

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive

At 9.00 am on Wednesday 12th July, 2023 in the Council Chamber, Corby Cube, George Street, Corby, NN17 1QG

Present:-

Members

Councillor Jason Smithers (Leader of the Council) (Chair)	Councillor Helen Howell (Deputy Leader of the Council)
Councillor Matt Binley	Councillor Helen Harrison
Councillor David Brackenbury	Councillor David Howes
Councillor Lloyd Bunday	Councillor Harriet Pentland
Councillor Scott Edwards	

Also in attendance – Councillors Lyn Buckingham, Jim Hakewill, Peter McEwan and Mike Tebbutt

459 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Cllr Mark Rowley. Apologies were also received from Adele Wylie, Executive Director of Customer and Governance, AnnMarie Dodds, Executive Director of Children's Services, Graeme Kane, Executive Director Place and Economy (Interim) and Susan Hamilton, Director of Public Health.

460 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 8th June 2023

RESOLVED that the Executive agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 8th June 2023 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

461 Members' Declarations of Interest

No declarations were received.

462 Notifications of requests to address the meeting

The Chair, Councillor Jason Smithers reported that there were requests to address the meeting as set out below:

Agenda Item	Speakers
Item 5 – Performance Indicator Report – 2023/24	Cllr William Colquhoun
Item 6 - Home to School Transport	Cllrs Dorothy Maxwell, Jim Hakewill, Wendy Brackenbury and Lyn Buckingham
Item 7 – SACRE Annual Report	Cllrs Dorothy Maxwell, William Colquhoun and Lyn Buckingham
Item 8 – Northamptonshire Strategic Transport Model	Cllrs Dorothy Maxwell and Lyn Buckingham
Item 9 – North Northamptonshire Local Transport Plan Development Timetable	Cllr Dorothy Maxwell
Item 11 – Capital Programme Update	Cllrs William Colquhoun and Lyn Buckingham

Cllr William Colquhoun did not attend the meeting and consequently did not speak on Agenda Items 5, 7 and 11.

Cllr Dorothy Maxwell opted not to speak in relation to Agenda Item 8.

463 Performance Indicator Report 2023/24 (Period 2 - May 2023)

The Chair invited the Executive Member for Finance and Transformation, Cllr Lloyd Bunday to introduce a report that sought to provide an update on the performance of the Council across a range of services as measured by performance indicators (PIs), as well as setting out the progress that was being made in the development of the Council's performance monitoring arrangements.

Cllr Bunday reported that the Period 2 report indicated a similar picture for performance as the previous period, with 14 indicators on or exceeding their target, with two inside tolerance levels, 12 performing below target levels and one having insufficient data to allow reporting. Of the PIs reported for the period, 23 had shown improvement, with 12 deteriorating since the previous reporting period.

Of the PIs related to the Council's Corporate Plan, "Better, Brighter Futures" was performing well, with two-thirds of its indicators above target. "Modern Public Services had two indicators exceeding their targets, while "Safe and Thriving Places" showed a balanced picture.

It was reported that Revenue and Benefits collection rates for Council Tax and Business Rates were above monthly targets and were higher than for the same period in the previous financial year.

Cllr David Brackenbury spoke to reference performance indicators relating to the Planning Service. PI reference STP17 was being carefully monitored following a decrease in performance, however, the overall picture was positive for the service when viewed against national benchmarking.

RESOLVED

That the Executive:

- a) Noted the performance of the Council as measured by the available indicators at Period 2 (May) 2023/24, set out in the appendix to this report.

Reason for Recommendations – to better understand the Council’s performance as measured by Key Performance Indicators as at Period 2 (May) 2023/24.

