To agree the new timetable with a final report due to be submitted to this Committee on 11th March and to the shadow Executive on the 25th March
 - b) To note the progress made to date and the likely shape of the strategy

4. Report Background

- 4.1. The Climate Change Task and Finish Group was established at the October meeting of this committee, at the request of the Shadow Executive. It comprises 8 members and is chaired by Cllr Lora Lawman. It has met seven times so far. It has been supported by a small team of officers drawn from sovereign councils and the Joint Planning unit and has drawn on expertise within the local government family to provide evidence. The original intention was that it would report back to this meeting with a draft strategy for the committee to consider and which, if agreed, could be sent onto the Executive Committee and subsequently for public consultation.
- 4.2. Since October, changes have been made to the overall meetings timetable, to better accommodate the budget consultation process, and this means that the earliest opportunity for the strategy to be submitted to the Executive Committee will be 4th March, which, in turn, means it was unlikely that any consultation could sensibly be launched before purdah comes into effect on the 24th March.
- 4.3. More critically however, the Task and Finish Group has found the task greater than anticipated. The subject areas covered have elicited more discussion and taken more time than planned, so not all subject areas have been covered at the time of writing. Furthermore, it has proven difficult to secure subject matter expert time to attend meetings, which has further slowed down progress. In January, the twin impacts of lockdown and local flooding has also taken officer and subject expert time away from evidence provision.
- 4.4. The task and finish group have therefore agreed to seek further time to complete their work. Further meetings have been timetabled in for 4th February and 18th February, with a final session after that to agree the wording of the strategy. If this committee is happy to agree this timetable, then a report here on the 11th March can be achieved.

5. Evidence gathered and format of the Strategy

- 5.1. The Task and Finish Group has, to date, had input on a range of subjects as follows
 - corporate leadership and ambition
 - housing standards
 - asset management
 - procurement and social value
 - public health and inequalities
 - planning, infrastructure and the built environment
- 5.2. More sessions on education, economic development, skills, transport and movement, and the natural environment are to be held.
- 5.3. The task and finish group also set up an email address, inviting the public to make proposals and suggestions which potentially could be accommodated

within the strategy – over 100 submissions have been received and these are being summarised for the group to work through.

- 5.4. The Task and Finish Group have agreed that the strategy should be constructed as follows, with an expectation that it would be a relatively concise summary of what needs to be done, so as to make it easier to consult on and be understood by a wider audience. Some flexibility may still need to be applied to this structure in the light of evidence yet to be heard and the results of the public feedback being received through the “ideas” email address.

1. Introduction

Explains local context, some information about activities which generate climate risks in the area, how the task and finish group addressed the questions posed by the Centre for Public Scrutiny Framework.

2. Leadership and ambition Overall statement of how the Council will drive this forward and embed it within the authority.

3. Procurement Describes the principles behind procurement by the Council of goods and services and what will be expected of suppliers, particularly looking at energy supply

4. Management of the Council’s resources, fleet, property and housing estate Describes how the Council invests in its assets, including its housing estate, and all its other resources, how it can use technology to reduce travel, the footprint of office and other accommodation etc

5. Planning, infrastructure and the environment

- a. Planning policy aims and objectives – management of the growth agenda
- b. Travel and transportation
- c. Housing standards – new and existing
- d. Management of the natural environment
- e. Waste

6. Education, skills and economic development This will cover how ongoing education and awareness is delivered, how engagement is achieved as well as how skills and jobs in the low carbon sector can be built

7. Health, social care and vulnerable communities This will look at the intersection between health and well-being and a low carbon economy and environment

8. Partnership and actors This will look at how the Council works with other agencies and interests to extend its “reach” as an organisation into the wider community and business sectors.

Appendices

- The CPS Framework questions
- Examples of projects already underway which ought to be continued by the new council
- Examples of new projects which the unitary should be asked to consider implementing
- Governance and monitoring arrangements

6. Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Resources and Financial

At this stage there are no additional resource implications.

6.2 Legal

There are no legal implications arising from the proposals.

6.3 Risk

There is a small risk that delaying the report will slow down the consultation on the strategy itself, but it was always intended that the strategy would be ready for the new Council to consider adopting early in its existence, once consultation had been carried out.

If the election day is moved from May 2021, there will be a need to revisit the overall timetable.

