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Meeting:	Executive
Date:	Wednesday 12 th July, 2023
Time:	9:00 am
Venue:	Council Chamber, Corby Cube, George Street, Corby, NN17 1QG

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To members of the Executive

Councillors Jason Smithers (Chair), Helen Howell (Vice-Chair), Matthew Binley, David Brackenbury, Lloyd Bunday, Scott Edwards, Helen Harrison, David Howes, Harriet Pentland and Mark Rowley

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	To consider any items of business of which notice has been given to the Proper Officer and the Chair considers to be urgent, pursuant to the Local Government Act 1972.		
	Adele Wylie, Monitoring Officer		
	North Northamptonshire Council		
	Andrie		
	Proper Officer		
	Tuesday 4 th July 20	23	

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ITEM	NARRATIVE	DEADLINE
Members of the Public Agenda Statements	Northamptonshire council area may make statements in relation to reports on the public part of this agenda. A request to address the Executive must be received 2 clear	5.00pm Friday 7 th July 2023
	working days prior to the meeting at <u>democraticservices@northnorthants.gov.uk</u> Each Member of the Public has a maximum of 3 minutes to address the committee.	
Member Agenda Statements	Other 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 Member has a maximum of 3 minutes to address the committee. A period of 30 minutes (Chair's Discretion) is allocated for Member Statements.	5.00pm Friday 7 th July 2023

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Minutes of a meeting of the Executive

At 10.00 am on Thursday 8th June, 2023 in the Council Chamber, Corby Cube, George Street, Corby, NN17 1QG

Present:-

<u>Members</u>

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

Also in attendance – Councillors Lyn Buckingham, Anne Lee, Jim Hakewill, William Colquhoun, Dorothy Maxwell and Matt Keane

440 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of the Executive Director of Children's Services, AnnMarie Dodds.

441 Minutes of the Meetings Held on 20th April 2023 and 11th May 2023

RESOLVED that the Executive agreed the minutes of the meetings held on 20th April 2023 and 11th May 2023 as true and accurate records of the meetings.

442 Members' Declarations of Interest

A personal and prejudicial interest was declared by Cllr Scott Edwards in Agenda Item 11 – South-West Kettering (Headlands Community) Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Edwards left the meeting for the duration of the debate and voting on this item.

443 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 6 - Corporate Parenting Board	Cllrs Dorothy Maxwell and Lyn
	Buckingham
Item 7 – NNC Public Spaces Protection Order	Cllrs Anne Lee, Ross Armour,
for Dog Control	Dorothy Maxwell and Lyn
	Buckingham

Item 12 - Primary Education Provision at the Glenvale Park Development	Cllrs Dorothy Maxwell and Lyn Buckingham
Item 13 – Start Well Research Project	Cllrs Anne Lee, Dorothy Maxwell and Lyn Buckingham
Item 14 - Treasury Management Outturn Report – 2022-23	Cllr Dorothy Maxwell
Item 15 – Budget Forecast Outturn 2022-23 at Period 12	Cllrs Anne Lee, Dorothy Maxwell and Lyn Buckingham
Item 16 - Capital Outturn 2022/23 – Provisional Outturn as at Period 12	Cllr Dorothy Maxwell

Cllr Ross Armour had provided his apologies for the meeting and consequently did not speak on Agenda Item 7.

Cllr Dorothy Maxwell opted not to speak in relation to Agenda Items 13, 14, 15 and 16.

444 Performance Indicator Report 2023/24 - Period 1

The Leader 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 following the agreed changes to performance reporting arrangements at the meeting of Executive on 16th March 2023, the PI set had been revised for the 2023/24 financial year, streamlining the report and concentrating on areas that were not performing as well as expected.

The Period 1 report indicated a mixed picture for performance, with 32% of indicators performing above target, with 13% within tolerance levels and 36% below target. The remaining 19% of indicators were missing data to allow for reporting. Of the 58 PIs reported for the period, 17 had shown improvement, with 17 deteriorating since the previous reporting period.

The meeting heard that revenues and benefits collection rates had seen a positive start to the financial year, surpassing monthly targets as well as figures for April 2022, whilst Environmental Information Regulation, Freedom of Information and Individual Rights Requests completed within set timescales had all shown marked improvements.

Cllr David Brackenbury noted the positive improvements to PIs relating to Planning Services which reflected great credit on the team involved.

Cllr Helen Harrison spoke to welcome the progress made in regard to deprivation of liberty safeguarding cases, the result of hard work from the team involved. Cllr Harrison also referenced two indicators (AFL07 & AFL08) relating to care and support needs that were currently showing as below target, noting that it was early in the reporting year and performance was anticipated to improve in both these areas.

Cllr Bunday concluded debate by stating that work was ongoing to further refine performance indicators and their presentation, and members could expect improvements to future iterations of the report in the coming months.

RESOLVED

That the Executive noted the performance of the Council as measured by the available indicators at Period 1 (April) 2023/24, set out in the appendix to this report.

Reason for Recommendations: To better understand the Council's performance as measured by performance indicators as at Period 1 (April) 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.

445 Corporate Parenting Board

The Chair welcomed Cllr Dorothy Maxwell to the meeting and invited her to address the Executive in relation to the Corporate Parenting Board report. Cllr Maxwell spoke to welcome the proposal to form a separate board for North Northamptonshire and noted the importance of allowing children to provide their views on the social care they received. Cllr Maxwell queried the number of children placed outside the North Northamptonshire area and the cost to the Council for these placements.

The Chair thanked Cllr Maxwell for her comments before inviting Cllr Lyn Buckingham to address the meeting. Cllr Buckingham noted that there was the opportunity to have a better insight into the lives and experiences of the looked after community, despite little time for planning for a transitioned service. The authority could now focus attention on children in its own area and target intervention where needed. Cllr Buckingham stated that the board needed a strong reporting mechanism to allow all Councillors to understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to Corporate Parenting.

The Chair thanked Cllr Buckingham for her comments before inviting the Executive Member for Children, Families, Education and Skills, Cllr Scott Edwards to introduce a report that sought to update Executive on new arrangements for a North Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board.

Cllr Edwards reported that the statutory Corporate Parenting Board had formerly operated as a joint function with West Northamptonshire Council until April 2023. The new board, to be chaired by Cllr Edwards, would allow members and officers to offer the best possible support to looked after children in North Northamptonshire. A strong reporting mechanism was vital to the work of the board and partner organisations had already been invited onboard.

Cllr Edwards noted that the terms of reference for the board were attached as an appendix to the report, and that membership would consist of representatives from the Council's Children's Services, seven elected members from across the political

spectrum, health services, education, the police, voluntary sector and care leavers. The board would meet bi-monthly and would report to the Executive on an annual basis.

Cllr Helen Howell spoke to welcome the report as an opportunity for the Council to take control of its own services and allow more access for members to be involved in Corporate Parenting.

The Chair concluded debate by noting that a North Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board focussed on children within the area was something that was crucial to giving the best outcomes for all those involved.

RESOLVED

That the Executive:

- i) Established a Corporate Parenting Board with seven elected members for North Northamptonshire
- ii) Noted the Terms of Reference at Appendix A of the report and agreed the membership as set out therein

Reason for Recommendation – to ensure that statutory obligations are effectively discharged.

Alternative Options Considered: The alternative option is to not have a Corporate Parenting Board, however, to assist in effectively discharging the Council's obligations it is best practice to have a Corporate Parenting Board.

446 NNC Public Space Protection Order for Dog Control

The Chair welcomed ClIr Anne Lee to the meeting and invited her to address the Executive regarding the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for Dog Control. ClIr Lee welcomed the well-written and comprehensive report, stating her support for the exclusion of dogs from school and sports fields, but noting the need for specific locations for dogs to be exercised off-lead. ClIr Lee also queried a perceived lack of enforcement regarding dog-related offences. ClIr Lee also referenced resourcing of enforcement and stated that this should not be at the expense of other important areas of Council work.

The Chair thanked Cllr Lee for her comments and invited Cllr Dorothy Maxwell to address the meeting. Cllr Maxwell spoke to note the issue of dog fouling and the possibility of having fenced-off areas specifically for dogs to be exercised off-lead. Cllr Maxwell queried the cost of wardens to carry out enforcement activities.

The Chair thanked Cllr Maxwell for her contribution before inviting Cllr Lyn Buckingham to speak. Cllr Buckingham also raised the issue of enforcement, querying the point of introducing PSPOs if they were not enforced and noting the need to positively change the behaviour of certain dog owners.

The Chair thanked the speakers for their comments 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 commence the first stage public consultation on the proposed North Northamptonshire Public Spaces Protection Order for Dog Control.

Cllr Binley stated that there were currently orders in place across three of the legacy council areas of Kettering, Wellingborough and East Northants. The Kettering order had originally been due to expire in August 2023 but had been extended until November in line with the remaining two orders to allow for the process before members to be completed. The meeting heard that there was no dog control order currently in place for Corby.

It was reported that the proposed PSPO would cover the whole authority area and by aligning conditions would make enforcement simpler and restrictions easier for residents to understand. Details of the proposed restrictions were highlighted, including dog exclusion from all fenced children's play areas, authority-wide controls on dog fouling, dogs on lead orders in designated places and the ability for authorised officers to require dogs to be placed on leads when requested. The order in Kettering currently stated that a person could not be in control of more than six dogs; however, it was proposed to remove this from any new PSPO as DEFRA was currently reviewing this position and could issue national requirements.

It was heard that enforcement of the proposed PSPO would be carried out within existing resources, with the Council keeping the revenue from any fines. However, the PSPO was aimed at changing behaviours of a minority of dog owners so that everyone could enjoy open spaces in the Council area.

It was noted that, if approved, the first stage consultation would be carried out over a six-week period. Recommendations would then be made based on consultation feedback and a revised order drafted followed by a further four-week consultation period. This process required public engagement and statutory consultees to be involved to seek views from as many people as possible. Initial views from Town and Parish councils had been sought during a pre-consultation, and the list of councils to respond was highlighted in the report. In addition, the proposals had been discussed with members of the Sustainable Communities and Prosperous Communities EAPs, with both supporting the proposed consultation process.

The Chair welcomed the report as a tool in the Council's armoury to hold to account the very few dog owners that did not properly control their dogs.

Cllr Harriet Pentland spoke to support the proposal going to consultation, noting that a broad range of views was important to the process. Cllr Pentland also noted that owning a dog came with significant responsibilities and having a Dog Control PSPO in place was important from that perspective.

Cllrs Helen Howell and David Brackenbury also spoke to welcome the proposal, noting the importance of educating the few dog owners who currently caused issues that the order was designed to prevent.

RESOLVED

That the Executive approved the commencement of the Public Spaces Protection Order Consultation for Dog Control for North Northamptonshire Council.

Reason for Recommendations – having one aligned PSPO in place for dog control, will bring all existing conditions and controls together in one place, will remove inconsistencies across the areas and make enforcement more straightforward and easier to understand for the public.

Alternative Options Considered – The existing PSPO's within the previous sovereign areas of Wellingborough, Kettering and East Northamptonshire could be extended; amended; or revoked or could be left to expire in November 2023. However, having one aligned PSPO in place would remove inconsistencies that having three PSPO's creates and if they were allowed to lapse, this could increase dog fouling and dog control complaints and issues.

A separate PSPO could be introduced for the previous sovereign area of Corby, or this area could remain without standards for and enforcement of dog control. It is however believed to be important that all areas are covered by the same PSPO.

447 Adoption of the NNC Contaminated Land Strategy and the Contaminated Land Cost Recovery and Hardship Policy

The Chair invited the Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration, Cllr David Brackenbury to introduce a report that sought approval of the proposed Contaminated Land Strategy and Cost Recovery and Hardship Policy.

Cllr Brackenbury reported that the documents before members combined existing strategies held by former legacy authorities and were a statutory requirement regarding the operation of inspections of potentially contaminated land within the Council area and the methods to address any contaminated land identified. The Cost Recovery and Hardship Policy detailed the decision-making process when determining how to recover costs associated with the clean-up of contaminated land.

Cllr Brackenbury reported that statutory consultation had been undertaken with appropriate public authorities and responses received had been taken into account in the production of the strategy. The strategy had also been considered by the Sustainable Communities EAP.

RESOLVED

That the Executive approved the proposed Contaminated Land Strategy and Cost Recovery and Hardship Policy as set out in Appendix A and Appendix B to the report.

Reason for Recommendation: The North Northamptonshire Contaminated Land Strategy and Cost Recovery and Hardship Policy are based on the strategy and policy documents previously adopted by the former Borough and District councils across Northamptonshire. The new documents have been produced in collaboration with West Northamptonshire Council. The responsibility for the inspection of contaminated land has traditionally sat within Environmental Protection.

The document has been the subject of both an internal and external consultation process with comments invited on the document. The comments and changes, where appropriate to the aims and objectives of the document, have been incorporated into the strategy.

Alternative Options Considered – The Executive could decide not to update the strategy and policy, however statutory guidance states that the local authority should keep their contaminated strategy under periodic review and not doing so could threaten the lawfulness of any enforcement action taken. The Council would also fail to meet its statutory duty.

448 Braybrooke Neighbourhood Plan

The Chair invited Cllr David Brackenbury, Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration to introduce a report that sought approval to formally make the Braybrooke Neighbourhood Plan as part of the statutory development plan, following an independent examination and positive referendum result.

Cllr Brackenbury offered congratulations to all those involved in the process of getting the neighbourhood plan to this stage, and commended the work involved in its production. Cllr Brackenbury noted that North Northamptonshire now benefitted from a suite of such plans across the area, and this was to be welcomed.

Cllrs Scott Edwards and David Howes welcomed the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan for Braybrooke and praised the work of those involved in its production.

RESOLVED

That the Executive made the Braybrooke Neighbourhood Plan, so that it became part of the statutory development plan for the area.

Reason for Recommendation – The plan was approved through a public referendum, identifying a majority in favour verdict of making the Plan, in addition the Council is satisfied that the making of the Plan would not breach, or otherwise be incompatible with, any EU or human rights obligations. Therefore, the Council is procedurally required to "make" the Braybrooke Neighbourhood Plan part of the statutory development plan for the Braybrooke Neighbourhood Area within the timeframe set out by the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

Alternative Options Considered – The Council is required by the Localism Act and provisions of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as

amended) to 'make' a neighbourhood plan within 8 weeks of the day following a successful referendum. The only circumstance where the Council should not make this decision is where the making of the plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU of human rights obligation. Failure to make the Plan would prevent it being adopted.

449 Harrington Neighbourhood Plan

The Chair invited Cllr David Brackenbury, Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration to introduce a report that sought approval to formally make the Harrington Neighbourhood Plan as part of the statutory development plan, following an independent examination and positive referendum result.

Cllr Brackenbury again offered congratulations to all those involved in the process of getting the neighbourhood plan to this stage, and commended the work involved in its production.

RESOLVED

That the Executive made the Harrington Neighbourhood Plan, so that it became part of the statutory development plan for the area.

Reason for Recommendation – The plan was approved through a public referendum, identifying a majority in favour verdict of making the Plan, in addition the Council is satisfied that the making of the Plan would not breach, or otherwise be incompatible with, any EU or human rights obligations. Therefore, the Council is procedurally required to "make" the Harrington Neighbourhood Plan part of the statutory development plan for the Harrington Neighbourhood Area within the timeframe set out by the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

Alternative Options Considered – The Council is required by the Localism Act and provisions of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) to 'make' a neighbourhood plan within 8 weeks of the day following a successful referendum. The only circumstance where the Council should not make this decision is where the making of the plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU of human rights obligation. Failure to make the Plan would prevent it being adopted.

450 South-West Kettering (Headlands Community) Neighbourhood Plan

(Cllr Scott Edwards left the room prior to consideration and voting on this item)

The Chair invited Cllr David Brackenbury, Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration to introduce a report that sought approval to formally make the South-West Kettering (Headlands Community) Neighbourhood Plan as part of the statutory development plan, following an independent examination and positive referendum result. Cllr Brackenbury again offered congratulations to all those involved in the process of getting the neighbourhood plan to this stage, and commended the work involved in its production.

RESOLVED

That the Executive made the South-West Kettering (Headlands Community) Neighbourhood Plan, so that it became part of the statutory development plan for the area.

Reason for Recommendation – The plan was approved through a public referendum, identifying a majority in favour verdict of making the Plan, in addition the Council is satisfied that the making of the Plan would not breach, or otherwise be incompatible with, any EU or human rights obligations. Therefore, the Council is procedurally required to "make" the Harrington Neighbourhood Plan part of the statutory development plan for the Harrington Neighbourhood Area within the timeframe set out by the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

Alternative Options Considered – The Council is required by the Localism Act and provisions of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) to 'make' a neighbourhood plan within 8 weeks of the day following a successful referendum. The only circumstance where the Council should not make this decision is where the making of the plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU of human rights obligation. Failure to make the Plan would prevent it being adopted.

451 Primary Education Provision at the Glenvale Park Development, Wellingborough North

The Chair invited Cllr Dorothy Maxwell to speak. Cllr Maxwell noted that many school buildings locally were outdated and over-subscribed, with reference made to the school at Rowan Gate and noted the potential for the site to possibly become a specialist school.

The Chair then invited Cllr Lyn Buckingham to address the meeting. Cllr Buckingham suggested utilising the school building to create new SEND provision which could be used to remedy an existing shortfall.

The Chair then invited Cllr Scott Edwards, Executive Member for Children, Families, Education and Skills to introduce a report that sought approval of a proposal to seek expressions of interest in relocating an existing local school to the Glenvale Park school given that there would be insufficient current demand to support the school opening until September 2025 or beyond.

Cllr Edwards confirmed that the site could not be used for SEND provision and had to be utilised for primary education as part of the s106 agreement. Cllr Edwards provided details of four brand new SEND units previously approved by the Executive that would increase provision in North Northamptonshire. The meeting heard that creating additional school places through opening the new school could have a detrimental impact on surrounding schools. In addition, the Department for Education would not provide funding unless demand for places could be clearly evidenced, and this would not be the case for a new school at Glenvale Park at the current time. Consequently, work had been undertaken to assess the options for the new school to ensure there was access to sufficient school places, that no schools were disadvantaged and that available assets were used as effectively as possible. The conclusion drawn as a result of this work was that offering local schools the opportunity to express an interest in moving to the new site would deliver the best outcomes for the community.

It was reported that a further report would be brought to Executive setting out the outcome of the expression of interest process and seeking a formal decision about whether to proceed on this basis. It was heard that should there be an expression of interest from an existing school to move to the site at Glenvale Park, the former school location could be repurposed, with reference made to a hospital school that North Northamptonshire did not currently have.

The Chair sought explanation for all attendees and meeting viewers regarding hospital schools and noted that the Council had invested £34m in local school infrastructure during 2022/23.

Cllr Graham Lawman spoke to note that Glenvale Park already had over 400 residents, with 3000 dwellings planned and welcomed the innovative way of looking at the issue of usage of the newly built school building.

Cllr Helen Harrison welcomed the report stating the importance of using Council facilities in the best possible way. It was noted that it was of importance that any decision made took into account the future expansion of the Glenvale Park development.

RESOLVED

KEY DECISION

That the Executive:

- i) Approved the proposal to seek expressions of interest in relocating an existing local school to the Glenvale Park school.
- ii) Approved the commencement of the preparation for the statutory process relating to making a significant change to an academy or a maintained school.
- iii) Noted that a further report will be brought forward setting out the outcome of the expression of interest process and seeking a formal decision about whether to proceed on this basis.

Reasons for Recommendation:

- Ensure the delivery of sufficient suitable school places that meet the needs of the community now and in the future.
- Ensure pupils have access to high quality facilities that support their education.
- Making effective and efficient use of the education estate to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Ensure full transparency of the process being followed.
- Allows for all interested parties to have their views heard and considered as part of the decision-making process.
- Will evidence that appropriate steps are taken in line with statutory guidelines and within appropriate timescales.
- Allows Executive to be further updated on the outcome of the expressions of interest ahead of any further decision making.
- Is in accordance with the DfE legislation and policy on making significant changes to an academy or maintained school.
- Demonstrates to the governing bodies/trustees of any schools wishing to make an application that the council are progressing a shared solution in line with their expression of interest.

Alternative Options Considered:

- Establishing a new Primary School at Glenvale Park Pupil place planning data does not support the creation of a new Primary School in the Glenvale area at this time. Over provision of places would have a detrimental impact on surrounding schools leading to financial viability concerns. In addition, DfE would not fund a school where the need for additional places is not supported through the place planning process.
- Identify an alternative use for the school site. There is need for additional SEND places in the North Northamptonshire area. However, repurposing the school buildings would be costly and would not be in line with the development agreement.
- Leave the site vacant until demand for places increases. Based on available Pupil Place Planning data, the need for places is unlikely to grow for some years. Even at that time, this may not justify a new 2 Form of Entry school on this site. Leaving the site unused for an extended period of time is a poor use of resources and creates additional costs in areas such a security and maintenance.

452 Start Well Research Project

The Chair invited Cllr Anne Lee to speak regarding the Start Well Research Project. Cllr Lee spoke to support the allocation of funding and the recommendations of the report. Cllr Lee noted the impact of Covid-19 on early years development and the detrimental impact of the historic scaling-down of Sure Start provision. Cllr Lee made reference to the accessibility of support services and developmental delay problems not being picked up quickly enough. Cllr Lee noted that health visitors should be more involved, as well as identifying an underspend in Public Health and further noted the delay in publication of the latest Director of Public Health Annual report stating that councillors needed to be kept informed of developments in this area.

The Chair thanked Cllr Lee for her comments before inviting Cllr Lyn Buckingham to speak. Cllr Buckingham noted that attainment of development milestones were not being met for all children locally and voiced concerns regarding a lost opportunity to thrive for a generation of children. Additional funding was needed to finance the required resources for early years support and Family Hubs needed to establish a firm footing in local communities.

The Chair thanked Cllr Buckingham for her contribution, noting the Council's £650,000 investment in maintained nursery provision and stated that the Council would continue to lobby government for additional funding.

The Chair then invited Cllr Scott Edwards, Executive Member for Children, Families, Education and Skills to introduce a report that sought to inform the Executive of the Start Well Research Project linked to Family Hubs and detailed the initial findings from the Start Well Research Project. The report also sought approval for the dissemination of research outcomes with partners.

Cllr Edwards noted that there would be further reports on the subject brought to the Executive in future, with the long-term aim being to pilot the Start Well Research Project in the Wellingborough area, creating a successful research model that could be replicated elsewhere. Cllr Edwards stated that Early Years provision was absolutely vital for the welfare of children and families and the Council was doing everything possible to improve outcomes for those families.

Details were provided to the meeting of the initial findings gathered from the Start Well Research Project and the top four areas of need were detailed as follows:

- SEND/SENCo
- Speech and language
- Safeguarding refresher
- Communication approaches

Cllr Edwards highlighted a collaborative piece of work with Dr Tanya Richardson, Principal Investigator and Senior Lecturer in Education (Early Years) at the University of Northampton that would be funded through the Family Hub programme. The aim of the study was to ascertain how factors in play and learning environments of Early Years settings were associated with the quality of their communication and language and if so, the nature and effects of those factors.

Cllr Helen Harrison spoke to confirm that in regard to 0-19 years health visiting, the existing contract was set for re-procurement with stringent conditions to be put in place to ensure children were getting milestone health checks completed. Cllr Harrison stated that the report before members was a good piece of work, backed by a solid evidence base that would assist in the development of Children's Services across the whole of North Northamptonshire.

Cllr Matt Binley also spoke to welcome the report.

RESOLVED

KEY DECISION

That the Executive:

- a) Noted the research project; and
- b) Approved dissemination of research outcomes with partners

Reason for Recommendation: To support children and young people and their families to access high quality sustainable education that facilitates the achievement of best outcomes.

Alternative Options Considered: Not undertaking the Start Well Research project. This would have been a missed opportunity to gather valuable data in relation to Early Years provision in North Northamptonshire.

453 Treasury Management Outturn Report - 2022-23

The Chair invited Councillor Lloyd Bunday, Executive Member for Finance and Transformation to introduce a report that updated the Executive on the Council's treasury management and prudential indicators, including the position following progress on the disaggregation of the assets and liabilities that were previously held by the former Northamptonshire County Council. The report also provided an update on the Council's treasury management activities and performance for the financial year 2022/23 in accordance with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management which required that members be informed of treasury management activities at least twice a year.

Cllr Bunday reported that the Council continued to face a volatile financial market, with high inflation and regular interest rate rises. The meeting noted that as at 31^{st} March 2023, the Council held loans totalling £463.4m, representing a decrease of £22.3m at the end of the previous financial year.

It was heard that the Council had a statutory duty to operate a balanced budget, achieved by ensuring cash flow was adequately planned, with any surplus money deposited in low-risk investments. It was reported that during the year, the Council's investment balances ranged between £186.6m and £314.6m due to timing differences between income and expenditure.

Cllrs David Brackenbury and Helen Howell spoke to welcome the progress in reducing in the Council's outstanding loan holdings. Cllr Brackenbury also spoke positively of the strong income return on Council investments.

The Chair thanked the Finance Team for their work in ensuring positive progress relating to treasury management.

RESOLVED

That the Executive:

- a) Noted the treasury management outturn report detailing the activity undertaken during the financial year ended 31st March 2023 and the performance achieved set out in **Appendix A** to this report; and
- b) Noted the Council's treasury management activities and performance for the financial year ended 31st March 2023.

Reasons for Recommendations: The Council's TMSS is underpinned by the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management ("the Code") which requires that members are informed of treasury management activities at least twice a year. Full Council has delegated the formulation and monitoring of the Council's treasury management strategy, policy, and activity to the Executive Committee.

Alternative Options Considered: There are no alternative options to be considered for this report, which is for noting only.

454 Budget Forecast Update 2022/23 - Period 12

The Chair invited ClIr Anne Lee to address the Executive. ClIr Lee raised an issue regarding an underspend of £482,000 in relation to the Climate Change budget and hoped that this funding would be carried forward into the new financial year for the same purpose. ClIr Lee also raised the issue of an underspend in relation to Public Health and suggested it could be used toward a feasibility study for the future of Kettering Leisure Village.

The Chair then invited Cllr Lyn Buckingham to address the meeting. Cllr Buckingham offered her thanks to staff for their hard work in stepping up into unfilled roles across the Council and referenced the financing of Home to School Transport. Cllr Buckingham also suggested that vitamin deficiency in certain localities was a real issue to be considered and addressed by Public Health going forward.

The Chair thanked both speakers for their comments before inviting 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 12 monitoring forecasts for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), noting that this was a forecast only and still required auditing and official sign-off. Cllr Bunday commended both members and officers for strong financial management and in-year prudence, noting that a number of areas could impact the forecast outturn, including inter-authority charging arrangements with West Northamptonshire Council.

The meeting heard that the overall outturn forecast for the General Fund for 2022/23, as at Period 12, was a forecast overspend of £965,000, a favourable movement of £2.897m since the last report to Executive. It was reported that there were a number of budgetary variances, however, the main pressure still came from

within the Children's Trust where the forecast overspend was £21.38m. The cost to the Council of this overspend was £9.444m.

The forecast outturn for 2022/23 for the specific service areas was as follows:

- Children's and Education £8.254m overspend
- Adults, Communities and Wellbeing £426k overspend
- Place & Economy £480k underspend
- Enabling and Support £7.717m underspend

Cllr Bunday noted that the report also sought approval to transfer to capital reserves of \pounds 3.043m to cover MRP and \pounds 2.728m to the Business Rates reserve. It was reported that as at the end of March 2023, 96.8% of Council Tax had been collected, with 97.05% of Business Rates collected. The contingency budget for 2022/23 of \pounds 4.75m had been fully utilised as at Period 7, presenting a risk for the remaining five months of the year.

The meeting noted that the two separate Housing Revenue Account neighbourhood accounts would eventually merge into a single HRA. The account for Corby was forecasting an underspend of \pounds 521,000 and that for Kettering an underspend of \pounds 180,0000.

Cllr Harriet Pentland spoke to confirm that Climate Change funding would be rolled over to the new financial year and set out the context behind that position, referencing the Carbon Management Plan and forthcoming spending against the fund that was based on careful planning.

Cllr Helen Harrison noted that any Public Health underspend was ringfenced for spending in that area only. Regarding the vitamin deficiency query raised by Cllr Buckingham, it was noted that distribution of vitamin tablets was the responsibility of primary health, although Public Health could potentially raise awareness of the issue. Cllr Harrison praised the work of the Executive Director of Adults, Health Partnerships and Housing and his team for departmental underspend in relation to the Adult Social Care budget given its volatile nature as a demand-led service.

Cllr Graham Lawman made reference to the ongoing Home to School Transport consultation, the future provision of this service and associated budgetary impact.

RESOLVED

That the Executive:

- a) Noted the Council's draft outturn position for the General Fund 2022/23 which is an overspend of £965km and the Housing Revenue Account 2022/23 which is an underspend of £473k as summarised in section 4, alongside the further analysis which is set out in Section 5 and Section 6 of this report.
- b) Approved the following transfers to reserves which are reflected in the draft outturn position.

Transfer to reserves included within individual Directorates:

- Place & Economy Grants (Section 5.45) £287k
- Planning Reserve (Section 5.45) £143k
- Capital General Fund (MRP Section 5.62) £3.043m
- Members Empowerment Fund (Section 5.83) £104k

Transfer to Earmarked Reserves from Available Resources:

- Business Rates Risk Reserve (Section 5.86) £2.728m
- c) Noted the assessment of the 2022/23 savings as shown in Appendix A to the report.

Reason for Recommendations – to note the draft outturn position for 2022/23, approve the transfer to reserves 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 2022/23 and makes recommendations for the Executive to note the current budgetary position as such there are no specific choices within the report.

455 Capital Outturn 2022-23

The Chair invited Councillor Lloyd Bunday, Executive Member for Finance and Transformation presented a report that:

- Set out the provisional capital outturn position for 2022/23 for the Council, and the subsequent carry forward requests due to the rephasing of scheme expenditure profiles.
- Included requests to approve schemes, which during the process of closing the year end for 2022/23, had been identified as capital expenditure and needed to be reclassified and included within the Council's Capital Programme.
- Detailed the latest revised capital budgets (2022/23) for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme, including new schemes which had been approved since 1st April 2022

Cllr Bunday reported that outturn in respect of the General Fund Capital Programme showed a revised capital budget position of £109.3m, including slippage and in-year approved programmes. The spend was £35.4m, which represented movement (slippage/underspend) of £73.9m against the revised budget.

The meeting noted that a report to Executive in February 2023 had detailed that \pounds 43m of budget had been reviewed and re-profiled into the 2023/24 budget, therefore the proposed carry forward request from 2022/23 was only £29.9m out of the reported underspend of £73.9m.

Cllr Bunday drew attention to schemes identified to transfer into the development pool, where there were uncertainties over the timing or scope of delivery, noting that further business cases would be required to request approval back into the capital programme. It was reported that the outturn for the HRA Capital Programme showed a revised a budget for 2022/23 of £28.3m, including slippage from 2021/22 of £14.3m and approvals in year of £0.610m. The outturn showed a spend of £9.6m, representing an underspend of £18.7m compared to budget.

RESOLVED

KEY DECISION

That the Executive:

- a. Noted the update to the provisional capital outturn for the General Fund (GF) Capital Programme and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme for 2021/22.
- Noted the provisional capital outturn position for the General Fund (GF) Capital Programme and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme for 2022/23.
- c. Approved the proposed capital carry forwards 2022/23 into 2023/24 for the GF and HRA capital programmes as detailed in Appendices A and B.
- d. Approved year end budget adjustments for the GF as shown in Appendix A to the report.

Reasons for Recommendations: This is in line with the Council's constitution and financial regulations in relation to governance.

Alternative Options Considered: By not approving these recommendations there would be an adverse impact on service provision in North Northamptonshire.

456 Urgent Items

It was reported that there were no urgent items of business to be transacted.

457 Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Chair informed members of the press and public that the remaining business for the meeting would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information and he was therefore proposing that the press and public be excluded in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

RESOLVED:- That the press and public be excluded from the meeting in order that consideration could be given to the following item of business which was exempt by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972:-

• Agenda Item 17 – Surplus Asset Disposal

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458 Surplus Asset Disposals

The Chair invited Cllr Graham Lawman to introduce a report that sought approval to dispose of five Council assets identified by the Asset Management Review Group and confirmed as not required to be retained in line with the Council's Asset Disposal Policy.

It was noted that once identified as surplus, The Housing and Planning Act set a limit of two years for disposal of any such asset.

The meeting heard that disposal of the identified assets would reduce the Council's holding costs, provide a capital receipt and benefit the local community.

RESOLVED

KEY DECISION

That the Executive:

- i) Determined the sites detailed in the appendices to the report as surplus
- ii) Delegated authority to the Executive Member for Highways, Travel and Assets, in consultation with the Assistant Director for Assets and Environment to progress the sale, and agree the market terms of:
 - a) Parcel 1, former agricultural land, A14 Jct9, Kettering
 - b) Vacant commercial premises, Thrapston
 - c) Land adjacent Phoenix Parkway, Corby
 - d) Land adjacent A14
 - e) Land & Buildings, Gladstone Road, Desborough

Reasons for Recommendations:

- The suggested way forward will bring the sites forward for redevelopment, providing wider economic development benefits in a reasonable time scale.
- It provides a value for money outcome for the Council, whilst supporting its Council's Corporate Plan commitments.
- There are controls through the planning process, including consultation associated with that process, for the community to be engaged in the outcome of the development.
- Bringing sites forward for development contributes to North Northants area housing supply and to regeneration of their respective areas.
- Progressing these sites will result in the Council reducing the revenue holding costs.
- Any developments will also be regulated with building regulations including those supporting accessibility and the requirement for adherence to energy and sustainability requirements.
- The disposal of the sites will generate a capital receipt, supporting the Council's financial position

Alternative Options Considered:

- The sites have had an extensive review of alternative options. Many have been vacant for some time and incur holding costs.
- Alternative uses have been considered through the AMRG, which includes service area representatives, who confirmed the sites will not meet their needs and/or are not financially viable for their requirements.
- A review of the markets including land values and planning policy shows that there are viable options for development of these sites and, once developed, these uses will contribute to employment opportunities for North Northamptonshire

Chair

Date

The meeting closed at 11.54am

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EXECUTIVE

12th July 2023

Report Title	Performance Indicator Report 2023/24 (Period 2 – May 2023)
Report Author	Tom Barden, Head of Performance, Intelligence and Partnerships Tom.Barden@northnorthants.gov.uk
Lead Member	Cllr Lloyd Bunday, Executive Member for Finance and Transformation

Key Decision	□ Yes	🛛 No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	🗆 Yes	⊠ No
Are there public sector equality duty implications?	🗆 Yes	⊠ No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	🗆 Yes	⊠ No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972		

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Detailed Performance Indicator Report Period 2 2023/24 (May 2023)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. To provide an update on the Council's performance across a range of indicators as measured by the Council's suite of Key Performance Indicators for period 2 (May) 2023-24.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. This report provides an assessment of the Council's performance in respect of the Key Performance Indicators for 2023/24 as at period 2.
- 2.2. A detailed assessment of the performance of services as measured by key performance indicators for period 2 has been included as **Appendix A**.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. It is recommended that the Executive:
 - a) Note 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.
- 3.2. Reason for recommendations to better understand the Council's performance as measured by Key Performance Indicators as at Period 2 (May) 2023/24.
- 3.3. 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

4. Report Background

- 4.1. A detailed assessment of the performance of services as measured by Key Performance Indicators for period 2 has been included as **Appendix A**. This includes comments / exception reports on each of the performance indicators reported.
- 4.2. 54 Key Performance Indicators are reported for this period, of which are reported on a monthly basis.
- 4.3. Key Performance Indicator data for Northamptonshire's Children's Trust for period 1 and period 2 is included within this report.
- 4.4. The list of Key Performance Indicators to be reported throughout this financial year (2023-24) was approved by the Executive Committee at their meeting on the 16th March and can be found in item 405 (<u>Performance Management and Reporting Arrangements 2023-24</u>).
- 4.5. Queries raised by Members on the content of this report will be responded to within 12 working days of the Executive meeting, as agreed with the Executive Member for Finance and Transformation.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1. It is important that the format and presentation of performance data meets the needs of its audience. Therefore, the Council will always welcome any feedback and/or suggestions on how the performance report could be further developed to help facilitate understanding and performance improvement.
- 5.2. It is envisaged that additional indicators will be added to the Key Performance Indicator set as time goes on. Any changes to indicators will be reported to the Executive and scrutiny committees.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. To continue to develop and embed a strong performance management framework and culture at North Northamptonshire Council.
- 6.2. To continue to embed and review the suite of Key Performance Indicators so that the Council can more effectively measure how it is performing against its vision and key commitments outlined within its Corporate Plan.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. **Resources, Financial and Transformation**

- 7.1.1. Performance monitoring allows the Council to drive continuous improvement for North Northamptonshire and identify areas of concern early. Services that submit data returns have many projects that are subject to the Council's Transformation Plan. Accurate and consistent corporate performance data may also assist the compilation of, and aid the success of, external funding bids.
- 7.1.2. This report should be read alongside the Budget Forecast 2023/24 monthly reports once available. By considering both reports together, a broader view of the Council's performance and the relationship between resource allocation and service delivery can be understood.

7.2. Legal and Governance

- 7.2.1. The Council is required to provide statutory monitoring and funding returns to central government departments and their agencies. The Council is currently on course to comply with these requirements. Note that the workload and deadlines for achieving these statutory and mandatory deadlines can prove challenging, particularly where returns are significantly increasing in complexity (this is currently the case for Adult Social Care and Education returns).
- 7.2.2. Monitoring performance is a key element of the Council's Governance Framework. The Council has made performance measurement and management a priority and views it as central to both Council transparency and to the Council's improvement agenda. The Council has adopted a written <u>Performance Management Framework</u> which describes its principles and processes for Performance Management.

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

7.3.1. Effective performance management directly contributes to the delivery of the key commitments set out within the Council's Corporate Plan.

7.4. **Risk**

7.4.1 There are a number of risks relating to performance information:

(a) Poor data quality – Inaccurate data will inevitably lead to less accurate decision making.

(b) Lack of data – Failing to measure key service activities can leave the Council without a clear view of its performance. This prevents the effective oversight of key services, including those affecting the safety and wellbeing of residents.

(c) Incorrect interpretations – Caution should be applied to the interpretation of performance data, particularly given the adjustments that have been made by services to adapt when there was a COVID pandemic. Misunderstanding the performance picture can lead to ineffective decision-making, reputational damage, and inaccurate resourcing.

7.5. Consultation

- 7.5.1. Formal consultation was carried out in the development of the Corporate Plan.
- 7.5.2. Informal consultation with relevant stakeholders, including Executive Members and Scrutiny Members (through the scrutiny committees) was completed for the Key Performance Indicators included in this report and for the development of the new suite of Key Performance Indicators for 2023/24.
- 7.5.3. Informal consultation with relevant stakeholders will continue to take place as we continue to develop the Council's Performance Management Framework.

7.6. Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel

7.6.1. This report serves as information in respect of the Council's performance for Period 2 (May) 2022/23, therefore consideration by the Executive Advisory Panel was not necessary.

7.7. Consideration by Scrutiny

7.7.1. Performance reports will be considered by future meetings of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee, following reports to the Executive.

7.8. Equality Implications

7.8.1. Equality-related performance indicators are in development.

7.9. Climate and Environment Impact

- 7.9.1. The Council continues to develop its set of indicators that provide information about how it is meeting its key commitment to helping deliver a green and sustainable environment.
- 7.9.2. For 2023-24, the Council is measuring and reporting on the following Green, Sustainable Environment key performance indicators:

Indicator Reference Number	Indicator Name	Frequency
GSE01	Number of E-Scooter trips	This was measured monthly in 2022-23 and is to be measured quarterly in 2023-24.
GSE02	Number of E-Scooter users	This was measured monthly in 2022-23 and is to be measured quarterly in 2023-24.
GSE03	Co2 savings from E- Scooters	This was measured monthly in 2022-23 and is to be measured quarterly in 2023-24.
GSE04	Number of electric vehicle charging points publicly available	This was reported on once a year in 2022-23 and featured in the P7 (October) report. It is to be measured quarterly in 2023-24.
GSE05	Number of electric vehicles per charge point	This was reported on once a year in 2022-23 and featured in the P7 (October) report. It is to be measured quarterly in 2023-24.
GSE06	Fly tipping: number of fly tips reported	This is reported quarterly.
GSE07	Percentage of waste diverted from landfill	This is reported quarterly.
GSE08	Co2 saving from Delivery Robots	This is a new KPI for 2023-24 and is to be reported quarterly.
GSE09	Volume of pesticides used within NNC grounds services operations	This is a new KPI for 2023-24 and is to be reported quarterly.

GSE10	Habitat area improved	This is a new KPI for 2023-24 and is	
	for pollinators (hectares)	to be reported annual.	