Alternative Options Considered: Reporting performance data on a less frequent basis is an option but monthly reporting is considered useful at this stage of the Council’s existence, reporting alongside budget information

464 Home to School Transport - Policy Revisions for Statutory School Age Pupils 2024/25

The Chair invited Cllr Dorothy Maxwell to address the meeting. Cllr Maxwell made reference to the former county council not increasing school transport fares historically and stated that parents who chose to send children to a school of their choice should pay for transport if required. Cllr Maxwell noted that fares needed to be reviewed annually, and queried who picked up the overspend for the service.

Cllr Jim Hakewill was then invited to speak to the meeting. Cllr Hakewill stated that in his view the proposal before members opposed the discussions that had taken place at the recent Big 50 conference. Cllr Hakewill referenced a lack of financial data forming part of the report and requested additional scrutiny of the matter and a delay in implementation to 2025.

The Chair invited Cllr Wendy Brackenbury to speak. Cllr Brackenbury raised concerns regarding the removal of link schools, referencing a specific example impacting Thrapston. Cllr Brackenbury noted that parents may be forced to apply to schools they did not wish their children to attend simply to get transportation. Cllr Brackenbury also commented that the policy should be supportive and sustainable.

Cllr Lyn Buckingham then addressed Executive raising serious concerns regarding the report and the consultation process. Cllr Buckingham stated that certain children might not be able to afford to go to school as a result of the revised policy and that additional work needed to be undertaken before the policy was adopted. The impact of the cost-of-living crisis was mentioned, with a reference to additional impact on those living in rural areas. Cllr Buckingham concluded by noting that the recommendation to delegate authority to approve the final draft policy to the Executive Member of Highways, Travel and Assets in consultation with the Executive Director for Place and Economy was a concern.

The Chair thanked the speakers for their contributions and invited the Executive Member for Highways, Travel and Assets to introduce a report that sought to:

- Update the format and wording of the Home to School Transport Policy to make it easier to understand
- Retain the discretionary service provision for all age groups subject to the following changes:

a) The guaranteed discretionary seat for early applicants to be withdrawn from all new applications for transport for September 2024 onwards. In doing so, discretionary seats will only be available on a first-come-first-served basis if there is spare capacity on transport arranged for pupils eligible for free transport. Page 43

b) From September 2024, increase the fare contribution to £760/seat/year to reduce the subsidy provided by the Council, funded from general taxation. This will apply to existing passengers as well as new applicants.

- Review the fare annually in line with the Council's fees and charge's structure.
- Cease to provide free transport to linked schools unless it is the nearest suitable school with places. This would only affect new applications from September 2024 onwards
- Delegate authority for the approval of the final draft of the policy to the Executive Member of Highways, Travel and Assets in consultation with the Executive Director for Place and Economy

Cllr Binley responded to the comments made by speakers and noted that the policy was long overdue for review, having last been reviewed over a decade previously by the former county council.

The meeting heard that the Council was required to arrange free, suitable, home to school transport for children of the compulsory school age who were eligible to their nearest suitable qualifying school with availability in line with the Education Act 1996 and the Government's statutory "Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance 2014".

It was noted that should a school be fully subscribed and the next available one not the geographically closest, children would qualify for free transport under the legislation if they met the required criteria which were detailed to the meeting.

It was reported that any changes to the policy would not come into effect in the current year; changes would be published in September 2023 to take effect in September 2024, affording parents the opportunity to decide which schools they wanted their children to go.

An extensive public consultation had taken place, with the views of councillors, local MPs, town and parish councils and many other stakeholders sought.

The Executive heard that where someone of the statutory school age did not qualify for the criteria listed for free transport, the Council, under the existing policy, used its discretionary powers to provide free transport to linked schools, as they were treated the same as the nearest schools under the policy at present. The cost to parents to purchase a seat on contracted services was £600 per school year. The Council also currently offered a guarantee that it would commission sufficient additional seats to accommodate all those who applied for the discretionary service before a set deadline. Currently there were 295 students using the discretionary seat service which was running at a significant loss. The current cost to the Council for providing this discretionary service was £538,000, with only £265,000 being recovered through the £600 charge decided over a decade ago.