6.4 Consultation

Public feedback and ideas are being captured in the process and it is intended that a draft strategy would be subject to consultation in the spring.

6.5 Climate Impact

The subject matter of this report.

6.6 Community Impact

The strategy will have a significant impact on the community,

7. Background Papers

Agendas and notes from each of the meetings of the Task and Finish Group

NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SHADOW AUTHORITY

SHADOW OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING

28TH January 2021

Report Title	Report of the Blueprint Task and Finish Group
Report Author	Martin Hammond, Executive Director, Kettering Borough Council martin.hammond@kettering.gov.uk

List of Appendices

'None'

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. To report on the work of the blueprint task and finish group .

2. Executive Summary

2.1 The Committee is asked to note the conclusions of the task and finish group, to draw any conclusions of its own, and to agree what, if any, comments it wishes to pass on to the Shadow Executive.

3. Recommendations

3.1 That the report be noted.

4. Report Background

4.1 This committee established the Blueprint Task and Finish Group, in order to give members insight and assurance that the blueprint agreed by the Shadow Executive was realistic, was being implemented effectively, and to make any proposals it saw fit to recommend changes to any part of the blueprint or any aspect of the implementation stage.

4.2 The group's membership comprised Cllr Harrison as chair, and Cllrs Henley, McEwan, Perry and Rowley. Other members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were also entitled to attend as observers.

4.3 The Group met four times, initially to agree its work programme, and then to work through three subject matters it had selected for detailed review. These subject matters were:-

- Housing standards in the public and private sector
 - Waste collection and disposal - harmonisation and integration
 - Public health and how it is enabled to influence all aspects of the work of the new council
- 4.4. These service areas were selected because they were thought to affect the greater majority of the population in North Northamptonshire and would be amongst the first to raise public concerns should transition not go well.
- 4.5. Subject matter experts from existing councils made presentations in each instance and the following conclusions are drawn from the debate which followed each set of presentations.
- 4.6. The Task and Finish Group is grateful to those officers who prepared and gave presentations to the group, at a time when there was pressing business for their teams to attend to.

5. Findings and Conclusions

- 5.1. In broad terms, the Task and Finish Group was assured that good progress was being made across all three subject areas, and that the aspirations as set out in the blueprint were being reflected in the work underway by the cross authority teams that had been dealing with both aggregation and disaggregation challenges.. There was good evidence that officers were working well together and problem solving. The fact that the Shadow Executive has now received reports on service readiness and harmonisation in all three of the subject matters selected is further proof that joint working has been harmonious and productive.
- 5.2. One of the blueprint principles is that there should be no reduction in service on day one of the new authority and the Task and Finish Group found no evidence that this was a risk; indeed opportunities had been taken to improve service delivery, by “levelling up”, where this could be done without additional costs
- 5.3. HOUSING STANDARDS
- 5.3.1. The group looked at standards both in the private sector and in Council housing. Whilst it was noted that the blueprint talked about a fall back position of ensuring all services on the 1st April would be ‘at least as good as’ what went before, the new Council should aspire to levelling up in the first instance and improvements in service delivery over time. It was noted that some of this levelling up was already intended as part of the work to harmonise policies across the area.
- 5.3.2. The Group’s main conclusions were:-
1. Emphasis needed to be placed on integrated working across services, that is between housing and other functions of the Council, but in particular on making collaborative connections with Public Health; as an example, the

delivery of better insulation in people's homes reduced health inequalities and, in saving money for individuals, reduced poverty as well.

2. There is a lack of baseline data for council owned properties on their energy efficiency performance, because this has only been collected when a house becomes vacant; the new Council should prioritise developing baseline data for all of its stock.
3. The delivery of future capital programmes for council housing should rely on up to date data about housing standards to identify priority areas for investment, and some of this data was currently lacking
4. The Council can help drive up standards across the whole of the area and within all sectors, by investing in, or partnering to deliver, innovative schemes which deliver more energy efficient, cheaper to run, and adaptable homes, which model what is possible and encourages developers to do the same.
5. Such projects already existed and the learning from them and the application of features should be more widely disseminated and used in the design of new publicly owned homes as well as existing stock.
6. High speed electric charging points should be built into new public housing developments as a matter of course. The 2035 target for the ending of gas central heating networks will also put pressure on the Councils' capital expenditure plans which needed early attention as part of an overall approach to energy management in its stock.
7. The Council should extend and deepen its communications about energy efficiency to its residents and tenants and landlords.
8. The continued demand for disabled facilities grants (DFGs) and the delays in addressing referrals was a system wide problem and should be addressed by the new Council as a priority. It was noted that £1 investment in DFGs produced a £7 saving on average in health and social care costs.