7.9.3. The Assets & Environment service area have developed a Carbon Management Plan which was considered and approved by Executive at their meeting on 22nd December 2022. The Tree Management and Care Policy and Pollinator Strategy was considered and approved by the Executive at an earlier meeting on 25th August 2022. These policies will consider the Council's commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2030 and provide appropriate performance indicators to measure progress to achieving this target. This will include indicators that measure the Council's carbon emissions along with other environmental projects currently being developed.

7.10. Community Impact

7.10.1. Effective policy and decision-making, and scrutiny, guided by good quality, timely and relevant performance data can make a significant difference to the delivery of public services and therefore have an equally significant impact on the local communities.

7.11. Crime and Disorder Impact

7.11.1. No crime and disorder impacts have been identified.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1. <u>Performance Indicator Report Period 1 2023-24 (April)</u> reported to the meeting of the Executive on 8th June 2023.
- 8.2. <u>Performance Management and Reporting Arrangements 2023-24</u> reported to the meeting of the Executive on the 16th March 2023.
- 8.3. The Corporate Plan, reported to the meeting of the <u>Executive on 18th</u> <u>November 2021</u>, adopted by Council on the 1st December 2021.



Appendix A

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North Northamptonshire Council Performance Report - May 2023

Key to Performance Status Colours

Progress Status Key:
Green - On target or over-performing against target
Amber - Under-performing against target but within 5% corporate tolerance (or other agreed tolerance as specified)
Red - Under-performing against target by more than 5% (or other agreed tolerance as specified)
Dark Grey - Data missing
Grey - Target under review
Turquese - Tracking Indicator only
Children's Trust Progress Status Key:
Greer At target or better
Amber-Below target - within tolerance
Red - Below target - outside tolerance
Grey - No RAG

	ion of Travel Key
An acc	eptable range = within 5% of the last period's performance
∱G	Performance has improved from the last period – Higher is better
∳G	Performance has improved from the last period – Lower is better
↑	Performance has deteriorated but is still on or above target or within an acceptable range of 5% of the last period – Lower is better
→	Performance has stayed the same since the last period
Ţ	Performance has deteriorated but is still on or above target or within an acceptable range of 5% of the last
•	period – Higher is better
∱R	Performance has deteriorated from the last period – Lower is better
₩R	Performance has deteriorated from the last period – Higher is better
①	Actual increased - neither higher or lower is better
⇔	Actual has stayed the same since the last period - neither higher or lower is better
Û	Actual decreased - neither higher or lower is better
1	en's Trust Direction of Travel Key
∱G	Performance improved since last month
→	Performance the same as last month
₩A	Performance declined since last month

Performance	e Terminology key
TBC	To be confirmed
ТВО	To be determined
n/a	Not applicable
	The actual data (number/percentage) achieved during the reporting period
Benchmark	A comparator used to compare the Council's performance against. The 2020/21 average for Unitary Councils in
Dericimark	England has been used where available unless otherwise stated.
Numerator	Number as part of the percentage calculation which shows how many of the parts indicated by the denominator are
Hund de la	taken. See example below.
Denominator	The total number which the numerator is divided by in a percentage. See example below.
EXAMPLE Performance Indicator	% Calls answered
Numerator	Number of calls answered
Denominator	Total number of calls received
	X

						Place & Econ	omy						
Key Commitment	Ref No.	Description of Performance Indicator	Infographic / Chart	Benchmark	Year to Date 2023-24	<u>April 2023/24</u>	May 2023/24	Direction of Travel (since previous period)	Polarity	Target	Tolerance	Comments	
Growth & Regeneration	on			1					1	1			
Safe and thriving	STP15	Percentage of major planning applications determined within 13	100% 80% 60%	88% (Q4 2022/23 All	85.71%	100%	80%	₩R	Higher is better	90%	85% - 90%	Performance this month has dropped. Numbers of major applications at this point in the year are relatively low and so although as a percentage the performance drop looks significant, it is only one application that was outside the statutory time period when determined.	
places		weeks (or within agreed extension of time)	40% లో ఫ్లో ఫ్లో స్ఫో ల్ల్ లో ఫలో ఫ్లో ఫ్లో ఫ్లో ఫ్లో ఫ్లో	English Authorities - LG Inform)	6 out of 7	2 out of 2	4 out of 5	• IX					
Safe and thriving	STP16	Percentage of minor planning applications determined within 8	100% 90% 80% 70%	84% (Q4 2022/23 All	86.21%	86.05%	86.36%		Higher is	05%	000/ 050/	Performance this month has improved slightly and is above target and the	
places	51216	weeks (or within agreed extension of time)	60% κ ⁴ τ ₄ κ ³ τ ₃ ν ⁵ ν ³ τ ₄ κ ³ ε ₂ κ ⁶ O ^C τ ₂ ν ⁴ τ ₆ κ ⁶ τ ₃ κ ⁶ τ ₄ κ ⁶ → Actual 2023/24 Target → Actual 2022/23 Trend 2021/22	English Authorities - LG Inform)	75 out of 87	37 out of 43	38 out of 44	∱G	better	85%	80% - 85%	national benchmark. Planning officer capacity remains challenging but recruitment is to take place shortly to try and help alleviate this.	
Safe and thriving	STP17	Percentage of other (including householder applications) planning applications determined within 8	100% 90% 80% 70%	89% (Q4 2022/23 All	83.22%	85.07%	81.71%	Ŧ	Higher is	88%		Performance has dropped this month and is currently below target and national benchmark. This will be closely monitored by Planning Managers.	
places	31717	weeks (or within agreed extension of time)	60% P ⁴ t t ¹	English Authorities - LG Inform)	124 out of 149	57 out of 67	67 out of 82	•	better		83% - 88%	Planning officer capacity remains challenging but recruitment is to take place shortly to try and alleviate this.	
Highways & Waste				1									
Τ		Number of Defects Outstanding on the network (at end of period), split by category	5500 5000 4500 4000		4056	5406	4056	↓ G				The number of carriageway defects tends to be highest following the winter period, this is a national phenomenon. As explained last month, the service is seeking to improve on the position during the spring months and the figure show a fall in the number of defects outstanding at the end of the month. (This indicator was not reported during 2022/28 because the data was not available, it will now be provided monthly)	
<u>a</u>		P1 (Target response time within 24 hours)	3500 3000 2500 2000 1500		0	0	0		Lower is better	No target - tracking indicator only			
Safe an planes	STP29	P2 (Target response time within 7 days)	2000	n/a	11	30	11				r N/A		
	-	P3 (Target response time within 28 days)	1000 500 0		670	1421	670						
32	-	P4 (Target response time within 26 weeks)	الماني من الماني الم ماني ماني الماني الم		3375	3955	3375	↓G	ŧ				
		Number of Defects Repaired in the network in period, split by category	5000		3170	1317	1853	∱G					
	-	P1 (Target response time within 24 hours)	3000		5	4	1	₩R	ł	No target -		The overall number of repairs completed is higher this month than in the previous month. Overall performance is better with although performance	
Safe and thriving places	STP30	P2 (Target response time within 7 days)	1000	n/a	145	79	66	₩R	Higher is better	tracking indicator only	N/A	has fallen with regard to P4 repairs. This is owing to the increase in demand, which has been greater than the available resources. The	
		P3 (Target response time within 28 days)	6 - 0 - 0 - 0 - 0 - 0 - 0 - 0 - 0 - 0 -		1982	862	1120	∱G	İ	,		highways team is addressing this situation with the highways contractor.	
	ł	P4 (Target response time within 26 weeks)	Actual 2022-23Actual 2023-24		1038	372	666	∱G	İ				
		Percentage of defects responded to within the timeframes specified, split by category	100%		83.73% (2655 out of 3171)	76.77% (1011 out of 1317)	88.67% (1644 out of 1854)	∱G		P1 and P2 97.5% P3 and P4 90%			
		P1 (Target response time within 24 hours)	90%	n/a	100% (5 out of 5)	100% (4 out of 4)	100% (1 out of 1)		İ	97.5%	No Tolerance		
Safe and thriving places	STP31	P2 (Target response time within 7 days)	85%		98.63% (144 out of 146)	98.73% (78 out of 79)	98.51% (66 out of 67)		Higher is better	97.5%		Despite repairing more defects this period than last month, the service has not been able to complete all P4 repairs within the target response time. The highways team is addressing this situation with the highways	
		P3 (Target response time within 28 days)	80%		83.85% (1662 out of 1982)	74.94% (646 out of 862)	90.71% (1016 out of 1120)	∱G		90%		contractor.	
		P4 (Target response time within 26 weeks)	ないかけいいいでは、100mgののでいいでいた。 → Actual 2022-23 → Actual 2023-24		81.31% (844 out of 1038)	76.07% (283 out of 372)	84.23% (561 out of 666)	∱G		90%			

	Children's Services													
Key Commitment	Ref No.	Description of Performance Indicator the whole of Northamptonshire)	Infographic / Chart	Benchmark	<u>March</u> 2022/23	<u>Year to</u> Date 2023- <u>24</u>	<u>April</u> 2023/24	<u>May</u> 2023/24	Direction of Travel (since previous period)	Polarity	Target	Tolerance	Extra detail on Pl	Comments
Better, brighter futures	BBF05 (KPI 2)	the whole of Northamptonshire)	40% 35% 30% 25% به به	22.7% (All English Authorities 2021 - LAIT)	30% (821)	26%	28% (698)	24% (838)	∱G	Lower is better	29%	25% - 40%		Re-referrals have improved this month better than target, this remains an area of ongoing focus with audit and rev learning. The dedicated education roles in MASH (Mulii-Agency Safegarding Hub) are working positively with schools to appropriate referrals and compliments from schools about their roles are increasing. Work with all partners contin exercise appropriate and roles applications and roles application of thresholds. Steps have been taken to strengthen the Early Help partnerships with Partnership Support Team (Early Help Muli being placed in the MASH pods and a leaner step down process. It is anticipated that the strengthened model in 1 and developments in CFSS (Children and Family Support Services)/Early Help Will continue to support approgra- reduciong origing challenges in regards to capacity in Family Support Family partnership. COVID: and coci of living crisis has immpact on volume and quality of revelerals.
Better, brighter futures	BBF06 (KPI 3)	% of single assessments authorised within 45 working days	100% 55% 55% 55% 56% 56% 56% 56% 56	88% We are in the process of identifying more up to date benchmark data for this PI.	95% (825)	93%	94% (774)	93% (928)	₩A	Higher is better	85%	85% - 95%		Assessment timescales remain consistently above target and national average, decreasing to 93% this mon All managers monitor this very closely via daily reports. A narrative is provided for cases that go beyond 45 days, remains a very small minority. Whilst staffing has presented challenges due to vacancies and higher levels of sickness in DAAT (Duty and Assessment Team), here is now positive move towards more appropriate staffing being achieved and sustained. In addition to timeliness, we work on increasing the quality of assessments. Safety in our interventions.
Better, brighter futures	BBF07 (KPI 8)	% Children in care with three or more placements in the previous 12 months	14% 13% 13% 10% 9% 4 ye ¹ y ²	10% (All English Authorities 2021/22 - LG Inform)	11.0% (1,231)	10.6%	10.5% (1212)	10.6% (1,205)	¥A	Lower is better	10%	5% - 15%		Performance has increased to 11% this month. Consideration of various options to improve sufficiency is cont including oxploration of capital investment, additional in house resources, as well as improved engagement in markets. Two new emergency homes now operational and valuing care project has commenced. Through improved edge of care arrangements, the close oversight on admissions to care, and the development placement sufficiency, ware conflectint ecan reduce the need for child to move home as frequently. Posit Childrens Home Capital Programme application with the DIE (Department for Education) has been successful, should also support progress in this area.
Better, brighter futures	BBF08 (KPI 9)	% of young people now aged 17 21 and in employment, education or training who were looked after when aged 16	1955 1955 1955 1955 1956 1956 1956 1956	53% (All English Authorities 2020/21 - LG Inform)	63% (694)	63%	64% (687)	63% (686)	¥A	Higher is better	55%	50% - 60%		This month has seen performance decrease slightly to 63%, still comparing favourably with 58% across Englar in this area continues to be driven through arrangements with local colleges, the virtual school and the senior advisor (Education and Employment) with further review of contracted arrangements (Prospects) to be under ensure whave the best approach's upport for young people. Work with councils to ensure EET (Educat Employment and Training) opportunities and support is in place for our care leavers. COVID: has had a significant impact on the mental health and wellbeing of care leavers, targeted work supp- leavers to accoss EET
	BBF09 (KPI 10)	% of young people now aged 17 21 and living in suitable accommodation who were looked after when aged 16	100% 5% ه 5% ه 5% ه 4 م ال 2 م ا	89% (All English Authorities 2020/21 - LG Inform)	95% (694)	97%	95% (687)	97% (686)	∱G	Higher is better	90%	85% - 95%		Performance for this month increased to 97%, still above the target of 90%. We know that we have some your in unsuitable accommodation, including a number of young people sentenced to custody, and some who ha accommodation at all. We work har to address this, tenaciously seeking to engage with young people who me attempts at support as interference. The care leavers housing protocol is in place and work is being progressed under the governance of a strateg this includes a review of the housing panels and engagement with the housing associations. Helpful discuss? Colleagues in the Councils is placing the housing sufficiency needs of care leavers as central to their housing The Accommodation Transitions Panel is now in operation and ensures all young people have a comprehe accommodation at timely transition plan.
Better, brighter futures	BBF27 (KPI 5)	% of initial child protection conferences held within 15 days of a strategy discussion being initiated	166 ఉ భే ఛరో ఫ్లో ఫ్లో ట్రో ట్రో ట్రో ట్రో ట్రో ట్రో ట్రో ఫ్లో ఫ్లో ఫ్లో ట్రో Target -▲-Actual 2023/24		New as corporate KPI for 2023-24	28.00%	13% (134)	47.0% (104)	∱G	Higher is better	81%	66% - 86%		Performance has improved this still believe where we need it to be. High volumes of ICPC (Initi Protection Conferences) demand continues (104; 79% conversion to CP (child protection) Plans). (Safeguarding and Cuality Assurance Sarveig) capacity issues have been addressed. DAAT (Duty and Assa Team) business support gaps continue to present a childinge. Latest rolling Available and the sarveight of the safety of the
Better, brighter futures	BBF28	Number of children with a Child Protection Plan	800 300 		New as corporate KPI for 2023-24	687	680	687	Û		TBD			The number of children subject to plans at the end of May was 687, 7 CPPs (Child Protection Plans) more th previous month. So far in 2023-24, an average of 684 children have been subject to plans. There are 84 more or subject to plans now than one year ago. May marks the second-best performance in the last 12 months; best performance of 698 was reported in Janu [Intelligent Client Function commentary]
Better, brighter futures	BBF29	Number of children in care	1.500 المسط 1.000 ہٹ ہوٹ ہوٹ ہوٹ کی کھی کھی کو اور اور اور اور اور اور اور اور اور او		New as corporate KPI for 2023-24	1205	1212	1205	Û		TBD			The number of children in care at the end of May was 1,205, 7 children less than the previous month. An are 1,221 children have been reported to be in care in the last 12 months. Since the all-time peak of 1,241 children November 2022, the size of the cohort has decreased by 36 children. The numbers reported in the between N March represent the five highest figures ever reported. The latest recording in May 2023 is the lowest since Ju Prior to July 2022 the cohort has never exceeded 1200 children, a threshold that has been met every month si largest chunk of the recent increases occurred in July itself, which saw a steep rise by 29 to 1,217 children. [I

								Children's	s Services					
Key Commitment Learning, Skills &	Ref No.	Description of Performance Indicator	Infographic / Chart	Benchmark	<u>March</u> 2022/23	<u>Year to</u> Date 2023- <u>24</u>	<u>April</u> 2023/24	<u>May</u> 2023/24	Direction of Travel (since previous period)	Polarity	Target	Tolerance	Extra detail on PI	Comments
Better, brighter futures	BBF18b	% of EHC (education health care) plans completed in month issued within 20 weeks (including exceptions)	80% 60% 40% 20% 0%	57.9% All English Authorities 2021 - LAIT)	75.7%	58.0%	69.6%	43.2%	₩R	Higher is better	Target under review	n/a	Year to date is the academic year to date (Sept to July) Benchmark data is available from DfE, either via the Local Authority Interactive Tool or via other official DfE releases	Greater focus this month has taken place on in-time assessments with some further clearing of out of time assessments. Whilst the action plan in place to target improved performance for assessments undertaken on time is having an overall sustained impact on performance, weekly reporting has now been established to oversee timescates and allocation of
			هم بله این یک بیک هم مختلف می به به منه می منه می به منه می به منه می منه می به منه می منه می منه می منه می منه 		53 out of 70	58 out of 100	39 out of 56	19 out of 44						workload to ensure equity and address gaps in performance.
Better, brighter futures	BBF22	Number of children without a school place	200 150 50 0 45 yh yh yh yh yh yh yh yh yh yh yh yh yh	TBC	76	120	100	120	Û	Lower is better	Target under review	n/a	TBC	This measure is in the process of being amended to include, a) children without a school place in admissions process for mainstream schools, b) children without a school place in the EIP (Educational, inclusion and Partnership) service and c) children without a school place with SEN (Spocial Educational Needs). Naturally, this change will mean an increase in volume because the definition of the measure has been widened. Data cleansing within these categories is origoing and so the methodology for this KPI has not yet been changed for May. [Intelligent Client Function commentary]
Better, brighter futures	BBF32	Current number of home educated children	880 870 860 840 Apr May +Actual		New as corporate KPI for 2023-24	876	855	876	Û	No polarity	N/A - Tracking	n/a		The number of parents electing to home educate their children has slightly increased since the last report. This is due to the fact that some did not get their first choice of ascondary school and whiles can a waiting list, decide to (EHE) Electively Home Educate. This something I feel we need to be challenging more now. More support is being put in place. Referrals are made to external agencies such as the Hospital and Outreach service where therapeutic support is sought. This is in particular, for those students with anxiety issues. The EIP (Educational, Inclusion and Partnership) Team is working with parents, schools and admissions services to ensure that parents fully understand the implications of EHE prior to removing their children from school roll. There is still work to be done as they are now doing this before the summer holidays.
	BBF33	Number of children currently missing from education (Year 1- 11)	145 140 155 120 125 120 115 110 Apr May -th-Actual		New as corporate KPI for 2023-24	123	142	123	∳G	Lower is better	N/A - Tracking	n/a		The number of CME (children missing in education) pupils has marginally increased. Although the team is more efficient in their way of working to address these issues, there has been a slight increase. The small rise in cases is just before a school holiday, in this case the summer holidays These are being chased up as possible CME cases. The work done by EIP (Educational, Inclusion and Partnerships) Team with other agencies and local authorities is more and more collaborative in their approach and so getting more positive results. The EIP Team have become more and more resilient in their approach to ensure that systems and procedures are followed through led by the Interim Consultant.
Better, brighter	BBE36	% Education Health Care Plan	within 4		New as	83.2%	83.2%	N/A reported	n/a	Higher is better	: N/A - Tracking	n/a		Meetings are held weekly with the Heads and/or SENCOs (Special Educational Needs Coordinators) of the 8 Special Schools, to discuss upcoming Annual Reviews and highlight any potential complex cases and to complete reviews within the four-week deadline.
futures	BBF-36	Annual Reviews completed within 4 weeks of meeting			corporate KPI for 2023-24	114 out of 137	114 out of 137	one month in arrears						There are regular meetings with the SENCO via the SENCO Forums to share performance and improve communication with schools.

								Adults & Housing					
Key Commitme nt Adult Social (Ref No.	Description of Performance Indicator	Infographic / Chart	Benchmark	March 2022/23	Year to Date 2023 24	April 2023/24	<u>May 2023/24</u>	Direction of Travel (since previous period)	Polarity	Target	Tolerance	Comments
Active, fulfilled lives	AFL03	Percentage of New Requests for Services (all ages) where Route of Access was Discharge from Hospital, that had a sequel of short term services to maximise independence (ST- MAX i.e. reablement)	42% 40% 38% 38% 32% 22% \$2% \$2% \$2% \$2% \$2% \$2% \$2% \$2% \$	2021/22 SALT Report: - England: 37%	34%	38%	34%	38%	∱G	Higher is better	35%	5% points	BI Comments: There were 7 new requests for people aged 18-64 and 145 for people aged 65 and over. There is a positive change from previous month, with the rate higher than those reported throughout 2022/23 and above year-end target. Service Comments: Volumes of support from Adult Social Care on all pathways continued to rise across 2022/23 and is continuing into 2023.
		max i.e. reasternenky	Actual 2022/23 -▲ Actual 2023/24		752 out of 2191	152 out of 404	68 out of 199	152 out of 404					
Active, fulfilled lives	AFL04	Number of new safeguarding concerns received per month	337 337 337 337 337 337 337 337	n/a	325	306 (April)	306	N/A Reporting one month in arrears	∳G	Lower is better	No target - tracking indicator only	N/A	BI Comments: There was a slight decrease in the number of concerns received this period (-19), but is broadly in line with the average number of concerns received over the previous financial year (318).
Active, fulfilled lives	AFL05	New safeguarding concerns determined to be enquiries (both s42 and other) "(A S42 enquiry must take place if there is reason to believe that abuse or neglect is taking place)	130 120 110 100 100 100 100 100 100 100 10	n/a	49	57 (April)	57	N/A Reporting one month in arrears	Û	No polarity	No target - tracking indicator only	N/A	BI comments: There was a slight increase in the number of concerns determined to be enquiries (+8), but the proportion (19%) remains within the range seen in the previous financial year (15-25%).
	AFL06	Total number of open Deprivation of liberty Safeguard (DoLS) cases	2000 1900 1800 1500 1500 1400 1200 \$	n/a	1250	1273	1251	1273	↑	Lower is better	No target - tracking indicator only	N/A	BI comments: The number of open DoLS cases remained relatively stable compared to last period, increasing slightly (+22). Service Comments: There has been a slight increase in open referrals due to 2 Business Support Officers leaving their post, increase throughout of referrals from customer service centre and data cleansing exercise now completed so less closures of open referrals.
Active, fulfilled lives	AFL07	Long-term support needs met by admission to	650 550 450 550 50 50 50 50 50 50 50 50	2021/22 SALT Report: - East Midlands: 562 - England: 539	667.18	109.73	56.39	109.73	↓ G (cumulative)	Lower is better	Year-end target: 564 Monthly target: 47	TBD - for now applied standard 5%	BI comments: The rate has increased considerably from previous month but remains lower than expected compared to 2022/23 trends which typically ranged between 74-77%. This is a cumulative measure which increases throughout the financial year and resets each financial year. A year-end data review was carried out and identified coding errors for reported admissions. As a result, the actual admissions rate is likely to be over once validated and corrected. The Business Intelligence team will work with Adult Social Care colleagues to review the data recording process, make any necessary changes and/or suggest additional guidance for recording in order to accurately reflect actual admissions.
		Number of people who were prevented from requiring statutory care, or whose need was reduced	80% 75% 70% 65%	84.6% East Midlands Average, we are	76.50%	69.70%	60.30%	69.70%					BI comments: The rate has increased considerably from previous month but remains lower than expected compared to 2022/23 trends which typically ranged between 74-77%.
Active, fulfilled lives	AFL08	Delaying and reducing the need for care and support having received short term services to maximise independence (ST-MAX) services'	60% 55% p ^d ₄ p ^d ₃ p ^d ₃ p ^b ₂ p ^b ₄ p ^b ₆ p ^b ₆ p ^b ₄ p	in the process of identifying more up to date benchmark data for this PI.	624 out of 816	101 out of 145	41 out of 68	101 out of 145	∱G	Higher is better	80%	5% points	There is a higher proportion of people accessing reablement support as a result of hospital discharge when compared to the same period previous year (82% versus 75%), along with higher proportions of these requiring long term support following their reablement episode, contributing to lower than expected performance.

	Adults & Housing													
Key Commitme nt	Ref No	Description of Performance Indicator	Infographic / Chart	Benchmark	March 2022/23	Year to Date 2023- 24	April 2023/24	<u>May 2023/24</u>	Direction of Travel (since previous period)	Polarity	Target	Tolerance	Comments	
Housing Serv Active, fulfilled lives	AFL12	Number of rough sleepers - single night snapshot	40 30 20 10 0 pd ⁺ yd ⁺	10 (Al English Authorities Autumn 2022- LG Inform)	20	NA	18	23	∱R	Lower is better	9	9 to 12	There has been an increase in the number of rough sleepers and this will be mainly due to the temperatures being warmer. However, the flow of new rough sleepers is at 5. Since carrying out the single night figure 4 individuals have moved into accommodation. Out of the month rough sleepers numbers the new rough sleepers indicators have shown us that we have a 15 long term rough sleepers, which is a rough sleeper with obsen seen 3 months out of the 12. This truly reflects the types of rough sleepers was are working with. We have some entrenched rough sleepers who we are honging to accommodate within the NGU properties which will be led on the Housing First principles. The repeat number based on the new indicators for May was 13, which shows us that work needs to be carried out around prevention, which the rough sleepers team are working on with supported accommodation providers.	
Active, fulfilled lives	AFL13	Number of households whose homelessness was prevented	40 30 20 Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar - Actual 2022/23 - Actual 2023/24 Target	n/a	27	45	24	21	¥	Higher is better	252 (21 per month)	18-21	Performance continues to fluctuate between months due to a variety of factors. This reflects the difficulties the Housing Options Team are having trying to secure accommodation solutions, particularly in the private sector in order to prevent or refleve households homelessness locally. There is a recognised need for the team to move its facus further upstream to maximise homelessness prevention opportunities and action plan is being developed in this regard.	
Active, fulfilled lives	AFL14	Number of households whose homelessness was relieved	40 30 20 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 1	n/a	37	56	22	34	∱G	Higher is better	300 (25 per month)	22-25	Performance continues to fluctuate between months due to a variety of factors. This reflects the difficulties the Housing Options Team are having trying to secure accommodation solutions, particularly in the private sector in order to prevent or relieve households honelessness locally. There is a recognise need for the team to move its focus further upstream to maximise homelessness prevention opportunities and action plan is being developed in this regard.	
Active, fulfilled lives	AFL15	5 Total number of homeless approaches	640 540 340 240 v ^d y ^d y ^d y ^d y ^d y ^d y ^d y ^d y	n/a	581	929	413	516	Û	N/A	Tracking - monitoring levels of demand only	N/A	3,863 households approached the Council as homeless during 2021/22, which is an average of 320 approaches per month. 4778 households approached the Council as homeless during 2022/23. This is an increase of just over 900, and an average of 400 approaches per month. Currently the Housing Options Team have a live caseload of 1174 cases. During May there was an increase in the number of approaches from 413 to 516.	
Active, fulfilled lives	AFL17	Total number of households Iliving in temporary accommodation	400 00 \$	n/a	231	N/A	244	250	∱R	Lower is better	245	No tolerance	As previously reported, the number of households living in temporary accommodation continues to rise because of sustained increased demand and limited options for move on. Housing teams have started to review flow through temporary accommodation including barriers to move on and what action can be taken to mitigate these. Managers are in the process of producing guidance and training materials to roll out training to housing staff next month. Given sustained pressures this target has been reviewed and increased to 245. "This figure is for statutory duty placements only and does not include the additional cohort of rough sleepers accommodated using discretionary powers".	
Active, fulfilled lives	AFL18	Number of households with family commitments* living in bed and breakfast accommodation	10 8 4 2 0 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10	n/a	3	N/A	2	7	∱R	Lower is better	5	No tolerance	While there are 7 households with family commitments living in Bed & Breakfast (B&B), the household with the longest stary was placed on 19 May (so had been placed for 12 nights as at 31 05 2023). The temporary accommodation team have already identified move on plans for all households, unfortunately some vidi slippage times has meant that 4. households who were due to move on have been delayed causing the number to riss sharply. The temporary accommodation team continues to work hard to keep under daily review any cases where households with family commitments have been placed in B&B in an emergency, so that more suitable move on accommodation cam be offered as quickly as possible. Although the Council has not broken the 's week rule' given sustained pressures this target has been reviewed and increased to 5.	
Active, fulfilled lives	AFL24	Number of Temporary Accommodation placements out of NN area	4 2 0 Apr May		New for 2023-24	N/A	2	1	∳G	Lower is better	0	No tolerance	The household that is living out of area in the neighbouring area of West Northamptonchine was placed there in November 2021 (prior to the temporary accommodation service review and while teams were working on a locality basis). The household has an offer of an area temporary accommodation and will move into it crose it is ready to let. North Northamptonshire is a large geographical area within which the team can manage any risks/safeguarding issues to out of area placements are area off of the reason the team will continue to work towards the existing target.	

	Adults & Housing														
Key Commitme nt	Ref No.	Description of Performance Indicator	Infographic / Chart	Benchmark	<u>March 2022/23</u>	<u>Year to Date 2023-</u> <u>24</u>	<u>April 2023/24</u>	<u>May 2023/24</u>	Direction of Travel (since previous period)	Polarity	Target	Tolerance	Comments		
Safe and thriving places	STP38	Percentage of rent collected	100% 80% 20% 20% 20% 20% 40% 20% 40% 5% 40% 5% 40% 5% 40% 5% 40% 40% 40% 40% 40% 40% 40% 40		92.54% 141307978.48 out of 152707188.83	91.65% 7577992.40 out of 8268599.77	90.55% 2937018.79 out of 3243355.78	91.65% 7577992.40 out of 8268599.77	∱G	Higher is better	97%	5%	There has been a slight increase in collection rates from April to May. In Kettering, the May collection rate does not include payments from 29th, 30th and 31st which includes Direct Debit run for 28th which was £105,784.44.		
Safe and thriving places	STP12		50 40 40 40 40 40 40 40 40 40 4	n/a	5	N/A	6	12	∱R	Lower is better	10	10 to 15	At the end of May there was 10 properties in Corby and 2 in Kettering that were ready to let. Of the 10 in Corby, 4 were awaiting nominations and 1 HRA temporary accommodation and 4 were received on 3006/23. The weekly void meetings are helping to ensure that this number is kept to a minimum and even though there has been an increase since April, the total number of 12 remains within the tolerance set.		
Safe and thriving	STP36	Number of voids - Kettering Area	75 1 55 55 55 55 55 5 55 5 56 5 57 5 58 5 59 5 56 5 57 5 56 5 57 5 56 5 57 5 56 5 57 5 56 5 57 5 56 5 57 5 56 5 57 5 56 5 57 5 58 5 59 5 50 5 56 5 57 5 58 5 59 56 50 50 50 50 50 50 <t< td=""><td>n/a</td><td>58</td><td>N/A</td><td>71</td><td>62</td><td>∳G</td><td>Lower is better</td><td>No target - tracking</td><td>tracking</td><td>tracking</td><td>N/A</td><td>This indicator provides a snapshot at the month end of the number of void properties in the process. There has been an increase of 3 in number for the Corby area and the Kettering area has decreased the overall number of voids at the end</td></t<>	n/a	58	N/A	71	62	∳G	Lower is better	No target - tracking	tracking	tracking	N/A	This indicator provides a snapshot at the month end of the number of void properties in the process. There has been an increase of 3 in number for the Corby area and the Kettering area has decreased the overall number of voids at the end
age)))	Number of voids - Corby Area	100 50 Apr/May-Jun Jul AugSep Oct NovDec Jan Feb Actual 2022/23 - Actual 2023/24 Trend	n/a	85	N/A	87	90	♠		indicator only		of May has decreased by 6 from April 2023.		
Safe and thriving places		Average time taken to re-let	63 62 61 60 60 60 64 48 ³ 5 ³ 5 ³ 8 ³ 8 ³ 8 ³ 9 ³ 8 ³ 9 ⁴		New KPI for 2023-24	60.7 days	62.6 days	60.7 days	∳G	Lower is better	56 days	56 to 60 days	For 2023/24 void properties will be reported by standard and major properties for NNC. The figure reported is the cumulative average turnaround time for those properties let in the month. This will help remove the impact a long term major void has when been empty for a long time and provide a more accurate reflection of void turnaround for standard properties. In May 23 Kattering area let 15 standard void properties and Corby let 14 standard properties, so atol al 29 voids now re-occupied d which had been void for a total of 1.633 days. While the team have adopted the new ways of reporting from 1st April, there is still a number of standard voids coming through for reletting that were not being processed in line with the new target times that have been adopted. It will therefore take a few months to get all of these legacy standard voids through to reletting.		
Safe and thriving places	STP37b	Average time taken to re-let NNC major void properties	560 60 <u>本一ム</u> ⁶⁴ わっぷ が たっらった やっしっぷ かめ な Actual 2023/24		New KPI for 2023-24	244 days	257.5 days	244 days	₩G	Lower is better	No target - tracking indicator only	N/A	In May 23 Kettering area let 2 major void properties and Corby area let 3 major void properties, totalling 1193 days void, this has meant a decrease in the turnaround time from April 23.		
Safe and thriving	STP08	% of properties with a valid	100%	TBD	99.7%	N/A	99.7%	99.7%	→	Higher is	100%	99.5% and above is green, 99%	At the end of May 2023 there were 23 properties without a valid gas certificate. In Kettering, 14 properties were out of date as at 31/05/2023. 4 properties have had legal letters. 7 properties have a court date booked for 06/06/2024. 2 properties have a court date booked for 20/06/2023. 1 property was serviced on 230/50/2023 but the certificate needed		
places	511 00	gas safety certificate	98% ^{Ad} th ^{di} y ^G y ^G th ^{di}		7893 out of 7917	N/A	7888 out of 7911	7886 out of 7909	7	better		and above is amber	propenses name a court case booker (or 2010/2022), i propenty was as encode of 25/00/2022) out ne delinear encoded to be re-issued. This was received on 06/06/2022 We are limited to the number of properties we can take to court each fortnight to obtain right of entry warrants, so this is impacting compliance.		

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Safe and thriving places	STP04	Number of active households on Keyways (as at 1st month)	6,060 4,060 60 60 60 60 60 60 60 60 60 60 60 60	n/a	4967	N/A	5146	5119	Û	N/A - Tracking	N/A - monitoring levels of demand	N/A	This provides a snapshot of the number of applicants active on the Council's housing Register (Keyways). New applications still remain higher that same time last year, however, the total number of active applications decreased last month due to a large number being moved from active to housed following confirmation from the Keyways landlords that their new tenancies had started. Please note that as applications are made active, previously active applications have the status changed to pending, suspended, closed, and housed. This figure therefore is not how many applications are being assessed in total.
Safe and thriving places	STP05	Number of new Keyways applications received	1,060 560 60 بال بها به به به به به به به به به به به به به	n/a	752	1208	606	602	Û	N/A - Tracking	N/A - monitoring levels of demand	N/A	The number of applications received remained stable at 602 in May 23, a decrease of 4 from April.
Safe and thriving places	STP39	Number of repair jobs awaiting completion	1,560 1,060 560 60 rd yet ye ye ye ge of yet of ye ye ge Actual 2023/24		New KPI for 2023-24	N/A	1,210	1,453	Û	N/A - Tracking	N/A - monitoring levels of demand	N/A	This is a new measure to help monitor the current repairs jobs awaiting completion outside of the backlog jobs listed at the 1/3/23. A snapshot at the end of May shows there was a total of 1,453 repair jobs across Kettering and Corty that are awaiting completion. Within the Corty area there was a significant number of backlog jobs bockd in for the month of April which made a good indent on the total outstanding backlog jobs bock of in for the month of april which made a good indent on the total outstanding backlog jobs both has created an increase in the number of current responsive repairs awaiting completion. This was a situation that we expected to happen based on the lag between setting up the backlog project team from commencing in May and the 1st March 2023 date for the ring fracing of jobs for the backlog project. The team will monitor closely trans on wore whether the responsive repairs awaiting completion row or whether the responsive repairs are staffed to be able to manage the level of new jobs received each month or not. Name changed for ease of understanding - it was approved as "Repairs backlog - Number of repair jobs awaiting completion"
Safe and thriving places	STP40	Number of repair jobs awaiting completion which are outside of target timescale	1.060 560 60 بدی بری بری بی بی بی بی بی بی بی بی بی بی بی بی بی		New KPI for 2023-24	N/A	554	670	Û	N/A - Tracking	N/A - monitoring levels of demand	N/A	This is also a new measure to help monitor the current repairs jobs that are outside of target times. Again the lag between shifting backlog work off of the regular responsive repairs teams and onto the newly created backlog team is seen as the main reason with three are already a number of jobs post 1st March 2023 that are out of target time. The team will monitor closely from now on whether the responsive repairs team are staffed to be able to manage the level of new jobs received eash month or not. Name changed for ease of understanding - it was approved as "Repairs backlog - of which outside of target timescale"

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									Finance Services				
Key Commitment	Ref No.	Description of Performance Indicator	Infographic / Chart	Benchmark	May 2022/23	Year to Date 2023/24	April 2023/24	<u>May 2023/24</u>	Direction of Travel (since previous period)	Polarity	Target	Tolerance	Comments
Revenues & Benef	its												
Modern Public	MPS05	% of council tax collected in the year	120% 100% 80% 60% 40%	1 achir 96.07% mor	20.10% (YTD) 105.79% achieved of the monthly target (19.00%)	20.19% (YTD) 106.26% achieved of the monthly target (19.00%)	10.80% (YTD) 120% achieved of the monthly target (9.00%)	20.19% (YTD) 106.26% achieved of the monthly target (19.00%)	Ŧ	Higher is better	98% (Annual target)		Performance is above target and above last year's collection at this stage, which represents a strong start to the year. Close monitoring will continue due to the impact of the cost of living crisis.
Services		debit raised	20% % بلغ بلغ بلغ بلغ بلغ بلغ بلغ بلغ محمد من 202223 محمد Actual 2023/24 Target	2021/22 - LG Inform)	£22, 759,479.12 (collected in May)	£48,895,447.26 (collected YTD)	£26,153,852.42 (collected in Apr)	£22,741,594.84 (collected in May)	·				
Modern Public	MPS04	% of business rates collected in the year	120% 100% 80% 60% 40%	96.33% (All English Authorities	19.77% (YTD) 104.05% achieved of the monthly target (19.00%)	19.92% (YTD) 104.84% achieved of the monthly target (19.00%)	9.84% (YTD) 109.33% achieved of the monthly target (9.00%)	19.92% (YTD) 104.84% achieved of the monthly target (19.00%)	¥	Higher is	98% (Annual	No tolerance	Performance is above target and above last year's collection at this stage, which represents a strong start to the year. Close monitoring will continue
Services		debit raised	20% 5 0% 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5	2021/22 - LG Inform)	£15,011,360.83 (collected in May)	£32,509,002.30 (collected in YTD)	£15,980,529.06 (collected in Apr)	£16,528,473.24 (collected in May)		better	target)		due to the impact of the cost of living crisis.

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EXECUTIVE

12th July 2023

Report Title	Home to School Transport - Policy Revisions for Statutory School Age Pupils 2024/25
Report Author	Graeme Kane, Executive Director, Place and Economy (Interim)
Lead Member	Cllr Matt Binley, Executive Member for Highways, Travel and Assets

Key Decision	🛛 Yes	□ No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	⊠ Yes	🗆 No
Are there public sector equality duty implications?	🛛 Yes	🗆 No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	□ Yes	⊠ No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972		

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Summary of responses to consultation

Appendix B – Home to School Transport Mainstream Demand as at 2023

Appendix C – Current Home to School Policy

Appendix D – Copy 'Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance 2014'

Appendix E – Equalities Impact Assessment (June 2023)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) are required to arrange free, suitable, home to school transport for children of compulsory school age who are eligible, to their nearest suitable qualifying school in line with section 508B of the Education Act 1996 and the Government's statutory guidance 'Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance 2014'.
- 1.2 The arrangements that the Council feels necessary must be published in an annual policy by September, to allow parents applying for places at secondary school for the following September to consider any transport related matters prior to making their choices.