Changes to the policy as outlined above were therefore recommended.

The Place and Environment Scrutiny Committee had reviewed the policy proposals and recommended that the new format be adopted, that linked schools be ceased, that new discretionary applicants pay the full amount and those currently in the system pay a reduced rate of £760 and that the guaranteed seat option be removed.

Cllr Scott Edwards spoke to welcome the depth of consultation undertaken and supported the recommendations contained within the report.

Cllr David Brackenbury noted that should proposals to abolish linked schools from the policy be approved, it would have a considerable impact on the trajectory of future school admissions given capacity issues at certain schools. A new secondary school in Thrapston could help resolve such issues.

The Chair spoke in support of the concept of a secondary school for Thrapston given the size of the town and the unsustainable nature of transporting children from the town to neighbouring schools.

Cllr Helen Howell noted the need for the Council to ensure best value for everything it did across policies and procedures. Pressures faced by parents were understood, however the Council could not continue to subsidise parents choosing to go outside their catchment area.

Cllr Helen Howell noted that the decision would not come into effect until September 2024 and welcomed the proposals before members that offered greater clarity for parents.

RESOLVED

KEY DECISION

That the Executive:

- i) Updated the format and wording of the policy to make it easier to understand.
- ii) Retained the discretionary service provision for all age groups subject to the following changes:
 - a) The guaranteed discretionary seat for early applicants to be withdrawn from all *new* applications for transport for September 2024 onwards. In doing so, discretionary seats will only be available on a first-come-first-served basis if there is spare capacity on transport arranged for pupils eligible for free transport.
 - b) From September 2024, increase the fare contribution to £760/seat/year to reduce the subsidy provided by the Council, funded from general taxation. This will apply to existing passengers as well as new applicants.

- iii) Reviewed the fare annually in line with the Council's fees and charge's structure.
- iv) Ceased to provide free transport to linked schools unless it is the nearest suitable school with places. This would only affect *new* applications from September 2024 onwards.
- v) Delegated authority for the approval of the final draft of the policy to the Executive Member of Highways, Travel and Assets in consultation with the Executive Director for Place and Economy.

Reasons for Recommendations:

- The Home to School Transport Budget was overspent by £4m in 2022/23. Although the budget has been increased for 2023/24, there are still pressures on the budget due to a combination of factors including inflation, changes in employment legislation (minimum wage and living wage regulations) and the increase in demand. There is a need to take action to control spend.
- The current service is more than the statutory minimum required. The proposals and recommendations in this report focus on the few areas of the Council's discretionary powers where any financial savings may be obtained from change.
- The revisions to the Policy are part of a larger package of measures to control costs, including improved management data, and exploration of alternative ways to meet our statutory obligations.
- The demand for transport (both entitled and discretionary and including Post 16) is in some geographical areas bordering on commercial service levels and there is therefore potential to work with operators and other stakeholders to move responsibility for provision of this service to the commercial market rather than relying on the Council. This would also benefit other residents in the same areas by providing an increased public service for other users. This is in line with the aims of the Corporate Plan to develop sustainable transport and improve accessibility across the North Northamptonshire.
- The current service is subsidised by the Council, which is using funds provided from general taxation to benefit those families who are not eligible for free transport and who choose to use the Council's home to school transport service. These families are not legally entitled to this service and yet the Council is providing a significant subsidy for their use of it.
- Our current fare and provision of discretionary transport is undercutting the commercial market, which in turn may be inhibiting potential commercial growth.
- The current fare for discretionary transport has not been reviewed or increased for 10 years. In that period costs for travel provision have increased substantially. If the discretionary fare had been increased by 3% year for the last ten years, it would be approximately £800.
- Providing discretionary transport to pupils enables them to travel from home to school on shared transport rather than encouraging the use of cars and therefore where spare capacity exists, it is helpful to offer it for use.
- The Government currently has a capped fare scheme in place with fares capped at £2 per journey. This would equate to £760 for a home and return journey for the 190 days of school each year. An increase in fares to this level would therefore be bringing the fares back in line with current commercial fares,

and would be a reasonable compromise between the need to off-set costs and the consultation response.