5.4. WASTE

- 5.4.1. Members were sighted on the proposals due to be taken to Executive Committee on waste collection harmonisation and on the other "moving parts" within the waste service area, notably, the need to harmonise green waste charging, extend food waste collection, to replace the current contract for collection in Wellingborough when it expired in February 2022, and the long term shortfall in waste disposal capacity for the county. The contracts for household waste centres expired in 2025.
- 5.4.2. Members also noted that final budgets had not yet been allocated to this service area, and expressed concern that the service was unsighted on what its exact budget would be; but assured that this is in hand.

5.4.3. Members also noted that the pandemic had created potentially long term changes in the profile of waste collected, with more food and other recyclates being collected from homes. At the same time the value of recyclates in the market had declined as volume had increased, and the disposal costs of recyclates was now closer to the disposal costs for residual waste.

5.4.4. Finally, it was noted that recycling credits would cease to exist when the unitary council was in being.

5.4.4. The main conclusions were:-

1. That the principal risk for the new Council was the lack of waste infrastructure and there was a critical need to develop plans, probably as joint ventures with West Northamptonshire and others, to ensure long term and sustainable provision was developed soon.
2. The proposed harmonisation of waste collection practices was supported, with its objectives of reducing residual waste, improving the ability to communicate with residents, and gradually levelling up standards, as well as allowing for synergy in enforcement procedures. It was vital that the right communications were readied to advise residents about the changes and that the changes did not involve the wholesale replacement of waste containers.
3. The creation of a unitary authority was an opportunity to take more creative approaches to recycling, and to develop a more competitive commercial refuse offer
4. In assessing the costs and benefits of charging for green waste, account needed to be taken of the differing demographics between large parts of East Northamptonshire and the rest of the new council area.
5. The current county waste partnership should end on 1st April, but that a continuing relationship with West Northamptonshire Council was important to address waste infrastructure needs.
6. The Council should review its waste budget early in 2022 to ensure it remains fit for purpose, especially in the light of changed waste patterns as a result of the pandemic.

5.5. PUBLIC HEALTH

5.5.1 Members were sighted on the approach to public health being taken now, and in the future, which was to embed public health considerations in every area of service delivery, recognising in particular the inter-dependencies between public health outcomes, tackling inequalities generally and climate change action plans. The range of public health measures and intended outcomes meant that it was a “whole system” feature for how the Council would operate in future. It was noted that some opportunities for improvement would have a broad span across the county whereas others would be more ward specific

5.5.2. The challenges thrown up by the pandemic could also provide an opportunity to tackle public health with the benefit of much greater public awareness and engagement. The focus moving out of the pandemic will be look at catch-up in those service offers that had taken a back seat and the steps taken to even out inequalities.

5.5.3. It was noted that, in other countries, the combination of both GDP and Wellbeing trackers has a positive impact in that an increase in GDP tends to result in an increase in wellbeing markers and this is reflected in the reverse cycle. Increased wellbeing increase GDP.

5.5.4. The main conclusions coming from this session were

1. The importance of the new Council developing a culture whereby all strategy and policy work properly addressed the public health, inequalities and climate change implications of its subject matter and carried out thorough assessments of each, as a matter of course and without having to rely on in house experts to do that for them
2. That the community hubs being developed for adult services should be broadened to incorporate public health and health and wellbeing activities to benefit their communities
3. That the proposed structure for the public health team, which retained expertise and capacity in a shared service between the two authorities and the NHS, but included a dedicated team for each authority, to deepen local knowledge, responsiveness and aid connectivity, be fully endorsed.
4. That greater reliance needed to be placed on the gathering and use of local data sources, because of the time lag in national datasets being provided
5. That unintended barriers to the access and use of leisure facilities, country parks and other settings where people can improve their health needed to be considered, including parking charges.
6. A wellbeing measure should be developed to measure progress with initiatives and to develop greater awareness of localities that had fallen behind, or to expand on areas of success, and that the conclusions from the application of such a measure should help direct future investment.
7. That the voluntary sector should be supported to take up a significant role in public health promotion and service delivery

5 Implications (including financial implications)

5.5 Resources and Financial

The report highlights budgetary issues for the new Council to consider.