1.3 This report is to request Executive to approve the proposed changes to the Policy.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 NNC provides transport for 4133 mainstream students to and from 54 schools daily throughout the school term (these numbers change throughout the year depending on demand):
 - 3989 students are of statutory school age;
 - 3694 students are entitled to free home to school transport;
 - 295 students purchase a discretionary seat.
- 2.2 Ten schools alone account for 3614 of those pupils.
- 2.3 In addition, there are a further 173 students using the Home to School service under the Post 16 policy which is planned for a review over Summer 2023
- 2.4 The home to school travel arrangements offered must be free of charge to the parent of an eligible child.
- 2.5 The provision under the current policy meets the statutory minimum requirements with some local enhancements.
- 2.6 A public consultation was held to seek opinions on potential changes to the Home to School Transport Policy for students and pupils of statutory school age (5 to 16). The consultation, which is a legal requirement, was open from 24th April 2023 and closed at midnight on Monday 12th June 2023. A summary of responses and outcomes is attached at **Appendix A**.
- 2.7 The consultation primarily considered the discretionary element of home to school transport which is currently costing the Council approximately £538,000 per year (this figure changes depending on demand and the outcome of tendering processes and does not include administrative costs). Some of this cost is recouped by charging up to £600 for each available seat, but this recovers less than £265,000 per year.
- 2.8 There is an important financial consideration for the Council regarding the provision of seats on a discretionary basis for a fee. The distinction between selling a 'spare seat' and an 'additional seat' is important in considering the Council's approach to providing discretionary seats on their transport.
- 2.9 The possible changes put forward in the consultation fell into two categories:
 - 1. Format and language used in the policy document.
 - 2. Substantive changes to entitlement to free and discretionary transport
 - a. ceasing to provide free transport to linked schools unless it is the nearest suitable school with places. This proposal would comply with the legislation.

b. Making changes to the provision of discretionary transport:

Options relating to discretionary transport:

- Withdraw all discretionary transport (all age groups).
- Withdraw discretionary transport for Post 16 only.
- Cease to guarantee a discretionary seat for those applying by mid-May.
- Increase fares to recoup more of the expenditure and cease to undercut the commercial market.
- 2.10 The options in 2b are not exclusive or stand-alone; it is possible to implement some of them together.
- 2.11 All changes consulted on were focussed on Mainstream provision where entitlement is primarily based upon walking distance to the nearest suitable school and the road safety issues affecting any walking routes.
- 2.12 It is proposed that any implementation would only apply to new school placements. Existing students would continue to receive transport under the same provisions as at present to allow them to complete their schooling. If they change school (or they move house), their eligibility would be assessed against the new policy.
- 2.13 It was identified that the three proposals to limit availability of discretionary transport would have a significant impact upon families in the former East Northants District, and in particular, families with students attending, or wishing to attend, Prince William School in Oundle. It is, therefore, proposed that, should the Executive decide to adopt one or more of these proposals, the Home to School team work with colleagues from the Council's Transport team, service operators and the affected schools to consider appropriate alternative transport options.
- 2.14 No changes are proposed to the current entitlement arrangements for pupils with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND).

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 The Executive is recommended to:
 - i) Update the format and wording of the policy to make it easier to understand.
 - ii) 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.

- 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) Review the fare annually in line with the Council's fees and charge's structure.
- iv) 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.
- v) 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.
- 3.2 Reason 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 cosultation response.

3.3 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.

4. Report Background

- 4.1 Under the Education Act 1996, the Council must provide assistance with travel between home and school for those young people meeting the eligibility criteria set out in the legislation. Such travel arrangements provided by the Council must be free of charge to the parent of an eligible child.
- 4.2 A local authority may also use its discretionary powers to provide transport for young people who do not meet the eligibility criteria and a charge may be levied to cover all or part of the cost of that discretionary transport.
- 4.3 Eligibility for free transport is based upon:
 - the child or young person attending their nearest suitable school with places available;
 - the statutory walking distances for their age between home and school;
 - special educational needs, disability or mobility problems preventing the child from walking the statutory walking distance;
 - where a walking route shorter than the statutory walking distance is unsafe to walk;
 - extended rights for those in receipt of certain benefits or on low incomes.
- 4.4 Children and young people with Special Education Needs (SEN) are also potentially entitled to free transport where it is deemed unreasonable to expect them to be able to walk to school, even if accompanied by an adult, due to their SEN or disabilities. In the case of young people with SEN, their nearest suitable school will be the one named in their Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- 4.5 For those young people who do not meet these criteria, the Council currently uses its discretionary powers to provide the following:
 - linked schools are treated the same as the nearest suitable school in respect of eligibility for free transport.
 - parents can purchase a seat on Council contracted services for a fare of £600 per year,
 - a guarantee that the Council will commission sufficient additional seats to accommodate those who apply before a set day in May each year (the spare seat guarantee).
- 4.6 There is an important financial consideration for the Council regarding the provision of seats on a discretionary basis for a fee. Where a seat is genuinely 'spare' e.g. a bus carrying pupils eligible for free transport has spare capacity, it is in the interest of the Council to sell that spare seat in order to recoup the costs, which is better than having an empty seat and no financial contribution towards it. Where a seat is purchased by the Council specifically to accommodate a pupil who chooses to take up a discretionary seat in exchange for paying a fee, it is in the interest of the Council to recover the full cost of providing that seat otherwise it is subsiding that pupil at a cost to the Council.

This distinction between selling a 'spare seat' and an 'additional seat' is important in considering the Council's approach to providing discretionary seats on their transport.

- 4.7 The provision under the current policy is close to the statutory minimum required under the legislation. There are few elements of the policy that are discretionary and can be amended by the Council.
- 4.8 All changes consulted on were focussed on Mainstream provision where entitlement is primarily based upon distance to the nearest suitable school and the safety of any walking routes.
- 4.9 No changes are proposed to the current entitlement arrangements for pupils with SEND.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1 Local authorities must consider the impact that proposed changes to their home to school travel policy will have on parents' school choices, and on the financial impact they will have on affected families.
- 5.2 Every day NNC provides transport for 4133 mainstream students to and from 54 schools (these numbers change throughout the year in line with demand).
 - Ten schools alone account for 3614 of those pupils.
 - 3989 students are of statutory school age.
 - 3694 students are entitled to free home to school transport.
 - 295 students purchase a discretionary seat.
- 5.3 In addition, there are a further 173 students using the Home to School service under the Post 16 policy which will need to be reviewed later in the year.
- 5.4 In line with legislation, a public consultation was held to seek opinions on potential changes to the Home to School Transport Policy for students and pupils of statutory school age (5 to 16). The consultation was option from 24th April 2023 and closed at midnight on Monday 12th June 2023.
- 5.5 The consultation was particularly focused on the discretionary element of home to school transport which is currently costing the Council in excess of £538,000 per year. Some of this cost is recouped by charging up to £600 for each available seat, but this recovers less than £265,000 per year.
- 5.6 The Consultation was in two parts.

5.7 Part One

5.8 The first part asked for opinions and thoughts about a proposed rewording and reformatting of the current policy document. Over recent years we have

received a considerable number of negative comments from parents and professionals that the current policy is difficult to understand and does not follow a logical order. The wording of the current policy also leaves some areas open to interpretation.

5.9 We have worked with colleagues from the Children's Services and with members of the Parents' Forum to revise the content and layout of the document to try to make it as understandable as possible and to ensure that it contains all the information that parents and carers need to be aware of when applying for transport or other Travel Assistance.

5.10 Part Two

5.11 The second part of the consultation focused on potential substantive changes to the current eligibility criteria.

Linked Schools

- 5.12 The consultation asked for opinions in relation to the possible withdrawal of the right to free transport to linked schools.
- 5.13 Some primary schools are given priority over others for places at secondary schools. These are often referred to as feeder schools or linked schools.
- 5.14 Links are created by the Admissions Body relevant to the schools. With the advent of Free Schools and Academies the local authority is no longer the Admissions Body for these schools, which can declare a "link" to any school or area that they feel appropriate.
- 5.15 The legislation requires a Council to provide free transport to those meeting the entitlement criteria when attending their nearest suitable school with places available.
- 5.16 The current NNC policy allows for feeder schools or linked schools to be treated in the same way as the nearest suitable school, even where there is another suitable school geographically closer to the child's home than the linked one.
- 5.17 Removal of this clause would potentially increase the number of young people requiring discretionary transport. In some areas it may also overload the nearer schools to the extent that they can no longer meet the demand, pushing local children into schools further from home.
- 5.18 Areas particularly affected by withdrawal of this linking between schools would be within the former East Northants district. For example, primary schools in Thrapston have a link to Prince William school, despite there being a school at Raunds which is geographically closer. The school at Raunds would not have the capacity to absorb the annual intake from Thrapston. Those who chose to attend Prince William school would require discretionary transport, whilst those who were allocated Prince William school because Raunds was unable to accommodate them would be entitled to free transport. This could lead to

inequality of provision and would certainly result in avoidable challenge and dissatisfaction from parents.

5.19 It is currently not possible to calculate exactly how many young people obtain free transport because they attend linked schools, although the largest proportion would appear to attend Prince William School in Oundle. This proposal is expected to reduce the cost of transport for the Council, but it is not practical to calculate the cost as it depends on how individual journeys will be affected by removal of any links, and how families choose to alter their choice of school and mode of transport.

Changes to the current provision of discretionary transport

5.20 Four options were consulted upon in relation to reducing the cost of discretionary transport.

5.21 Option 1: Withdrawal of all Discretionary Transport

- 5.22 If the Council were to withdraw all discretionary transport (from all age groups), based on current numbers, there are 295 young people of statutory school age who would need to find an alternative way to access their school placements, along with a further 173 post-16 students.
- 5.23 Many areas do not have suitable public transport to absorb this demand, either because of operating schedules or because of the numbers of children that require travel at the same time. Parents would need to find alternative ways to get their children to school, which could include the use of private cars.
- 5.24 Prince William School would be particularly badly impacted as 300 of these young people attend that school; 200 of statutory school age and 100 post-16 students. If parents decided to drive their children to and from the school, the congestion and environmental impact upon Oundle would be significant. Also the roads and villages between Oundle and Corby and Weldon, where the majority of these young people reside, would be negatively impacted with increased traffic flow, and the resulting pollution and congestion.

5.25 Option 2: Withdrawal of Post 16 transport

- 5.26 Although the post-16 service is not covered by this policy and thus the current consultation, there are over 700 young people in Year 11 currently using home to school transport. These young people will be looking for their post-16 education options shortly. Many of these will opt to transfer to post-16 colleges. For the others, the largest numbers opt for Prince William, Corby Business Academy and Wollaston School.
- 5.27 There are currently 173 students using the post-16 service, and Prince William accounts for over 57% of that demand.
- 5.28 The same arguments about congestion and environmental damage apply here as for the withdrawal of the whole service, although on a slightly lower scale.

5.29 **Option 3: Removal of the Spare Seat Guarantee.**

- 5.30 The Council currently guarantees to commission additional capacity to meet all demand in respect of applications for discretionary transport received before a set date in May. Applications received after that date can only be filled where there is surplus capacity on the route, once the entitled students and those who applied sufficiently early to get the guaranteed seat have been accommodated. From the data currently available it is not possible to isolate the numbers accommodated under this provision, but it is indicative that popular schools such as Prince William have a waiting list for spaces for those applying for a discretionary seat after the deadline. This suggests that a considerable number of families that did not apply early enough to qualify for a guaranteed space and that there is an ongoing demand for transport services.
- 5.31 Removal of the guarantee would reduce the availability of spare seats to only those seats genuinely surplus to the requirement for students entitled to free transport, i.e. the difference between demand and the capacity of the most practical vehicle for the purpose. This would not have a detrimental impact for most schools, where the number of young people paying for their transport is 5 or less. However, there would be a disproportionate number of young people attending the more popular schools adversely affected by this proposal.
- 5.32 To use Prince William as an example again, there are currently 26 vehicles required to meet the demand for access to this school. There are 683 pupils of statutory school age who are entitled to free transport to the school. In theory this demand could be met by using 13 coaches of 56 seats each. This would provide 728 seats, meaning that there were 45 "spare" seats available for discretionary transport. This could leave 171 students whose transport needs were not met. (In this specific instance it is likely that more coaches would be required to compensate for the wide geographical area covered, so that there would potentially be a larger number of "spare" seats available, but still not sufficient to meet the entire demand.)

5.33 Option 4: Increase in fare payable for discretionary transport.

- 5.34 Currently the Council is in effect subsidising discretionary transport by approximately 50% of the true cost of service provision (the actual cost of seat depends on the nature of the journey and the tender prices received from the market). One way to mitigate the cost is to recover a larger proportion of the cost from those using the service. The current charge is £600.
- 5.35 The consultation document included a table of potential options and ranges of possible charges.
- 5.36 Unsurprisingly the verdict from respondents was that they would prefer there to be no increase in fares and thus the fares should be left alone.
- 5.37 Against this argument, the Council need to consider in the levels of overspend from previous years and the overall effect of increasing demographics and the availability of school placements at key points across the Council area.

- 5.38 It must be borne in mind that there have been no increases in Home to School fares for the past 10 years and the Council is currently providing a significant subsidy to families who choose to travel on the Council's home to school transport. This subsidy is funded from general taxation rather than individual contributions from those using the service. As an indicative calculation, if the fare had been increased by 3% each year for the last ten years, the fare would now be £783.
- 5.39 On the basis that schools are open for 190 days per calendar year, and daily fares on a direct commercial service operating under the Government's current £2/fare scheme, would currently be £4 per day (£2 each way) it is therefore suggested that the fares be increased to £760 per annum for discretionary seats. This represents a 27% increase in the fare, which, whilst unpalatable for the end user, is proposed as a reasonable balance.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. The policy will be revised to reflect the decisions of the Executive and will be published in its final version by September 2023.
- 6.2. The Executive Member for Highways, Travel and Assets will be asked to approve the final draft on behalf of the Executive prior to publication.
- 6.3. The revised policy will come into effect from September 2024 onwards.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. **Resources, Financial and Transformation**

7.1.1. Any savings from these proposals will contribute towards the overall budget for Home to School Transport from 2024/25. The provision under the current policy is close to the statutory minimum required under the legislation. 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.

7.2. Legal and Governance

7.2.1 The report has been prepared in consideration of the Education Act 1996 which contains the law on school transport and furthermore in carrying out its duties as a local authority has regard to **Appendix D** which is the statutory guidance on Home to school travel and transport.

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

7.3.1 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 improve the sustainable transport network.

7.4. **Risk**

- 7.4.1 It has been identified that there would be a significantly increased impact for residents of some of the former East Northants district from the implementation of these changes. Consideration will be made to identity mitigations to reduce these impacts. In the short term the Council could continue to provide excess spaces based on current levels of demand, but, without the formal guarantee of a seat, whilst alternative solutions are sought and implemented for the schools and residents most affected.
- 7.4.2 There is a risk that the restriction of access to discretionary transport will lead to parents using their own vehicles to take the young people to and from school. This would increase congestion and pollution in the worst affected areas and, in particular, the areas around Oundle.

7.5 **Consultation**

- 7.5.1 The Council conducted a consultation exercise between 24th April 2023 and 12th June 2023. The public consultation was supported by the Council's Consultation and Engagement Team.
- 7.5.2 The consultation sought views on the Council's proposed policy changes and options affecting the discretionary transport to inform the consideration and subsequent changes to the policy. It also sought feedback on how the Council could make the wording and layout of the policies clearer to understand.
- 7.5.3 The structure and design of the consultation set out the proposals and enabled both online and non-digital means of participation, in accordance with nationally recognised good practice. To ensure the widest possible reach, a variety of consultation feedback channels were used to maximise the range of accessible channels for consultees, these included:
 - Visiting the Home to School Transport Policy Review Consultation webpage and completing the questionnaire or requesting a paper questionnaire
 - Accessing the online questionnaire free of charge at any NNC library for those without internet access
 - Emailing HomeToSchoolConsultation@northnorthants.gov.uk
 - Writing to Home to School Transport Policy Consultation Response, North Northamptonshire Council, Sheerness House, Meadow Road, Kettering, NN16 8TL
 - Contacting the Council by telephone to give verbal feedback

- Using social media including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn
- 7.5.4 Opportunities to take part in the consultation were promoted in the local media via press releases. The press release went to 26 newsrooms (local, print and broadcast), plus individual reporters and other local news sites. It was promoted through the Council's Leaders' Update, the Council's website, e-newsletters and social media channels, enabling both internal (e.g. staff) as well as external consultees to get involved in the process.
- 7.5.5 Councillors, local MPs, town and parish Councils, partner organisations, voluntary and community sector organisations, North Northants Business Network, and members of both the North Northamptonshire Residents' Panel and the Council's Consultation Register were invited to give their views and asked to promote the consultation to their members, or within their local area where appropriate.
- 7.5.6 All North Northamptonshire Head Teachers were advised of the consultation via the Leadership in Schools Email (LSE) and asked to promote the consultation to families. Promotion of the consultation was also circulated by North Northants Information, Advice and Support Service (IAS); Northants Parent Forum Group (NPFG); Northamptonshire Local Offer; and the Northamptonshire Children's Trust newsletter. Consultation details were also sent out to Northamptonshire Health participation groups.
- 7.5.7 During the consultation period, using the various means available to consultees, local people, interested parties and organisations contributed to the consultation 518 times. Nearly all of the feedback received was via the questionnaire, with 514 respondents participating via the questionnaire and four respondents submitting a written response. Within the questionnaire, respondents could choose which questions they responded to, and so there are lower response numbers to each question when compared with the overall number of participants.
- 7.5.8 The consultation feedback is analysed and presented in detail in **Appendix A**.
- 7.5.9 Consultation responses have been considered in making the recommendations within the report and balanced against the other factors as set out within the report. Members should ensure they read and consider the analysis and redacted comments that have been made available to them before making their decision on the revised policy.

7.6 **Consideration by Scrutiny**

7.6.1 The consultation results and the range of possible substantive changes to the policy were considered by the Place and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 27th June 2023. A minute extract of the recommendations of that meeting is included below:

"Resolved to recommend to the Executive that:

- i) The format and wording of the policy be updated to make it easier to understand;
- ii) Free transport to linked schools be ceased, for new applications, unless it is the nearest suitable school with places, with effect from September 2024.
- iii) New applicants pay the full cost of the fare for those not eligible for free transport, but those pupils currently within the system pay a suggested fare of £760, rising potentially over a three-year period from September 2024, with a caveat that consideration be given to the cost implications on older pupils undertaking examinations and to multiple children travelling from the same household;
- iv) The 'guaranteed seat' option be removed, and applications received before the May deadline be offered on a first come first served basis."

7.7 Equality Implications

- 7.7.1 The Council is committed to treating people fairly. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) was carried out on 19th June 2023, taking into account the responses to the consultation and the concerns raised Members of the Prosperous Communities and Future Communities Executive Advisory Panels. The EqIA is presented in **Appendix D**.
- 7.7.2 The EqIA and responses to the consultation have identified that there is a particular potential adverse impact on some residents in the former East Northants District. This group does not form one of the nine protected characteristics but will require mitigations to be developed and implemented if the Council was to avoid or lessen the impacts of the change.

7.8 **Climate and Environment Impact**

- 7.8.1 If all discretionary transport were to be withdrawn the impact on the climate and the local environment would be negative, with particular impact on areas served by the most popular schools, such as the former East Northamptonshire District.
- 7.8.2 Mitigations will be considered to manage the transport demand to the areas most negatively affected, including exploring commercial and co-produced options.

7.9 **Community Impact**

7.9.1 The consultation and EqIA has identified that some residents of the former East Northamptonshire District will be significantly impacted by these proposals. In particular students attending or wishing to attend Prince William School in Oundle will be significantly affected by the withdrawal of free transport to linked schools and the withdrawal of the guaranteed spare seat. 7.9.2 The transport demand to this school is bordering on commercially viable demand from several communities in the area. Officers will work with stakeholders, including officers elsewhere within the Council, to mitigate the impacts by identifying and developing alternatives, including alternative service provision.

7.10 Crime and Disorder Impact

7.10.1 There are no crime and disorder implications.

8 Background Papers

8.1 None.

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Appendix



Home to School Transport Policy Review

Consultation Analysis Report 2023



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1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to set out the Home to School Transport Policy Review consultation process, and key consultation findings (including an understanding of who participated in the consultation), the results of which will be used to help inform the review of the North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) Home to School Travel Assistance Policy and Post 16 Education Transport Policy.

The following lists the changes NNC are considering making to the above policies. The consultation also sought feedback on the wording and layout of the policies, so they are clearer to understand:

- Change to the status of Linked Schools
- Insertion of a provision to allow the Council to reclaim costs of transport awarded based upon inaccurate application
- Changes to the provision of discretionary transport (Spare Seats) 4 Options
- Clarification on the services provided for children and young people with medical needs
- Clarification of the ways in which transport support might be provided
- Clarification on who is authorised to meet a child from the bus

2. Executive decisions and formal consultation

Consultation was carried out in accordance with the Department for Education's guidance. Consultation commenced 24 April 2023 and concluded on 12 June 2023.

The public consultation was supported by the Council's Consultation and Engagement Team. The structure and design of the consultation set out the proposals and enabled both online and non-digital means of participation, in accordance with nationally recognised good practice.

A paper on the final proposals is scheduled to appear before the Council's Executive on 13 July 2023.

3. How was the consultation promoted?

The consultation was hosted on the Council's Consultation and Engagement Hub website. Councillors, local MPs, town and parish Councils, partner organisations, voluntary and community sector organisations, North Northants Business Network, and members of both the North Northamptonshire Residents' Panel (circa 625 members) and the Council's Consultation Register were invited to give their views and asked to promote the consultation to their members, or within their local area where appropriate.

Opportunities to take part in the consultation were also promoted in the local media via press releases. The press release went to 26 newsrooms (local, print and broadcast including the Northants Telegraph and BBC Radio Northampton), plus individual reporters and other local news sites. It was promoted through the Council's Leaders' Update, the Council's website, e-newsletters and social media channels, enabling both internal (e.g. staff) as well as external consultees to get involved in the process. The Facebook reach (i.e. the number of people who saw any content from or about the consultation web page) was 4,543; the Twitter Impressions (i.e. the number of times any content from or about the consultation web page entered a person's screen) was 3,850; and LinkedIn impressions were 991.

In addition to the above all North Northamptonshire Head Teachers were advised of the consultation via the Leadership in Schools Email (LSE) and asked to promote the consultation to families. Promotion of the consultation was also circulated by North Northants Information, Advice and Support Service (IAS); Northants

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Parent Forum Group (NPFG); Northamptonshire Local Offer; and the Northamptonshire Children's Trust newsletter which goes out to all schools including primary, secondary, special educational needs and disabilities provision (SEND), and under-fives settings. Consultation details were also sent out to Northamptonshire Health participation groups.

Where appropriate reminders of the consultation were distributed during the consultation period, including direct emails to the Head Teachers of schools with the largest users of the service.

4. How did consultees have their say?

Local people, organisations and other interested parties were able to have their say about the proposals in a range of ways, by:

- Visiting the <u>Home to School Transport Policy Review Consultation webpage</u> and completing the questionnaire or requesting a paper questionnaire
- Accessing the online questionnaire free of charge at any NNC library
- Emailing <u>HomeToSchoolConsultation@northnorthants.gov.uk</u>
- Writing to Home to School Transport Policy Consultation Response, North Northamptonshire Council, Sheerness House, Meadow Road, Kettering, NN16 8TL
- Contacting the Council by telephone to give verbal feedback

5. Number and type of responses received

During the consultation period, using the various means available to consultees, local people, interested parties and organisations contributed to the consultation 518 times. Nearly all of the feedback received was via the questionnaire, with 514 respondents participating via the questionnaire and 4 respondents submitting a written response.

Within the questionnaire, respondents could choose which questions they responded to, and so there are lower response numbers to each question when compared with the overall number of participants.

During the consultation period, an interim summary of the consultation responses received were circulated to senior Transport officers and all responses received were circulated to decision makers upon conclusion of the consultation to enable them to see each response in full.

6. What did people say?

This report is a summary of the feedback received. It is recommended that it is read in conjunction with the full consultation results. The full consultation results have been made available to Members and are available on the <u>Consultation & Engagement Hub</u>.

The following documents were published alongside the consultation questionnaire:

- Current Home to School Education Transport Policy (September 2022 July 2023)
- Draft Home to School Travel Assistance Policy (Academic year 2024-25) as reformatted
- <u>Current Post 16 education transport policy</u>
- Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 Home to School Transport Policy Review Consultation Questionnaire

In total, 514 respondents filled out a questionnaire on the Home to School Transport Policy Review, either partially or fully. Respondents did not have to answer every question and so the total number of responses for each question differs and is shown in relation to each question.

6.1.1 About the respondent

Respondents were asked in what capacity they were responding to the consultation. There were 506 responses to this question, with respondents being able to select more than one option if applicable. The vast majority of respondents said they were a parent/ guardian/ carer of a young person aged under 16 and in education in North Northamptonshire (431). The second highest respondents are a parent/ guardian/ carer of a young person aged over 16 and in education in North Northamptonshire (60). This was followed by interested members of the public (35) and educational professionals (18). The following table details the various respondent types to the consultation questionnaire.

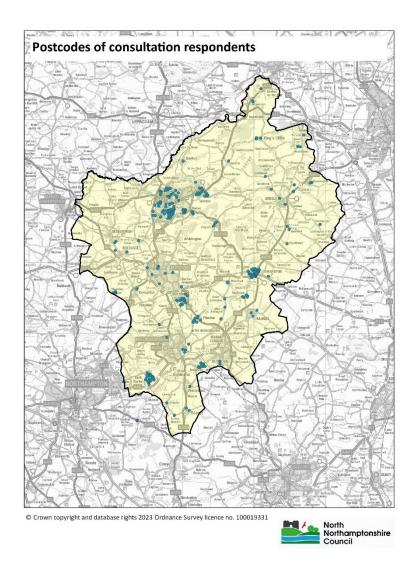
	Response number
A parent/guardian/carer of a young person aged under 16 in education in North Northamptonshire	431
A parent/guardian/carer of a young person aged 16 or over in education in North Northamptonshire	60
A student aged under 16 in education in North Northamptonshire	2
A student aged 16 or over in education in North Northamptonshire	5
An educational professional in North Northamptonshire	18
A representative of an education provider in North Northamptonshire	5
A representative of a transport operator in North Northamptonshire	1
A childminder and/or a before/after school setting	2
An interested member of the public	35
A North Northamptonshire Council Councillor	3
A Town or Parish Councillor	10
A representative of a Town/Parish Council	3
A representative of the voluntary sector or a community organisation	1
A representative of the local business community	0
Other (please give details below)	9

The 9 respondents who made comment within the 'Other' text box gave short descriptions as to their personal status.

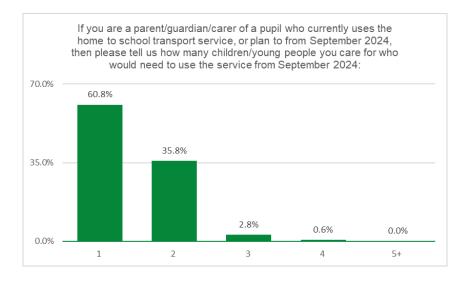
6.1.2 Parent, guardians and carers

Respondents who said they were either a parent, guardian or carer of a child or young person were asked an additional set of eight questions to give us a better understanding of their circumstances.

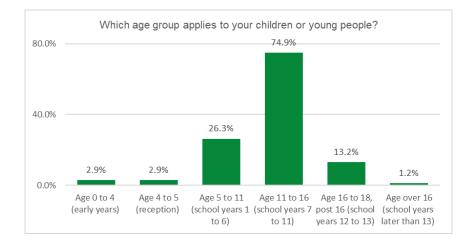
These respondents were asked to provide their postcode to give us an understanding of where they live. There were 344 valid postcodes provided for North Northamptonshire. The following map broadly shows where these respondents reside. As can be seen from the below, most respondents identified themselves as either living in or around Burton Latimer, Corby/Weldon, Earls Barton and Thrapston.



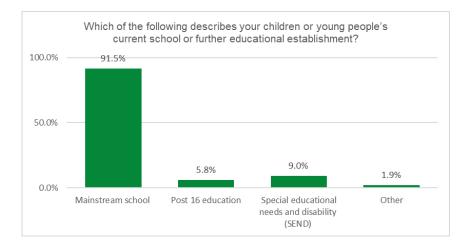
Parent/guardian/carer respondents of pupils who currently use the home to school transport service, or plan to from September 2024, were asked how many children/young people they care for would need to use the service from September 2024. A total of 352 respondents answered this question, with the majority (60.8%) saying they have one child who would need to the use the service. A total of 35.8% said they would have two, 2.8% said three, 0.6% said four. No one said five or more.



Respondents were then asked which age groups applied to their children. A total of 410 respondents answered this question, with most respondents (74.9%) saying age 11 to 16 (school years 7 to 11). The second highest (26.3%) was age 5 to 11 (school years 1 to 6). A total of 5.9% identified their children as aged 5 or under and either in reception or early years. The remaining 14.4% were aged over 16 and in school years 12 or above.

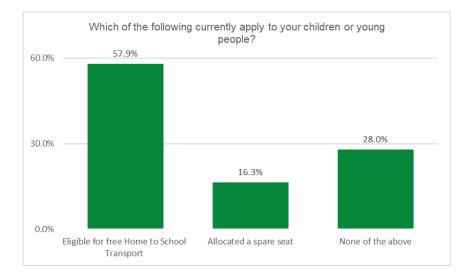


Respondents were then asked which type of educational establishment their children attend. A total of 411 respondents answered this question. By far the most frequent response was mainstream school (91.5%). This was followed by 9.0% saying special educational needs and disability (SEND); 5.8% saying post 16 education; and 1.9% saying 'Other'.



The 8 respondents who made comment within the 'Other' text box, mostly provided details of their child's school setting.

These parent/guardian/carer respondents were then asked if their child/young person were eligible for free Home to School Transport or allocated a spare seat. A total of 404 respondents answered this question, with the majority all respondents (57.9%) saying they are eligible for free Home to School Transport. A total of 16.3% said they were allocated a spare seat; and 28.0% said 'None of the above'.



Parent/guardian/carer respondents were then asked how they would define their sex, marital status, and if they have a disability. The following tables outline the feedback received.

How would you define your sex?

	Response number	Percentage (%)
Female	321	78.1%
Male	70	17.0%
Non-binary	0	0.0%
Self define (please state below)	1	0.2%
Prefer not to say	19	4.6%
TOTAL	411	100.0%

How would you describe your marital status?

	Response number	Percentage (%)
Single (never married)	36	8.8%
Married	272	66.2%
Civil partnership	7	1.7%
Divorced	20	4.9%
Widowed	5	1.2%
Cohabiting	38	9.2%
Separated	9	2.2%
Other (please state below)	1	0.2%
Prefer not to say	23	5.6%
TOTAL	411	100.0%

Do you have a disability?

	Response number	Percentage (%)
Yes	25	6.1%
	20	
No	364	88.6%
Prefer not to say	22	5.4%
TOTAL	411	100.0%

6.1.3 Style of the Draft Home to School Travel Assistance Policy (Academic year 2024-25) document

All respondents were then advised that the Council has received feedback saying the layout of the current policy is difficult to follow, and that some people have struggled to find the relevant information. NNC has rewritten the draft Home to School Assistance Policy into a new format, to make it more user friendly for people to read and clearer to understand.

It was explained that based upon the outcome of this consultation and the feedback on the new format for the Draft Home to School Travel Assistance Policy (Academic year 2024-25) the Post 16 policy for 2024 may be reformatted before publication later in the year.

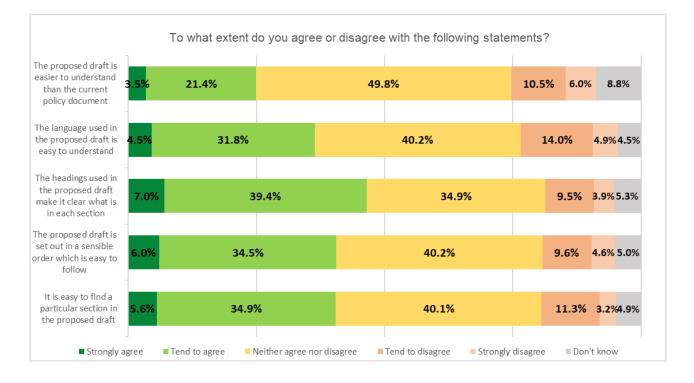
Respondents were then asked a series of questions to seek their views on the revised format. It was made clear that the questions in this section were about the form and style of the policy and not the detail of the content/proposed changes, and that respondents would be asked to provide their feedback on the content/proposed policy changes later in the questionnaire.

Links to the following documents were shared again here as a reminder of their contents:

- Current Home to School Education Transport Policy (September 2022 July 2023)
- Draft Home to School Travel Assistance Policy (Academic year 2024-25)
- <u>Current Post 16 education transport policy</u>

Respondents were presented with a series of statements and were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with each of them.

There were 286 responses to this question. As can be seen in the below graph, whilst there were a lot of respondents who neither agree nor disagreed with the statements, on the whole there was more agreement for every statement than disagreement.

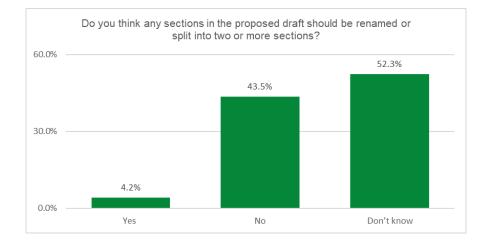


Statements listed in order of strength of agreement:

	Total agree (%)	Total disagree (%)
The headings used in the proposed draft make it clear what is in each section	46.5%	13.4%
The proposed draft is set out in a sensible order which is easy to follow	40.6%	14.2%
It is easy to find a particular section in the proposed draft	40.5%	14.4%
The language used in the proposed draft is easy to understand	36.4%	18.9%
The proposed draft is easier to understand than the current policy document	24.9%	16.5%

Respondents were then asked if they thought any sections in the proposed draft should be renamed or split into two or more sections. There were 285 responses to this question. Most respondents (52.3%) said they 'Don't know', whilst 43.5% said 'No', and 4.2% said 'Yes'.

The below graph shows the frequency of response answers to this question.



Those respondents who felt some sections should be split were asked to tell us which ones. Of the 12 respondents who said 'Yes' to the above question four added additional comments as to how the sections should be split. It was suggested the document should be rewritten and all topics put into sections e.g. SEND/fare paying passengers/low income households. There were also comments that eligibility should be explained as clearly as possible and that a one page summary of the policy is needed.

Respondents who felt some sections should be renamed were invited to tell us what we should rename them. A total of five respondents made comment. It was suggested the word 'free' be added into the section 'Who Is Entitled To Travel Assistance' so that it is clear this section is for eligible customers.

Although not specifically referencing a title section there were several additional comments, these included that the difference between low income and exceptional circumstances should be clearer; the notification process should be personalized; that the text is still unclear to a layman, with confusing and complicated language; and it should be made clear what an eligible school is and what choice will be available.

Respondents were then invited to tell us of any other suggestions as to how we can make the policy easier to understand. A total of 18 respondents made comments.

Of the points regarding the policy several indicated that the new policy content was not clear. Some of these comments made suggestions for changes which included better indenting and listing; to move 'How to Apply' and 'When' near the start of the document; that the language used was deemed prohibitive to those for who 10 | Home to School Transport Policy Review Consultation Change Report 2023

English is a second language or have limited literacy skills. It was also suggested that only the relevant information should be shared with families and that the school and/or Council should provide any additional information as needed; and that it should be mandatory for every school website to hold the transport information and/or include details in their schools admission pack.

Other comments include the opinion consultation supporting materials were unclear as to what the proposed changes were and the supporting papers were too long; that the policy needs more clarity about which schools were link schools, particularly with villages; and concern over the financial pressures that families would face if charges were increased.

6.1.4 Proposed policy changes

Respondents were then remined that the changes being proposed and consulted upon may affect children and young people from all age groups; that the findings from this consultation will therefore be used to amend both the policy for statutory school age pupils and the policy for post 16 pupils as appropriate; and the sections of the policy under review.

Respondents were also informed of the Councils legal requirements of the service, as outlined below:

- We are legally required to provide home to school transport for pupils of compulsory school age (5 years to 16 years of age) if:
 - The child lives beyond two miles to the nearest suitable school (below the age of eight)
 - The child or young person lives beyond three miles to the nearest suitable school (age 8 to 16)
 - The child lives beyond two miles to the nearest suitable school for pupils aged eight to 11 and is from a low-income family (for example in receipt of free school meals)
 - The child or young person lives between two to six miles to one of the three nearest qualifying schools for pupils aged 11 to 16 and is from a low-income family
 - The child or young person lives between 2 and 15 miles from school where this is the nearest school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief for pupils aged 11 to 16 and is from a lowincome family
 - The child or young person lives below the statutory walking distance to the nearest suitable school and cannot reasonably be expected to walk due to their special educational needs or disability.
 - The route has been assessed by the Council as unsafe to walk even when accompanied by an adult.

6.1.5 Linked schools

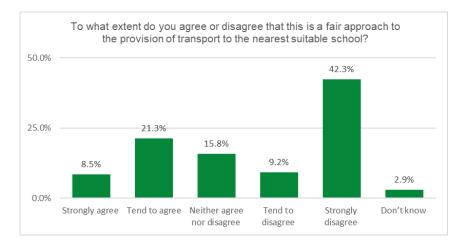
Respondents were given an explanation of "linked" schools, what is required by statute and what is currently provided under the existing policy. The consultation outlined the Council's proposal:

• With effect from September 2024, transport will only be provided to the nearest suitable school which has places available, subject to the young person also meeting the other eligibility criteria for transport. The nearest suitable school means the school which is geographically closest to the child's home and is deemed suitable to meet the needs of the child and has places available to accommodate the child.

It was explained that this proposal would ensure the Council meets its statutory duty and will deliver efficiency savings to help reduce the service's current overspend and ensure the available funding is directed at delivering our statutory requirements.

It was also explained that to avoid problems for young people already attending a linked school under the current policy, any changes to this provision would apply to new applications only. Those already receiving transport under the criterion in the current policy would continue to receive transport until their next trigger point; for example, change of school, change of address, etc.

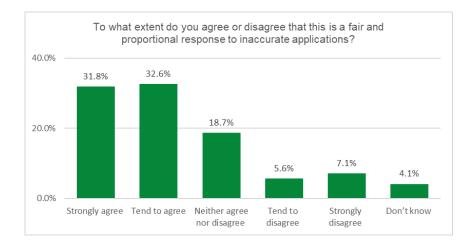
Respondents were then asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed that this is a fair approach to the provision of transport to the nearest suitable school. There were 272 responses to this question. Just over half of the respondents (51.5%) said they strongly disagree or tend to disagree, while a little under a third (29.8%) said they strongly agree or tend to agree.



6.1.6 Inaccurate Applications

Respondents were told this is a new stipulation, which would allow the Council to reclaim any costs of providing transport where the placement at that school was based upon inaccurate or fraudulent information.

Respondents were then asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed that this is a fair and proportional response to inaccurate applications. There were 267 responses to this question. The majority of respondents (64.4%) said they strongly agree or tend to agree, while 12.7% said they strongly disagree or tend to disagree.



6.1.7 Provision of Spare Seats/Discretionary transport

The provision of "spare seats" and the discretionary transport that the Council currently provides, along with the budgetary pressures this brings, were explained to respondents. Respondents were also informed that the current charge to the family/student for discretionary transport (spare seat) is £600 per year and that this was introduced 10 years ago and has not increased. It was explained that this fare does not cover the cost

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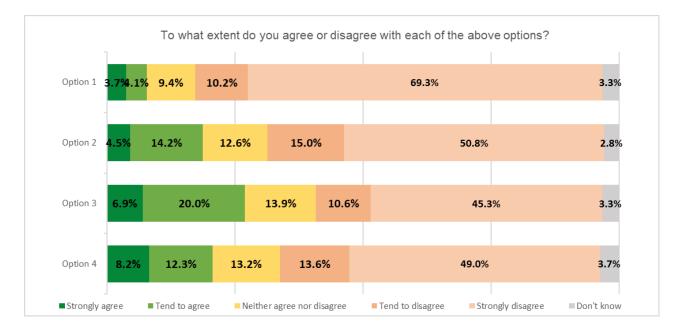
of the transport provided, resulting in the Council subsidising the cost of this transport for these families/ children and young people.

The consultation stated that the Council is considering the following options:

- Option 1. Withdraw all discretionary (spare seat) transport for all age groups. This would mean that parents of all children and young people who were not eligible for transport under the statutory criteria would need to provide transport for themselves.
- Option 2. Withdraw discretionary transport (spare seat) provision for all Post 16 students, i.e. retain spare seats for those of Statutory School age only. This would mean that all Sixth form students would need to make their own way to their chosen place of education. Sixth formers with SEND who cannot access education or training in any other way would still be eligible for free transport.
- Option 3. Cease to guarantee a "spare seat" for those applying before a set date (usually the 3rd Friday in May); fare paying "Spare seats" would only be available where there were genuinely spare seats on a vehicle rather than purchasing additional capacity on the vehicle to ensure additional seat availability. Priority would continue to be given to those of statutory school age, and then on a first come first served basis for Sixth form students.
- Option 4. Increase the charges payable by all students in receipt of discretionary transport to cover the true cost or a higher proportion of the true cost of the provision of the seat. This option may also be applied alongside Options 2 or 3.

Respondents were then asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with each of the above options.