Alternative Options Considered –

All options considered fall within the discretionary powers of the Council:

- Make no changes to the policy. This would ensure no disruption to pupils and their families but would not address the Council's financial position and continues with the significant subsidy towards the service, which is funded by general taxation.
- Reduce entitlement to free transport to those between 5 and 16 (statutory school age) only i.e., withdraw entitlement for those under 5 who are attending school in reception class. This change would result in minimal savings for a disproportionately negative impact on those not yet of statutory school age and may discourage parents from starting their child at school until they are 5 years old.
- Enforce the need to change schools for those changing address in year 11 (exam year) where a place is available at a nearer school rather than provide transport. This change is – expected to produce minimal savings and creates disruption to those in their exam year.
- Impose increased statutory walking distance in the term following a pupil's 8th birthday; this is expected to produce minimal savings for the Council.
- Retain linked schools only where link is created by the Local Authority Admissions Board. Remove link where it is created by other Admissions Board e.g., Academy, Foundation, etc. This would result in complex administration for the Council costing more in back-office resources or reducing the level of customer service provided to residents using the home to school service.

465 Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) Annual Report 2021/22

The Chair invited Cllr Dorothy Maxwell to address the Executive. Cllr Maxwell stated the importance of the teaching of Religious Education (RE) in schools but queried whether parents were aware of what was being taught.

Cllr Lyn Buckingham was then invited to address the meeting. Cllr Buckingham queried that lack of detail within the annual report of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) in terms of achievements and outcomes.

The Chair then invited Cllr Scott Edwards, Executive Member for Children, Families, Education and Skills to introduce the annual report of SACRE for approval by the Executive.

Cllr Edwards noted that the report covered the period 2021/22, during which time SACRE had been without an advisor. Consequently, no data had been collected or monitored regarding the teaching of RE in schools. The committee had met three times during the year and had been available to respond to complaints or requests regarding the teaching of RE, although none had been received.

Cllr Helen Howell looked forward to the next iteration of the report and welcomed the move to appoint an advisor for SACRE.

RESOLVED

That the Executive Advisory Panel received and noted the SACRE annual report for 2021-2022

Reasons for Recommendation: To ensure that the following SACRE duties are met:

- To publish an annual report of its work;
- To advise the local authority on the provision of training for teachers in RE;
- To consider complaints about the provision and delivery of religious education and collective worship referred to it by the local authority.

Alternative Options Considered: SACRE has a legal duty to publish an annual report. This report ensures that it complies with that duty and therefore to not present it is not considered to be an alternative option. No alternative options are therefore proposed

466 Northamptonshire Strategic Transport Model

The Chair invited Cllr Lyn Buckingham to speak. Cllr Buckingham stated her involvement the last time the Strategic Transport Model had been developed and noted the significant undertaking in developing an updated model, with reference made to modal shift and how to implement that aspect. Cllr Buckingham also questioned the rationale of West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) being the lead authority in the development of the revised model.

The Chair commended Cllr Buckingham for attending before inviting the Executive Member for Housing, Communities and Levelling Up, Cllr Matt Binley to introduce a report that sought approval from the Executive to rebuild the Northamptonshire Strategic Transport Model in conjunction with WNC and agree its funding.

The model simulated vehicle movements, using a number of different data sources and was utilised in relation to development proposals, spatial strategies, transport policies and major highway schemes. Such models only had a limited life span, with the current version developed in 2008 and updated in 2015. Whilst this model had been pivotal in assessing development impacts on the road network, the underlying data and assumptions could be considered outdated based on government guidance. A rebuild had been approved by the former county council in 2020, but due to the Covid pandemic the work had not progressed. It was heard that a rebuilt model would support the development and implementation of the Local Plan and Local Transport Plan.