5.6 Legal

None as a result of this report

5.7 Risk

The reports highlights some of the risks the new authority will need to manage

5.8 Consultation

These conclusions have been developed with the support of teams within the current sovereign authorities.

5.9 Climate Impact

Many of the conclusions of these reports impact on climate change outcomes. The views of this task and finish group are to be shared with the Climate Change Task and Finish Group in order to inform their thinking.

5.10 Community Impact

These service areas have a significant impact on the community in the way they are delivered and developed.

6 Background Papers

Presentations to the task and finish group and minutes of each meeting
The Blueprint (relevant extracts)

North Northamptonshire Shadow Authority

FORWARD PLAN OF DECISIONS

1 January 2021 to 30 April 2021

Published by: Democratic Services

Leader of the North Northamptonshire Shadow Authority: Councillor Russell Roberts

INTRODUCTION

This is the North Northamptonshire Shadow Authority's Forward Plan. It is published pursuant to The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012. Its purpose is to provide the required 28 days notice of the Shadow Authority's intention to take 'key decisions' and to hold meetings or parts of meetings in private. It gives advance notice of all the "key decisions" and other executive decisions which the Shadow Executive or another body or officer so authorised are likely to take over a four month period. The Plan is updated on a rolling monthly basis.

At times it may be necessary for the North Northamptonshire Shadow Authority to give consideration to items where the public may be excluded from the meeting. Members of the public are excluded from meetings whenever it is likely that, in the view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that confidential information would be disclosed. This includes exclusion from access to any pertinent documents. Details of the exemption categories can be found in the 'Access to Information Procedure Rules' section in the Shadow Authority's Constitution. This plan provides advance notice of any items which may be held in private.

Each entry in the forward plan identifies:

- The matter in respect of which a decision is to be made.
- The name of the decision-making body.
- The date on which, or the period within which, the decision will be taken.
- How and to whom representations (about the decision) can be made.
- What reports/papers are, or will be, available for public inspection.

The concept of a "key decision" is intended to capture the most important or significant decisions. "Key decisions" will normally be made at meetings open to the press and public. The press and public will only be excluded from such meetings as and when the Shadow Authority's Monitoring Officer considers that this is necessary in order to avoid the public disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

The authority has decided that a Key Decision is one which is likely:-

- (a) to result in the authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are significant.
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards or electoral divisions in the area of the relevant local authority."

In determining the meaning of "*significant*" for these purposes the North Northamptonshire Shadow Authority will have regard to any guidance for the time being issued by the Secretary of State in accordance with section 9Q of the Local Government Act 2000.

Other decisions that will be published in the Forward Plan include:

- (a) The draft Budget or a draft of one or other of the plans or strategies which make up the Shadow Authority's "policy framework". The Shadow Executive's role in relation to these matters will be to agree a draft which will then be presented to the Shadow

Authority Full Council for approval (details of all of plans/strategies etc which are to be considered within the life of the plan are set out at the back of the plan); and

- (b) Other decisions which, whilst they are not “key decisions”, are considered by the Leader to have significant cross-cutting or corporate implications.

The Members of the Shadow Executive Committee are:	
Councillor Russell Roberts	Leader of the North Northamptonshire Shadow Authority Property, Assets and Housing
Councillor Jason Smithers	Deputy Leader of the North Northamptonshire Shadow Authority Highways, Transport, Environment and Climate
Councillor Jean Addison	Customer services, Digital and Transformation
Councillor Tom Beattie	Corporate
Councillor Wendy Brackenbury	Children, Families and Education
Councillor Martin Griffiths	Adults, Health and Wellbeing and Communities
Councillor Ian Jelley	Finances and Revenues and benefits
Councillor David Jenney	Growth, Infrastructure, Regeneration, Skills and Employment
Councillor Steven North	Planning, Strategic Planning, Regulatory and enforcement services
Councillor Tom Partridge-Underwood	Sports, Leisure, Culture and Tourism

All general questions or queries about the contents of this Forward Plan or about the arrangements for taking key decisions should be raised with Ben Smith, Joint Lead Democratic Services Manager.