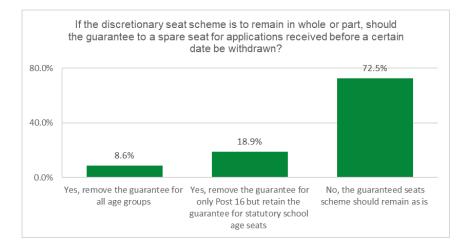
There were 248 responses to this question. As can be seen in the below graph, there was a lot of strong disagreement with these options. Option 3 received the most support with a total of 26.9% of respondents to this question agreeing and 55.9% disagreeing. Option 1 received the least support with a total of 7.8% agreeing and 79.5% disagreeing.



Options listed in order of strength of agreement:

	Total	Total disagree
	agree (%)	(%)
Option 3	26.9%	55.9%
Option 4	20.6%	62.6%
Option 2	18.7%	65.9%
Option 1	7.8%	79.5%

Respondents were then asked if the discretionary seat scheme is to remain in whole or part, should the guarantee to a spare seat for applications received before a certain date (usually the 3rd Friday in May) be withdrawn. There were 244 responses to this question. The vast majority of respondents (72.5%) disagreed and said they felt the guaranteed seats scheme should remain as is. A total of 18.9% felt the scheme should be removed for only Post 16s but retain a guarantee for statutory school age seats. Whilst 8.6% felt there should be removal of a guaranteed seat for all age groups.



6.1.8 Discretionary transport (spare seat) fare review

Respondents were reminded that the current charge to the family/student for discretionary transport (spare seat) is £600 per year. It was explained that the average cost to the Council of providing transport for the Home to School service is approximately £1,050 per person per year. This increases to approximately £1,200 per person per year when administration costs are added. Respondents were reminded that the Council does not have to provide this discretionary spare seat service and were shown the following table, which gives several examples as to how the cost of the discretionary (spare seat) transport could be shared between families/students who are not entitled to free transport and the Council. The table was set out in the form of percentages variants to give an understanding of respondents views on the principle of sharing the cost between the Council and families/students:

Cost to family/ student	Cost to the Council	Percentage of subsidy provided by the Council		To note	
student		Family/ student	Council		
£600	£600 (including approximate £150 administration cost)	50%	50%	This is the current rate and shares the cost 50/50	
£720	£480 (including approximate £150 administration cost)	60%	40%	This shares the cost 60/40	

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£840	£360 (including approximate £150 administration cost)	70%	30%	This shares the cost 70/30
£960	£240 (including approximate £150 administration cost)	80%	20%	This shares the cost 80/20
£1050	£150 approximate administration cost	88%	13%	This means the family/ student pay the cost of transport and the Council pays the administration cost
£1125 (including £75 contribution towards the approximate administration cost)	£75 contribution towards the approximate administration cost	94%	6%	This means the family/ student pay the cost of transport plus a half of the administration cost. The Council pays the other half of the administration cost
£1200 (including approximate £150 administration cost)	£0	100%	0%	This means the family/ student pay the full cost of transport and the administration cost

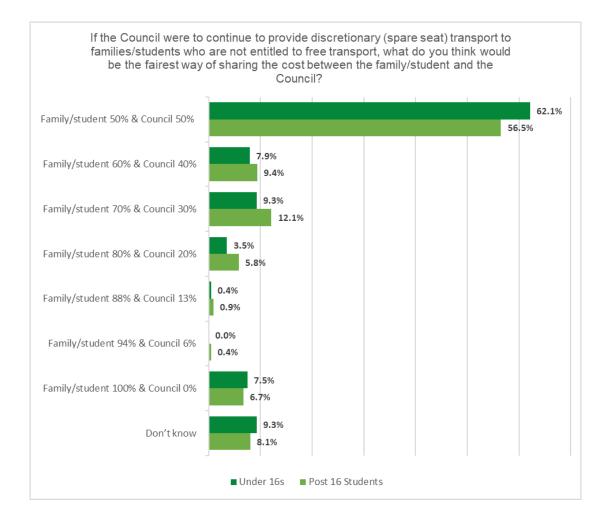
Respondents were asked what they felt would be the fairest way of sharing the cost between the family/student and the Council, if the Council were to continue to provide discretionary (spare seat) transport to families/students who are not entitled to free transport. Respondents were asked to consider if this should be different for those students who are in post 16 education and those that are younger.

There were 229 responses to this question. As can be seen by the below graph, when considering the principle of how the cost could be shared the majority of respondents feel the fairest way of funding the discretionary transport is by sharing it 50/50 between the family/student and the Council. There was also little variation between whether the percentage of share should be different if the pupil were under 16 or post 16.

Under 16s

	Und	EI 105	Fost to Students	
	Response number	Percentage (%)	Response number	Percentage (%)
Family/student 50% & Council 50%	141	62.1%	126	56.5%
Family/student 60% & Council 40%	18	7.9%	21	9.4%
Family/student 70% & Council 30%	21	9.3%	27	12.1%
Family/student 80% & Council 20%	8	3.5%	13	5.8%
Family/student 88% & Council 13%	1	0.4%	2	0.9%
Family/student 94% & Council 6%	0	0.0%	1	0.4%
Family/student 100% & Council 0%	17	7.5%	15	6.7%
Don't know	21	9.3%	18	8.1%
TOTAL	227	100.0%	223	100.0%

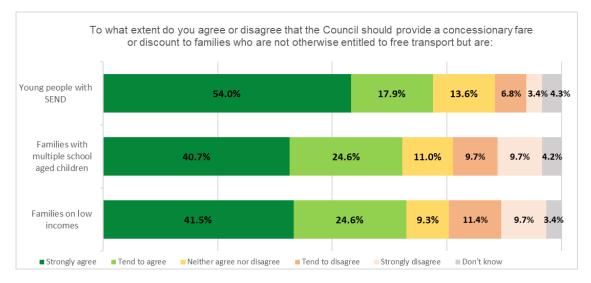
Post 16 Students



The Council has the option to provide a concessionary fare or discount to certain groups of people. Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed that the Council should provide a concessionary fare or discount to families who are not otherwise entitled to free transport but are:

- on low incomes and/or in receipt of benefits
- have multiple school aged children
- young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND).

There were 237 responses to this question. Respondents were in support of this proposal with the majority of respondents feeling the Council should provide a concessionary fare or discount to all of the family circumstances mentioned above. Families with young people with SEND received the most support with a total of 71.9% of respondents to this question agreeing and 10.2% disagreeing. This was followed by families on low incomes (with a total of 66.1% agreeing and 21.2% disagreeing); closely followed by families with multiple school aged children (total of 65.3% agreeing and 19.5% disagreeing).



Statements listed in order of strength of agreement:

		Total
	Total	disagree
	agree (%)	(%)
Young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND)	71.9%	10.2%
Families on low incomes and/or in receipt of benefits	66.1%	21.2%
Families with multiple school aged children	65.3%	19.5%

6.1.9 Transport of Children and Young People with Medical Needs

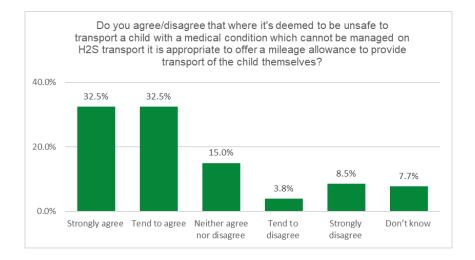
It was explained to respondents that local authorities need to ensure that drivers of vehicles providing dedicated home to school transport, and any passenger assistants involved in providing home to school transport, have undertaken appropriate training and that this is kept up-to-date.

Some young people have medical needs which may impact upon their transport. For most young people their needs can be met by a Passenger Assistant (i.e. someone who is employed to supervise and support one or more young people on the vehicle) but for those with more serious conditions additional support may be required. It is anticipated that the current guidance will be revised to require a Risk Assessment to be carried out for those with medical needs and where it is considered appropriate to ensure safe transport, a Passenger Assistant be trained in managing those needs. As such the Council proposed:

- A medically qualified Passenger Assistant (i.e. Nurse or Nursing Assistant) will only be appointed in the most exceptional cases (for example a condition which requires frequent and immediate medical attention). In most circumstances one or more Passenger Assistants would be trained in how to deal with the child's needs and condition. This may require arranging for specialist training and support from the School Nurse or other professional involved with the child.
- Based upon a Risk Assessment, where it is felt that it would be unsafe to transport the child, because their medical condition cannot be managed on Home to School Transport parents/guardians/carers may be requested to transport the child themselves in exchange for a mileage payment.

It was explained that this proposal is in line with the draft guidance issued for consultation by the Department for Education at the end of 2022, and is included in this policy in anticipation of the publication of the confirmed guidance later this year.

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed that where it is deemed to be unsafe to transport a child with a medical condition which cannot be managed on home to school transport it is appropriate to offer parents/guardians/carers a mileage allowance to provide transport of the child themselves. There were 234 responses to this question. Approximately two thirds of the respondents to this question (65.0%) said they strongly agree or tend to agree, while 12.4% said they strongly disagree or tend to disagree.



6.1.10 Travel options

It was explained to respondents that the Council has a duty under Section 508A of the Education Act 1996 to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport. This duty applies to all children and young people of compulsory school age (5 to 16) who travel to receive education or training in a local authority's area.

The proposed policy includes a list of travel options. Travel options which may be considered are:

- Walking (alone or accompanied by parent)
- Walking bus (walking with other children and adult supervisors)
- Cycling or Scooting
- Bus/Train Pass for public transport
- Discounted travel schemes
- Parental mileage payments
- Personal budget
- Independent Travel Training
- Dedicated school bus routes (with passenger assistant if required)
- Minibus or shared Multi-Purpose vehicle (people carrier) from pick up points (with passenger assistant if required)
- Minibus or shared Multi-Purpose vehicle (people carrier) from door to door (with passenger assistant if required)
- Shared Taxis (with passenger assistant if required)
- Solo taxi (with passenger assistant if required)

It was explained that for some pupils, especially those with special educational needs and disability (SEND), some of these forms of transport will not be practical options. Some of the options will require further work before they become practical, for example a walking bus would need local and/or school support to put it in place, not least in providing adults to supervise the young people.

Respondents were asked if there were any other potential travel solutions which they would like to see included in this list. Schools and parent groups in particular were asked to consider whether there are any local options open to them to improve access to the school premises. There were 42 responses to this question.

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Approximately half of these respondents suggested other potential travel solutions. The most frequent were park and ride, and car share schemes, and offering a discount for bicycles and cycling proficiency courses. There was also an indication that better cycle/walking routes were required too, with meeting points for children to ride to school together.

Further solutions were a free pass or reduced cost for public transport and a percentage contribution towards driving lessons for post 16 to be able to transport themselves.

Some options centered around changes to admissions with children only being offered a place at their nearest school and withdrawing an option of attending a school more than three miles away. It was also suggested that current processes and plans should be reviewed, that could combine current routes and/or review the size of buses used, to be more cost effective. It was felt more bus stops were needed and logistical support for children, for example at zebra crossings.

For those using home to school transport and not at their nearest school, is was suggested there could be a charge per mile for the difference between the nearest and chosen school so that costs could be recouped.

Approximately half of the respondents did not specifically reference alternative travel solutions. These comments were regarding a concern about the perceived lack of safe footpaths and routes for children walking to school, particularly from villages. Some indicated that these should be reviewed and rectified before any changes are made to the current arrangements.

Several comments expressed concern over the additional financial costs of the service, with some indicating it should be free. There was also concern regarding the lack of suitable alternative bus routes, options, the number of buses available and their frequency/lateness.

There were a small number of comments regarding the frustration of some of the Council's internal processes including invoices being sent at infrequent intervals leaving parents with larger sums to pay in one go and receiving late notification as to whether a seat had been allocated.

Finally, some comments were shared saying an amount of choice has been taken away from parents, particularly as some choice of schools had been made with an understanding that there would be home to school transport available, and that should be continued. There was also concern raised over logistical difficulties in getting children to school, affected by parents having to work and the perceived additional traffic on the road.

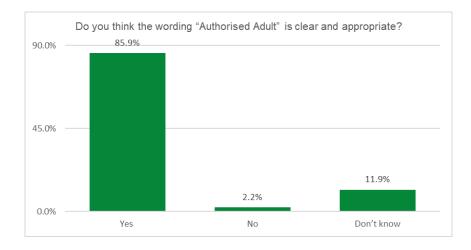
The following is a Wordcloud of the most frequent words respondents used when asked what other potential travel solutions they would like to see:



6.1.11 Who can collect the child from the vehicle

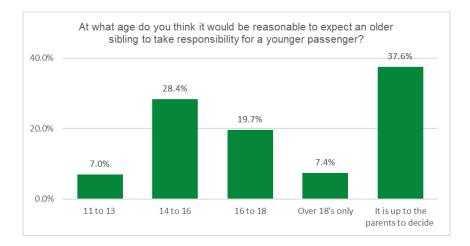
The consultation stated that the wording regarding who needs to meet a child from the vehicle has been amended in the proposed draft policy to change the term "[parents] or their representative" to "[parents] or an authorised adult". The Council accepts and acknowledges that parents cannot always meet their child from the vehicle, but suitable arrangements need to be made to ensure that the child is left with an appropriate person, who can be responsible for their welfare, and not someone who is not authorised to collect the child. This is particularly important for young people with SEND.

Respondents were then asked if they thought the wording "Authorised Adult" is clear and appropriate. There were 227 responses to this question. The vast majority of the respondents (85.9%) said they felt the wording is clear and appropriate; 2.2% felt it was not; and 11.9% said 'Don't know'.

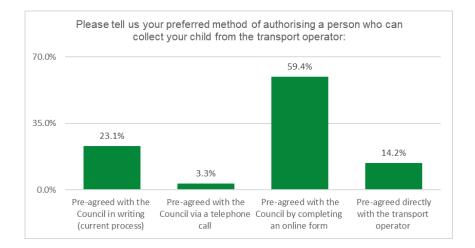


Those that said 'No' were invited to tell us why and asked what alternative they would suggest. Only one respondent made comment. They said there is a need to have an age appropriate adult collecting.

Respondents were asked what age they thought it would be reasonable to expect an older sibling to take responsibility for a younger passenger. There were 229 responses to this question. Many respondents (37.6%) felt it is up to the parents to decide. When analysing the age bands presented 14 to 16 was the most frequent answer, with 28.4% of respondents choosing this answer option. This was followed by 16 to 18 (19.7%). Other answers were 11 to 13 (7.0%) and Over 18's only (7.4%).



Currently the arrangement for authorising someone to collect a child from the bus is done via email or letter to the Transport Team and is arranged by the team with the transport operator. Respondents were asked to tell us their preferred method of authorising a person who can collect the child from the transport operator. There were 212 responses to this question. The preferred option (59.4%) was 'Pre-agreed with the Council by completing an online form'. This was followed by the current process of 'Pre-agreed with the Council in writing' (23.1%); then 'Pre-agreed directly with the transport operator' (14.2%); and lastly 'Pre-agreed with the Council via a telephone call' (3.3%).



6.1.12 Other comments

Respondents were asked which, if any, of the following proposals they felt would potentially apply to them if they were implemented by the academic year 2024/25. There were 227 responses to this question. There was a mixture of respondents who felt the proposals would potentially apply to them or not, as well as some who did not know. The following lists the number of responses to this question in order of which potential proposal may apply, ranging from the highest to the lowest:

Percentage (%)

No

37.1%

35.9%

43.4%

43.9%

53.4%

Yes

43.8%

42.2%

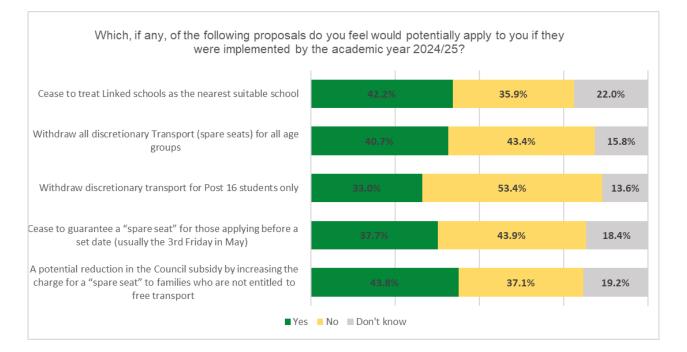
40.7%

37.7%

33.0%

A potential reduction in the Council subsidy by increasing the charge for a "spare seat" to families who are not entitled to free transport Cease to treat Linked schools as the nearest suitable school Withdraw all discretionary Transport (spare seats) for all age groups Cease to guarantee a "spare seat" for those applying before a set date (usually the 3rd Friday in May)

Withdraw discretionary transport for Post 16 students only



Respondents were invited to tell us of any negative impacts they feel the proposals may make, along with any suggestions on how any potential negative impacts could be reduced or avoided. A total of 96 respondents shared their comments. A large amount of respondents gave details about their own personal circumstances and mentioned many perceived potential impacts changes to the policy may create.

About a third of the comments received were in relation to the lack of alternative travel options for families to be able to ensure their children reached school including concerns about logistics and managing the time around their own working hours and potentially having to change jobs. There was particular concern around the lack of public transport or none at all from rural areas.

Approximately a quarter of comments were in relation to the financial pressures the potential increase would have on families, with those on low incomes and single parents particularly impacted in having to find additional funds and current service users feeling penalised. Several added that the proposed increase was too much and that cumulatively, if there was more than one child, there would be an even larger financial burden on families.

Whilst several schools were mentioned almost a quarter of respondents to this question made specific reference to Prince William School in Oundle and it links with rural villages and the towns that feed into it, particularly Thrapston Primary School and Corby schools. There is strong concern that if the linked school for Thrapston Primary is changed to the nearest school, which is Manor School in Raunds, lots of families will be impacted. Respondents stated that historically most of the Thrapston Primary School children go on to Prince William School, with many having older siblings at the school and families and Thrapston Primary School having existing long-term relationships with the school, and changes to this would be disruptive. Respondents said the proposed changes to linked school travel would mean many parents would be charged for transport to Prince William School, with a small number indicating that it could potentially create a two-tier system of those who can afford it and those who cannot. It was strongly felt this could have a negative impact both financially and mentally due to potentially splitting friendship groups and family groups, as many older siblings already attend Prince William School. It was also felt that the removal of free travel to linked schools would have a negative impact on Prince William School itself as it appears to have a large rural intake which would decrease if more of the children went to Manor School in Raunds and that the relationship has not yet been developed with Manor School.

About a fifth of respondents commented on the legal position regarding post 16 education and said those in that category had no option but to attend sixth form/college and therefore should receive assistance or free travel.

A similar number felt there would be a removal of choice if families are unable to afford to pay for home to school travel for a school that is their preferred choice. It was commented that the proposed plans appear to impact families on a lower income in a proportionately higher way, and that this was not sufficiently referenced in the Equality Impact Assessment.

A few families were unclear if any changes to the policy would impact existing service users or only new applicants. These respondents felt that if a choice has already been made based on currently available information it would be unfair for existing users to be affected. Some felt that what the Council may deem as a suitable school, the parent/child may not agree.

Several comments were received regarding the proposed changes leading to an increase of road traffic, especially around busy schools with drop off/collection of children, leading to concerns around environmental impact, safety, and the impact on local residents. It was also felt the proposals contradict the Council's green travel plan.

Several comments were received expressing dissatisfaction with the Council's current processes including infrequency of receiving invoices for home to school transport, leading to a larger bill later in the school year, causing additional concern and financial burden. There were other suggestions that a direct debit system should be set up for monthly or term invoices and that communication and processes should be reviewed and improved. It was mentioned that confirmation, or otherwise, of a seat on home to school transport can come late and there was reference to the admissions policy and children not necessarily securing a place at their nearest school. It was also referenced that the recent annual increase in Council Tax should cover the cost of this service. There was also frustration regarding the small window to make a potential school option at a brand new school when there is no history to understand how the school is fairing.

A similar number of comments were received regarding concern of perceived potential disruption to children and their education if they have to change school due to changes in home to school transport, or there are siblings in different schools and potential non-attendance if children cannot physically travel to school. There were also concerns that pupils could also potentially miss out on extra curricula activities.

Some comments were made raising concerns over the mental wellbeing of both children and parents, and the negative impact, due to the uncertainty and potential disruption and changes resulting from some of the proposals.

A few respondents also referenced concern that current relationships and links with feeder schools could be broken and that current smooth transition from one school to another could be disrupted. It was felt it would also impact local communities where relationships with schools has been built.

A similar number indicated a perceived negative impact on rural communities with limited or no public transport and possible increased car traffic of parents taking their children to and from school.

A small number of comments indicated that there needs to be a guarantee of spare seats or better planning so that any spare seats allocated are not withdrawn and parents should receive sufficient notice as not knowing whether a seat has been secured makes it a challenge for the family to plan.

Other comments shared were that any future plans need to consider how a child can access the school without transport during the placement, and the opinion that the plans are retrogressive. It was stated that transport should be available to everyone, with improvement needed around Kettering/Corby/Wellingborough areas. While there was recognition that costs had changed to the service it was felt that the options presented were leaning towards forcing parents to choose a more expensive option over losing the service and placed pressure on students and parents to consider a potentially lower grade school which could limit the education and experience for some students. It was felt this showed a lack of care and compassion from the Council and raises questions about its priorities and agenda.

A few respondents suggested various potential ways any impact could be mitigated. These included that there should be a full transport options review; the Council should investigate digital solutions and negotiate a contract with one provider; there should be free transport or any increases should be staggered, means tested and reviewed with schools and parents; free transport should be scrapped and all seats should be required to pay the subsidised amount, giving them a guaranteed place on the bus; to review eligibility for example children in the catchment area do not need the free transport; to charge a fee per mile for the difference between linked and allocated/chosen school; and that linked schools should provide transport to their catchment area.

The consultation raised some questions including why other areas, i.e. a nearby College, charge a smaller amount for a bus whereas NNC buses are going to the school anyway and there is room for post 16 children.

Other suggestions included ensure that siblings are offered places at the same school; to review the perceived practice of allocating Corby children to Kettering schools and Kettering children to Corby schools; that there should be better relationships between linked/catchment schools as children would attend from further away; allocating children from a cross-section of schools could lead to better Ofsted results; to allow schools some time to build relationships with all primary schools in their locality and review transport provisions at that time (3 years minimum was suggested); would be willing to pay a contribution for transport to get their child to school safely; discretionary places should offset the SEN places; and to lobby government for increased funding.

Respondents were then given an opportunity to tell us of any other comments they would like to make that they have not already told us. There were 53 additional comments made. The largest number, nearly a third, were relating to frustrations of the Council's internal processes and/or admissions policy. Comments were made regarding a lack of, and/or poor, communication with parents having to chase the Council for information regarding allocated seats and not receiving confirmation until after the child had already started school and late issuing of the bus pass. It was commented that invoices were often issued late, resulting in larger sums having to be paid at any one time. Sharing a personal story, frustrations were expressed regarding siblings attending different schools due to allocations. It was felt the system for SEND children should be simplified; and there was also a reference that a child who is allocated a seat should be guaranteed the seat through their whole school life.

There were several comments, in equal numbers, asking the Council to work more closely with operators and adjust plans to ensure they are more efficient and cost effective; that the costs for the service to families should be spread more evenly across everyone who uses it and/or reviewed; and that the proposed changes would have a negative impact on children if they have to change schools or change their plans, with the potential of non-attendance.

A small number of comments expressed a perception that choice has been removed or that the proposed plans are unfair to service users.

Finally there were a small number of comments in relation to a few different themes including concerns over the lack of alternative, reliable public transport if children don't receive an allocated seat; additional traffic on the roads if parents drive children to school; the impact of the proposed changes on the mental wellbeing of children; and also the additional financial pressures that an increase in costs could have on families. A couple of comments indicated that the consultation supporting papers were difficult to understand and that there should be support from the schools in understanding what proposed changes may mean from a practical perspective.

A small number of ideas and suggestions were shared including the provision of low-cost transport to the nearest school for all children; that all barriers to get children to school should be removed; the creation of a formal car share scheme; that all villages should have an allocated school for both primary and secondary; and if the Council do not have enough funding to provide the service then it should lobby government for appropriate funding.

6.1.13 Demographic information

The questionnaire then invited organisational respondents to provide more detail about their organisation by providing their organisations name and their job title/ role. The two respondents who provided this information identified themselves as a Town and Parish Council. We have not listed the job titles/ roles of respondents within this report to ensure respondents' anonymity is retained.

Respondents who were not responding on behalf of an organisation were asked a range of equality monitoring questions to help us understand the characteristics of people who have taken part in the consultation.

Many respondents did not complete the equality monitoring form, although key demographic data was captured within the main questionnaire, as presented earlier within this report. The following is a brief summary of the data received from the equality monitoring form.

More females (87.5%) completed the equality monitoring from than males (12.5%). All of the equality form respondents said they were the same gender as they were assigned at birth and are aged between 35 to 49.

Most of the respondents identified themselves as being married (62.5%), followed by being single (25.0%) and divorced (12.5%). The majority of respondents said they were heterosexual (87.5%); with 12.5% saying 'Prefer not to say'.

Other identified demographic information provided by respondents demonstrated that 25.0% were disabled. Predominantly respondents identified themselves as White British (85.7%), with the remainder identifying themselves as Polish. The most frequent religion identified was Christian (71.4%), with 28.6% of respondents choosing 'None'.

6.2 Written responses

There were four written responses received.

One submission made several comments including requests for further information regarding the development of the proposals and the Council's supporting data. They also challenged the language used in the equality impact assessment as they felt there is no doubt that the proposal would have negative impacts.

This respondent challenged the viability of reliance on public transport as an alternative to discretionary seats, and cited an example of no buses running at a suitable time to match the school day on a local bus route. They felt the proposed changes would result in more cars on roads generating higher emissions than the transport currently provided, which would cause environmental damage.

They felt the draft proposals would revoke equality of opportunity between school children based on where they reside, and believe they have the potential to discriminate against children on the basis of their home address.

Another respondent explained their personal circumstances and said there should be no charge to families whose children have to attend a school which was not their first choice.

The other two respondents, including one from a local school Chair of Governors, mentioned their disagreement with removal of the linked school proposal, both citing Thrapston Primary School and Prince William School. It was commented that this proposal goes against years of historic transfers to the linked schools and is causing angst among families. A parent respondent felt if this proposal were to be approved it would be unfair as those families who could not afford the cost of transport would have their choice of preferred secondary school taken away from them. They raised concern over the breaking up of lifelong friendships, especially during what has been a challenging number of years to the children due to the pandemic.

Appendix B

Home to School transport demand as at Summer 23

Mainstream Schools provision

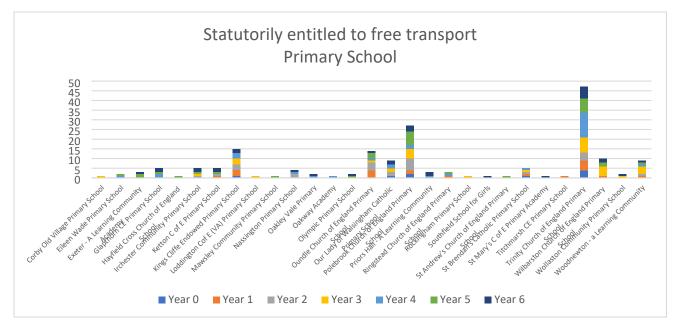
Every day NNC provides transport for 4133 mainstream students to and from 54 schools. Some of these students are entitled to free transport under the legislation and some are travelling as fare paying passengers under the Authority's Discretionary powers. Some 3988 of these students are of statutory school age. The rest are Over 16 and attending some form of Sixth Form studies.

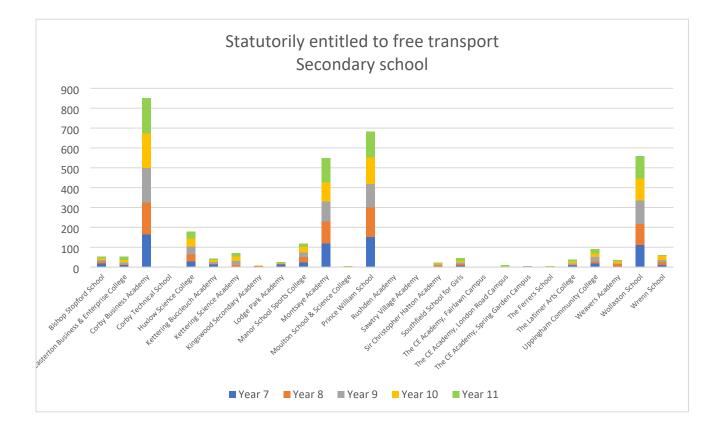
Ten schools alone account for 3614 students.

	Count of students on
Schools with the greatest proportion of	transport (all age
HtoS transport	groups)
Prince William School	967
Corby Business Academy	860
Wollaston School	604
Montsaye Academy	577
Huxlow Science College	179
Manor School Sports College	129
Uppingham Community College	95
Kettering Science Academy	79
Sir Christopher Hatton Academy	62
Wrenn School	62

Students Entitled to Free Transport

The Local Authority is required to provide free home to school transport for young people of statutory school age (5 to 16) who meet the eligibility criteria set out in the statutes surrounding home to school transport.





Four secondary schools show as significant peaks in free Home to School transport entitlement. A closer examination of towns/villages of origin students attending these schools shows the following geographical breakdowns:

Corby Business Academy					
Brigstock	9				
Corby	712				
Great Oakley	21				
Gretton	7				
Little Stanion	40				
Weldon	61				
Grand Total	850				

Wollaston School				
Bozeat	107			
Earls Barton	154			
Easton Maudit	3			
Great Doddington	39			
Grendon	20			
Irchester	231			
Wellingboroug h	3			
Wilby	1			
Grand Total	558			

Montsaye Academy					
Braybrooke	2				
Broughton	5				
Burton Latimer	4				
Corby	19				
Desborough	431				
Great Oakley	4				
Kettering	30				
Loddington	3				
Mawsley	33				
Rushton	6				
Stoke Albany	1				
Thorpe Malsor	3				
Weston by	2				
Welland	۷				
Wilbarston	5				
Grand Total	548				

Prince William School	
Achurch	1
Aldwincle	12
Apethorpe	7
Ashton	3
Barnwell	15
Blatherwycke	3
Brigstock	3
Bulwick	2
Clopton	8
Collyweston	6
Corby	6
Cotterstock	3
Deenthorpe	1
Denford	6
Denford Ash	1
Duddington	1
Easton on the Hill	10
Elmington	1
Glapthorn	4
Great Oakley	2

Hemington	3
Islip	31
Kings Cliffe	47
Lilford	4
Little Stanion	1
Lower Benefield	2
Lowick	8
Luddington	1
Lutton	5
Nassington	30
Pilton	1
Polebrook	15
Southwick	7
Stoke Doyle	2
Sudborough	2
Tansor	5
Thorpe Waterville	2
Thrapston	344
Thurning	1
Titchmarsh	18
Upper Benefield	6

Upper Laxton	3
Wadenhoe	2
Warmington	31
Weldon	1

Woodnewton	8
Yarwell	8
Grand Total	683

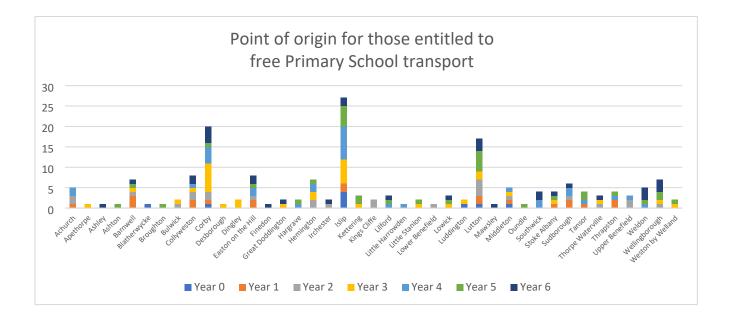
Prince William has the widest "catchment" of any education establishment in North Northamptonshire. It is also arguably the most rural school in the Unitary area, serving a vast number of small villages and communities in the former East Northants. It has feeder schools in several communities, including Thrapston, which also helps to give it the one of the largest cohorts of pupils entitled to free transport.

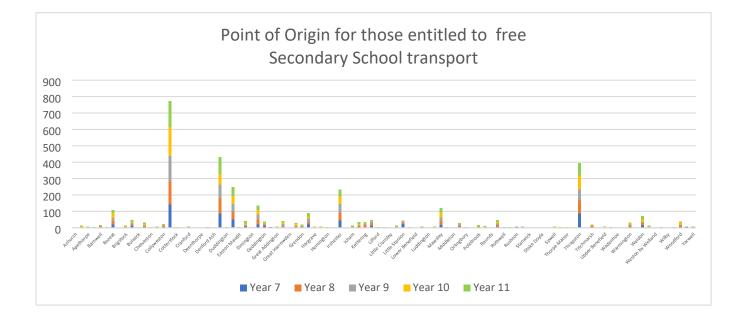
Any changes to the arrangements for feeder schools would potentially have a significant effect of the families in Thrapston, and thus on Prince William School.

Communities requiring free transport to access schooling.

Taking into account that free transport is only available for those accessing their nearest suitable (or linked) school, we can potentially identify capacity issues in local school provision by looking at where students receiving free transport live. The graphs below show a breakdown of communities where there are children and young people who are entitled to free transport to access their nearest suitable (or linked) school.

We can see that some communities appear to have a particular dependency upon home to school transport. By splitting the data by year group we can potentially identify whether the issue is current or historical, and whether the pattern is improving or worsening over time.





There appear to be fewer capacity issues for Primary Schools than for Secondary schools, although demand may also be less because many parents prefer to take their younger children to school themselves rather than rely on the Council to transport them, and also that Primary Schools tend to be more local.

Key points of demand for Primary school capacity appear to be Corby, Islip and Lutton. The capacity issues in Corby appear to be reducing, with those entitled to free transport dropping from 7 children requiring transport currently in year 3 to just 1 currently in each of Reception and Year 1.

For secondary schooling the numbers requiring transport are considerably higher. The main points of unmet demand appear to be Bozeat, Corby, Desborough, Earls Barton, Finedon, Mawsley and Thrapston. Unfortunately there does not seem to be much movement in the overall numbers by year group for any of these communities, which alone account for nearly 63% of the students entitled to free transport to secondary schools.

Discretionary Transport

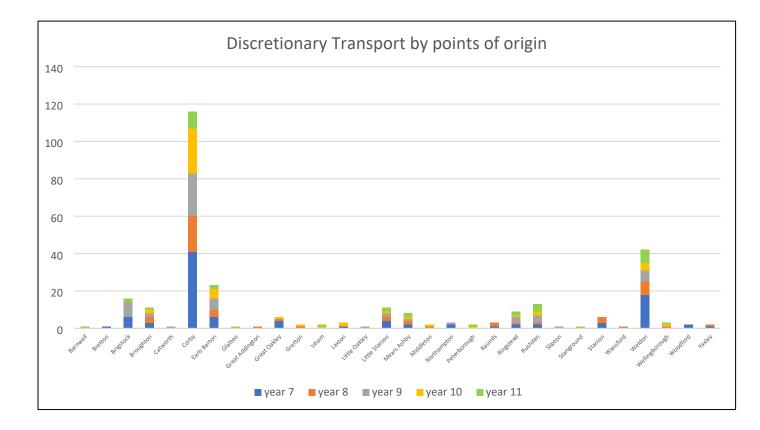
Discretionary transport is the transport provided under the Council's discretionary powers for young people who are not entitled to free transport under the legislation. The scheme is colloquially known as the spare seat scheme or the fare paying scheme. The fact that these pupils are receiving discretionary transport means that:

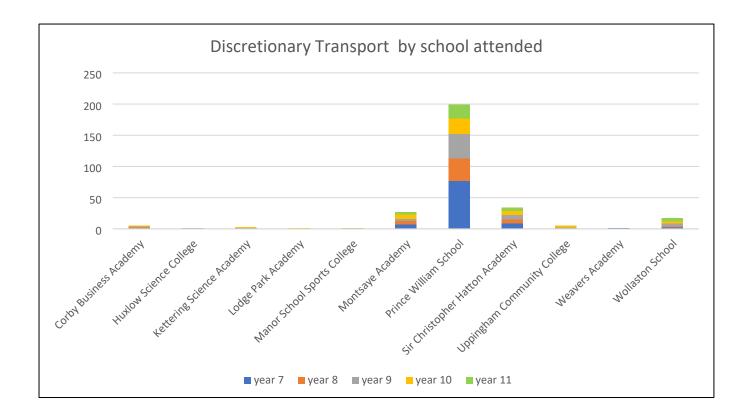
- 1. the nearest suitable school was within the statutory walking distance or
- 2. there would have been an alternative school suitable for their needs closer to home than the one attended, i.e. they are attending these schools from parental choice.

The Council currently requires a contribution from each young person of £600 per year towards the cost of this transport. This transport actually costs the Council approximately £1200 per child, made up from both the direct cost of transport paid to the transport operators and the cost of administration of the scheme. The Council is currently consulting on a series of options realting to Discretionary transport from withdrawing the facility completely, reducing availability or increasing the payable charges.

The commercial fare for these journeys would also be higher than £600. 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. Our fare is therefore currently undercutting the commercial market.

There are no children of primary school age (years reception to year 6) currently making use of Discretionary transport services.



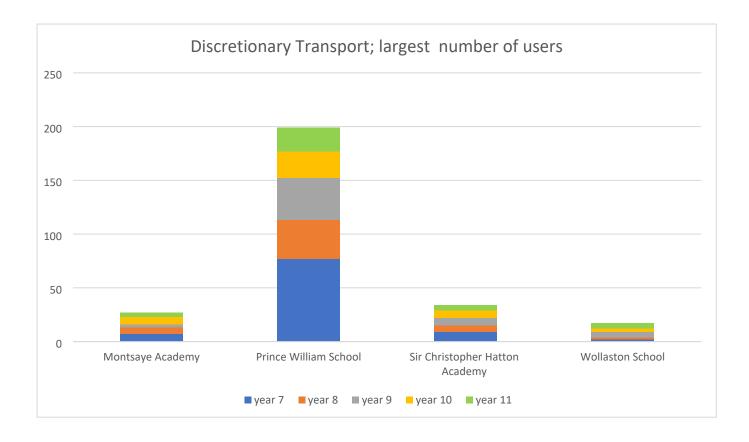


From the two charts above we can see:

The largest points of origin for those in receipt of discretionary transport is Corby, followed (at some distance) by Weldon and Earls Barton. Any changes to discretionary transport, either in capacity or cost will therefore have a disproportionate impact upon families of students in these areas.

Increases in costs or reduction in availability of discretionary transport may cause some families to want to send their children to other schools, which may cause capacity issues in schools more local to the points of origin, both now and in the future. As these schools fill, students will be referred to more distant schools, with the potential that more students would become entitled to free transport.

Schools with the largest number of						Grand
students receiving discretionary transport	year 7	year 8	year 9	year 10	year 11	Total
Montsaye Academy	7	6	3	7	4	27
Prince William School	77	36	39	25	22	200
Sir Christopher Hatton Academy	9	6	7	7	5	34
Wollaston School	2	2	5	3	5	17
Total in year group	95	50	54	42	36	278



The vast majority of students receiving Discretionary Transport are attending Prince William School, with 200 pupils using the service, with over half of these students coming from Corby (98 pupils) and Weldon (42 pupils).

When the four schools with the highest levels of discretionary transport users are discounted, there are only 17 young people of statutory school age claiming a seat under the discretionary transport provision. This would be manageable within current service parameters, even if the guaranteed seat provision were to be withdrawn.

	Point of								
Number of pupils	origin								
		Cor	Laxt	Little	Little	Middl	Northa	Ringst	Grand
school	Barnwell	by	on	Oakley	Stanion	eton	mpton	ead	Total
Corby Business									
Academy		3				2			5
Huxlow Science									
College								1	1
Kettering Science									
Academy		3							3
Lodge Park									
Academy					1				1
Manor School									
Sports College	1								1
Uppingham									
Community College		1	3	1					5
Weavers Academy							1		1
Grand Total	1	7	3	1	1	2	1	1	17

Sixth form demand

Although young people are now required to engage with education to the age of 18, the legislation relating to transport provision still only requires the Local Authority to provide free transport for those of between the ages of 5 and 16. It is understood that this is because young people over 16 have free choice of placement for Post 16 studies, including the option to undertake apprenticeships and paid work-place training.

The figures given here should be treated with some caution as there may be a few students at Post 16 who are entitled to travel support due to additional needs as well as those travelling from choice. This has not been taken into account when producing these figures for Post 16 demand.

The former combined Authority operated a partnership with the three main colleges in the area to provide transport to the college campuses at a subsidised cost. NNC will be taking up its place in this partnership. The transport scheme is administered by the colleges themselves and is not part of this current document.

For those who choose to continue to study in school the only home to school transport provision from the Council is the Discretionary Transport scheme discussed above.

There are currently 173 students attending 10 schools under the Post 16 provision.

When demand for Sixth form discretionary places is added to the statutory school age demand for discretionary transport, we can see a significant demand at some schools. Some schools, such as Prince William, also have a waiting list for spaces on discretionary transport, which in most cases was unfulfilled last academic year.