It was proposed to rebuild the model in conjunction with WNC, with WNC being the lead procuring authority. Details of the procurement process and key benefits to procuring the contract using a framework to include ongoing hosting, management, maintenance and operation of the model were highlighted.

The cost to rebuild the model would be split equally between the two councils, with a joint budget of £556,000. It was heard that joint working with WNC on the model would result in financial, time and resource savings which could not be realised should the Council complete the undertaking as a single entity.

The meeting heard that the Council would retain ownership of the new model that could also provide a charged service to third parties, external users and internal budgets where appropriate. The rebuilt model would include an emissions module, to allow for production of emissions outputs supporting air quality assessments and carbon impacts.

The model development, report and forecasts had a predicted completion date in late Autumn 2024.

Councillor David Brackenbury spoke to note the importance and scale of the work; the model being a key driver in place-shaping and development to be brought forward in future as well as providing an important evidence base.

Councillor Harriet Pentland noted the potential benefits of the model in work to reduce emissions and improve air quality.

RESOLVED

KEY DECISION

That the Executive

- a) Agreed to work in partnership with West Northamptonshire Council to update and rebuild the Northamptonshire Strategic Transport Model
- b) Agreed to West Northamptonshire Council being the lead procuring authority
- c) Agreed £78,000 of existing model fee income towards the development of the Northamptonshire Strategic Transport Model, alongside the £400k already set aside by both councils.
- d) Delegated authority to the Executive Member for Highways, Travel and Assets, in consultation with the Executive Director for Place & Economy, Executive Director for Finance and the Executive Member for Finance, to take any further decisions and/or actions required in connection with the procurement and award of the Northamptonshire Strategic Transport Model contract, without the need to return to the Executive
- e) Noted North Northamptonshire Council will retain ownership and ongoing management of its own independent version of the Northamptonshire Strategic Transport Model.

Reason for Recommendations – Unlike the other options considered, the joint revalidation of the NSTM produces financial, time and resource efficiencies whilst allowing each authority to retain future exclusive use of the model. There is a fair distribution of the costs and maintain individual approaches to the ongoing use of the Northamptonshire Strategic Transport Model.

Alternative Options Considered:

- For one council to validate the model completely at its cost whilst the other pays for access.
- For each council to construct separate models.
- Not update the Northamptonshire Strategic Transport Model

None of these options are recommended.

467 North Northamptonshire Local Transport Plan Development Timetable

The Chair invited Cllr Dorothy Maxwell to address the meeting. Cllr Maxwell spoke regarding transport systems within the county, specifically with reference to rural bus service and improvements that were needed.

The Chair thanked Cllr Maxwell for her attendance before inviting the Executive Member for Housing, Communities and Levelling Up, Cllr Matt Binley to introduce a report that sought to update the Executive on the timetable for the preparation of North Northamptonshire's Local Transport Plan and sought its adoption.

Cllr Binley reported that it was a requirement of the Transport Act 2000 for local authorities to publish a Local Transport Plan (LTP) regarding the maintenance and improvement of all aspects of local transport that must be implemented once adopted. As part of the process, the Council was required to consult with key stakeholders and local communities through consultation.

The current plan had been adopted by Northamptonshire County Council in 2012 and required updating to reflect the needs of the community, priorities and investment for the next five years. The Council would develop a plan in line with other strategic policies, such as the Corporate Plan and Local Development Framework, and also in conjunction with other policies such as the Greenway Strategy and local walking and cycling plans. The proposed timetable forecast a start in the summer of 2023, with completion of the six-stage process by Autumn 2024.

It was noted that new government guidance on the subject was currently being drafted, with an expected publication in Autumn 2023. It was anticipated that the new guidance would require certain government policies to be considered in the development of the plan, including the Decarbonising Transport Plan.