Please email: democraticservices@northnorthants.gov.uk

January 2021

Subject of the decision:	Decision Maker	Is it a key decision?	Will the report contain exempt information?	Reason for exemption, if any	Anticipated Date of Decision:	Report Author	Supporting documents (if any):
Programme Status	Shadow Executive	No	No	N/A	07 Jan 2021	Lisa Hyde	
Assets, Capital Schemes and Reserves Notification Process a) Asset Management b) Green Patch Kettering c) Shire Lodge Cemetery Extension	Shadow Executive	No	Yes	Paragraph 3-financial information	07 Jan 2021	Greg McDonald Mark Dickenson	
Programme Change Requests	Shadow Executive	Yes	No	N/A	07 Jan 2021	Programme Leads	
Budget Update Post Local Government Finance Settlement.	Shadow Executive	No	No	N/A	07 Jan 2021	Janice Gotts/ Glenn Hammons	
Housing Revenue Account	Shadow Executive	Yes	No	N/A	07 Jan 2021	Mark Dickenson	
Council Tax Support Scheme- Outcome of Consultation	Shadow Executive	Yes	No	N/A	07 Jan 2021	Janice Gotts/ Lucy Hogston	

February 2021

Subject of the decision:	Decision Maker	Is it a key decision?	Will the report contain exempt information?	Reason for exemption, if any	Anticipated Date of Decision:	Report Author	Supporting documents (if any):
Programme Status	Shadow Executive	No	No	N/A	03 Feb 2021	Lisa Hyde	
Assets, Capital Schemes and Reserves Notification Process	Shadow Executive	No	Yes	Paragraph 3-financial information	03 Feb 2021	Glenn Hammons/ Janice Gotts	
Service Policies for Review	Shadow Executive	Yes	No	N/A	03 Feb 2021	Andrew Hunkin	
Task & Finish Group Updates	Shadow Executive	No	No	N/A	03 Feb 2021	Task & Finish Group Chairs	
NNDR (Business Rates) Discretionary Rate Relief	Shadow Executive	Yes	No	N/A	03 Feb 2021	Janice Gotts / Lucy Hogston	
Discretionary Housing Payments	Shadow Executive	Yes	No	N/A	03 Feb 2021	Janice Gotts / Lucy Hogston	
Recovery & Enforcement Policy	Shadow Executive	Yes	No	N/A	03 Feb 2021	Janice Gotts / Lucy Hogston	
Private Sector Housing Policy	Shadow Executive	Yes	No	N/A	03 Feb 2021	Chair of Place Board	
Private Sector Enforcement Policy	Shadow Executive	Yes	No	N/A	03 Feb 2021	Chair of Place Board	
Waste & Street Cleansing Harmonisation	Shadow Executive	No	No	N/A	03 Feb 2021	Chair of Place Board	
Aligned Tenancy Agreement	Shadow Executive	Yes	No	N/A	03 Feb 2021	Chair of Place Board	
Tenancy Policy – Request to go out to Consultation	Shadow Executive	Yes	No	N/A	03 Feb 2021	Chair of Place Board	
Countywide Archives Service	Shadow Executive	Yes	No	N/A	03 Feb 2021	Chair of Place Board	

February 2021

Subject of the decision:	Decision Maker	Is it a key decision?	Will the report contain exempt information?	Reason for exemption, if any	Anticipated Date of Decision:	Report Author	Supporting documents (if any):
Countywide Heritage Service	Shadow Executive	Yes	No	N/A	03 Feb 2021	Chair of Place Board	
Audit Committee Terms of Reference	Shadow Executive	No	No	N/A	03 Feb 2021	Glenn Hammons/ Janice Gotts	
Risk Management Strategy	Shadow Executive	No	No	N/A	03 Feb 2021	Glenn Hammons/ Janice Gotts	
Rebranding Day 1 Items and Costings	Shadow Executive	No	No	N/A	03 Feb 2021	Martin Cox	
HR Policy Principles	Shadow Executive	No	No	N/A	03 Feb 2021	Martin Cox	
Highly Complex Autism tender	Shadow Executive	No	No	N/A	03 Feb 2021	Katie Brown	
Returning Officer Fees	Shadow Executive	No		N/A	03 Feb 2021	Adele Wylie	
Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget 2021/22 – for recommendation to Shadow Authority *Includes below	Shadow Executive	Yes	No	N/A	10 Feb 2021	Glenn Hammons/ Janice Gotts	