Schools attended	Number of Post 16 students	Statutory school students receiving discretionary transport	total discretionary seats provided	Approximate number of additional vehicles* provided each day to meet demand
				*based on 56 seat coach
Prince William School	100	200	300	5.4
Wollaston School	35	17	52	0.9
Sir Christopher Hatton Academy	7	34	41	0.7
Montsaye Academy	2	27	29	0.5
Corby Business Academy	5	10	15	0.3
Manor School Sports College	12	1	13	0.2
Kettering Science Academy	8	3	11	0.2

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Appendix C

North Northamptonshire Council

Home to School Education Transport

September 2022 – July 2023 (Revised)

Version	Author	Date	Changes	
V 01	Head of Transport Delivery	April 2020	Review & Date Changes	
V 02	Head of Transport Delivery	April 2021	Review & Date Changes	
V 03	Head of Transport Delivery	October 2022	Review, Date Change, Update Local	
			Authority Reference, Complaints	
			information (section 3.3)	

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North Northamptonshire Council

Home to School Transport Policy

1. Legal Framework

- 1.1 The main purpose of school transport is, and will continue to be, to enable pupils to attend school.
- 1.2 School transport is currently provided by local authorities under Sections 509, 444 and 508A to 508D and Schedule 35B of the Education Act 1996), as inserted by Part 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- 1.3 Section 509(1) of the 1996 Act obliges local authorities to make transport arrangements if they consider it necessary to facilitate a pupil's attendance at school. It applies to all pupils, including those below compulsory school age, or, who have special educational needs.
- 1.4 Section 509(2) states that if a local authority considers transport to be necessary, then it must be provided free of charge.
- 1.5 In cases where pupils do not qualify for free transport, Section 509(3) provides a discretionary power for local authorities to provide assistance by paying all or part of the pupil's reasonable travelling expenses. They may take account of parental means in deciding whether or not to do so. It is for each authority to decide whether and how to exercise these powers.
- 1.6 Section 509(4) gives examples of factors which local authorities should take into account in deciding whether transport is necessary. These include the age of the child, the nature of the route, and any wish of a child's parent for provision of education at a school or institution in which the religious education provided is that of the religion or denomination to which the parents adhere.
- 1.7 Section 444(4) of the 1996 Act describes the circumstances in which a parent of a pupil of compulsory school age will have a defence to the charge of failing to secure that child's regular attendance at school. Under that provision, a parent has a defence if they can prove that their child lives outside the statutory walking distance from school, and that no suitable arrangements have been made for one of the following:
 - The child's transport to and from school;
 - Boarding accommodation; or,
 - Enabling the child to be registered at a nearer school.
- 1.8 Section 444(5) defines walking distance as 2 miles for pupils under 8, and 3 miles for older pupils, in both cases measured by the nearest available route. The Courts have held that a route is available if a child, accompanied as necessary, can walk along it with reasonable safety to school. It does not fail to qualify as 'available' because of dangers which would arise if the child is unaccompanied, but local authorities may take account of parents' capacity to accompany their child. Local authorities can also adopt lower walking distances than the statutory ones, if they so wish.

- 1.9 The Courts have held that the provisions of section 444 of the 1996 Act are relevant in determining whether in a particular case free school transport should be provided under Section 509(1).
- 1.10 The Courts have held that local authorities do not have a duty to provide free transport for pupils whose parents have chosen to send them to a school other than the nearest suitable one, even if it is beyond statutory walking distance. Local authorities may help in such cases if they wish, but it is for each authority to decide whether or not to do so.
- 1.11 Sections 508A to 508D and Schedule 35B of the Education Act 1996 (as inserted by Part 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006) extend the role of local authorities in supporting access to schools through improved travel and transport arrangements, particularly for children from the most disadvantaged families. In particular, the provisions will:
 - require local authorities to assess the travel and transport needs of all pupils, and promote safe and sustainable methods of travel to school;
 - extend a right to free transport to the most disadvantaged pupils of secondary school age (those entitled to free school meals and those whose parents are in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit) to include transport to any one of their three nearest schools between 2 and 6 miles from their home, and to the nearest suitable school preferred on grounds of religion or belief up to a distance of 15 miles from their home;
 - extend a right to free transport to the most disadvantaged primary school pupils aged 8 and over (those entitled to free school meals and those whose parents are in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit) to include transport to their nearest suitable school more than 2 miles from their home (the current cut off is 3 miles)
- 1.12 In addition, the Transport Act 1985 permits local authorities outside London, to allow pupils not eligible for free school transport to occupy spare seats on school buses, either free or at a subsidised rate.
- 1.13 The duty set out in the legislation quoted above applies to "home to school" travel arrangements at the start of the normal school day, and to "school to home" travel arrangements at the end of the normal school day. It does not relate to travel between locations during the school day.
- 1.14 The Department for Education's statutory guidance 'Home to school travel and transport guidance', issued in July 2014 applies to all local authorities.

2. North Northamptonshire Council Policy

2.1 North Northamptonshire Council (the Council) recognises parents'/carers' responsibility for ensuring attendance of their children at school. It also recognises that in some circumstances assistance may be required. Please note that all school transport will normally only pick up and set down at or near the pupil's home address as shown on the school roll and Council records. Consideration will be given to requests to pick up and set down at other locations e.g. childminders or other family members provided this is notified in writing and does not involve any further expenditure for the Council.

2.2 Free Travel Arrangements

The Council will provide or arrange free travel arrangements either by dedicated vehicle or bus pass for the following pupils:

- (i) **Pupils aged 4 to 8th birthday** attending their nearest suitable* or linked** school and who live more than 2 miles from that school.
- (ii) Pupils aged 8 to 16 years attending their nearest suitable* or linked** school and who live more than 3 miles from that school (but see (iv) and (v) below for exceptions)
- (iii) Pupils aged 4 to 16 years whose walking routes are unacceptable: where pupils are attending their nearest suitable* or linked** school and the walking route to school is less than the distances set out in (i) and (ii) above but where the route is assessed as unacceptable to walk according to the Council's published criteria. (See Appendix A for criteria).

* Suitable school i.e. the school with places available that provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child, and any SEN that the child might have

**linked school / area – more information is available in the Council's documents 'Applying for a Primary / Secondary School Place in North Northamptonshire'

Please note that these definitions will be applied throughout this policy.

(iv) Pupils aged 8 but under 11 entitled to free school meals, or those whose parents are in receipt of their maximum level of Universal Credit or Working Tax Credit: pupils aged 8 but under 11 entitled to free school meals or whose families are in receipt of their maximum level of Universal Credit or Working Tax Credit (WTC) receive free transport to their nearest suitable school if they live more than 2 miles from that school. This 2 mile limit will be measured in the same way as the statutory walking distance. Parents/carers will need to apply to the Council for assistance once their child reaches the age of 8. If eligibility for free school meals or Universal Credit or maximum level Working Tax Credit ceases, then free transport will be withdrawn at the end of the academic year.

A full list of the low income qualifying criteria is available in Appendix A3 attached to this policy.

 Pupils aged 11 to 16 entitled to free school meals, or those whose parents are in receipt of their maximum level of Universal Credit or Working Tax Credit: pupils aged 11 to 16 entitled to free school meals or whose families are in receipt of their maximum level of Universal Credit or Working Tax Credit (WTC) will receive free transport to one of the three nearest schools to their home address which are over 2 miles (measured by an acceptable walking route) and less than 6 miles(measured by the shortest road route). Additionally, pupils who can demonstrate that they have gained a place at a school because of their or their family's religion or belief then the upper limit is extended to 15 miles from the pupil's home address (measured by the shortest road route). If eligibility for free school meals or Universal Credit or maximum level Working Tax Credit ceases, then free transport will be withdrawn at the end of the academic year.

A full list of the low income qualifying criteria is available in Appendix A3 attached to this policy.

(vi) Pupils aged 4 to 16 years attending Single Sex or Faith (Denominational) Schools

The Council will only offer assistance with transport to single sex or faith schools if any of the following apply:

1. the school concerned is the nearest suitable school and the distance between home and school is greater than 2 miles (pupils aged 4 to 8) or 3 miles (pupils aged 8 to 16) by the shortest walking route; **OR**

2. the school concerned is the nearest suitable school and the distance between home and school is less than the distances in (1) above but is along a route considered by the Council to be an unacceptable route on grounds of safety; **OR**

3. the pupil is entitled to free school meals or their parents are in receipt of their maximum level of Universal Credit or Working Tax Credit (see Sections (iv) and (v) above.

- (vii) Pupils aged 4 to 16 whose parents/carers have a disability. Where the Council relies on a parent/carer accompanying a pupil along a walking route for it to be considered safe, or to accompany a pupil between home and a picking up or setting down point but the parent's or carer's permanent or temporary disability prevents them from doing so, then the Council may provide free transport as a "reasonable adjustment" under the terms of the Equality Act 2010.
- (viii) **Pupils aged 4 to 16 with SEN or a disability.** Where a pupil is attending their nearest suitable school, and they have a condition where they cannot reasonably be expected to walk, and this is supported by appropriate medical and/or specialist advice, then the Council will make suitable travel arrangements (see also Section 2.5 Travel arrangements for pupils with SEN or a disability).
- (ix) **Post 16 students** in certain stated categories as set out in the Council's Post-16 Transport Policy Statement.

Parents/carers of pupils who move home address during their schooling to an area where another school is the nearest suitable or linked school may either:

- apply to move their child to the nearest suitable or linked school for their new address and if successful the policy stated above will apply Or:
- retain the child's place at their current school but they will become responsible for the child's transport provision and costs

If there are no places available at schools nearer to the new home address then the current school, then the Council will provide free travel arrangements to the current school.

However, if the pupil is in Year 11 and following examination courses at the point of moving, there may be some temporary help available. Help is not usually available for pupils in year 10 at the time of moving even if they are following examination courses. However, each case will be considered on its own merits by a Senior Transport Officer.

Additionally, some help may be available in other exceptional circumstances, where, for example, the pupil concerned would otherwise be at risk of harm. Again, each case will be considered on its own merits by a Senior Transport Officer.

If parents/carers elect to move a pupil to a school that is not the nearest suitable or linked school to their home address then they will become responsible for the child's transport provision and costs, except in very exceptional cases where the pupil concerned would be at serious risk of significant harm. Bullying, poor educational achievement and similar factors will not normally be considered as exceptional circumstances.

2.3 Transport for Post 16 students

Post-16 transport provision is set out in the Council's 'Post-16 Transport Policy Statement'

2.4 Travel arrangements for non-entitled pupils/students aged 4 to 16

Travel arrangements for non-entitled pupils aged 4 to 16 will be

- on a fare-paying basis
- where there is spare capacity on a contracted vehicle.

In such cases passes for spare seats will be offered on a first come first served basis at a cost to be determined annually. Additional vehicles will not be contracted to cater for concessionary fares and a minimum of five seats will be held unsold to cater for entitled pupils who may become eligible for transport during the school year. Parents/carers will be advised that the facility could be withdrawn at reasonable notice – not less than one month in which case they will be refunded for the remainder of the fare period.

Pupils whose parents/carers have chosen and have accepted a place at a school that is not their nearest suitable or linked school, also accept the responsibility for, and cost of, the transport of the child to and from school.

The Council reserves the right to decline to sell passes for spare seats on transport provided for pupils with Special Educational Needs

2.5 Travel arrangements for pupils with SEN or a Disability

Principles

The encouragement and development of independence is seen as part of the Inclusion Process. It is the responsibility of all parents/carers with children of compulsory school age to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. It has been established that where a pupil cannot travel to school alone, a pupil can be expected to travel accompanied by a responsible adult. For pupils with special educational needs each case is considered individually, guided by the criteria that follow:

Procedures

Eligibility for free travel arrangements for pupils with SEN or a disability is considered with reference to this policy and a request will be made to the Transport team at North Northamptonshire Council, as appropriate. The provision of travel arrangements will be reviewed as part of the annual review of the EHC plan, or other relevant information regarding a child's SEN or disability. The provision of existing travel arrangements will also be reconsidered if the child moves school or home address.

Criteria for agreeing home-school travel arrangements for pupils with SEN or a disability

General points

- Special Educational Needs travel arrangements will be reviewed if the pupil moves address.
- Special equipment i.e. wheelchairs etc must be approved by the Council before transportation including any changes. All non-standard passenger and wheelchair harnesses and restraints must be supplied by the parents/carers.
- Special Educational Needs travel arrangements must be reconsidered as part of the pupils' annual review process.

Travel arrangements will be agreed for pupils with SEN or a disability where:

- 1 The pupil is attending the nearest suitable school as determined by the LEA; and
- 2 The pupil has a condition where they cannot reasonably be expected to walk to and from school, and there is detailed written advice from appropriate medical personnel to corroborate this.

In determining whether a pupil cannot reasonably be expected to walk due to their special educational needs or disability, the local authority will consider whether the pupil could reasonably be expected to walk if accompanied and if so, whether their parent or carer can reasonably be expected to accompany them.

The general expectation is that a pupil will be accompanied by a parent where necessary. Where a parent or carer may be working at the time their child is travelling to or from school, they will be expected to put in place suitable alternative arrangements.

The Council will consider each case on its own merits and take account of the individual family circumstances which prevent them from accompanying their child when determining whether travel assistance is required.

Please note that where a pupil with SEN or a disability lives further than the statutory distance from school, i.e. under 8 years old, over 2 miles from home address OR over 8

years old, over 3 miles from home address, and the school is their nearest mainstream school, or the nearest suitable special provision, then travel assistance will be provided.

Travel arrangements will not be allocated where:

• the pupil is not attending their nearest mainstream school, or the nearest suitable special provision, and the school is one of parental preference;

Exceptional circumstances:

The Council will consider exceptional circumstances on a case by case basis and some examples of where the Council may exercise its discretion to provide free home to school travel arrangements are as follows:

- Where there are two or more children of primary age in a family (living at the same address) and where for one child the authority has determined special provision making it impossible for the parent to make arrangements.
- Where a pupil faces a temporary medical problem which affects their mobility so that they are unable to access school without support and school has considered reasonable adjustments. In these cases, consideration will be given to family circumstances and to medical advice.
- Where a family has to move suddenly to temporary accommodation, for example, because of a house fire or domestic violence.

Passenger assistants

- The provision of a passenger assistant may be agreed on the basis of the pupil's special educational need and/or disability.
- Passenger assistants are given PATS (Passenger Assistant Training Scheme) training. This is a nationally recognised standard for passenger assistants.

Passenger assistants are intended to be provided where -

- It is necessary in the interests of safety, taking into account the special needs of the pupil or pupils being transported.
- Pupils are of pre school age;
- A specially adapted vehicle that requires additional assistance is used;
- Parents/carers or relatives of children who are travelling in sole occupancy vehicles may, if they wish, volunteer to accompany their child / children by mutual agreement with the Transport Team.

Transport to and from out of area residential schools

It is expected that parents/carers will transport their children. This provides an opportunity for regular personal discussion between parent/carers and the staff at the residential provision. This arrangement must be agreed in advance with the Transport team at North Northamptonshire Council and mileage can be claimed at the agreed rate on a termly basis.

Where parent/carer transport is not possible, children on termly placements (i.e. 3 terms a year) will be provided with transport at the start and end of each term and half term holiday. In addition, a mileage allowance at the agreed rate may be claimed for one visit to the school each half term. For weekly placements, weekly transport will be provided.

Short Break Service

The Council has no responsibility to provide home to school travel arrangements for children to and from respite care facilities.

In exceptional circumstances, where transport is agreed, it will only be provided to and from the normal home address.

However, if there is the capacity to assist with respite care arrangements, then the Transport team at North Northamptonshire Council will assist by making alternative arrangements as long as there is no additional cost to the Council

3. Assessing Entitlement to Free Travel Arrangements

3.1 Walking distances

The distance between a pupil's home and school will be measured by the shortest available walking route.

3.2 Availability of school places.

Where a place is not available at the pupil's nearest suitable or linked school at the point of starting school, transferring to secondary school, or moving into a new area, free travel arrangements will be provided to the next nearest suitable school, subject again to distance and route acceptability criteria.

Parents/carers who express all of their preferences for schools that are not their nearest suitable or linked school will take responsibility for the provision and cost of transport to the school at which their child is allocated a place, unless a place is allocated at the nearest suitable or linked school.

Parents/carers who, when expressing a preference, place another school in a higher priority position than their nearest suitable or linked school and, who fail to get a place at either, will be entitled to free transport to the nearest suitable alternative school (unless this school is within the adopted walking distances). If this place is declined in favour of a different school, parents/carers will take responsibility for the provision and cost of transport to that preferred alternative.

3.3 Pick up and set down points

Assistance with transport may not be door to door. Pupils, accompanied by an adult if necessary, may be expected to walk to and from a pick up and set down point. The walking distance will not exceed $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile for children aged between 4 – 8th birthday and 1 mile for children aged between 8 and 16, but account will be taken of a pupil's special educational needs and/or disability and parents/carers' disability.

3.4 Appeal procedures

Parents/guardians/carers or a young person are entitled to challenge the decision of the Authority to refuse to provide assistance with transport as set out in this policy or when the parents/guardians/carers or young person consider that the travel arrangements, agreed by the Authority, are unsuitable. A decision may be challenged on the following grounds:

- eligibility
- distance measurement
- safety of the route; and/or
- transport arrangements offered

Please note that there is no right to challenge a decision made by the Authority, where a child's/young person's entitlement to transport assistance has been removed either temporarily or permanently on the grounds of unacceptable behaviour.

Full details of the appeal procedures for home to school transport are available on the Council's website (<u>www.northnorthants.gov.uk</u>).

Should a parent/guardian/carer be unhappy with the level of service provided by the Council and/or its transport providers, then information on how to make a formal complaint is available using the link below:

https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/complaints

4. Quality Standards and Responsibilities

4.1 Safety

A child's safety and welfare is always the main priority.

- Where appropriate all vehicles used or contracted by the Council are fitted with the standard seat belts, child seats and special equipment. Specialised equipment must be supplied by the parents.
- Trained passenger assistants are intended to be made available where necessary.
- All children will be independently seated one seat per child.
- All passenger assistants will be approved by North Northamptonshire Council. Passenger assistants will carry an ID badge at all times.
- Vehicles contracted by the Council are expected to be licensed appropriately; this is a condition of the contract.
- All drivers must be licensed appropriately and should carry an identification badge at all times.
- All drivers and passenger assistants employed by the Council will be checked as appropriate in accordance with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

- Drivers employed on contracted vehicles are subject to DBS checks by their employer.
- All vehicles, drivers and passenger assistants will be subject to random checks by Council inspectors.

4.2 Behaviour and parental responsibilities

Pupils have a right to safe and trouble free travel.

Pupils are expected to behave in a safe and appropriate manner as set out in the Transport Service Agreement supplied to parents/carers. If a pupil misbehaves persistently, transport provision may be temporarily or permanently withdrawn.

Parents/carers have a key role to play regarding the conduct of their children on transport and are responsible for ensuring that their children are aware of the necessity to behave in a reasonable and responsible manner. Parent/carers need to ensure their children are aware that failure to behave in a reasonable manner may have consequences, including:

- a cost to parents/carers for replacement travel permits if lost or damaged;
- cost to parents/carers for damage to the vehicle or to property caused by misbehaviour of their children;
- Temporary or permanent withdrawal of free transport with no recompense and no right of appeal.

Parents/carers of children with a home collection/drop-off are required to ensure their child is ready immediately when the vehicle arrives at the normal home address. Parents/carers are also required to ensure they or their representatives are available to meet the child at the normal home address at the end of the school day. They must advise the passenger assistant, if there is a particular difficulty with their child and ensure their child understands the standard of behaviour required or accept responsibility for their child's behaviour.

Where a parent/carer agrees to convey their child when no transport is available, expenses for two return journeys per day will be paid at the locally agreed rates.

4.3 Quality of Service

Applications for bus passes can be obtained from schools or from the Transport team at North Northamptonshire Council. Requests will be responded to within 10 days.

Pupils who qualify for assistance in the form of a bus pass can expect to receive the bus pass within 4 weeks of the application being received by North Northamptonshire Council.

Pupils who have had their bus pass stolen/lost can expect to receive a replacement within 7 days of the loss being reported to North Northamptonshire Council.

Reasonable requests for travel expenses will be considered by the Council, if the above deadlines are not met.

Parents/carers of pupils who have an EHC plan will receive a letter before the term commences in September detailing their child's travel arrangements. Timings given at this point are approximate and may change throughout the year. Any disruption will be kept to a minimum.

5. Duty To Promote Sustainable School Travel

The Council will publish an annual Sustainable School Travel Strategy showing

- An assessment of the travel and transport needs of children and young people in North Northamptonshire
- An audit of the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within North Northamptonshire that may be used when travelling to and from schools and colleges
- A strategy to develop that infrastructure to better cater for the travel needs of children and young people
- How the Council will promote sustainable travel and transport to from and between schools and other institutions

Appendix A1

North Northamptonshire Council

School Transport – Safety of Walking Routes (Built-up areas inc. in villages)

When determining whether the Council should provide transport to schools on safety grounds, a number of criteria have to be considered in order to determine a route's acceptability for pupils to walk.

The criteria assume that pupils aged 4-11 will be accompanied by a responsible adult, and that pupils aged 11 or over may travel independently. The law expects that all pupils will be accompanied "as appropriate".

Pupils are expected to travel by the shortest available route. However, where that route is judged to be unacceptable longer alternatives may be considered provided that they are still within the agreed walking distance.

The following are the criteria that must all be met for a route to be acceptable for use by child pedestrians in an urban or village environment.

- Can the route be walked without walking on a classified¹ road? If yes, the route may be acceptable. If no, the route is unacceptable.
- Is the 85th percentile speed² more than the guidelines for enforcement³?
 If yes, the route is unacceptable.
 If no, the route may be acceptable.
- Are there formal crossing facilities⁴ available on A class roads as required?
 If no, the route is unacceptable.
 If yes, the route may be acceptable.

In measuring the speed of vehicles to apply criterion 2, only the data collected on schooldays between 0700hrs and 0900hrs and between 1500hrs and 1700hrs will be taken into account. The route will be considered acceptable if the average speed of 85% of traffic over the week during the stated times is below the enforcement guidelines.

If a route appears to meet all of the criteria, it will be deemed to be acceptable. Should a decision be challenged, a site visit would be made to verify that no exceptional circumstances exist.

¹ Class A, B or C.

² The speed which 85% of vehicles does not exceed.

³ As determined by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO).

⁴ School Crossing Patrols, pedestrian refuges, zebra, pelican or other light-controlled crossings.

North Northamptonshire Council

School Transport – Safety of Walking Routes (Village to Village Routes)

When determining whether the Council should provide transport to schools on safety grounds, a number of criteria have to be considered in order to determine a route's acceptability for pupils to walk.

The criteria assume that pupils aged 4-11 will be accompanied by a responsible adult, and that pupils aged 11 or over may travel independently. The law expects that all pupils will be accompanied "as appropriate".

Pupils are expected to travel by the shortest available route. However, where that route is judged to be unacceptable longer alternatives may be considered provided that they are still within the agreed walking distance.

The following are the criteria that must all be met for a route to be acceptable for use by child pedestrians.

- 1 Is the route classified as Red or Amber¹ by the Highway Authority? If yes, the route is unacceptable. If no, the route may be acceptable.
- 2 Can the route be walked without walking on a classified² road? If yes, the route may be acceptable. If no, the route is unacceptable.
- 3 Is the traffic flow over 1,000 vehicles in the peak hour? If yes, the route is unacceptable. If no, the route may be acceptable.
- 4 Is the 85th percentile speed³ more than the guidelines for enforcement⁴? If yes, the route is unacceptable. If no, the route may be acceptable.
- 5 Are there formal crossing facilities⁵ available on A class roads as required? If no, the route is unacceptable. If yes, the route may be acceptable.

In measuring the speed of vehicles to apply criterion 4, only the data collected on schooldays between 0700hrs and 0900hrs and between 1500hrs and 1700hrs will be taken into account. The route will be considered acceptable if the average speed of 85% of traffic over the week during the stated times is below the enforcement guidelines.

If a route appears to meet all of the criteria it will be deemed to be acceptable. Should a decision be challenged, a site visit would be made to verify that no exceptional circumstances exist.

¹ Under the Casualty Reduction Strategy, all roads in the county are classified Red, Amber or Green on the basis of their overall accident record.

² Class A, B or C.

³ The speed which 85% of vehicles do not exceed.

⁴ As determined by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO).

⁵ School Crossing Patrols, pedestrian refuges, zebra, pelican or other light-controlled crossings.

North Northamptonshire Council

Low Income Criteria for Extended Rights Home to School Transport

If you are in receipt of any of the following, your child may be eligible for free Home to School Transport under the extended right legislation. You also need to meet the other qualifying criteria set out in section 2.2 items iv and v of the Home to School Transport Policy.

Below is the Low Income qualifying criteria which is the same as for free school meals for children in year 3 or above:

- Income Support
- Income based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, with no element of Working Tax Credit, and a household income below £16,190 (as assessed by HM Revenue and Customs)
- Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit
- Universal Credit

A child must reside with the applicant to receive free school meals.

Appendix D



Home to school travel and transport guidance

Statutory guidance for local authorities

July 2014

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Summary

This is statutory guidance from the Department for Education. This means local authorities are under a duty to have regard to it when carrying out their duties in relation to home to school travel and transport, and sustainable travel.

This guidance is issued under duties placed on the Secretary of State by sections 508A and 508D of the Education Act 1996 (the Act). It deals with sections 508A, 508B, 508C, 509AD, and Schedule 35B of the Act which were inserted by Part 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (the EIA 2006).

This guidance replaces Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance Ref: 00373-2007BKT-EN.

Review date

This guidance will next be reviewed in 2017.

What legislation (including statutory instruments) does this guidance refer to?

This guidance refers to the following legislation (including statutory instruments):

- Sections 444, 508A, 508B, 508C, 508D, 509AD and Schedule 35B of the Education Act 1996 (the Act), as inserted by <u>Part 6 of the Education and</u> <u>Inspections Act 2006</u> (the EIA 2006)
- Regulation 5 and Part 2 of Schedule 2 to The School Information (England) Regulations 2002, <u>as amended</u>
- Equality Act 2010
- School Admissions Code
- European Convention on Human Rights
- The School Travel (Pupils with Dual Registration)(England) Regulations 2007
- Public Service Vehicles (Carrying Capacity) Regulations 1984
- Section 48 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998

Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is for:

- Local authorities
- Leaders of maintained schools, academies and free schools
- Parents
- Other interested parties, e.g. Transport Providers

Main points

- There has been no change to school transport legislation and the associated duties continue to rest with local authorities.
- With the widening of the academies programme, the introduction of the free schools programme, and all schools now having the power to decide their session times, there will be an increasing need for local stakeholders to work together in partnership to agree and deliver transport policies that meet the particular needs of their area¹.
- The guidance on appeals has changed and is intended to ensure greater consistency in approach and to be clearer and more transparent for both parents and local authorities.
- The policy for post 16 transport is different from that for compulsory school aged children (5-16). The link to the department's guidance on post 16 transport is provided in the '<u>Further information</u>' section of this guidance.
- Local authorities should review travel policies, arrangements and contracts regularly to ensure best value for money is achieved.

Local authorities' statutory duties

In order to comply with their home to school transport duties local authorities must:

- Promote the use of sustainable travel and transport (Part 1.1).
- Make transport arrangements for all eligible children (Part 1.2).

¹ See Hertfordshire County Council's approach to capacity building in the <u>case study at Annex 1</u>.

Part 1 - Statutory duties

1.1 Sustainable school travel

1. Section 508A of the Act places a general duty on local authorities to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport². The duty applies to children and young people of compulsory school age who travel to receive education or training in a local authority's area³. The duty relates to journeys to and from institutions where education or training is delivered.

- 2. There are five main elements to the duty which local authorities must undertake:
 - an assessment of the travel and transport needs of children, and young people within the authority's area;
 - an audit of the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within the authority's area that may be used when travelling to and from, or between schools/institutions;
 - a strategy to develop the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within the authority so that the travel and transport needs of children and young people are best catered for;
 - the promotion of sustainable travel and transport modes on the journey to, from, and between schools and other institutions; and
 - the publication of Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy.

3. The Act defines sustainable modes of travel as those that the local authority considers may improve the physical well-being of those who use them, the environmental well-being of all or part of the local authority's area, or a combination of the two.

Assessing the travel and transport needs of children and young people

4. Local authorities should, in large part, base their assessment of children and young people's travel and transport needs on the data provided by schools or colleges, often contained within school travel plans. Effective school travel plans, updated as necessary, put forward a package of measures to improve safety and reduce car use, backed by a partnership involving the school, education, health and transport officers from the local authority, and the police. These seek to secure benefits for both the school and the children by improving their health through active travel and reducing congestion caused by school runs, which in turn helps improve local air quality. Many travel plans

² See Darlington Borough Council's approach to sustainable travel in the <u>case study at Annex 1</u>.

³ 'Child', 'compulsory school age' and 'sixth-form age' are defined respectively in sections 579(1), 8 and 509 AC of the Act.

are produced as a result of planning conditions placed on new developments by local authority planning departments. This highlights the need for all relevant departments (e.g. highways departments, planning departments, transport departments, children's services, environment departments, and public health) to be fully engaged when addressing this duty.

Audit of infrastructure to support sustainable school travel

5. Local authorities already collect much of the information required for the audit of the infrastructure supporting sustainable school travel. Local authorities should audit infrastructure in accordance with any relevant guidance and the requirements of any infrastructure implemented. Specific school routes audits are considered good practice. The specifics of the audit and how often it should be reviewed are for a local authority to decide on as appropriate. However, the audit should include a mapping exercise showing how schools are served by:

- bus and other public transport routes (including school transport provided by the local authority);
- footpaths, cycle ways, roads and associated features (including crossing points and patrols, traffic calming measures, speed limits, 20mph zones); and
- any other arrangements made to support sustainable school transport that may be in operation (including the provision of cycle training, road safety training, and independent travel training; the provision of walking promotion and barrier removal schemes, car sharing schemes, park and stride/ride schemes, cycle parking).

6. The audit should also consider data relating to <u>personal safety and security</u>, and other factors that influence travel choices, such as poor behaviour on school buses and/or the incidence of bullying on the journey to school. School travel plans will help local authorities understand any specific local issues, including perceptions of pupils and parents.

7. The arrangements or requirements for children with special education needs (SEN) or disabilities should also be considered and whether, for example, some might benefit from independent travel training which can result in a skill for life⁴.

Strategy to develop infrastructure to support travel needs of pupils

8. Following the assessment of pupil needs, and audit of the sustainable transport infrastructure that supports travel to school, local authorities must establish a strategy for

⁴ See Coventry City Council's approach to independent travel training in the <u>case study at Annex 1</u>.

developing that infrastructure so that it better meets the needs of children and young people in their area. These improvements should address a range of objectives, including environmental improvements, health benefits and enhanced child safety and security. The strategy should be a statement of the authority's overall vision, objectives and work programme for improving accessibility to schools and will be an important source of information to parents on the travel options available to them when expressing their preferences for particular schools in the admissions round.

9. The strategy should be evidence-based, including an assessment of the accessibility needs and problems of the local authority's area. Local authorities must monitor the implementation of their strategy and revise these as they feel necessary.

Promoting sustainable travel and transport to and from school

10. Local walking, cycling, and bus strategies should inform the local authority's duty to promote sustainable school travel. In line with the physical Olympic and Paralympic legacy, as set out in HM Government's document '<u>Moving More, Living More</u>', promotion of walking and cycling to school can be an effective way to increase physical activity in children.

11. The sustainable school travel duty should have a broad impact, including providing health benefits for children, and their families, through active journeys, such as walking and cycling. It can also bring significant environmental improvements, through reduced levels of congestion and improvements in air quality to which children are particularly vulnerable.

Publication of Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy

12. The Education (School Information) (England) Regulations 2002, as amended require local authorities to publish their Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy on their website by 31 August each year⁵.

1.2 Provision of travel arrangements

13. Sections 508B and 508C of the Act make provision for local authorities to ensure that suitable travel arrangements are made, where necessary, to facilitate a child's attendance at school.

⁵ S.I. 2002/2897, amended by <u>The Education (School Information) (England) (Amendment) Regulations</u> <u>2007 (S.I. 2007/1365)</u>.

14. These provisions apply to home⁶ to school travel arrangements, and vice versa⁷. They do not relate to travel between educational institutions during the school day⁸.

15. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. However, section 444(3B) of the Act provides that a parent will have a defence in law against a prosecution by a local authority for their child's non-attendance at school where the local authority has a duty to make travel arrangements in relation to the child under section 508B and has failed to discharge that duty.

1.3 Provision of travel arrangements: Eligible children

16. Section 508B of the Act deals with the duty on local authorities to make such travel arrangements as they consider necessary to facilitate attendance at school for eligible children. Schedule 35B of the Act defines eligible children – those categories of children of compulsory school age (5-16) in an authority's area for whom free travel arrangements will be required local authorities are required to:

Statutory walking distances eligibility

- provide free transport for all pupils of compulsory school age (5-16) if their nearest suitable school⁹ is:
 - beyond 2 miles (if below the age of 8); or
 - beyond 3 miles (if aged between 8 and 16)

Special educational needs, a disability or mobility problems eligibility

 make transport arrangements for all children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school because of their mobility problems or because of associated health and safety issues related to their special educational needs (SEN) or disability¹⁰. Eligibility, for such children should be assessed on an individual basis to identify their particular transport requirements. Usual

⁶ A child's 'home' is the place where he/she is habitually and normally resident.

⁷ Including to boarding provision, where applicable.

⁸ When a dual placement is outlined on an EHC Plan or statement, a local authority should use its discretion to decide on how best to cater for this child's individual circumstances.

⁹ Taken to mean the nearest <u>qualifying school</u> with places available that provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child, and any SEN that the child may have.

¹⁰ As per Schedule 35 of The Act, disability is as defined in S.6 of EA 2010: a person has a disability if they have (a) a physical or mental impairment, and (b) that impairment has a substantial a long-term effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Therefore a chronic health condition may lead to eligibility under this definition.

transport requirements (e.g. the statutory walking distances) should not be considered when assessing the transport needs of children eligible due to SEN and/or disability.

Unsafe route eligibility

• make transport arrangements for all children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to nearest suitable school because the nature of the route is deemed unsafe to walk.¹¹.

Extended rights eligibility

- provide free transport where pupils are entitled to free school meals or their parents are in receipt of maximum Working Tax Credit ¹² if:
 - the nearest suitable school is beyond 2 miles (for children over the age of 8 and under 11);
 - the school is between 2 and 6 miles (if aged 11-16 and there are not three or more suitable nearer schools);
 - the school is between 2 and 15 miles and is the nearest school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief (aged 11-16).

Accompaniment

17. In determining whether a child cannot reasonably be expected to walk for the purposes of 'special educational needs, a disability or mobility problems eligibility' or 'unsafe route eligibility', the local authority will need to consider whether the child could reasonably be expected to walk if accompanied and, if so, whether the child's parent can reasonably be expected to accompany the child. When considering whether a child's parent can reasonably be expected to accompany the child on the journey to school a range of factors may need to be taken into account, such as the age of the child and whether one would ordinarily expect a child of that age to be accompanied.

18. The general expectation is that a child will be accompanied by a parent where necessary, unless there is a good reason why it is not reasonable to expect the parent to do so.

19. Local authorities should, however, promote and ensure equality of opportunity for disabled parents. For example, if a parent's disability prevents them from accompanying

¹¹ Paragraphs 4 and 5 of Schedule 35B.

¹² Paragraphs 9-14 of Schedule 35B.

their child along a walking route that would otherwise be considered unsafe without adult supervision, a reasonable adjustment might be to provide free home to school transport for the child in question.

Assessing route safety

20. Creating safe walking, cycling and travel routes and encouraging more pupils to walk and cycle to school is one of the best ways to reduce the need for transport and associated costs. In assessing safety, local authorities should consider a range of risks, such as: canals, rivers, ditches, speed of traffic and fields of vision for the pedestrian or motorist. An authority should also consider whether it is reasonable to expect the child's parent to accompany the child along a route which would otherwise be classified as <u>being unsafe</u>.

21. Good practice shows that using local knowledge, coupled with modern IT tools, is essential when assessing existing walking routes and identifying potential new ones. Putting in place suitable new paths, pedestrian crossings and cycle lanes can improve safety, but minimal investment can also reap significant rewards. This might be something as simple as trimming overgrown hedges or preventing illegal parking. Making parents aware of safe walking routes and the time taken to assess them can help alleviate concerns and significantly increase the amount of pupils choosing to walk.

Measurement of routes

22. The measurement of the statutory walking distances is not necessarily the shortest distance by road. It is measured by the shortest route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, <u>may walk safely</u>. As such, the route measured may include footpaths, bridleways, and other pathways, as well as recognised roads.

23. The 2 mile limit for extended rights should be measured in the same way as the statutory walking distances. However, the 6 mile upper limit to a choice of schools, and the 15 mile upper limit to a school preferred on grounds of religion or belief are not walking routes, and should therefore be measured along routes that are passable using a suitable motorised vehicle. In short, the upper limits should be measured along road routes.

Timing of assessment of eligibility

24. At the point when transport eligibility is considered, the prospect of being able to secure a place in an alternative (usually nearer) school must be a real one. For most cases this will be during the normal school admissions round when places are allocated. A smaller number of cases will need to be considered during the course of the school year e.g. as a result of families moving to a new area.

25. Where entitlement to extended travel rights has been established the department's opinion is that local authorities should consider the pupil to be eligible for the entirety of

the school year for which the assessment has been made. If a pupil ceases to be eligible any change to provision made by the local authority must be considered in the context of the potential impact on the child. Disruption to a child's education should be avoided.

26. Where a pupil is registered at a school, but is attending a place other than that school as a result of temporary exclusion, <u>eligibility for home to school travel</u> will apply to the other place for the temporary period.

Qualifying school

27. The relevant educational establishment in relation to an eligible child will be either a qualifying school or the place, other than a school, where they are receiving education by virtue of arrangements made under section 19(1) of the Act¹³.

28. Regulations¹⁴ clarify the entitlement for eligible children, a small number of whom may be registered at more than one educational establishment, e.g. children of no fixed abode might be registered at more than one school, and other children may be registered at a hospital school and another school, etc.

29. Qualifying schools are:

- community, foundation or voluntary schools;
- community or foundation special schools;
- non-maintained special schools;
- pupil referral units;
- maintained nursery schools; or
- city technology colleges (CTC), city colleges for the technology of the arts (CCTA) or academies, including free schools and University Technical Colleges (UTC)¹⁵.

30. For children with SEN, an independent school can also be a qualifying school where this is named on the child's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan) or statement, or it is the nearest of two or more schools named.

Travel arrangements made by the local authority or other bodies/persons

31. Examples of other bodies or persons making travel arrangements might include: a parent consenting to use their car in return for a mileage allowance; a school or group of

 $^{^{13}}$ Section 508B(10) of the Act.

¹⁴ <u>The School Travel (Pupils with Dual Registration)(England) Regulations 2007</u> (S.I.2007/1367).

¹⁵ Paragraph 15 of Schedule 35B.

schools reaching an agreement with a local authority to provide transport in minibuses owned by the school; or a transport authority providing free passes for all children on public transport. For example, in London, Transport for London provides free bus passes for all children under the age of 16. In many circumstances, London Boroughs may therefore not need to make any additional travel arrangements for children living in their area, particularly when eligibility would be through statutory walking distances or extended rights.

32. Subsection (4) of 508B and 508C of the Act list some of the travel and transport arrangements that may be made. These might include: provision of a seat on a bus or minibus provided by the local authority; provision of a seat in a taxi where more individualised arrangements are necessary; and provision of a pass for a public service bus, or other means of public transport.

33. On condition that the relevant parental consent has been obtained (annually or, if a child moves school, at that point too) by the local authority, a number of alternative arrangements might be considered to meet the local authority duty relating to travel arrangements. Examples include:

- a mileage allowance paid to a parent driving their eligible child to school in lieu of the local authority making arrangements for a taxi to transport the child;
- a cycling allowance paid by the local authority where the parent agreed for their child to cycle to and from school instead of catching a bus for, say a three mile journey; and
- local authority provision of a suitable escort to enable an eligible child with a disability to walk a short distance to school in safety, instead of making arrangements for a taxi to take them to and from school.

Suitability of arrangements

34. As a general guide, transport arrangements should not require a child to make several changes on public transport resulting in an unreasonably long journey time. Best practice suggests that the maximum each way length of journey for a child of primary school age to be 45 minutes and for secondary school age 75 minutes, but these should be regarded as the maximum. For children with SEN and/or disabilities, journeys may be more complex and a shorter journey time, although desirable, may not always be possible.