The LTP was listed within the Council's constitution, therefore the Executive would be responsible for agreeing the draft plan before the plan was put to Full Council for adoption.

The Sustainable Communities Executive Advisory Panel had considered the local transport plan programme and timetable at its meeting on 11th May and highlighted the importance of the plan having a strong relationship with the strategic plan.

It was heard that funding for the work would come from existing budgets along with £178,541 of local transport authority capacity grant funding provided by the Department for Transport.

Cllr Howell spoke in support of the report, noting the importance of all transport plans fitting neatly together, with particular reference to green modes of transport.

RESOLVED

KEY DECISION

That the Executive adopted the timetable for producing the North Northamptonshire's Local Transport Plan as set out in Section 5.9.

Reason for Recommendations – The timetable provides flexibility in allowing for the preparation of baseline information ahead of the anticipated revised DfT guidance. The timetable proposed a series of engagement opportunities to support community ownership of the plan and its preparation.

Alternative Options Considered:

- To undertake formal consultation only.
- To pause preparation of the LTP until the Department for Transport release guidance.

Neither of these options are recommended because this would delay the start, and continuation of, the preparation of the LTP.

468 Budget Forecast Update 2023/24 - Period 2

The Chair invited Cllr Lloyd Bunday, Executive Member for Finance and Transformation to introduce a report that set out the forecast outturn position for the Council based on the Period 2 monitoring forecasts for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

The meeting heard that the overall forecast for the General Fund, as at Period 2, was a forecast overspend of £7.12m based on the emerging data for 2023/24. The main budgetary pressure remained that of the Children's Trust where the forecast overspend was £20.578m. The cost to the Council of this overspend was £9.087m, with the meeting noting that this pressure would pose a significant financial risk to the Council should it not be mitigated. It was further noted that a key risk was the delivery of efficiency savings of £7.632m that formed part of the contract sum. At present, the Trust was forecasting that £6.653m of these savings were at risk of non-delivery, resulting in a residual financial risk of £5.539m which could increase the overall pressure from £20.578m to £26.117m.

Additionally, a further pressure of nearly £1million relating to Adult Social Care was reported as a result of inflationary pressures impacting the PPP Shaw contract.

Uncertainty also remained regarding the level of annual pay award for staff, as this had yet to be agreed for 2023/24.

The main savings to offset the pressures outlined above were from additional investment income of £4.36m that reflected the increase in the Bank of England's base rates on future investments based on an average cash balance of £176m at a weighted average rate of 4.02% for the full year.

In order to help safeguard the financial position of the Council, officers would continue to seek in year efficiencies to offset the forecast overspend. Whilst the Council operated a contingency budget and had reserves available to call on to help fund in-year pressures, it looked to achieve alternative mitigations in the first instance.

The Council's overall outturn forecast for the Housing Revenue Account was an overspend of £93,000. It was also reported that the Dedicated Schools Grant was currently forecast to be delivered on budget.

The Chair raised concerns regarding the predicted overspend in relation to the Children's Trust. The financial position as at Period 2 was considered to be wholly unacceptable, and engagement was required to ensure that identified efficiencies were able to be achieved as it was other service areas within the Council that would feel the negative impact of this overspend by the Trust.

Cllr Helen Harrison spoke to note that significant work was underway to identify mitigations for the overspend relating to Adult Social Care in order to ensure that this area came in on budget.

Cllr Scott Edwards spoke as Executive Member for Children, Families, Education and Skills to note that the Children's Trust was being held to account and work was taking place to ensure the overspend could be mitigated. The positivity of the position regarding the Dedicated Schools Grant was noted.

Cllr Matt Binley spoke to report that the overspend against the HRA was being worked on, and a business case to address the volume and duration of void social housing units was also being prepared.

Cllr David Brackenbury noted the small overspend relating to Growth and Regeneration, although the recent planning service restructure would reduce the reliance on agency staff and drive this figure down. An underspend in Regulatory Services was to be welcomed.