*Includes General Fund Revenue Budget 2021/22 and Medium Term Financial Plan; Report on Robustness of Budget Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves; Capital Strategy & Programme; Treasury Management Strategy; Council Tax Requirement

March 2021

Subject of the decision:	Decision Maker	Is it a key decision?	Will the report contain exempt information?	Reason for exemption, if any	Anticipated Date of Decision:	Report Author	Supporting documents (if any):
Programme Status	Shadow Executive	No	No	N/A	04 Mar 2021	Lisa Hyde	
Assets, Capital Schemes and Reserves Notification Process	Shadow Executive	No	Yes	Paragraph 3-financial information	04 Mar 2021	Glenn Hammons/ Janice Gotts	
Service Policies for Review	Shadow Executive	Yes	No	N/A	04 Mar 2021	Andrew Hunkin	
Task & Finish Group Updates	Shadow Executive	No	No	N/A	04 Mar 2021	Task & Finish Group Chairs	
Income Management Policy	Shadow Executive	Yes	No	N/A	04 Mar 2021	Chair of Place Board	
Rent Setting Policy	Shadow Executive	Yes	No	N/A	04 Mar 2021	Chair of Place Board	
Taxi Licensing Policy – Request to go out to consultation	Shadow Executive	No	No	N/A	04 Mar 2021	Chair of Place Board	
Appeals Policy	Shadow Executive	Yes	No	N/A	04 Mar 2021	Chair of Place Board	
Temporary Accommodation Policy	Shadow Executive	Yes	No	N/A	04 Mar 2021	Chair of Place Board	
Suitable Discharge Policy for Homelessness	Shadow Executive	Yes	No	N/A	04 Mar 2021	Chair of Place Board	

March 2021

Subject of the decision:	Decision Maker	Is it a key decision?	Will the report contain exempt information?	Reason for exemption, if any	Anticipated Date of Decision:	Report Author	Supporting documents (if any):
Spend to Save Policy-Homelessness	Shadow Executive	Yes	No	N/A	04 Mar 2021	Chair of Place Board	
North Unitary Grants and Community Support Policy	Shadow Executive	Yes	No	N/A	04 Mar 2021	Chair of Place Board	
Scheme of Members Allowances – for recommendation to Shadow Authority	Shadow Executive	No	No	N/A	04 Mar 2021	Adele Wylie	
Constitution for the North Northamptonshire Unitary Council – for recommendation to Shadow Authority	Shadow Executive	Yes	No	N/A	04 Mar 2021	Adele Wylie	
Programme Status	Shadow Executive	No	No	N/A	25 Mar 2021	Lisa Hyde	
Assets, Capital Schemes and Reserves Notification Process	Shadow Executive	No	Yes	Paragraph 3-financial information	25 Mar 2021	Glenn Hammons	
Day 1 Readiness	Shadow Executive	No	No	N/A	25 Mar 2021	George Candler	
Community Safety Plan 2021	Shadow Executive	No	No	N/A	25 Mar 2021	Mike Greenway	

March 2021

Subject of the decision:	Decision Maker	Is it a key decision?	Will the report contain exempt information?	Reason for exemption, if any	Anticipated Date of Decision:	Report Author	Supporting documents (if any):
Service Policies for Review	Shadow Executive	Yes	No	N/A	25 Mar 2021	Andrew Hunkin	
Task & Finish Group Updates	Shadow Executive	No	No	N/A	25 Mar 2021	Task & Finish Group Chairs	
Procurement/SLA Contract Procedure Rules	Shadow Executive	Yes	No	N/A	25 Mar 2021	Martin Cox	
Insurance- Details of Insurer and Cover/Cost	Shadow Executive	Yes	No	N/A	25 Mar 2021	Martin Cox	

April 2021

Subject of the decision:	Decision Maker	Is it a key decision?	Will the report contain exempt information?	Reason for exemption, if any	Anticipated Date of Decision:	Report Author	Supporting documents (if any):
--------------------------	----------------	-----------------------	---	------------------------------	-------------------------------	---------------	--------------------------------

No meeting currently scheduled