35. Consideration should also be given to the walking distance required in order to access public transport. The maximum distances will depend on a range of circumstances, including the age of the child, their individual needs and the nature of the routes they are expected to walk to the pick up or set down points and should try to be combined with the transport time when considering the overall duration of a journey. With regards to pick up points, local authorities may at their discretion use appropriate pick up points when making travel arrangements. For arrangements to be suitable, they must

also be safe and reasonably stress free, to enable the child to arrive at school ready for a day of study.

Part 2 - Discretionary Arrangements

Travel arrangements for other children

36. Section 508C of the Act provides local authorities with discretionary powers to go beyond their statutory duties and provide transport for children who are not entitled to free transport. Charges can be made, or, as stated in Subsection (5) of 508C local authorities may also pay all or part of the reasonable travel expenses of children who have not had travel arrangements made either under the statutory duty placed on local authorities, or under their discretionary powers to make travel arrangements. Where charges are imposed, good practice suggests that children from low income groups (those not eligible for extended rights, either due to being just outside financial eligibility or live outside of the distance criteria and therefore not in receipt of free travel) should be exempt.

37. It is very much for the individual local authority to decide whether and how to apply this discretion as they are best placed to determine local needs and circumstances. It is recognised that local authorities will need to balance the demands for a broad range of discretionary travel against their budget priorities. While the department offers guidance, the final decision on any discretionary travel arrangements must rest with the individual local authority who should engage with parents and clearly communicate what support they can expect from the local authority.

Religion or belief

38. Many parents will choose to send their children to a school as near as possible to their home. However, some parents choose to send their children to a school with a particular ethos because they adhere to a particular faith, or belief. Local authorities need to respect parents' religious and philosophical convictions as to the education to be provided for their children¹⁶, give careful consideration to discrimination issues and seek legal opinion if they are unsure about the effect of their policies, before publishing them each year.

39. Under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), parents do not enjoy a specific right to have their children educated at a school with a religious character or a secular school, or to have transport arrangements made by their local authority to and from any such school and the Equality Act 2010 (which places a duty on local authorities

¹⁶ Article 2 of the First Protocol.

not to discriminate against a person on the grounds of their religion or belief), does not apply to the exercise of an authority's functions in relation to transport¹⁷.

40. However, the Secretary of State continues to attach importance to the opportunity that many parents have to choose a school or college in accordance with their religious or philosophical beliefs, and believes that wherever possible, local authorities should ensure that transport arrangements support the religious or philosophical preference parents express. In many cases these schools may be more distant and therefore the provision of transport and/or training, and the avoidance of unreasonable expenditure on travel are encouraged. However, the department appreciates that this may be incompatible, for example, on grounds of excessive journey length, or where the journey may have a detrimental impact on the child's education.

41. The Act places a duty on local authorities to make arrangements for secondary pupils from <u>low income</u> backgrounds to attend the nearest school preferred on grounds of "religion or belief", where that school is between 2 and 15 miles from their home. Local authorities may wish to use their discretionary powers to extend transport arrangements beyond the extended rights duty and facilitate attendance at such schools. The Secretary of State expects local authorities to consider all possible options before they disturb well established arrangements, some of which have been associated with local agreements or understandings about the siting of such schools. Local authorities should pay particularly careful attention to the potential impact of any changes on low income families (those not eligible under extended rights) whose parents adhere to a particular faith or philosophy, and who have expressed a preference for a particular school because of their religious or philosophical beliefs.

42. Local authorities will need to be aware of their obligation not to discriminate under article 14 of ECHR. For example, where local authorities use their discretionary powers to make travel arrangements for children on the basis of their parents' religious beliefs to schools designated with a religious character, the equalities implications should be considered, to facilitate parents' who wish their children to be educated in accordance with their philosophical convictions.

¹⁷ s31 of, and paragraph 11 of Schedule 3 to, the Equality Act 2010.

Part 3 - Transport Considerations

Safeguarding requirements

43. It is the responsibility of the individual local authority to ensure the suitability of its employees and any contractors or their employees by undertaking the required safeguarding checks on those whose work or other involvement will bring them into contact with children, or more widely, vulnerable adults. This should include bus drivers, taxi drivers and escorts, as necessary. The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) have merged to become the <u>Disclosure and Barring Service</u> (DBS). CRB checks are now called DBS checks. Please see <u>Further information</u>.

Training and Equalities

44. All local authorities should ensure that all drivers and escorts taking pupils to and from school and related services have undertaken appropriate training, and that this is kept up to date. It is also considered good practice for those responsible for planning and managing school transport to have undertaken appropriate equality training. This training could consist of (but is not restricted to):

- an awareness of different types of disability including hidden disabilities;
- an awareness of what constitutes discrimination;
- training in the necessary skills to recognise, support and manage pupils with different types of disabilities, including hidden disabilities and certain behaviour that may be associated with such disabilities;
- training in the skills necessary to communicate appropriately with pupils with all types of different disabilities, including the hidden disabilities; and
- training in the implementation of health care protocols to cover emergency procedures.

Bus safety considerations

45. Buses and coaches used to take pupils to and from school are public service vehicles and, as such, are subject to specific legislation on safety standards. All coaches and minibuses carrying groups of children of 3 to 15 years of age on organised trips are required to be equipped with seat belts. The legal requirement to fit seat belts does not apply to other types of bus, including those on public service. These tend to travel relatively slowly, over short distances, with frequent stops. Schools or local authorities making arrangements for home to school transport are free to specify within their contracts that they will only accept vehicles fitted with seatbelts.

46. The <u>Public Service Vehicles (Carrying Capacity) Regulations 1984</u> allow the option of three children under the age of 14 to occupy a bench seat designed for two adults on a

service bus. Modern bus designs and seat belt requirements are reducing the circumstances in which this practice can be adopted and in the opinion of the Secretary of State, local authorities making arrangements for home to school travel should only make use of this concession on an exceptional basis.

Poor behaviour on school buses/other modes of transport

47. The department expects each school to promote appropriate standards of behaviour by pupils on their journey to and from school through rewarding positive behaviour and using sanctions to address poor behaviour. The EIA 2006 empowers headteachers to take action to address unacceptable behaviour even when this takes place outside the school premises and when pupils are not under the legal control of the school, but when it is reasonable to do so. In the department's view, this would include behaviour on school buses, or otherwise on the route to and from school, whether or not the pupils are in school uniform.

48. A number of local authorities have adopted a policy of withdrawing transport, either for a temporary period, or permanently for more serious or repeated cases of misbehaviour. Equally, the behaviour of pupils outside school can be considered as grounds for exclusion. This will be a matter of judgment for the Headteacher¹⁸. Local authorities might also consider that escorts are necessary to ensure safety of pupils on buses and can stipulate the provision of suitable escorts in their tender documents.

Partnership

49. The department strongly supports local authorities in developing cross-cutting approaches to home to school travel and transport. Relevant considerations would include sustainability, delivering value money and finding school and parent friendly solutions. This could be through strong partnerships between local authorities and academies, the use of Department for Transport policies and practices, such as Local Transport Plans and Local Sustainable Transport fund (see <u>Further information</u>) and partnership with parents, for example to allow them to top up transport costs through the payment of fees in order to maintain the provision.

50. Partnerships are strongly encouraged, particularly in rural areas, where the generally more limited transport services could disadvantage children¹⁹.

¹⁸ <u>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion</u>

¹⁹ See Staffordshire County Council's approach to rural travel provision in <u>case study at Annex 1</u>.

Part 4 – Policy Changes

Publication of general arrangements and policies

51. Local authorities must publish general arrangements and policies in respect of home to school travel and transport for children of compulsory school age. This information should be clear, easy to understand and provide full information on the travel and transport arrangements. It should explain both statutory transport provision, and that provided on a discretionary basis. It should also set out clearly how parents can hold local authorities to account through their appeals processes. Local authorities should ideally integrate their Sustainable Modes of School Travel strategies into these policy statements, and publish them together.

Policy Changes

52. Local authorities should consult widely on any proposed changes to their local policies on school travel arrangements with all interested parties. Consultations should last for at least 28 working days during term time. This period should be extended to take account of any school holidays that may occur during the period of consultation.

53. Good practice suggests that the introduction of any such changes should be phased-in so that children who start under one set of transport arrangements continue to benefit from them until they either conclude their education at that school or choose to move to another school. Parents make school choices based on, amongst other things, the home to school transport arrangements for a particular school, and any changes might impact adversely on individual family budgets.

Part 5 - Appeals process

54. Local authorities should have in place both complaints and appeals procedures for parents to follow should they have cause for complaint about the service, or wish to appeal about the eligibility of their child for travel support. The procedure should be published alongside the local authority travel policy statement. If an appellant considers that there has been a failure to comply with the procedural rules or if there are any other irregularities in the way an appeal was handled they may have a right to refer the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman. If an appellant considers the decision of the independent appeals panel to be flawed on public law grounds, they may apply for a judicial review.

55. In the past we have left it to local authorities to determine how their appeals procedures should operate in practice. However, in the interests of consistency and to be both clearer and more transparent, for both parents and local authorities, we have now set out a recommended review/appeals process in <u>Annex 2</u>.

Further information

Post-16 transport

Guidance relating to post-16 transport is available on the department's website

Sustainable transport

British Cycling is the national governing body for cycling and can provide advice on cycling to school and cycle training. More information is available at <u>www.britishcycling.org.uk</u>

Department for Transport funding is available to Local Highway Authorities and Schools Games Organiser Host Schools for the provision of Bikeability cycle training for school children in England. This will teach children to cycle safely, confidently and competently on the roads. More information is available here: www.dft.gov.uk/bikeability/schools

The Department for Transport Local Sustainable Transport Fund was established to support authorities in delivering local economic growth whilst cutting carbon emissions from transport. Further information can be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-sustainable-transport-fund

Living Streets runs the national Walk to School campaign which reaches over 13 million people. The campaign successfully encourages and supports parents/carers and children to make walking to school part of their daily routine. More information is available on their website <u>www.livingstreets.org.uk</u>

Modeshift is the national sustainable travel organisation. Modeshift supports local authorities, schools, business and communities to increase levels of sustainable travel. More information is available on their website <u>www.modeshift.org.uk</u>

Moving More, Living More is a document produced by the Department of Health which builds on the work already under way to help realise the aim of having a more physically active nation as part of the legacy from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/279657/mo ving_living_more_inspired_2012.pdf

Sustrans is the leading sustainable transport charity that provides practical advice that can be passed onto parents to increase confidence in walking and cycling. More information is available on their website: <u>www.sustrans.org.uk</u>

DBS (formerly CRB) employee suitability checks

Further information about DBS checks (and who requires them or is eligible, for example bus drivers for designated home to school transport are eligible, whereas those driving

public services are not) can be obtained from: <u>https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check</u>

Definitions

- Section 444(5) of the Act defines the statutory walking distances.
- Schedule 35B of the Act defines:
 - 'eligible children' (paragraphs 2-7 and 9-13);
 - 'qualifying school' (paragraph 15);
 - 'disabled child' (paragraph 15(4));
 - 'religion and belief' (paragraph 15(6)) and 509AD of the Act;
 - 'low income family' (paragraphs 9-14).
- Section 579 of the Act defines 'child'.
- Section 509AC of the Act defines 'compulsory school age'.
- The Equality Act 2010 defines 'religion or belief' for the purposes of this Act.
- The Children's and Families Act section 10 defines 'SEN'

Key term Glossary

- Home: A child's 'home' is the place where he/she is habitually and normally resident.
- Nearest suitable school: Taken to mean the nearest qualifying school with places available that provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child, and any SEN that the child may have.
- Parent: Reference to parent in this document should be equated to mean parent/carer/legal guardian.
- Philosophical Belief: For a philosophical "belief" to be worthy of protection, it must attain a certain level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance; be worthy of respect in a democratic society; and not be incompatible with human dignity or the fundamental rights of the child. Examples of beliefs are humanism and atheism.
- Road routes: Reference to road route should be taken to mean a route passable by a motor vehicle, and could include distance covered on additional transport, e.g. via ferry.

Annex 1: Case Studies

Sustainable travel

Effective sustainable travel plans have wider benefits for a local area than simply improving access to schools and education. Evidence shows that school travel plans can have benefits ranging from increased road safety, to healthier, more alert and engaged pupils, to increasing independent travel and associated life skills for pupils with SEN. Enabling the increased use of sustainable modes of travel such as walking, cycling and the use of public transport has environmental benefits in reducing levels of noise, congestion and poor air quality - the latter of which children are particularly at risk to.

Darlington Borough Council case study

Impact/benefits

The data from 2011-12 indicates that on average, 7% of secondary school pupils are choosing to cycle to school. Before the Local Motion initiative began, this figure stood at just 1%.

Details of the approach

Darlington Borough Council has encouraged a modal shift away from the car to more sustainable modes under the brand 'Local Motion'. The Local Sustainable Transport Fund has provided funding for the continuation of this project since 2011. It ensures that schools, young people and their families receive relevant information, to enable them to choose sustainable travel options to get to and from school.

How was the change made?

The whole schools package is underpinned by the Modeshift STARS online accreditation scheme which recognises and rewards each school's commitment to promoting sustainable travel. All Darlington schools must engage with Modeshift STARS in order to access other support and resources from the Local Motion project.

A new Year 6 Transition Programme has been introduced to help pupils and their parents make informed choices about sustainable travel options to the secondary school they will be attending.

All Darlington secondary schools have converted to academy status, but have continued to engage with the Local Motion programme and continue to support sustainable travel.

Advice for other LAs contemplating such an initiative

The Local Motion Transition encourages families to start thinking about how they are going to travel to secondary school long before they start at the school, to avoid relying on private cars.

For further information please email Louise Neale: louise.neale@darlington.gov.uk

Stoke-on-Trent case study

Impact/benefits

After just one year of Sustrans' engagement (2013/14) regular cycling amongst pupils (once or twice a week or more) increased from 8.5% to 12.7% and those regularly being driven (once or twice a week or more) decreased from 49.9% to 45.3%. This is helping to reduce the impact of congestion from education travel which is estimated to cost £2.6m per year.

Details of the approach

Stoke is one of eight partner local authorities in the Access to Education (A2E) programme, led by Devon County Council and coordinated by Sustrans. It is funded by the Local Sustainable Transport Fund.

Using locally-tailored packages Sustrans provide a real alternative to the car for trips to schools, colleges and universities, reducing congestion, improving journey reliability and boosting local economies.

How was the change made?

- Intensive engagement from two Sustrans officers working with 21 primary and seven secondary schools
- Provision of 'Access to Bikes School Hubs' shipping containers that contain 15 bikes, helmets, hi-viz jackets, pumps, locks, lights and maintenance tools placed in nine schools
- Installation of cycle parking and scooter pods at schools
- A programme of highway safety improvements, including new crossings and off-road cycle access links from residential areas to schools

Advice for other LAs contemplating such an initiative

Schools need to have intensive support over an extended period of time which would include building the skills, knowledge and confidence of 'champions' to deliver the ongoing work. The Sustrans School Mark, an accreditation scheme which recognises and supports schools' excellence in active and sustainable travel, provides a framework to drive this forward.

For further information please email Allan Williams: allan.williams@sustrans.org.uk

Home to school travel assistance for pupils with SEN or disabilities

Research indicates that there can be significant short and long term benefits in the application of independent travel training for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities. The training given can result in savings to transport budgets in the short term, but can also provide longer term benefits to the individual in terms of a skill for life that might lead to greater social inclusion and employment prospects.

Coventry City Council case study

Impact/savings achieved

As a result of this initiative and tighter control and work to secure efficiencies in the operation of the home to school travel assistance programme the Council made £326k savings in 2011/12. The savings made in 2012/13 equated to £374k which includes the reductions in expenditure on home to school escorts. The total reduction over the 2 years is a 19% fall in expenditure.

Details of the new approach

Successful work has been undertaken to provide independent travel training for secondary aged pupils and the provision of personal transport budgets to the parents of pupils in special schools. This has enabled young people to become more independent and given them valuable skills for life, as well as securing a reduction in spending for the Council.

How was the change made?

Impower Consultancy was commissioned to identify potential efficiencies. Focus groups of parents of pupils with SEN or disabilities were formed to seek views and identify new ways of working. Two key work streams were then established to take forward the provision of Independent Travel Training and Personal Transport Budgets (PTBs).

Two travel trainers now focus their work on school aged pupils, to help them improve their independence skills. This also reduces the number of adults needing training in subsequent years.

The Council also developed a scheme to offer PTBs to parents. The funding was high enough to incentivise parents, while being low enough to deliver savings for the Council. This was piloted in one school initially and then rolled out across all the special schools.

Advice for other LAs implementing the change

Special school headteachers are fully involved in this initiative and they help identify suitable young people to undertake training.

Contacting parents by telephone was resource intensive, but very positive in terms of fully explaining the benefits and options. PTBs are voluntary, tailored and non-prescriptive. The attendance and punctuality of pupils with a PTB is monitored. Beyond this there is no prescription and parents are not asked to account for expenditure.

For further information please email Marian Simpson: marian.simpson@coventry.gov.uk

Capacity building with schools and transport operators

In a financial climate where spending is reduced and costs are increasing local authorities may well find that they have less funding available to support discretionary transport provision, but there may be alternative solutions.

Many academies, with support from their local communities, are taking full advantage of their academy freedoms and are collaborating with other stakeholders and providers to offer discretionary transport to their schools. Local authorities can greatly assist with these initiatives by sharing their experience, expertise and influence in the procurement of transport.

Hertfordshire County Council case study

Impact/savings achieved

£5-6 million will be saved each year as a result of schools and commercial operators providing discretionary travel on routes previously funded and delivered by the Council.

Details of the new approach

From September 2012 Hertfordshire County Council introduced a statutory only homeschool transport policy. The Council was keen to attract third party providers to arrange transport on routes which it had previously organised and subsidised and that catered mainly for children without a statutory entitlement to home to school transport.

The Council has worked to build capacity locally to encourage and enable schools, community groups and commercial operators to provide school transport. From September 2013 a total of 130 routes to schools of preference operate without a financial subsidy from the Council. Thirty of these routes have been operating since April 2012.

How was the change made?

The Council supported schools and parents to help develop transport plans. The Council also secured the involvement of the commercial sector and promoted awareness of business opportunities to it.

Advice for other LAs implementing the change

Commercial operators require routes to be financially secure, and therefore are only likely to consider taking on routes where there is a predicted, fare paying commitment from parents. School transport only accounts for 192 days a year.

Local authorities should act as facilitators with the commercial sector, to help schools with contracts and to ensure competition law is followed. Models should rely on parents being able to fund their family's school transport, without any subsidy from the LA. In the

current financial climate, there has been more opportunity for commercial coach companies to participate in this market, rather than commercial bus companies.

For further information please email Sarah Vize: sarah.vize@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Demand responsive service in rural areas

Counties with a large number of small rural communities face the challenge of ensuring that children in these communities are transported to their local schools whilst also providing a cost efficient transport network to the wider community to avoid rural isolation. Rural transport is essential in sustaining local rural communities and connecting people with essential services.

Staffordshire County Council case study

Impacts/Benefits

As a result of replacing infrequent existing local service buses and incorporating home to school transport on to a demand responsive service, a sustainable service has been developed which transports children to school and enables the rural population to be connected with essential services and the wider community. Children that have been transported to school frequently go on to use the service when they move up to middle or high school, increasing their independence despite their rural location.

Details of the approach

Moorlands Connect, a Demand Responsive Service was launched in 2010. The service incorporates the home to school transport to two village schools within the operating area which covers approximately 125 square miles. Outside school transport times the vehicles can be booked as a door to door service to transport people to work, appointments or other essential journeys. Using smaller vehicles and a demand responsive approach that is not tied to a scheduled route has meant that remote areas now have access to a service.

How was the change made?

A rural transport review was commissioned in 2008 and recommended the implementation of a demand responsive service. Residents in the area were consulted and current services, including home to school transport, were reviewed to establish which services could be incorporated on to a new service to increase its sustainability. Funding was sourced from various external agencies for the purchase of two fully accessible vehicles that carry bicycles and the service was launched in September 2010. It continues to be well used by the local communities and also by visitors to the area who can get out and about in the Peak District using the service.

Advice for other LA's implementing the change

The process in setting up the service should include service demand evaluation, assessment of service options, the associated costs and, importantly, comprehensive consultation. Such service complements existing local bus services and provides

alternative choice for passengers. The latter ensures new and continuing public and political support for the scheme. Ticketing options need to be considered, including onward ticketing and potential integration with the local bus service(s). All funding options should be explored at a local and national level; this connect service received initial funding from Districts, Staffordshire Police and Fire services. Once the service is operational there is the need to monitor and evolve the service to meet ongoing needs and changing travel patterns.

For further information please email: <u>kathryn.grattage@staffordshire.gov.uk</u>

Annex 2: Recommended Review/Appeals Process

Previous guidance made clear that local authorities should have in place and publish their appeals procedures, but left it to the individual authority to determine how this should operate in practice. We are now recommending that local authorities adopt the appeals process set out below, appreciating that specifics, such as the identification of an appeal compared to a complaint, will need to be decided by local authorities. The intention is to ensure a consistent approach across all local authorities, and to provide a completely impartial second stage, for those cases that are not resolved at the first stage.

Local authorities should publish annually their appeals process on their website. This should set out a clear and transparent two stage process (with paper copies available on request) for parents who wish to challenge a decision about:

- the transport arrangements offered;
- their child's eligibility;
- the distance measurement in relation to statutory walking distances; and
- the safety of the route.

Stage one: Review by a senior officer

- A parent has 20 working days²⁰ from receipt of the local authority's home to school transport decision to make a written request asking for a review of the decision.
- The written request should detail why the parent believes the decision should be reviewed and give details of any personal and/or family circumstances the parent believes should be considered when the decision is reviewed.
- Within 20 working days of receipt of the parent's written request a senior officer reviews the original decision and sends the parent a detailed written notification of the outcome of their review, setting out:
- the nature of the decision reached;
- how the review was conducted (including the standard followed e.g. Road Safety GB²¹);
- information about other departments and/or agencies that were consulted as part of the process;
- what factors were considered;
 - the rationale for the decision reached; and

²⁰ As with the whole appeals process the timings are recommended and not compulsory. We envisage many appeals will be dealt with much sooner that these timings, particularly those which have a time pressure, whilst complex cases may take longer.

²¹ Road Safety GB is the sole published standards known to the department, hence referenced.

information about how the parent can escalate their case to stage two (if appropriate).

Stage two: Review by an independent appeal panel

A parent has 20 working days from receipt of the local authority's stage one written decision notification to make a written request to escalate the matter to stage two.

Within 40 working days of receipt of the parents request an independent appeal panel considers written and verbal representations from both the parent and officers involved in the case and gives a detailed written notification of the outcome (within 5 working days), setting out:

- the nature of the decision reached;
- how the review was conducted (including the standard followed e.g. Road Safety GB);
- information about other departments and/or agencies that were consulted as part of the process;
- what factors were considered;
- the rationale for the decision reached; and
- information about the parent's right to put the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman (see below).

The independent appeal panel members should be independent of the original decision making process (but are not required to be independent of the local authority) and suitably experienced (at the discretion of the local authority), to ensure a balance is achieved between meeting the needs of the parents and the local authority, and that road safety requirements are complied with and no child is placed at unnecessary risk.

Local Government Ombudsman – it is recommended that as part of this process, local authorities make it clear that there is a right of complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman, but only if complainants consider that there was a failure to comply with the procedural rules or if there are any other irregularities in the way the appeal has been handled. If the complainant considers the decision of the independent panel to be flawed on public law grounds, the complainant may also apply for judicial review.

Home to school travel and transport: flowchart of the review/appeals process

Officer A declines the home school travel application or offers travel arrangements the parent considers 'unsuitable'

Parent challenges (within 20 working days)

Parent challenges officer A's decision on basis of:

- entitlement
- distance measurement
- route safety
- · consideration of exceptional circumstances

Stage 1 (within 20 working days): Review by a senior officer

Officer B (a senior officer) reviews officer A's decision and sends the parent a written notification of the outcome including:

- · detailed reasoning for decision made
- · notification of option to escalate to stage 2 (an appeal panel)

Parent challenges (within 20 working days)

Parent challenges officer B's (the senior officer) decision

Stage 2 (within 40 working days): Review by an appeal panel

Independent appeal panel (officer A or B must not sit on panel) hears written / verbal representation from parent. The appeal panel is independent of the process to date and suitably qualified

Independent appeal panel sends decision letter to parent (within 5 working days), including how to escalate the case to Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)



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Equality Impact Assessment

1: Background

Requirement	Detail
Title of proposal	Changes to the Home to School Transport Policies for academic year 2024
Drype of proposal: new policy / change to policy / new service / change to service / removal of service / project	Changes to policy
Directorate	Place and Economy
Service area	Highways and Waste/ Home to School Transport
Lead Officer's name	Rachel Mawson
Lead Officer's job title	Transport Delivery Manager
Officer who completed Equality Screening Assessment	Rachel Mawson
Equality Screening Assessment completion date	16 March 2023
Date Director informed of full assessment requirement	17 March 2023
Equality Impact Assessment completion date	19 June 2023

2: Legal Requirements

The Equality Act (2010) places a general duty on all public bodies to have `due regard` to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Foster good relations.
- Advance the opportunity of equality.

Equality Impact Assessments help us evidence that we have met the requirements of the General Equality Duty. As a local authority we also have a specific duty to publish information about people who are affected by our policies and practices. All Equality Impact Assessments will be published with the Equality Screening Assessment (ESA) on the <u>North Northamptonshire Council website</u>.

3: Proposal Details

escription of the proposal:

- 150
- 1. Reword and reformat the policy to increase accessibility and make it easier to understand.
- 2. Ceasing to treat Linked schools as the nearest suitable school for free transport where there is another school closer.
- 3. Amendments to the provision of discretionary transport to
 - a. Those of statutory school age (5 to 16 years of age)
 - b. Students attending Sixth Form Studies (16 to 18 years of age)
 - c. Withdrawal of the guaranteed seat for those applying early
 - d. Increase of financial contribution for provision of discretionary transport
- 4. Once an Option has been agreed, the Home to School Transport Policies will be reviewed to reflect the option and to make them Policy more accessible and easier to read.

What are the key objectives of this proposal?

- 1. Increase accessibility and clarity of the policy
- 2. Reduce or remove the financial pressures incurred by the Council in providing discretionary transport by
 - a. Restricting or removing discretionary transport provision and/or
 - b. Increasing the financial contribution paid by service users towards the cost of providing discretionary transport

Who will benefit from this proposal?

1. A) Service users and potential service users will have a better understanding of whether or not they are entitled to assistance under the policy.

B) Officers will be better able to understand the entitlement criteria leading more accurate application of the policy, in turn leading to fewer challenges against decisions.

2. The Council will reduce or eliminate the financial pressures currently incurred by the provision of discretionary transport.

What were the findings of the initial Equality Screening Assessment?

Increase in financial contributions could be detrimental to service users, especially to those already experiencing financial hardship. Restriction or removal of discretionary transport could negatively impact access to education for those not entitled to assistance under the legislation. Restrictions to the provision of discretionary transport will have a significant negative impact on some of those living in the former East Northants district, in particular those attending Prince William School, which has a high number of linked or feeder schools from a wide geographical area.

The proposals will have an indirect effect on children whose parents who are unable to take them to school because of a disability, but who are not entitled to free transport under the legislation.

The proposals will impact parents with full-time contracts with no flexible working options, this may have a larger impact on single parents. 78% of people in NN were in fulltime role in 2021. In the East Midlands in 2021 56% of single working families were female, and 7.2% male single parents – therefore this is likely to have a higher impact on females than males that are working single parents.

32.4% of single parent females were working part-time, and 23.6% working full-time.

16% of households in NN do not own a car/van and thus rely on public transport.

https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/sources/census_2021/report?compare=E06000061

4: Data Evidence

What information or data, additional to that found in the ESA, have you obtained?

Consultation with service users and stakeholders took place during the Summer Term. Consultation closed on 12th June 2023.

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We does this data or information help you assess the impact of the proposal on protected groups?

Responses to the consultation will enable an informed decision about whether or not to withdraw all or part of the discretionary service and/or recoup a greater proportion of the costs of service provision from the service users

On the basis of the consultation responses it is clear that the proposals will have a disproportionate effect on some residents of the former East Northants District. If these impacts are to be reduced, alternative arrangements for transport would need to be put in place. What changes do you recommend being made to the proposal as a result of this evidence?

Members will be asked to make a decision to

- I. restrict the discretionary transport by removing the guaranteed seat provision, rather than withdraw the service completely, and
- II. to increase contributions for the remaining discretionary service, limiting that increase to bring fares back in line with commercial service prices rather than opting for full cost recovery.
- III. consider withdrawing the free transport to linked schools. Any implementation would only apply to new school placements. Existing students would continue to receive transport under the same provisions as at present to allow them to complete their schooling.

Members will be asked to consider the Equality Impacts and the data provided alongside the options given to them.

What impact could these changes have on the overall outcome of the proposal?

The proposals seek to take a balanced approach to address the impact on residents whilst also considering the need for the Council to reduce its overall expenditure on this service.

Members will be able to make an informed decision on the future of the discretionary service.

Could these changes have a negative impact on any other equality group(s)?

As above.

5: Equality Impact

Using the evidence gathered above, describe the potential negative impact this proposal may have on individuals or groups because of their Upharacteristics in the table below. Ensure you consider different groups within each of the protected groups.

Characteristic	Potential negative impact
Age	Reduced or restricted access to discretionary transport provision for
	children and young people of school or sixth form age, who would
	otherwise not be entitled to transport under the legislation.
Disability	Reduced or restricted access to discretionary transport provision for
	children and young people of school or sixth form age with Special
	Educational Needs and/or disabilities who would otherwise not be
	entitled to transport under the legislation.
	May be an impact on parents with disabilities where their child is not
	otherwise entitled to transport assistance.

Characteristic	Potential negative impact
Sex	Likely to have a higher impact on females than males as more than 50% of
	single parents are female.
Marriage or Civil Partnership	n/a
Pregnancy or Maternity	n/a
Race	n/a
Religion or Belief	n/a
Gender Reassignment	n/a
Sexual Orientation	n/a
Health and Wellbeing	Reduced or restricted access to discretionary transport provision for
	children and young people of school or sixth form age with Special
	Educational Needs and/or disabilities who would otherwise not be
م	entitled to transport under the legislation. AND/OR
	Increase in contributions payable towards costs of providing discretion
	transport.
	Households without access to a car or personal transport will be
	impacted.

6: Consultation

Who has been consulted with as part of this Equality Impact Assessment?

Who was consulted?	Date(s)	Why was this group consulted?	Any negative impact on equality groups identified?	What change(s) will be made as a result of this consultation?
Parents and carers	24th April	Statutory requirement;	As set out above	Decision will be made whether to

Who was consulted?	Date(s)	Why was this group consulted?	Any negative impact on equality groups identified?	What change(s) will be made as a result of this consultation?
Schools and	2023 to	Existing and future service		withdraw discretionary service in
educational	12th June	users and stakeholders		whole or part and whether to
establishments	2023.			increase contributions for any
Neighbouring				remaining service.
Authorities				
Current and future				
service users and				
their families				
D				

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re further consultations planned? (Give dates, explain reason why this group is to be consulted).

none

7: Assessing the Impact

Will the negative impact identified in the ESA have been eliminated once the above changes have been implemented?

If no, an Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan must be completed to evidence how the negative impact will be mitigated, reduced and reviewed. (Please see action plan template at the end of this document).

8: Monitoring and Evaluation

What monitoring systems are in place to measure and monitor the impact that the proposals have on protected groups?

The service can monitor the number of pupils who apply for the discretionary transport, but they would not know the number of families who would like to use the service but do not apply for whatever reason. It will be difficult to measure how many people are impacted by the changes on a year by year basis as the Council will not be aware of who these people are and what alternative transport options they have.

9: Decision Making Summary

Report on impacts identified attached.

10: Authorisation

Pae	Signature	Date
ቅ - A pproved by Equalities Team ማ	Emma Freeman, Equality Officer, Corporate Services	3/7/2023
Authorised by Department Director	Graeme Kane, Executive Director Place and Economy	25/06/23

- A signed copy should be retained by the owner for audit purposes.
- A completed copy should be attached to the relevant report/policy/proposal.
- An electronic copy must be emailed to <u>NNC Equalities</u> be logged and published.

10: Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan

Negative impact	Action to eliminate or reduce negative impact.	Officer responsible	Action target date	Review outcome (has the action had the intended outcome)
Access to school/education in	Short term: make special	Home to School	May 2024	
particular Prince William School	arrangements outside the policy	Manager		
	to duplicate current provision			
	until alternatives are in place.			
	Longer term: encourage			
	development of commercial			
-	services, improve access by			
	bike and walking			
	Encourage and support school			
	and/or parents groups to take on			
•	responsibility for own services			
Increased fares	Introduce an instalment	Home to School	May 2024	
	payment scheme such as	Manager		
	monthly direct debit to spread			
	the cost.			
	Limit the increase to commercial			
	levels.			

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EXECUTIVE

12th July 2023

Report Title	Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) Annual Report 2021-2021
Report Author	Jo Hutchinson – Head of School Effectiveness (Executive Report) Morcea Walker – Chair of SACRE (Author of The Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) Annual Report 2021-2022)
Lead Member	Cllr Scott Edwards – Executive Member for Children, Families, Education and Skills

Key Decision	🗆 Yes	🛛 No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	□ Yes	🛛 No
Are there public sector equality duty implications?	🗆 Yes	⊠ No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	□ Yes	⊠ No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972		

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) Annual Report 2021-2021

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Local Authorities have a duty to establish a permanent body known as the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) in accordance with the Education Act 1996. The broad role of the SACRE is to support the effective provision of Religious Education (RE) and collective worship in schools and to enrich the experience of RE and collective worship for all pupils. Further information and background about SACRE are set out in **Appendix A**.
- 1.2 North and West Northamptonshire Councils established their SACRE in February 2021. The SACRE's terms of reference require that an annual report

on the work of SACRE is produced annually. It is considered best practice for the report to be received by the Executive.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report covers the period 2021/2022.
- 2.2 During the said period SACRE was still without an Adviser. No RE data was collected or subsequently monitored from schools however, the Committee met three times this year and were available to respond to any requests/complaints (none received).
- 2.3 There have been limited opportunities for training but Councillors have responded when possible. Relationships with community organisations remains a strength.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. It is recommended that the Executive receives and approves the SACRE annual report for 2021-2022
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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.

4. Report Background

- 4.1 Section 390 of the Education Act 1996 places a statutory duty on the Council to establish a permanent body called a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) to advise the Council on matters concerned with Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- 4.2 Councils must appoint representatives to each of four committees, representing respectively:
 - Group A: Christian denominations and such other religions and religious denominations as, in the authority's opinion, will

appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area;

- Group B: the Church of England;
- Group C: teacher associations;
- Group D: the local authority.
- 4.3 The broad role of the SACRE is to support the effective provision of RE and collective worship by:
 - Giving advice on methods of teaching the Agreed Syllabus for RE;
 - Advising the Council on the provision of training for teachers;
 - Monitoring inspection reports on RE, collective worship and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC);
 - Considering complaints about the provision and delivery of RE and collective worship referred to it by the LA.

5. Issues and Choices

5.1 Section 391 (6) and (7), Education Act 1996 clarifies the background to the recommendations made in this report:

"Each SACRE must publish an annual report on its work and on action taken by its representative groups, specifying any matters on which it has advised the local authority, broadly describe the nature of that advice and set out reasons for offering advice not referred to the local authority".

6. Next Steps

6.1. If approved by the Executive, the SACRE Annual Report 2021-2022 will be published to schools.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. **Resources, Financial and Transformation**

7.1.1. There are no resource or financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

7.2. Legal and Governance

- 7.2.1 As set out in the report, section 390 of the Education Act 1996 requires the council to establish a permanent body known as the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE), to advise them on matters concerned with the provision of Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- 7.2.2 The main function of SACRE is to advise the council upon matters connected

with religious worship in schools for which the council has responsibility and with the religious education to be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus. Under Section 391(6) and (7), Education Act 1996, SACRE is required to publish a report each year as to the exercise of its functions and any action taken by representative groups on the council. This report ensures compliance with the statutory duty.

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

- 7.3.1. The Council's Corporate Plan is relevant to the SACRE Annual Report 2021-2022 and to the statutory duties of SACRE.
- 7.3.2. The work of SACRE, through their statutory duties, link to the Corporate Plan key commitments:
 - Better, brighter futures; and
 - Connected communities.
- 7.3.3 Specifically, the statutory duties that SACRE must adhere to will assist the Council in meeting its commitment to:
 - Ensuring that every child has equal access to a high standard of education; and
 - Informing and listening to our communities, giving them a greater say in their future.

7.4. **Risk**

7.4.1. There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

7.5. Consultation

- 7.5.1 Before the final report was agreed, there was discussion and consultation within the SACRE.
- 7.5.2 The SACRE comprises four groups: the Church of England, other Christian denominations and the major faiths represented in Northamptonshire, teachers and the Council.
- 7.5.3 All groups have voted in support of the final version of the report.

7.6. Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel

- 7.6.1 The Future Communities Executive Advisory Panel's next meeting is on 13th July, after the Executive meeting will have taken place.
- 7.6.2 The Future Communities Executive Advisory Panel will be consulted via the

Chair of this committee who is the Executive Member for Children, Families, Education and Skills North Northants Council.

7.7. Consideration by Scrutiny

7.7.1. This report has not been considered by the Council's scrutiny function.

7.8. Equality Implications

7.8.1. There is no detrimental impact on any protected characteristic as a result of the recommendations in this report.

7.9. Climate and Environment Impact

7.9.1. There is no detrimental impact on the climate or environment as a result of the recommendations in this report.

7.10. Community Impact

7.10.1. There is no distinct community impact arising from the recommendations in this report.

7.11. Crime and Disorder Impact

7.11.1 The recommendations in this report will have negligible, if any, crime and disorder impact.

8. Background Papers

8.1 None

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Appendix

THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

2021-2022

September 2021– August 31st 2022





This Information can be made available in other languages and formats on request, such as large print, Braille and audio cassette. Please contact Jane Hall, Clerk to SACRE email: jane.hall@westnorthants.gov.uk

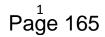


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Northamptonshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education: Annual Report 2021 -2022

Foreword by Morcea Walker - Chair of the Northamptonshire SACRE 2021-2022

The impact of the COVID pandemic continued into the period of this Annual Report. Its impact on Education, schools and other educational establishments did not diminish. However people working in this field were able to find creative ways of teaching students whilst catering for their wellbeing.

In 2021 – 2022 "Hybrid" teaching still continued for a while until schools were able to bring students back full time. This enabled quality teaching to take place through both methods.

SACRE has not had an Adviser since 2019 and this continues to be the case. Therefore it has been difficult to obtain information about the teaching of RE and the progress of worship in our schools/educational establishments. Some online training has been provided by SACRE members and a few visits to places of worship and other buildings have used the same method.

SACRE meetings followed Government guidelines and were held via Teams. This proved very valuable. The lifting of certain COVID restrictions meant that students were able to sit GCSEs and A levels in 2022.

Northamptonshire is settling into having two unitary authorities – West Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire. SACRE has been fortunate to have the support, at meetings, of the Heads of School Effectiveness for each Unitary Authority. SACRE works in both areas made easier by having joint meetings. SACRE members reflect the diverse community that is Northamptonshire.

We have now come out of the shadow of COVID so the role of SACRE will be to look at the best way to engage with schools in the North and West Northamptonshire Councils. This will include revisiting the Agreed Syllabus and training needs.

SACRE members continue to look forward to good working relationships with a range of Agencies and the wider community.

Morcea Walker MBE, VLL Chair Northamptonshire SACRE

1. OVERVIEW

Every Local Authority has to convene a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE). Northamptonshire SACRE, which has met three times this year, comprises four statutory groups. Attendance at meetings has been good. SACRE continues to ensure the membership reflects the demographic.

The four groups that make up SACRE are as follows:

- Committee A representatives of non-Anglican Christian denominations, other religions, and world-view communities;
- Committee B representatives of the Church of England;
- Committee C representatives of the teachers' associations; Teachers, Teaching Assistants and High Level Teaching Assistants
- Committee D Representatives of the Local Authority

The Committee have met 3 times via Zoom.

Details of the agenda items, attendance at the meetings and minutes of the meetings can be found on the West Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire County Council SACRE website at:

Religious education - Schools and education (northamptonshire.gov.uk)

2. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES)

- Local Agreed Syllabus This can be found on the SACRE website above.
- **Standards and monitoring of Religious Education -** No data was collected for the period 2021/2022 due to the on-going disruption of schools because of the COVID pandemic
- **Teacher training** Due to the lack of an advisor and uncertainty around the funding available, no training was able to be offered during this period. Church Schools have been able to access training through the diocese and other schools may have made their own arrangements.

3. COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The SACRE has not received any complaints about Collective Worship

Determinations

There have been no determination requests in regard to Collective Worship made to SACRE.

4. LINKS WITH OTHER BODIES

We are a member of NASACRE.

We communicate with the Peterborough Diocese Education Team.

We have regular reports from local interfaith groups.

Community organisations are well represented on SACRE and keep members updated. We have experienced some difficulties communicating this out more widely to schools and teachers.

We are affiliated to Holocaust Educational Trust

5. SACRE INVOLVEMENT LOCALLY

- Governor training
- Advice on issues within the community

The impact of COVID and the restrictions on schools and face to face meetings has resulted in great reduction in training. Members have delivered some, mainly online. Members have responded and offered advice when requested from the community. Community events and festivals have been promoted and supported by SACRE members.

6. SECTION ON SACRE'S OWN ARRANGEMENTS

(a) Professional and administrative support and how LA supports the SACRE (clerking, adviser, links to council initiatives)

Clerking has been consistent and professional which has supported SACRE. This service has been greatly valued.

(b) Membership

Please see Annex A

(c) Training for SACRE

NASACRE Conference – 23 May 2022 – 1 person NASACRE Training – "Where now with worldwide views?" – 1 person

(d) Finance given to SACRE for its work

The Financial status was unclear

(e) Liaison with other local SACRES

Church of England Members (Committee Group B)

Appendix A: Membership of SACRE

Membership 1 September 2021 – 31 August 2022

Name

Organisation

Committee A – Representatives of non-Anglican Christian denominations, other religions and world-view communities

Robert FarmerHumanistMr Bhupesh ParekhHinduismMr Saifullah NassirIslamAvnish ThackrarHinduismMr Daniel TaborJudaismMr Harkirat SinghSikh FaithMrs Morcea WalkerUnited Reform Church	ts
Mrs Morcea Walker United Reform Church	
Mr John Flory Religious Society of Friends	

Committee B – Representative of the Church of England

Oliver Coss	Rector of all Saints Church, Northampton
Mrs Julie Barke	Church of England
Val Griffiths	Church of England

Committee C – Representatives of the Teacher Associations, Teachers, Teaching Assistants and High Level TAs

Mrs Jenny Dixon	Primary Teacher Representative	(NEU)
Sylvia Erskine	NEU	
Will Kneeshaw,	Secondary representative (NASUWT)	

Committee D – Representatives of the Local Authority

Cllr Chris-Smith-Haynes	LA Representative North Northamptonshire
Cllr Keith Holland-Delamere	LA Representative West Northamptonshire
Cllr Tom Partridge-Underwood	LA Representative North Northamptonshire
Cllr Imran Choudhury	LA Representative West Northamptonshire

LA Representatives

Katie Morlidge - West Northamptonshire Jo Hutchinson - North Northamptonshire

Clerk to SACRE: Mrs Jane Hall



EXECUTIVE

12th July 2023

Report Title	Northamptonshire Strategic Transport Model
Report Author	Graeme Kane, Interim Executive Director for Place & Economy
Lead Member	Councillor Matt Binley, Executive Member for Highways, Travel & Assets

Key Decision	⊠ Yes	□ No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	⊠ Yes	□ No
Are there public sector equality duty implications?	□ Yes	⊠ No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	□ Yes	⊠ No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972		

List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. To update the Executive on the status of the Northamptonshire Strategic Transport Model, seek approval to rebuild the model in partnership with West Northamptonshire Council and to agree its funding. The rebuilt model will increase opportunities for successfully bidding and securing Government and developer funding and ensure the authority can plan and implement appropriate highway and transport schemes in the coming years.

2. Executive Summary

2.1. The Northamptonshire Strategic Transport Model (NSTM) is Northamptonshire's traffic model, which can be used for testing development proposals, providing an evidence base for spatial strategies, transport policies and major highway schemes. To ensure that they are representative, such models only have a limited life before new survey information and planning data is needed, and the model rebuilt.

- 2.2. Developed in 2008 by the former Northamptonshire County Council, the NSTM was last rebuilt in 2015. The NSTM has proven a robust basis to assess development impacts upon the road network and secure funding for proposed road infrastructure schemes.
- 2.3. The NSTM has not been significantly updated since 2015 and the age of the model, its assumptions and underlying data means the validity of model outputs could come under scrutiny for future assessment where:
 - Government funding is required for a major scheme
 - The model is supporting potentially contentious planning policy that requires public scrutiny and formal examination
 - There are traffic impacts arising from planned development anticipated on the local and Strategic Road Network (National Highways)
- 2.4. The Northamptonshire model is now due a rebuild, having reached the end of its current validity, both practically and according to Government guidance. An update will ensure that the NSTM is still relevant, robust and continues to be fit for appraising policies, transport improvements and development schemes.
- 2.5. Following consideration of a range of options, it is recommended that the NSTM be rebuilt in partnership with West Northamptonshire Council and upon completion each authority will operate and own its own copy of the model. This allows each authority to control access to the model, run individual scenarios and maintain appropriately.
- 2.6. The costs of the model update will be split equally between the two Councils. The update will be funded with £400,000 of accumulated Section 278 balances, together with £78,000 of fee income from use of the model by developers from each Council, making a total budget available of £556,000. Once updated, usage of the model will be charged to appropriate internal budgets or third parties, and external users will be charged a fee which will contribute to the cost of future updates.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. It is recommended that the Executive..."
 - a) Agree to working in partnership with West Northamptonshire Council to update and rebuild the Northamptonshire Strategic Transport Model
 - b) Agree to West Northamptonshire Council being the lead procuring authority
 - c) Agree £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) Delegates 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) Note North Northamptonshire Council will retain ownership and ongoing management of its own independent version of the Northamptonshire Strategic Transport Model.
- 3.2. 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.
- 3.3. 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.

4. Report Background

- 4.1. The Northamptonshire Strategic Transport Model (NSTM) is key to developing the evidence base for spatial strategies, transport policies and improvements, and support for business cases. It is also used by developers to support their planning applications, helping to ensure that these are undertaken in a consistent way acceptable to the Council. The NSTM is a strategic multi-modal model covering Northamptonshire, with less detailed coverage beyond the county boundary, capable of assessing the impacts of future changes in travel demand and transport provision within Northamptonshire.
- 4.2. The NSTM is an industry standard computerised model that was built in 2008 and rebuilt in 2015. The rebuild took account of significant changes to the highway network and was supported by updated count data. The existing NSTM has been used to assess a wide range of policies and schemes for example, the Strategic Plan and supporting Infrastructure Delivery Plan, the A43 improvements as well as and assessing a significant number of development sites and their impacts upon the road network.
- 4.3. The base year data is now more than seven years old with previous Department for Transport, Transport Appraisal Guidance (TAG)/Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) guidance recommending a six-year data source age limit.

TAG Unit M2.2 (May 2020) frequently references age of data as a potential limitation, dependent on the levels of change in travel demands over the intervening period.

- 4.4. The age of the model and underlying data means the validity of model outputs could come under scrutiny for future assessment where:
 - Government funding is required for a major scheme
 - The model is supporting potentially contentious planning policy that requires public scrutiny and formal examination
 - There are traffic impacts arising from planned development anticipated on the local and Strategic Road Network (National Highways).
- 4.5. In March 2020, Northamptonshire County Council approved a rebuild of the NTSM with a budget of £495,000 made up of £400,000 of accumulated Section 278 balances and £95,000 of fee income from developers using the model. This work did not progress due to the impossibility of undertaking representative traffic counts during the Covid pandemic.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1. Given its age, it is important that the NSTM is updated to support the development and implementation of the Local Plan and the Local Transport Plan. Both policies will be developed and assessed through 2023 and into 2024. The model will also support any future major scheme business cases for transport infrastructure funding to Government and will also be important for the effective assessment of large new development applications and substantiating the transport improvements required to mitigate their impact.
- 5.2. The model rebuild updates underlying travel demand data, and the transport network available (recognising any changes since 2015). The new model will have a new 2023 base year informed by new travel pattern and demand data, which will be validated using traffic count data. Future forecast year(s) of the model will then be developed, informed by known transport improvements, new developments and travel demand changes. A number of reports will be produced as part of the commission providing a valuable evidence base.
- 5.3. The current NSTM contains a significant amount of information of value to an updated model and therefore remains a useful resource for both authorities. A key decision to be reached is whether the Council should have its own model, or whether a single model is retained. In this respect, the close proximity of larger towns to the North/West Northamptonshire border is key, as were separate models to be created, there would be a significant overlap, so movements were correctly modelled.
- 5.4. Options considered, alongside the benefits and constraints are set out below;
 - **Option 1** Both authorities develop separate strategic transport models based on the NSTM

- **Option 2** One authority rebuilds the NSTM, with the other paying for use and access to the model
- **Option 3** The model is not rebuilt
- **Option 4** The NSTM is rebuilt jointly, with each authority managing a control version to enable future access, usage and control.

Option	Positive	Negative	Recommendation
1	 Maintain individual ownership and control Establish individual charging models for third party access to the model 	 Establishment costs of two models is likely to be more expensive than creating a single model More expensive for rebuilding the model and its ongoing maintenance. Potential for the two models to have different assumptions or forecasts complicating any cross-border assessments 	This option is not recommended
2	 Clear lines of ownership, single point of contact Lead authority could establish and update charging model Regional model would support cross border assessments 	 Lead authority takes all the risk Loss of control of access and unclear future costs for non- lead authority Funding model for access uncertain 	This option is not recommended
3	 S278 funds could be redirected to alternative uses 	 The council wouldn't have a valid method of accessing schemes, large development proposals and policies which would limit access to funding, weaken effective development management, reduce planning capabilities. 	This option is not recommended
4	Allows the Council full and direct access to the model.	 The councils would need to agree governance arrangements, 	This option is recommended

•	Costs and risks shared. Continues to allow the authority to charge for access to the model to third parties. Likely to be most cost-effective approach in terms of model build, maintenance and management cost, as well as officer/project team resource requirements Supports cross border	•	approach to model rebuild as well as technical assumptions and requirements. Need to agree third party fee models.	
	assessments			

- 5.5. The delivery routes (including the procurement options) were subject to an analysis of the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of the issues around affordability, deliverability and flexibility; as well as both value for money and potential risk.
- 5.6. The recommended option 4 is a cost-effective solution, avoiding duplication of expenditure, while ensuring effective control for each authority. Such a joint or regional approach to modelling is not unusual allowing for wider network consideration as well as the cost and resource benefits. It is necessary for one authority to be the lead authority, responsible for the procurement of the consultants to undertake the work. It is proposed that West Northamptonshire Council is the lead procuring authority, with arrangements in place to ensure that North Northamptonshire Council is properly involved in the governance of the scheme.
- 5.7. The model rebuild will be procured via a competitive process with a national framework, such as the Crown Commercial Services or ESPO. This will ensure best value. Use of such a framework will also reduce risk, and the input required from legal services compared to an open tender procurement. Use of a framework would also save some time on the commissioning process. Despite the procurement being led by West Northamptonshire Council, both authorities will establish a contract with the appointed consultancy securing individual versions of the model as well as establishing a direct relationship with the appointed consultancy. Once the model is built, each authority will manage access to their version, with any model work by one council being independent of the activity of the other. Provisions within the contract will ensure that if a change within one model is agreed, then it can translate into the other cost effectively.

5.8. Given the specialist nature of the work, and to enable the management of this work, it is proposed that a consultant with specialist modelling knowledge is appointed to work on behalf of both council's and will be part of the joint project team managing the update of the model.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. Assuming the approval of this report, work will commence to procure the NSTM update. The procurement will also include the ongoing hosting of the model, its management, maintenance and operation of the model for both authorities for its lifetime (approximately 7 years).
- 6.2. The model will require current traffic survey data to be collected in neutral months (to avoid seasonal effects), therefore, this work will be undertaken in Autumn 2023 through each authorities' term contract with Kier.
- 6.3. The model development, report and forecasts are anticipated to be completed in late Autumn 2024.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. **Resources, Financial and Transformation**

- 7.1.1. As described in section 4 above, in March 2020, the former Northamptonshire County Council approved funding of £495,000 towards an update of the NSTM. This was made up of £400,000 of accumulated balances from fees charged to developers for undertaking works on the public highway under Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980 and £95,000 of fee income from developers using the model towards an update of the NSTM. Given the challenges of the pandemic this work was not progressed.
- 7.1.2. Whilst the £400,000 of accumulated Section 278 balances remains committed, both North and West Northamptonshire Councils have identified further fee income that can further support this work, this funding will be provided on an equal share basis. Each Council has identified £78,000 of NSTM fee income towards this work, so the total funding available is £556,000. This is considered to be a realistic budget within which to undertake the model update, associated data gathering and consultant project team support will be delivered within the funding identified above.
- 7.1.3. Once the model is operational, the cost of model runs will be met from appropriate internal budgets for Council work, or from fees charged to developers where they wish to use the model to support their planning applications. As currently happens, external users of the model will be charged an additional fee for use of the model which will be put towards the cost of future updates.

7.2. Legal and Governance

7.2.1. The assistance of Legal Services will be sought in drawing up an appropriate contract for the model.

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

- 7.3.1. The proposal will assist the Council in meeting the priorities in the Corporate Plan around:
 - Safe and Thriving Places
 - Enable people to travel across North Northamptonshire and beyond
 - Green, sustainable Environment
 - Promote sustainable, active travel
 - Embed low carbon technology, sustained and improved green infrastructure, and sustainable forms of transport fit for the future.
- 7.3.2. The proposal will assist the Council in developing and delivering Council's Local Plan and Local Transport Plan, which the Council has a statutory duty to deliver.

7.4. **Risk**

- 7.4.1. If the model is not updated there is a risk that the Council will not be able to demonstrate that its transport and land use policies meet the requirements of the legislation. Furthermore, the council may face difficulties resisting development proposals that come forward outside its Local Plan and also face difficulties substantiating planning obligations associated with transport improvements.
- 7.4.2. It would also be impossible for the Council to create any future major transport scheme business cases and obtain the Government funding available for these. This, in turn, would impact on the implementation of these plans and inhibits access to funding for delivering transport infrastructure schemes.
- 7.4.3. A risk register will be developed as part of the project management process and will ensure risks are identified, recorded and monitored.

7.5. Consultation

7.5.1. No formal consultation has been undertaken or is required on this proposal.

7.6. Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel

7.6.1. This matter has not been considered by an Executive Advisory Panel to date, but they would be free to consider it at a suitable date should they wish.

7.7. Consideration by Scrutiny

7.7.1. Any requests from the Place and Environment Scrutiny Committee will be responded to, and formal engagement or presentations required will take place.

7.8. Equality Implications

7.8.1. An Equality Screening Assessment has not identified any adverse impact on individuals with protected characteristics.

7.9. Climate and Environment Impact

7.9.1. The updated NSTM will include an emissions module which can utilise information exported from the traffic model to produce emission outputs supporting the development of air quality assessments and reporting to inform carbon impacts in decision making.

7.10. Community Impact

7.10.1. The updated NSTM will support effective policy and decision-making, and scrutiny, making a significant difference to the delivery of transport infrastructure and services and therefore have an equally significant impact on the local communities.

7.11. Crime and Disorder Impact

7.11.1. The are no specific impacts relating to the recommendations in this report.

8. Background Papers

8.1. None

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EXECUTIVE

12th July 2023

Report Title	North Northamptonshire Local Transport Plan Development Timetable
Report Author	Graeme Kane, Interim Executive Director for Place & Economy
Lead Member	Councillor Matt Binley, Executive Member for Highways, Travel & Assets

Key Decision	⊠ Yes	□ No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	⊠ Yes	□ No
Are there public sector equality duty implications?	□ Yes	⊠ No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	□ Yes	⊠ No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972		

List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. To update the Executive on the timetable for the preparation of North Northamptonshire's Local Transport Plan (LTP).

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The Transport Act 2000 requires all Local Authorities to publish statutory plans, known as Local Transport Plans (LTPs), for maintaining and improving all aspects of local transport. The Act does not set a timescale for updating an LTP, but authorities must keep their LTP under review and alter it if they consider it appropriate to do so.
- 2.2. The current Local Transport Plan for North Northamptonshire is the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan, adopted by the former Northamptonshire County Council in 2012. This plan consists of a main

transportation plan; thematic plans such as walking and cycling plans as well as town transport strategies.

- 2.3. North Northamptonshire's LTP must reflect the needs of the community, priorities and investment plans for the next five years. It will be developed in line with other strategic policies such as the Corporate Plan and Local Development Framework whilst being coordinated with emerging policies, for example the Greenway Strategy and Local Walking and Cycling Investment Plans.
- 2.4. In developing a new LTP, the Council has a statutory duty to follow guidance issued by Government. The most recent guidance was published in 2009. New government guidance on LTPs is currently being drafted and is expected to be published, following consultation, in Autumn 2023. It is expected that the Government will require updated plans to be produced by the end of this parliament.
- 2.5. The Local Transport Plan is listed in part 3.1 of the Council's constitution as forming part of the Policy Framework. Part 3.3 of the constitution, states that the authority must publish a timetable to produce the LTP.

Stage	Key tasks	Timeframe
One	Preparation of baseline report and consultation and engagement plan	Summer 2023
Two	Public engagement on a 'learnings, challenges and opportunities' report and the preparation of the Integrated Sustainability Assessment scoping report.	Late Summer 2023
Three	'You said' report, update baseline report and setting of LTP vision, objectives, and principles.	Late Autumn 2024
Four	Develop and test a range of policies through a policy assessment and supported and informed by the Integrated Sustainability Assessment	Winter 2024
Five	Prepare and test a range of measures and ambition, development of an evaluation framework. Undertakes the formal consultation of all relevant documentation.	Spring 2024
Six	Adoption of the LTP	Autumn 2024

2.6. The LTP will be developed in six key stages, summarised below.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. It is recommended that the Executive adopts the timetable for producing the North Northamptonshire's Local Transport Plan as set out in Section 5.9.
- 3.2. 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.
- 3.3. 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.

4. Report Background

- 4.1. The Transport Act 2000 requires Local Transport Authorities (which include all non-metropolitan unitary authorities such as the Council) to publish a statutory plan setting out their transport policies, known as a Local Transport Plan (LTP). In developing their LTP, authorities must consult key stakeholders and involve local communities in local decision making and service provision. Authorities also have a statutory duty to implement their LTP, once adopted.
- 4.2. The Transport Act 2000 does not set a timescale for updating an LTP, but authorities must keep their LTP under review and alter it if they consider it appropriate it. The current Local Transport Plan for North Northamptonshire is the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan, adopted by the former County Council from 2012. This plan consists of a main transportation plan; thematic plans such as walking and cycling plans as well as town transport strategies.
- 4.3. In developing a new LTP, the Council has a statutory duty to follow guidance issued by Government. The most recent guidance was published in 2009. New government guidance on LTPs is currently being drafted and is expected to be published, following consultation, in Autumn 2023. It is expected that the Government will require updated plans to be produced by the end of this parliament.
- 4.4. It is expected that the new LTP guidance will require authorities to consider government policies such as Gear Change, Decarbonising Transport Plan, Levelling Up White Paper and Bus Back Better when preparing LTPs.

- 4.5. The Decarbonising transport plan (2021), requires that authorities embed decarbonisation within LTPs through calculating, evaluating and quantifying carbon impacts through a measure known as Quantifiable Carbon Reductions (QCR). The QCR should reflect local transport requirements and the ambition set out the net zero by 2030 ambition and delivered alongside the Carbon Management Plan.
- 4.6. Plans currently under development such as (Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIP) and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP)) will become part of a suite of support documents to the LTP.
- 4.7. The Local Transport Plan is listed in part 3.1 of the Council's constitution as forming part of the Policy Framework, which means that approval of an LTP is a matter for Council. Part 3.3 of the constitution, states that after consulting with the relevant Executive Advisory Panel, Executive must publish a timetable setting out the timetable to produce the LTP, together with the arrangements for consultation. The relevant Scrutiny Committee may respond to Executive as part of that consultation. Executive is responsible for agreeing draft LTP documents before they are referred to Council for formal adoption.
- 4.8. Once developed, the North Northamptonshire Council LTP will replace the Northamptonshire Local Transport Plan (2012).

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1. Given the age of the current LTP, it has been evident since before the Council's formation that it needed to be updated once the Council had its own transport strategy team in place to undertake the necessary work.
- 5.2. Although publication of the new Government guidance for consultation is still awaited, experience with past guidance is that this will concentrate on issues which the Government wishes to see considered, integration with wider policy areas and who should be consulted, rather than the process to be followed in drawing policy proposals together.
- 5.3. Public consultation is a necessary component of the plan's development. The plan will also be subject to an Integrated Sustainability Assessment (ISA) which carries its own statutory consultation requirements.
- 5.4. Stage one of the LTP development is proposed to be a preparatory stage with the formulation of a baseline report drawing together a review of the existing Northamptonshire LTP and its implementation, a contextual policy review, a summary of previous views captured and evidence base. An engagement and consultation plan will also be prepared to support the development of the plan.
- 5.5. Stage two will encompass the first stage of public engagement on a 'Learnings, challenges and opportunities' report and the preparation and consultation of the Integrated Sustainability Assessment scoping report.

- 5.6. Stage three will summarise and capture the views obtained in stage two through a 'You said' report and update the baseline report accordingly. Focussed workshops will be undertaken in stage three to develop the vision, objectives, and principles for the new LTP.
- 5.7. Stage four will be a substantial phase of work taking the outcomes from the previous stages with the vision, objectives and principles in Stage three to develop a range of policies. These will be tested through a policy assessment and supported and informed by the Integrated Sustainability Assessment.
- 5.8. Stage five will consider the interventions required to meet vision and policies set previously. It is expected that a range of measures and ambition will be tested considered to test for future uncertainties. This stage will include the draft of the ongoing evaluation framework. All the previous work will be drawn together into a consultation draft LTP and a formal consultation undertaken.
- 5.9. Stage six will involve reviewing the outcomes of the consultation on the draft LTP to produce a final draft which will be taken initially to Executive for approval and then to Council for final adoption.

Stage	Key tasks	Public engagement	Timeframe
One	Preparation of baseline report and consultation and engagement plan	None	Summer 2023
Тwo	Public engagement on a 'Learnings, challenges and opportunities' report and the preparation of the Integrated Sustainability Assessment scoping report.	Engagement	Late Summer 2023
Three	'You said' report, update baseline report and setting of LTP vision, objectives, and principles.	Engagement	Late Autumn 2024
Four	Develop and test a range of policies through a policy assessment and supported and informed by the Integrated Sustainability Assessment	Engagement	Winter 2023
Five	Prepare and test a range of measures and ambition, development of an evaluation framework. Undertakes the formal consultation of all relevant documentation.	Formal consultation	Spring 2024
Six	Adoption of the LTP	Opportunity for the public to speak at Executive and Council meetings.	Autumn 2024

5.10. The proposed timetable sets out how we can meet the duties of the Transport Act 2000 in preparing the plan with the local community, whilst meeting the timetable set by the government guidance.

6. Next Steps

6.1. Work will progress on implementing developing the Local Transport Plan in accordance with the timetable set out in section 5 above.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. **Resources, Financial and Transformation**

7.1.1. The Local Transport Plan will be developed from using staff funded from existing budgets together with £178,541.43 of Local Transport Authority Capacity Grant funding provided by the Department for Transport in March 2022 to assist the development of Local Transport Plans.

7.2. Legal and Governance

7.2.1. As explained in section 4 above, the Council has a statutory duty to have a Local Transport Plan. The proposals in this report provide for implementing that duty.

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

- 7.3.1. The proposal will assist the Council in meeting the priorities in the Corporate Plan around:
 - Safe and Thriving Places
 - Enable people to travel across North Northamptonshire and beyond
 - Green, Sustainable Environment
 - Promote sustainable, active travel
 - Embed low carbon technology, sustain and improved green infrastructure, and sustainable forms of transport fit for the future.

7.4. **Risk**

- 7.4.1. Not supporting the LTP timetable would prevent the progression of the LTP development and will prevent the Council fulfilling its duties under the Transport Act 2000 or complying with statutory guidance.
- 7.4.2. There is a risk that if the Government's guidance is delayed or is more extensive or substantially different to what is expected that this will affect the timetable laid out above.
- 7.4.3. There is a risk that if the LTP is not prepared in accordance with DfT guidelines, considering both time and content this could impact access to future funding. This can be mitigated by following the guidance, once it has been published.

7.5. Consultation

- 7.5.1. Public engagement and consultation are a necessary component of the plan's development and will involve comprehensive engagement, including four rounds of public consultation, capturing the views of our partners, stakeholders, interest groups, businesses and residents.
- 7.5.2. Given the initial stages of the LTP development, no formal consultation has been undertaken. This timetable set out in this report allows for two stages of public engagement and two formal consultation periods.
- 7.5.3. Each stage of engagement builds and facilitates a conversation about current and future mobility in the authority. It also ensures the more effective development, adoption, and delivery of the plan.
- 7.5.4. Engagement will be in line with the council's engagement principles, as set out below and best practice. We will deliver meaningful engagement through being:
 - Simple and accessible
 - Clear, positive, and informative
 - Responsive
 - Identifying relationships to other initiatives
- 7.5.5. To ensure people know how their involvement will shape the plans development after each public consultation a 'we asked, you said, we did' report will be prepared and published. This report will collate and summarise the main issues raised and recommend how these should be addressed. This will include identifying if and how the emerging plan should be amended. Additionally, a log of engagement activities to demonstrate how stakeholders have been involved and informed.
- 7.5.6. The plan will also be subject to an Integrated Sustainability Assessment (ISA) which carries its own statutory consultation requirements.

7.6. Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel

7.6.1. The Sustainable Communities Executive Advisory Panel, at their meeting on 11th May 2023, considered the Local Transport Plan programme and indicative timetable. The key issues raised by the panel included ensuring a strong relationship to the Strategic Plan, ensuring the needs and views of the rural community are represented and setting an appropriate long-term ambition for the plan.

7.7. Consideration by Scrutiny

7.7.1. Any requests from the Scrutiny Commission will be responded to, and formal engagement or presentations required will take place.

7.8. Equality Implications

7.8.1. The LTP will be assessed via an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal inclusive of an Equalities Assessment. This will be included in the supporting documentation and undergo public consultation as part of the preparation of the LTP.

7.9. Climate and Environment Impact

7.9.1. The government's Transport Decarbonisation Plan, Levelling Up White Paper and Bus Back Better all lay the groundwork for strengthening the role that transport can play in reducing environmental harm. It is expected that central to the DfT LTP guidance will be the requirement for the authority to assess the LTP considering the Quantifiable Carbon Reductions of included policies and interventions to drive decarbonisation at a local level.

7.10. **Community Impact**

7.10.1. The timetable set out for the preparation of the LTP will support effective policy and decision-making and scrutiny, making a significant difference to the delivery of transport infrastructure and services and, therefore, have an equally significant impact on the local communities.

7.11. Crime and Disorder Impact

7.11.1. The are no specific impacts relating to the recommendations in this report.

8. Background Papers

8.1. None



EXECUTIVE 12th July 2023

Report Title	Budget Forecast 2023-24 at Period 2
Report Authors	Janice Gotts, Executive Director of Finance and Performance Janice.gotts@northnorthants.gov.uk
Lead Member	Councillor Lloyd Bunday, Executive Member for Finance and Transformation

Key Decision	□ Yes	⊠ No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	□ Yes	⊠ No
Are there public sector equality duty implications?	🗆 Yes	⊠ No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	□ Yes	⊠ No
Applicable paragraph number for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1974		

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Savings Schedule

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The revenue budgets (2023/24) and Medium-Term Financial Plans for North Northamptonshire Council for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account were approved by Council at its meeting on 23rd February 2023. The purpose of this report is to set out the forecast outturn position 2023/24 for the Council for the General Fund the Housing Revenue Account and the Dedicated Schools Grant.
- 1.2. This monitoring report sets out the material financial issues identified since the 2023/24 budget was set, based on the income and expenditure as at the end of May 2023 (Period 2) and reflects the views of the Assistant Directors and budget managers within the Directorates.
- 1.3. As part of the ongoing monitoring process, work will continue to examine income and expenditure and activity data, against the available budgets to support the position presented and help to shape the medium-term financial plan.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report provides commentary on the Council's forecast for the revenue outturn position 2023/24. This is an early indication based on information available as at Period 2 (May 2023) the forecast position for each of the funds is as follows:
 - General Fund overspend of £7.120m
 - Housing Revenue Account overspend of £93k.
 - Dedicated Schools Grant is currently forecast to be delivered on budget.
- 2.2 The forecast is based on the emerging data for 2023/24 and the Council will continue to assess and refine the position on a regular basis using the latest intelligence available. The forecast presented in this report is based on the best available data and information of the operations of the Council and represents the view of the Budget Holders and Directors.
- 2.3 In order to help safeguard the financial position of the Council, officers will continue to seek efficiencies in year to offset the forecast overspend. The Council has a contingency budget and reserves available to call on to help fund in-year pressures, however, it will look to achieve alternative mitigations in the first instance.
- 2.4 National factors continue to be challenging and the Council, like its residents and businesses is facing inflationary pressures which impacts on the cost of services with CPI in May 2023 at 8.7%. Alongside this, the Bank of England increased interest rates by 0.5% in June and are now at 5%.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Executive:
 - a) Note 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) Note the assessment of the current deliverability of the 2023/24 savings proposals in Appendix A.
 - c) Approve 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.
 - d) Approve 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.

- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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.

4. Report Background

General Fund

4.1 The Council's Revenue Budget for 2023/24 was set at the Council meeting on 23rd February 2023. The overall outturn forecast for the <u>General Fund</u> for 2023/24, as at Period 2 is a forecast overspend of £7.120m against a budget of £336.590m. This is summarised in the Table below.

General Fund Foreast Outturn	2023/24			
Description	Net Budget	Forecast Position 31/03/24	Forecast Variance 31/03/24	Forecast Variance 31/03/24
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
Net Available Resources	336,590	336,590	0	0.00
Total Corporate Budgets	30,231	26,525	(3,706)	(12.26)
Children & Education	69,456	78,952	9,496	13.67
Adults, Health, Partnerships and	124,698	125,668	970	
Housing				0.78
Public Health & Communities	8,184	8,184	0	0.00
Place & Economy	68,630	68,571	(59)	(0.09)
Enabling & Support Services	35,391	35,810	419	1.18
Total Directorate Budgets	306,359	317,185	10,826	3.53
Total Budget	336,590	343,710	7,120	2.12

Note – Favourable variances are shown in brackets.

4.2 The forecast position at Period 2 is an overspend of £7.120m. The following table summarises the overspend.

	Report Ref	Net Budget	P2 Forecast Variance	
	R	£000	£000	%
Children & Education		69,456	9,496	13.67
Assistant Director of Education	5.15	5,195	527	10.14
Commissioning & Partnerships	5.17	981	(118)	(12.03)

	Report Ref	Net Budget	P2 For Varia	
	Ř	£000	£000	%
Northamptonshire Children's Trust	5.2	63,280	9,087	14.36
Adult, Health, Partnerships & Housing		124,698	970	0.78
Adult Services	5.33	89,811	0	-
Safeguarding and Wellbeing	5.36	6,577	0	-
Commissioning & Performance	5.38	25,243	970	3.84
Housing	5.40	3,067	0	-
Public Health & Communities		8,184	0	-
Public Health	5.43	0	0	-
Communities	5.45	8,184	0	-
Place and Economy		68,630	(59)	(0.09)
Assets & Environment	5.48	3,882	(47)	(1.21)
Growth and Regeneration	5.50	3,932	238	6.05
Highways & Waste	5.52	57,332	(140)	(0.24)
Regulatory Services	5.54	2,426	(110)	(4.53)
Directorate Management	5.56	1,058	0	-
Enabling and Support Services		35,391	419	1.18
Finance and Performance	5.57	14,701	50	0.34
Chief Executive's Office	5.59	1,697	0	-
Chief Information Officer	5.61	7,973	369	4.63
Human Resources	5.63	3,861	0	-
Legal Services	5.65	5,113	0	-
Customer Services	5.67	2,046	0	
Corporate Costs	5.1	30,231	(3,706)	(12.26)
Total		336,590	7,120	2.12

Note – Favourable variances are sh	hown in brackets.
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Housing Revenue Account

- 4.3 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a separate ring-fenced account within the Council for the income and expenditure associated with its housing stock. The HRA does not directly impact on the Council's wider General Fund budget or on the level of council tax. Income to the HRA is primarily received through the rents and other charges paid by tenants and leaseholders.
- 4.4 Within North Northamptonshire prior to 1st April 2021 there were two HRA accounts, covering the sovereign councils of Kettering and Corby respectively. As part of the move to a single unitary council for North Northamptonshire, there was a statutory requirement to create a single HRA for the area. Whilst North Northamptonshire Council must only operate one HRA it will, for a period of time, operate two separate Neighbourhood Accounts, these being:

- the Corby Neighbourhood Account responsible for the stock that was managed by Corby Borough Council and
- the Kettering Neighbourhood Account responsible for the stock that was managed by Kettering Borough Council.
- 4.5 The Council's overall outturn forecast for the <u>Housing Revenue Account</u> as at Period 2, is a forecast overspend of £93k against the approved budget of £38.752m. This is summarised in the table below and further details are set out in Section 6. It is important to note that this is subject to continual review.

Housing Revenue Account Foreca				
		Budget		
Directorate	Expenditure	P2 Forecast Variance at 31/03/24		
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Corby Neigbourhood Account	21,481	(21,481)	0	43
Kettering Neighbourhood Account	17,271	(17,271)	0	50
Net Position 2022/23 (under)/over	38,752	(38,752)	0	93

Dedicated Schools Grant

- 4.6 The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is a ringfenced grant allocated to Local Authorities by the government to support a range of education related services.
- 4.7 The Council's overall outturn forecast for the DSG as at Period 2, is a forecast Net Spend of £121.200m against the approved budget of £121.200m. This is summarised in the table below and further details are set out in Section 7. It is important to note that this is subject to continual review.

Block	Gross Budget	Recoupment	Net Budget	Forecast Net Spend	Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Schools Block	270,284	222,910	47,374	47,374	C
Central Schools Block	3,287	0	3,287	3,287	C
High Needs Block	57,851	10,853	46,998	46,998	C
Early Year Block	23,541	0	23,541	23,541	C
Total	354,963	233,763	121,200	121,200	(

National Context

4.8 The national, and indeed the global, economy continues to see significant inflationary pressures, with energy prices pushed to record levels, which in turn has contributed to high inflation. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Bank of England has taken action to get inflation under control; this in part has resulted in higher interest rates.

- 4.9 The Bank of England increased the Base Rate by 0.50% to 5.00% on 22nd June 2023. This was the thirteenth consecutive increase since December 2021 and the rate is at its highest level for 15 years (April 2008 5.00%).
- 4.10 The inflation figures for May 2023 saw no or very small movements compared to April 2023. The 12-month CPI figure for May was 8.7% which is unchanged to April. The 12-month RPI figure for May was 11.3% (April 11.4%).
- 4.11 Councils, like most organisations, have experienced the impact of significant price rises, particularly around fuel and energy costs (for example, the street lighting PFI). A number of services are provided under contract, and the Authority is experiencing some pressure from suppliers regarding current arrangements and any new contracts entered in to. As part of the budget setting for 2023/24, the Council included growth to address forecast inflationary increases in light of the position known at the time.
- 4.12 Further risk to Local Government funding comes from the high street as individuals have less disposable income and businesses face higher energy and supply costs. This poses a risk for the Council's future income generation from business rates should businesses cease to trade. It may also see more people seeking to access Council Tax Support and other financial support which could reduce the overall Council Tax yield. The continued increases in interest rates also have an impact on the number of new homes that are being occupied which can also have an adverse impact on the Council Tax yield.
- 4.13 Alongside this there is a recognition that the demand for services may increase which will need to be taken into account as part of financial and service planning.
- 4.14 The context of the national and global economy along with potential changes to the local government financial landscape in the future through reforms are key considerations for the Council as it continues to deliver its services for 2023/24 and will be key considerations in developing the 2024/25 draft budget proposals and the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

5. Overview of Forecast Position 2023/24

Available Resources and Corporate Costs

5.1 The Council is responsible for the collection of local taxes (Council Tax and Business Rates). At the end of May 2023 20.19% of Council Tax had been collected (May 2022 – 20.10%). Business Rates collection was 19.92% at the end of May 2023 (May 2022 – 19.77%).

Corporate Resources

5.2 The total net budget for Corporate Resources is £30.203m. The composition of the budget together with the forecast variances are shown in the following Table.

Description	Net Budget	P2 Forecast	Variance
£'000	£'000	£'000	%
Corporate Contingency	3,746	0	0.00
Minimum Revenue Provision	7,970	0	
(MRP)			0.00
Pay Contingency	5,708	0	0.00
Pay and Grading Review	2,479	0	0.00
Insurance	600	0	0.00
Treasury	8,830	(3,706)	(41.97)
Bad Debts Provision	870	0	0.00
Total	30,203	(3,706)	(12.27)

- 5.3 The Council's Corporate Contingency Budget for 2023/24 is £3.746m, which represents around 1% of the net budget. The contingency budget is held to meet unknown or unplanned / unbudgeted costs. At this stage the Contingency Budget is currently assumed to be used in full during the year. This will include inflationary and demand pressures as well as helping to offset the potential additional cost of the pay award, as the offer by the employers already exceeds the pay inflation allowed.
- 5.4 The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) reflects the minimum amount a Council must charge to the revenue budget each year to set aside a provision for repaying borrowing. This has been calculated as £7.970m which was an increase of £1.538m from 2022/23 and ensures that the provision is aligned to the MRP policy moving into the medium term.
- 5.5 The Council has set aside £5.708m in 2023-24 as a Pay Contingency to allow for annual increments and potential pay changes of 4%, with the final requirement determined by the outcome of pay negotiations, and the cost of increments. This budget will be allocated in 2023-24 once these have been agreed. The Pay award will exceed the budget as the offer by the employers already exceeds the pay inflation allowed. The forecast outturn will be updated following the conclusion of the national pay negotiations.
- 5.6 Additionally, a pressure of £2.479m was included in the 2023-24 budget, which reflected the initial costings for the implementation of the Pay and Grading review for staff recruited to interim contracts with North Northamptonshire Council, which is predominantly staff that have been appointed since 1st April 2021. Other staff transferred across to the new unitary authority on their existing terms and conditions through TUPE arrangements. The proposals for the new pay and grading structure are yet to be agreed. At this stage the forecast costs are expected to be delivered within budget.
- 5.7 The 2023/24 budget also includes a provision of £600k relating to insurance. This is to help offset the estimated increase in the premium following a review of the future policy requirements. At present this is forecast to be spent at budget level.
- 5.8 The Treasury Management Budget amounts to £8.830m for 2023/24. The composition of the budget and the forecast outturn is as follows:

Description	Net Budget	P2 Forecast Variance
£'000	£'000	£'000
Investment Income	(3,173)	(4,360)
Borrowing Costs	11,273	0
Other Treasury Management		
costs	730	654
Total	8,830	(3,706)

- 5.9 The movement for investment income reflects the increase in the Bank of England base rate on future investments and is based on an average cash balance of £176m at a weighted average rate of 4.02% for a full year. This offsets the additional pressure of £654k; relating to increased bank charges of £232k, unrealised internal interest income of £267k and recovery of debt management expenses of £155k.
- 5.10 If interest rates remain high over the longer term this will also create risk in relation to acquiring new loans to finance future capital programmes. The current PWLB rate for borrowing over a 30-year period is 5.24%, for every £1m borrowed this would be an additional interest payable of £52,400.
- 5.11 There continues to be risks around the overall cash and loan position for North Northamptonshire, not only from a volatile marketplace, but also due to the outstanding legacy audits for 2020/21 and the disaggregation of the opening position from Northamptonshire County Council. Any changes in these risks and balances will be reflected in future forecasts.
- 5.12 The bad debt provision for 2023/24 amounts to £870k the bad debts position is based on the age of the debt which reflects the risks associated with the collection of the debt. The increase in budget is forecast to be delivered on budget.

Directorate Budgets

5.13 This section of the report provides an analysis of the forecast variations against the 2023/24 General Fund for each of the Directorates as set out in the table at paragraph 4.2.

Children's Services Directorate

5.14 The budget for Children's and Education Services includes the Commissioning and Partnerships including Northamptonshire Children's Trust and Education Services not funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

Assistant Director of Education

5.15 The **Assistant Director of Education** is responsible for all learning, pupil attainment and achievement and school improvement functions. The forecast outturn position for the **Assistant Director of Education** is set out in the following table.

Assistant Director of Education	£'000
Expenditure	9,669
Income	(4,474)
Net Budget	5,195
Forecast	5,722
Variance	527

5.16 The forecast variance relating to the **Assistant Director of Education** is set out in the following Table and explanations for the variances are provided in the table below.