RESOLVED

That the Executive:

- a) Noted the Council's forecast outturn position for 2023/24 as summarised in Section 4, alongside the further analysis, risks and other considerations as set out in Section 5 to Section 7 of the report.
- b) Noted the assessment of the current deliverability of the 2023/24 savings proposals in Appendix A.

- c) Approved the inclusion of £482k from the Climate Reserve to support the development and operation of climate change projects and initiatives as set out in paragraph 5.49 of the report.
- d) Approved an increase in the gross budget of £4.931m to provide support for families and individuals in specific financial hardship to be funded from the Household Support Fund 4 grant of £4.931m as reported to Executive in April. See paragraph 5.69 of the report.

Reason for Recommendations – to note the forecast financial position for 2023/24 as at Period 2 and consider the impact on this year and future years' budgets.

Alternative Options Considered: The report focuses on the forecast revenue outturn against budget for 2023/24 and makes recommendations for the Executive to note the current budgetary position as such there are no specific choices within the report.

469 Capital Programme Update

The Chair invited Cllr Lyn Buckingham to address the meeting. Cllr Buckingham spoke to reference the £73m underspend in relation to the capital programme and queried why the programme was so far behind. Cllr Buckingham also made reference to the invest to save programme, particularly in relation to the Children's Trust as well as referencing flood mitigation and how the Council was meeting its obligations in that regard.

The Chair then invited Cllr Lloyd Bunday, Executive Member for Finance and Transformation to introduce a report that requested approval for capital schemes that had come forward for inclusion in the Council's Capital Programme. Approval of the funding would allow the schemes to move forward to procurement and delivery.

Four schemes were highlighted as per the report and recommendation below. In addition, the Executive recommended to Council the approval of borrowing proposals relating to grounds maintenance equipment.

Cllr Bunday noted that a significant proportion of the underspend referred to by Cllr Buckingham was as a result of inherited capital budgets, with rephasing of capital projects being examined.

Cllr David Brackenbury spoke to welcome the additional funding for Kettering High Street Heritage Action Zone and thanked Cllr Buckingham for raising the issue of flooding responsibilities ahead of a meeting with Anglian Water and the Environment Agency.

RESOLVED

KEY DECISION

That the Executive:

- i) Approved the following changes into the capital programme:

- a. UK Shared Prosperity Fund - £190k in 2023/24 and £1,060k in 2024/25 which is to be funded from the Core UK Shared Prosperity Fund grant transferred from the development pool.
 - b. Kettering High Street Heritage Action Zone – increase in existing budget of £371.4k in 2023/24 which is to be funded from the following sources: £93.9k from external grants, £132.5k from S106 contributions and £145k of virements from schemes already approved within the capital programme as set out in the report.
 - c. Warren Bridge Flood Defence - £303k in 2023/24 which is to be funded from the following sources: £213k from external grants and £90k from resident contributions.
 - d. Environmental Services grounds maintenance equipment - £445k in 2023/24 (£400k brought forward from the development pool in 2024/25) which is to be funded from borrowing.
- ii) Recommended to Council to approve the borrowing proposals for:
- a. Environmental Services grounds maintenance equipment - £445k

Reasons for Recommendations: These are set out in greater detail within section 5 of the report, but can be summarised as:

- To meet corporate plan objectives, for instance in leading in improving the local environment

Alternative Options Considered:

Items 3.1 a-c above are grant funded/ from S106 contributions and the use of the funding is in line with the agreements, so there are no alternative options proposed. For item 3.1 d, external grants were explored but are not available for plant equipment. The option of leasing new equipment was considered, but not deemed to represent value for money and therefore borrowing is the most cost-effective funding source. The other alternative option would be to not approve this scheme. However, this would have an adverse impact on meeting service needs and the achievement of NNC's corporate objectives.

Chair

Date

The meeting closed at 10.39 am