Ref	Description	Budget	Forecast V	ariance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
1	Employees	8,057	583	7.24
2	Supplies and Services	1,289	(99)	(7.68)
3	Income	(4,474)	(95)	2.12
4	Other budgets	323	138	42.72
	Total	5,195	527	10.14

- 1) The budget pressures within Education Services predominantly relate to staffing costs. The Education Health and Care (EHC) service is continuing to rely heavily on interim workers to fulfil its statutory obligations. This is due to an increasing level of demand, a high number of vacancies, and backlog of historic assessments. The service has planned to gradually phase out the existing agency staff from July 2023. This will require recruiting and taking the initiative to actively upskill the existing staff to ensure the future needs of children, young people and their families can be met. Whilst there are service areas with substantial amount of savings on salaries, particularly Educational Entitlement (£317k), Governance (£177k), Specialist Support (£320k) and other minors (£23k), the salary budget forecast pressure in EHC (£1.42m), results in a net pressure of £583k.
- 2) The forecast underspend for supplies and services of £99k relates to the reduced forecast spend on professional fees and hired services in Strategic Planning service area (£103k) and other net minor pressures of £4k. The Strategic Planning is one of the service areas contributing to the significant forecast overspend of £583k on salaries. As such, the forecast underspend of £103k will be used to partly mitigate the service's salary budget pressure.
- 3) Income has a forecast net benefit of £95k of which £338k relates to Teachers' Pension. The budget was set at £468k, while the forecast DSG contribution is £806k. Also, the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering grant has now ceased, leaving the service with a pressure of £227k. There are other net minor pressures of £16k across the services.
- 4) In respect of the other budget areas there has been an increase in the spend against Educational Psychologist Trainees and the service is anticipating an

increased bursaries payment to the respective cohort, resulting in a pressure of \pounds 48k. There are other net pressures which amount to \pounds 90k.

Assistant Director Commissioning and Partnerships

- 5.17 The Assistant Director of Commissioning and Partnerships leads the commissioning functions for Children's services across North and West Northamptonshire Councils. This includes contract management of the Northamptonshire Children's Trust and the commissioning of education services. The Children's and Education Services remaining with the Council includes the Intelligent Client Function (ICF) for the Northamptonshire Children's Trust and the Local Authority statutory education functions as follows:
 - Education Inclusion
 - Education Psychology
 - Support for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
 - School Improvement
 - Virtual Schools (lead in the North Northamptonshire Unitary Authority)
 - School admissions and school place planning
 - Early Education and Child Care
- 5.18 The forecast outturn position for the **Assistant Director of Commissioning and Partnerships** (excluding the Children's Trust) is set out in the following Table.

Assistant Director of Commissioning and Partnerships	£'000
Expenditure	1,014
Income	(33)
Net Budget	981
Forecast	863
Variance	(118)

5.19 The forecast variance relating to the **Assistant Director Commissioning and Partnerships** (excluding the Children's Trust) is set out in following Table and explanations for the variances are provided below the Table.

Ref	Ref Description	Budget	Forecast Variance	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
1	Employees	1,003	(148)	(14.76)
2	Income	(33)	0	0.00
3	Other budgets	11	30	272.73
	Total	981	(118)	(12.03)

 The Commissioning and Partnerships is forecasting an underspend of £148k on staffing. The directorate is currently undertaking a staffing restructure which will include a realignment of budgets across Children's Services. Whilst the directorate is striving to spend within the approved budget provision, the outcome of the restructure will determine the subsequent forecast spend for the service.

- 2) The service is expecting to receive the budgeted income in full. The income predominantly relates to DSG funding allocation of £30k to Information Advice and Support Service (IASS).
- **3)** The service will be responsible for external legal fees to support the contract management of Northamptonshire Children's Trust. This was not initially budgeted, therefore resulting in a pressure of £30k.

Northamptonshire Children's Trust

Northamptonshire Children's Trust	£'000
Expenditure	67,645
Income	(4,365)
Net Budget	63,280
Forecast	72,367
Variance	9,087

5.20 The forecast variance relating to the **Northamptonshire Children's Trust** is set out in following Table and explanations for the variances are provided below the Table.

Ref	Description	Budget	Forecast Variance	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
1	Third Party Payments	67,645	9,087	13.43
2	Income	(4,365)	0	0.00
	Total	63,280	9,087	14.36

- 5.21 The Northamptonshire Children's Trust delivers children's social care and targeted early help on behalf of North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council. The councils set the strategic outcomes and priorities and the Trust is responsible for delivering those outcomes. Services provided by the Trust include:
 - Targeted early help services to children and families.
 - Front door and safeguarding services
 - Support and placements for Children in Care
 - Support and placements for Disabled Children
 - In house fostering and residential provision
 - Commissioning of external placements and contracts
 - Commissioned legal services and transport for children in care.
- 5.22 The total contract value for the Children's Trust is £150.938m. The Council's share of this is £66.654m this reflects how the contract sum is split between

North Northamptonshire Council (44.16%) and West Northamptonshire Council (55.84%).

5.23 The Children's Trust are forecasting an overspend of £20.578m. The cost to the Council based on an overspend of £20.578m is £9.087m. If these pressures are not mitigated this will pose a significant financial risk to the Council. The Trust are looking at potential mitigations, however there is a risk that this position could worsen before year end. A key risk is the delivery of the efficiency savings of £7.632m which formed part of the contract sum. At present, the Trust is forecasting that £6.653m of these savings are at risk of non-delivery, and whilst additional mitigations of £1.114m have been identified, there remains a residual financial risk of £5.539m which could increase the overall pressure from £20.578m to £26.117m. There may be further staff related costs as the result of the continuation of a specialist staffing team if these costs cannot be accommodated within the existing budget. The following table summarises the contract sum and the forecast variances (excluding the risk on savings).

Description	Contract Sum	Forecast Outtrun	Forecast V	ariance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
Staffing	49,732	50,739	1,007	2.02
Other non staffing costs	358	358	0	0.00
Placements	65,376	84,263	18,887	28.89
Contracts	5,001	5,001	0	0.00
Children's Homes	3,767	3,767	0	0.00
Legal	4,788	5,299	511	10.67
Adoption	7,776	7,776	0	0.00
Transport	2,870	3,043	173	6.03
Other care	6,799	6,799	0	0.00
NCT Central - Other budget	(762)	(762)	0	0.00
Support Services / SLA	5,233	5,233	0	0.00
Total	150,938	171,516	20,578	13.63

5.24 The main pressure within the Children's Trust relates to placements for children in care – this amounts to £18.887m. The market and availability of placements remains challenging. The placements budget will continue to remain under pressure as it remains extremely volatile both locally and nationally. The Trust is working on how these pressures can be mitigated this year and how this can be reduced in future years. The following table provides further detail around the pressures from placements.

Description	Contract Sum	Forecast	Forecast	Variance
		Outtrun		
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
In House Fostering	8,532	8,532	0	0.00
Agecny Fostering	16,895	19,445	2,550	15.09
Independent Residential	31,087	36,126	5,039	16.21
Supported Accommodation	3,400	12,605	9,205	270.74
18+ Agency Placements	4,400	6,815	2,415	54.89
Welfare Secure	339	455	116	34.22
UASC	3,812	3,812	0	0.00
Remand Secure	300	533	233	77.67
Income	(3,389)	(4,060)	(671)	19.80
Total	65,376	84,263	18,887	28.89

- 5.25 The contract sum included a pay provision of 4%, this was in line with the provision that both North and West Northamptonshire Council included in their budgets. NCT are not aligned to national pay negotiations and a proposed offer aligned to West Northamptonshire Council would require additional funding of £1.007m and whilst a formal offer has not been made the outturn reflects the financial impact should the offer be agreed. There may be further staff related costs as the result of the continuation of a specialist staffing team if these costs cannot be accommodated within the existing budget.
- 5.26 The legal services budget remains a challenge with increasing demand and additional inflationary costs in this area. The budget forecast is a projected overspend of £511k.
- 5.27 There are also pressures on transport costs of £173k, this is as a result of inflationary pressures above the net contract sum of £2.870m. There is a risk that the inflation on transport costs could be above current levels.
- 5.28 As part of the contract negotiations, it was agreed an amount of £2.243m was included for one off investments the Council's share of this was £991k whilst this is subject to detailed Business Cases being provided from the Trust it is currently forecast that this will be delivered within budget.
- 5.29 The Children's Trust Budget is monitored in year through regular meetings between officers of both North and West Northamptonshire Councils and the Trust.

Adults, Health Partnerships and Housing

- 5.30 The revenue budget within this section covers Adult Social Services, Health Partnerships and Housing outside the HRA.
- 5.31 Under the 2014 Care Act, local authority Adults Services have a responsibility to make sure that people aged over 18 years who live in their areas are provided with personal day to day care (helping people get dressed, washed, going to the bathroom, eating etc) where they cannot do things for themselves or access family support. The service also provides other physical or psychological support to people with disabilities in order to help them live a full life. The

overriding responsibility is to keep people safe and protect them from harm or neglect.

5.32 Care can take many forms and can be provided directly by the Council, through contracted organisations or families can receive a personal budget to buy suitable care for themselves. Although receiving formal or long-term care is subject to people meeting the Council's eligibility criteria, the service also has a key responsibility for helping people to stay independent and preventing or delaying the need for care.

Assistant Director of Adult Services

5.33 The **Assistant Director of Adult Services** is responsible for the strategic planning, engagement, operational and statutory delivery of Adult Social Care This includes the independent care budgets for all people aged over 18 and the social care and reablement teams. The forecast outturn position for the **Assistant Director of Adult Services** is set out in the following table.

Assistant Director of Adult Services	£'000
Expenditure	106,571
Income	(16,760)
Net Budget	89,811
Forecast	89,811
Variance	0

5.34 The forecast outturn relating to the **Assistant Director of Adult Services** is set out in the following table. The forecast at Period 2 assumes that this will be delivered on budget and that the savings detailed in **Appendix A** are achieved in year. These savings will continue to be tracked, and any impact of the achievability will form part of future reports.

Description	Budget	Forecast	Variance
£'000	£'000	£'000	%
Employees	5,647	0	0.00
Third Party payments	86,366	0	0.00
Transfer Payments	13,954	0	0.00
Income	(16,760)	0	0.00
Other budgets	604	0	0.00
Total	89,811	0	0.00

5.35 Due to the volatile nature of the Adults Social Care budget, there may be immerging risk whilst we progress through the financial year. This may include an unexpected increase in demand during the winter period, e.g., an increase in flu and other respiratory diseases, unexpected provider failures, additional pressures from acute hospitals, changes in caselaw and adverse weather. Mitigations would be sought to manage these pressures including, in exceptional circumstances, the use of reserves. This is an area the Council will continue to monitor closely.

Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Wellbeing

5.36 The Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Wellbeing is responsible for the strategic planning, engagement, operational and statutory delivery of key services for Adult Social Care. This includes ensuring services, practice and standards meet statutory requirements and that all professionals work together to deliver Making Safeguarding Personal to promote and secure the safety of local residents. The forecast outturn position for the Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Wellbeing is set out in the following table.

Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Wellbeing	£'000
Expenditure	9,046
Income	(2,469)
Net Budget	6,577
Forecast	6,577
Variance	0

5.37 The forecast outturn relating to the Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Wellbeing is set out in the following table. The forecast at Period 2 assumes that this will be delivered on budget and that the savings detailed in Appendix A are achieved in year. These savings will continue to be tracked, and any impact of the achievability will form part of future reports.

Description	Budget	Forecast Variance	
£'000	£'000	£'000	%
Employees	7,617	0	0.00
Premise	396	0	0.00
Transport	327	0	0.00
Supplies and Services	706	0	0.00
Income	(2,469)	0	0.00
Total	6,577	0	0.00

Assistant Director of Commissioning and Performance

5.38 The Assistant Director of Commissioning and Performance is responsible for ensuring services, practice and standards meet statutory requirements and includes the commissioning and monitoring of Adults Social Care external contract. The forecast outturn position for the Assistant Director of Commissioning and Performance is set out in the following table.

Assistant Director of Commissioning and Performance	£'000
Expenditure	37,171
Income	(11,928)
Net Budget	25,243
Forecast	26,213
Variance	970

5.39 The forecast variance relating to the **Assistant Director Commissioning and Performance** is set out in following table and explanations for the variances are provided below the Table.

Description	Budget	Forecast Variance	
£'000	£'000	£'000	%
Employees	2,405	0	0.00
Third party Payments	33,503	970	2.90
Income	(11,928)	0	0.00
Other	1,263	0	0.00
Total	25,243	970	3.84

- 1) The employee related costs are currently forecast to be delivered on budget.
- 2) The main areas of spend in relation to Third Party Payments are in respect of Better Care fund expenditure and the PPP Shaw contract.

The annual budget for the PPP Shaw contract which is for the provision of six residential care homes across North Northamptonshire for the over 65s is $\pounds 9.8$ m. There is a forecast pressure of $\pounds 970k$ (9.8%) in relation to this contract. the service is exploring additional mitigations for the pressure. At the time the budget was set it was assumed that the inflationary increase would be $\pounds 234k$ this was based on previous trends. The actual increase was based on average weekly earnings up to March 2023.

- 3) The main income sources are the Improved Better Care Fund (£6.8m) and Client Contributions from PPP and Block purchased care provision (£3.7m). Other income sources including multiple minor grants amount to £1.4m, this is forecast to be delivered on budget.
- **4)** Other costs amount to £1.263m and is primarily made up of Community Equipment spend, this is forecast to be delivered on budget.

Assistant Director of Housing

5.40 The **Assistant Director of Housing** provides strategic direction and leadership for the delivery of the Housing Service and housing management, this includes support for homeless people. The forecast outturn position for the **Assistant Director of Housing** is set out in the following table.

Assistant Director Housing	£'000
Expenditure	9,448
Income	(6,381)
Net Budget	3,067
Forecast	3,067
Variance	0

5.41 The forecast outturn relating to the Assistant Director of Housing is set out in the following table. The forecast at Period 2 assumes that the service will be delivered on budget and that any savings detailed in **Appendix A** are achieved in year. Savings will continue to be tracked and changes to the deliverability will form part of future reports.

Description	Budget	Forecast Variance	
£'000	£'000	£'000	%
Employees	5,221	0	0.00
Premises	667	0	0.00
Supplies and Services	1,897	0	0.00
Income	(6,381)	0	0.00
Other	1,663	0	0.00
Total	3,067	0	0.00

5.42 All services across Adults, Health Partnerships and Housing undertake regular budget monitoring, track fluctuations in spend, and work to identify additional efficiencies and savings to either mitigate forecasted overspends within the directorate or to contribute to the overall corporate position in year of the Council. Ongoing work continues to identify any further efficiencies, savings or income that can be identified to improve the overall position in-year, to set budgets for the following year, and in contributing to the medium-term financial strategy.

Public Health and Communities

- 5.43 The **Director of Public Health and Wellbeing** is a statutory officer and the principal adviser on all health matters to elected members, officers, and partners, with a leadership role spanning health improvement, health protection and healthcare public health. This includes delivering core public health services in line with grant funding and statutory requirements.
- 5.44 The grant is ringfenced and any variances will result in a movement to or from reserves ensuring that all grant conditions are met.

Assistant Director Communities and Leisure

5.45 The Assistant Director Communities and Leisure includes libraries, cultural facilities (such as museums, theatres, art galleries and heritage sites), sports and leisure facilities (such as swimming pools, tennis courts, golf, playing pitches, indoor courts/sports halls etc), archaeological archiving and activities and access to parks and open spaces for play and recreation. The Service is also responsible for community grants as well as providing education and outreach services and advice and support, encouraging physical and mental wellbeing of residents through sport and leisure-based activities The forecast outturn position for the Assistant Director Communities and Leisure is set out in the following Table.

Assistant Director Communities and Leisure	£'000
Expenditure	17,077
Income	(8,893)
Net Budget	8,184
Forecast	8,184
Variance	0

5.46 The forecast outturn relating to the **Assistant Director of Communities and Leisure** is set out in following Table. The forecast at Period 2 assumes that this will be delivered on budget and that the savings detailed in **Appendix A** are achieved in year. These savings will continue to be tracked, and any impact of the achievability will form part of future reports.

Description	Budget	Forecast Variance	
£'000	£'000	£'000	%
Employees	6,532	0	0.00
Premises	3,031	0	0.00
Supplies & Services	4,080	0	0.00
Third Party Payments	3,699	0	0.00
Other	(265)	0	0.00
Income	(8,893)	0	0.00
Total	8,184	0	0.00

Place and Economy Directorate

- 5.47 The Place and Economy budget covers the following four functional areas plus Management Costs:
 - Assets and Environment
 - Growth and Regeneration
 - Highways and Waste
 - Regulatory Services

Assistant Director Assets and Environment

5.48 The Assistant Director Assets and Environment, includes Facilities Management, Property Estate Management, Energy and Fleet Management, Grounds Maintenance, Parks and Open Spaces and On and Off-street parking enforcement. It also includes Asset and Capital Management of the Council's corporate assets and capital programmes, together with the effective management of the Council's strategic assets and landholdings. Key income and cost drivers include footfalls to the high street for parking income, number of visitors to parks and heritage sites, demand for commercial rental spaces, use of office space and use of energy. The forecast outturn position for the Assistant Director of Assets and Environment is set out in the following table.

Assistant Director Assets and Environment	£'000
Expenditure	25,745
Income	(21,864)
Net Budget	3,881
Forecast	3,835
Variance	(47)

5.49 The forecast variance relating to the **Assistant Director Assets and Environmental Services** is set out in following Table and explanations for the variances are provided below the Table.

Ref	Description	Budget	Forecast Variance	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
1	Employees	10,004	0	0.00
2	Premises	9,266	(99)	(1.07)
3	Transport	4,967	(127)	(2.56)
4	Supplies and Services	1,927	73	3.81
5	Third Party Payments	1,098	(59)	(5.38)
6	Income	(21,864)	124	(0.57)
7	Other	(1,516)	41	(2.73)
	Total	3,881	(47)	(1.20)

- 1) Employees is forecast to be delivered on Budget.
- 2) The main areas of spend within Premises are Business Rates (£1.565m), Utilities (£3.426m), Building Repairs and Maintenance (£1.522m), Rents and Services Charges (£985k), Building cleaning (£607k) and other premises costs of £1.161m.

The underspend of \pounds 99k relates to a reduction in business rates due to the review of rates revaluation.

3) The main areas of spend within Transport relates to Vehicle leasing (£2.918m), Fuel (£1.373m) and other transport costs of £676k.

There is a pressure on the increased cost of fleet leases of \pounds 116k is offset by a saving on the current cost of fuel being lower than anticipated of \pounds 243k.

- **4)** The pressure within Supplies and Services relates to the purchase of equipment and tools for Grounds Maintenance (£73k).
- 5) The saving of £59k predominately relates to a £44k management fee saving for business centres operated by the council, there are other minor net variations of £15k.
- 6) The main income sources are Rent and Leases (£17.217m), Parking Income (£1.680m) and various other forms of income amounting to £2.967m.

There is a pressure of £124k relating to Grant income that the Council had budgeted to receive to fund posts for projects such as Corby Town Funds.

7) Other minor net pressures amount to £41k.

Assistant Director Growth and Regeneration

5.50 The Assistant Director Growth and Regeneration includes Planning Services, Economic Development, Growth and infrastructure, Regeneration, Digital Infrastructure, Climate Change and Flood and Water Management. Key income/costs drivers include local demand and volume of Planning services, including major development fees, availability of Planning resources e.g., Surveyors and demand for economic activities. The forecast outturn position for the Assistant Director of Growth and Regeneration is set out in the following Table.

Assistant Director Growth and Regeneration	£'000
Expenditure	7,321
Income	(3,389)
Net Budget	3,932
Forecast	4,170
Variance	238

5.51 The forecast variance relating to the **Assistant Director Growth & Regeneration** is set out in following Table. Explanations for the variances are provided below the Table.

Ref	Description	Budget	Forecast Variance	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
1	Employees	5,635	272	4.83
2	Supplies and Services	1,535	(32)	(2.08)
3	Income	(3,389)	0	0.00
4	Other	151	(2)	(1.04)
	Total	3,932	238	6.06

- 1) There is a pressure of £272k within Employees relating to agency costs to cover vacant posts. The use of agency staff is predominantly covering vacancies due to the restructure of the service and issues with recruiting hard to fill posts, particularly in the Planning Management and Flood & Water Management Teams. Work is underway to recruit to posts through the restructure during 2023/24.
- 2) There are minor savings of £32k within Supplies and Services.

The Carbon Management Plan was approved by Executive in December 2022, since which the funding of a variety of projects have been agreed from this budget including Corporate Properties Energy and Decarbonisation Surveys, the employment of a Residential Energy Efficiency & Energy

Officer and the funding of battery-operated equipment for Grounds Maintenance. The budget underspend from 2022/23 of £482k was carried forward to 2023/24 a total of £417k has now been committed to these projects and this report includes a recommendation to transfer £482k from the Climate Change Reserve – resulting in a net nil impact to the Council's budget. Subject to Executive agreement this change will be reflected in the Period 3 budget monitoring report.

- **3)** The main income sources are Planning Income (£2.773m) and other income which amounts to £616k. This is currently forecast to come in on budget.
- 4) There are minor savings amounting to £2k.

Assistant Director Highways and Waste

5.52 The Assistant Director for Highways and Waste includes street cleaning, waste and recycling collections and disposals, including the household waste and recycling centres and Transport Management. The highways services maintain the extensive network of public roads, footpaths, and rights of way, including highway related infrastructure such as streetlights, traffic signals, bridges, gullies, and highway trees. Services also include School Transport and Concessionary fares. Key cost drivers include the tonnes of waste materials collected from households, businesses, and litter bins for recycling and disposal, variations to costs per tonnage, investment on various highway assets, as well as the impact of extreme weather conditions, school age population for school transport and the agility of the older population for concessionary fares. The forecast outturn position for the Assistant Director of Highways and Waste is set out in the following Table.

Assistant Director Highways and Waste	£'000
Expenditure	67,125
Income	(9,793)
Net Budget	57,332
Forecast	57,192
Variance	(140)

5.53 The forecast variance relating to the **Assistant Director for Highways and Waste** is set out in following Table. Explanations for the variances are provided below the Table.

Ref	Description	Budget	Forecast Variance	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
1	Employees	9,540	(5)	(0.06)
2	Supplies and Services	7,619	250	3.28
3	Transport	20,775	(373)	(1.80)
4	Third Party Payments	30,022	0	0.00
5	Income	(9,793)	(20)	0.20
6	Other	(831)	9	(1.06)
	Total	57,332	(140)	(0.24)

- 1) There is a minor variance on Employees of £5k.
- 2) The overall forecast within Supplies and Services is a pressure of £250k of which £222k relates to the Waste Management Procurement project. The Council currently has a waste disposal contract with Thalia for all kerbside collected general waste which is due to expire in April 2025. There is no allocated budget for the procurement of this project which has resulted in a pressure against supplies and services.
- **3)** The main areas of spend within Transport relate to contract payments for Home to School Transport, Social Care Transport and Concessionary payments to transport operators.

The Department for Transport had requested that authorities continue to reimburse bus operators based on the average number of journeys in the winter months prior to the COVID-19 outbreak (December 2019 to February 2020).

The alternative is that the Council reverts to paying bus operators on the actual number of journeys. Reimbursing bus operators based on the average rather than the actual usage is estimated to be between £500k and £700k higher. The Council's support to the bus industry helps safeguard local bus services for residents throughout the pandemic and during the recovery period. This approach was agreed by the Executive at the meeting on 26th August. The forecast underspend is £373k.

The DFT are rebasing the reimbursement methodology for 2024/25 and announcements around this will be made later this year.

- 4) The main areas of spend relate to Waste Disposal (£17.470m), Street Lighting (£6.638m) and Highways Maintenance (£4.157m) and other third-party payments of £1.757. These are currently forecast to come in on budget. There are budgetary challenges with regard to Highways Maintenance and the increased requirement for repairs due to the deterioration of the highway network, together with the effect of inflation on the cost of services. Work is ongoing to identify how the service can be delivered differently in order to remain within the allocated budget; this may require a change in approach to maintaining the highways network.
- 5) There is a minor variance of £20k within income which relates to the Garden Waste subscription service performing better than initially predicted. It is worth noting that whilst subscriptions have gone up the associated costs to deliver the service have also increased.
- 6) There are minor pressures amounting to £9k.

Assistant Director Regulatory Services

5.54 The **Assistant Director Regulatory Services** includes Bereavement Services, Building Control, Emergency Planning, Environmental Health, Trading Standards, and the Travellers Unit. The main income and cost drivers include the local economy and market for Building Control income, age/morbidity demographic rate for bereavement services (burials and cremations), public health demand for Environmental Health services, and legal/statutory obligations for building regulations and licensing. The forecast outturn position for the **Assistant Director of Regulatory Services** is set out in the following table.

Assistant Director Regulatory Services	£'000
Expenditure	6,854
Income	(4,428)
Net Budget	2,426
Forecast	2,316
Variance	(110)

5.55 The forecast variance relating to the **Assistant Director Regulatory Services** is set out in following Table. Explanations for the variances are provided below the Table.

Ref	Description	Budget	Forecast Variance	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
1	Employees	5,186	25	0.48
2	Premises	690	24	3.48
3	Income	(4,428)	(156)	3.52
4	Other	978	(3)	(0.31)
	Total	2,426	(110)	(4.53)

- 1) There is a pressure of £25k within Employees relating to agency costs in Bereavement services to provide additional staffing required to support service delivery pending the restructuring of the service during 2023/24. An MTFP saving for 2023/24 of £185k for the restructure within Regulatory Services was approved of which £95k has been identified, leaving a pressure of £90k which will be covered by vacancies across the service. Work is currently being undertaken within the service area to deliver the saving.
- 2) The main areas of spend relate to Grounds Maintenance (£266k), Business Rates (£135k), Utilities (£213k) and other premises costs of £76k.

There are minor pressures of £24k within premises relating to increased business rates and utility pressures in Bereavement Services.

3) The main income sources are Bereavement Services (£2.226m), Building Control Income (£1m), Licensing (£936k), other minor income sources which amount to £266k.

The overall income forecast is a favourable variance of £156k, The, forecast outturn for income from Bereavement Services is £233k higher than budget this is reflective of the 2022/23 outturn and activity levels remain similar in 2023/24. This is partially offset by a pressure on Building Control Income where income levels are forecast to be £89k lower than budget with the

forecast being based on 2022/23 activity levels. Other forms of income are forecast to be delivered on budget.

4) There are minor net savings amounting to £3k.

Place and Economy Management

5.56 This area includes the management costs for the Place and Economy Directorate and is forecast to be on budget.

Directorate Management	£'000
Expenditure	1,058
Income	0
Net Budget	1,058
Forecast	1,058
Variance	0

Finance, Performance, Procurement and Revenues and Benefits Service

5.57 The Finance, Performance and Procurement Service is responsible for leading the management, development, performance and continuous improvement of all Finance, Audit and Risk services and leading on, all aspects of procurement delivery, category management, commissioning and contract management within the Council. The Revenue and Benefits Service is responsible for the collection of both Council Tax and Business Rates and in assessing, awarding and payments of benefits. The forecast outturn position for Finance, Performance, Procurement and Revenues and Benefits Service for is set out in the following Table.

Finance, Performance, Procurement and Revenue and Benefits Service	£'000
Expenditure	83,494
Income	(68,793)
Net Budget	14,701
Forecast	14,751
Variance	50

5.58 The forecast variance relating to the **Finance**, **Performance**, **Procurement and Revenues and Benefits Service** is set out in following Table. Explanations for the variances are provided below the Table.

Ref	Description	Budget	Forecast Variance	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
1	Employees	15,954	0	0.00
2	Supplies & Services	2,617	0	0.00
3	Transfer Payments	64,711	0	0.00
4	Other	212	50	23.58
5	Income	(68,793)	0	0.00
	Total	14,701	50	0.34

- 1) Employees is forecast to be delivered within budget.
- 2) The main areas of spend relate to Audit fees (£0.848m) and Insurance premiums (£1.140m). This is forecast to be delivered on budget.
- **3)** The relates to Housing Benefit payments. This is forecast to be delivered on budget.
- 4) Amounts shown within Other costs include payments to the lead authority board (£619k) for shared services provided on behalf of the Council. The forecast pressure of £50k, relates to Account Payable and Accounts Receivable functions.
- **5)** The main areas of income relate to Housing Benefit Subsidy and income from the government for the cost associated with the cost of collecting, NNDR & Council Tax income.

Chief Executive's Office

5.59 The functions managed through the **Chief Executive's Office**, include the Chief Executive, the Assistant Chief Executive, Executive Support, Communications, Consultation, Engagement and Corporate Equalities, Print Room and the Web Team. The service supports teams across the authority, providing leadership and strategic direction to secure a cohesive and coordinated approach to deliver and improve organisation-wide service provision, resource allocation and prioritisation. The forecast outturn position for the **Chief Executive's Office** is set out in the following Table.

Chief Executive's Office	£'000
Expenditure	1,724
Income	(27)
Net Budget	1,697
Forecast	1,697
Variance	0

5.60 The forecast outturn relating to the Chief Executives Office is set out in following Table. The forecast at Period 2 assumes that this will be delivered on budget and that the savings detailed in **Appendix A** are achieved in year. These

savings will continue to be tracked, and any impact of the achievability will form part of future reports.

Description	Budget	Forecast Variance	
£'000	£'000	£'000	%
Employees	2,051	0	0.00
Supplies & Services	485	0	0.00
Other	(812)	0	0.00
Income	(27)	0	0.00
Total	1,697	0	0.00

Chief Information Officer

5.61 The **Chief Information Officer** is responsible for the delivery of efficient and effective management of all aspects of IT operations, Digital, IT programmes of work, IT commercial contracts and supplier relationships and IT Service delivery teams and for transforming the IT and Digital Services team, this includes managing IT services provided by West Northamptonshire Council. The forecast outturn position for the **Chief Information Officer** is set out in the following Table.

Chief Information Officer	£'000
Expenditure	7,975
Income	(2)
Net Budget	7,973
Forecast	8,342
Variance	369

5.62 The forecast variance relating to the **Chief Information Officer** is set out in following Table and explanations for the variances are provided below the Table.

Ref	Description	Budget	Forecast Variance	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
1	Employees	1,855	279	15.04
2	Supplies & Services	2,976	0	0.00
3	Third Party Payments	3,682	90	2.44
4	Other	(540)	0	0.00
	Total	7,973	369	4.63

- Employee cost are forecast to be a pressure of £279k this relates to costs that were previously capitalised that are no longer able to be treated as capital as IT systems are predominately Cloud based which is a revenue cost.
- 2) The main areas of spend relate to software license costs, data line rental and telephone costs. This is forecast to be delivered on budget.

- **3)** The main area of spend relates to the shared IT service with WNC. The pressure reflects estimated inflationary increases from the IT SLA with WNC which amounts to £90k.
- 4) Other relates to internal income recharges.

Customer and Governance

Assistant Director of Human Resources

5.63 The Assistant Director of Human Resources is responsible for the leadership, development and implementation of relevant strategies for the area and council to deliver its corporate HR priorities, including HR Advisory, Workforce Planning & Development, Learning & Development and Health & Safety. The forecast outturn position for the Assistant Director of Human Resources is set out in the following Table.

Assistant Director of Human Resources	£'000
Expenditure	5,398
Income	(1,537)
Net Budget	3,861
Forecast	3,861
Variance	0

5.64 The forecast variance relating to the **Assistant Director of Human Resources** is set out in following Table. The forecast at Period 2 assumes that this will be delivered on budget and that the savings detailed in Appendix A are achieved in year. These savings will continue to be tracked, and any impact of the achievability will form part of future reports.

Description	Budget	Forecast Variance	
£'000	£'000	£'000	%
Employees	4,934	0	0.00
Supplies & Services	504	0	0.00
Third Party Payments	418	0	0.00
Other	(458)	0	0.00
Income	(1,537)	0	0.00
Total	3,861	0	0.00

Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services

5.65 The **Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services** is responsible for developing and delivering a strong governance and ethical framework and is responsible for contract management of the legal services provided through Pathfinder Law and the management of the internal Legal Services Team, Democratic & Election Services, FOI & Data Governance and Registration and

the & Coroners Services. The forecast outturn position for the **Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services** is set out in the following Table.

Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic	£'000
Expenditure	6,009
Income	(896)
Net Budget	5,113
Forecast	5,113
Variance	0

5.66 The forecast outturn relating to the **Assistant Director of Legal Services** is set out in the following Table. The forecast at Period 2 assumes that this will be delivered on budget and that the savings detailed in **Appendix A** are achieved in year. These savings will continue to be tracked, and any impact of the achievability will form part of future reports.

Description	Budget	Forecast Variance	
£'000	£'000	£'000	%
Employees	3,683	0	0.00
Supplies & Services	1,962	0	0.00
Third Party Payments	762	0	0.00
Other	(398)	0	0.00
Income	(896)	0	0.00
Total	5,113	0	0.00

Assistant Director of Customer Services

5.67 The **Assistant Director of Customer Services** is responsible for leading and implementing the transformation and aggregation of all the Customer Service and Complaints teams and is responsible for setting the key priorities and direction for Customer Services and Complaints in line with the corporate plan. The role is also responsible for the leadership, development and implementation of customer and digital strategies for the council, to deliver an improved customer experience and the administration of the 'Blue Badges' parking scheme. The forecast outturn position for the **Assistant Director of Customer Services** is set out in the following Table.

Assistant Director Customer Services	£'000	
Expenditure	2,154	
Income	(108)	
Net Budget	2,046	
Forecast	2,046	
Variance	0	

5.68 The forecast outturn relating to the **Assistant Director of Customer Services** is set out in the following Table. The forecast at Period 2 assumes that this will be delivered on budget and that the savings detailed in **Appendix A** are

achieved in year. These savings will continue to be tracked, and any impact of the achievability will form part of future reports.

Description	Budget	Forecast	Variance
£'000	£'000	£'000	%
Employees	2,862	0	0.00
Supplies & Services	159	0	0.00
Other	(867)	0	0.00
Income	(108)	0	0.00
Total	2,046	0	0.00

Household Support Fund 4

5.69 It was reported to the April meeting of the Executive that the Council had received a grant of £4,930,984 from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for the Household Support Fund 4 for distribution across households in North Northamptonshire. This will be allocated, via various packages, to eligible families and individuals in specific financial hardship.

6. Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

6.1 Within North Northamptonshire prior to 1st April 2021 there were two HRA accounts, covering the sovereign councils of Kettering and Corby respectively. As part of the move to a single unitary council for North Northamptonshire, there was a statutory requirement to create a single HRA for the area. Whilst North Northamptonshire Council must only operate one HRA it will, for a period of time, operate two separate Neighbourhood Accounts (Corby Neighbourhood Account and the Kettering Neighbourhood Account).

Corby Neighbourhood Account

6.2 The forecast position for the Corby Neighbourhood Account at the end of Period 2 shows an overspend of £43k. This is summarised in the following Table:

Corby Neighbourhood Account			
	Current	Projection	Forecast
	Budget	P2	Variance
	2023/24	2023/24	
	£000	£000	£000
INCOME			
Rents - Dwellings Only	20,692	20,688	4
Service Charges	641	602	39
HRA Investment Income	148	148	0
Total Income	21,481	21,438	43
EXPENDITURE			
Repairs and Maintenance	6,440	6,440	0
General Management	5,438	5,438	0
HRA Self Financing	2,125	2,125	0
Revenue Contribution to Capital	4,875	4,875	0
Transfer To / (From) Reserves	807	807	0
Special Services	1,014	1,014	0
Other	782	782	0
Total Expenditure	21,481	21,481	0
Net Operating Expenditure	0	43	43

- 6.3 The forecast position for rental income from dwellings at Period 2 is £4k lower than budget a rent gain of £68k is a result of the Right to Buy Sales being 15 less than the budgeted amount of 50 in 2022/23, resulting in a higher number of dwellings at 1st April 2023 resulting in a higher rental yield; however, this is forecast of be off-set by a shortfall of £72k due to lost income from a higher void rate. RTB sales are currently forecast at 45 due to a reduction in demand for RTBs in the current economic climate. The number of sales and void rates are areas that will be closely monitored during the course of the year.
- 6.4 The pressure on Service Charge Income of £39k is a result of a £19k budget inflationary increase not required on the fixed service charges and £20k of optional emergency alarm charges not taken up in the sheltered schemes and service charges on void properties.

Kettering Neighbourhood Account

6.5 The forecast position for the Kettering Neighbourhood Account at the end of Period 2 shows an overspend of £50k. This is summarised in the following Table:

Kettering Neighbourhood Accour	nt		
	Current	Projection	Forecast
	Budget	P2	Variance
	2023/24	2023/24	
	£000	£000	£000
INCOME			
Rents - Dwellings Only	16,763	16,713	50
Service Charges	487	487	0
HRA Investment Income	21	21	0
Total Income	17,271	17,221	50
EXPENDITURE			
Repairs and Maintenance	4,632	4,632	0
General Management	2,988	2,988	0
HRA Self Financing	4,986	4,986	0
Revenue Contribution to Capital	3,268	3,268	0
Transfer To / (From) Reserves	(565)	(565)	0
Special Services	1,257	1,257	0
Other	705	705	0
Total Expenditure	17,271	17,271	0
Net Operating Expenditure	0	50	50

- 6.6 The forecast position for rental income from dwellings at Period 2 is £50k lower than budget a rent gain of £67k is a result of the Right to Buy Sales being 14 less than the budgeted amount of 30 in 2022/23, resulting in a higher number of dwellings at 1st April 2023 resulting in a higher rental yield; however, this is offset by a forecast shortfall of £117k due to lost income from a higher void rate. RTB sales are currently forecast at 30. The number of sales and void rates are areas that will be closely monitored during the course of the year.
- 6.7 There could be further pressures to the two Neighbourhood Accounts as the HRA holds a depreciation charge that recognises the cost of managing and maintaining the Council stock at the current level. This funding represents a revenue cost to the HRA that is then used to support the capital programme to deliver the required enhancements to the stock to keep it fit for purpose. The revenue contribution to capital expenditure as a minimum must equal the depreciation charge and the value of the housing stock has increased resulting in a higher Revenue Contribution to Capital, the actual valuations will be confirmed as part of the final accounts process. These pressures would be mitigated by utilising the attributable debt from Right to Buy Sales.

7. Dedicated Schools Grant

- 7.1 The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is a ring-fenced specific grant allocated to the Council by the Government to support a range of education related services.
- 7.2 The Department for Education (DfE) currently operate a four-block funding model for funding schools and pre-16 education including early years as set out in the following table:

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)					
Schools Block	Central Schools Services Block	High Needs Block	Early Years Block		
The Schools Block is the largest element of the DSG and is allocated to Schools and Academies for day to day spending in their individual budgets.	The Central Schools Block provides funding for local authorities to carry out central functions on behalf of maintained schools and academies.	The High Needs funding system supports provision for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) from their early years to age 25.	The Early Years Block provides funding for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds.		

7.3 The total DSG Budget for 2023/24 amounts to £354.963m. After allowing for recoupment, which is where a local authority's DSG allocation is adjusted to reflect the grant that has been paid direct to academies, the net budget for the Council is £121.200m. The forecast outturn at this very early stage is showing a balanced budget and this is summarised in the following Table:

Dedicated Schools Gra	nts Forecast (Outturn 2023/24	4		
Block	Gross Budget	Recoupment	Net Budget	Forecast Net Spend	Forecast Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Schools Block	270,284	222,910	47,374	47,374	0
Central Schools Block	3,287	0	3,287	3,287	0
High Needs Block	57,851	10,853	46,998	46,998	0
Early Year Block	23,541	0	23,541	23,541	0
Total	354,963	233,763	121,200	121,200	0

7.4 The current forecast is for the DSG to be delivered within the funding envelope. The High Needs Block remains a significant risk and will be an area that will be closely monitored. Should there be any budget pressures in these blocks they will be managed, in the first instance, through available DSG reserves. The forecast outturn is also reported to the Schools Forum.

8. Conclusions

8.1 The forecast for 2023/24 is an overspend of £7.120m based on the position as at the end of Period 2. The Council's contingency budget of £3.746m has not, as yet, been used to mitigate these pressures recognising the risks that remain within the forecast, most notably pay and price inflation. Service Directors will be working to mitigate these pressures in-year, including those of the Children's Trust. The Council also holds earmarked reserves which may be utilised if mitigations are not identified to fund the current pressures.

8.2 The key risks which are set out in the report will continue to be monitored and actions sought as required throughout 2023/24. The achievement of the approved savings targets is also integral to this process and will continue to be monitored and reported.

9. Implications (including financial implications)

9.1 **Resources, Financial and Transformation**

9.1.1 The financial implications are set out in this report. The current forecast position for the General Fund is an overspend of £7.120m and the Housing Revenue Account is forecasting an overspend of £91k, the Dedicated Schools Grant is forecasting to come in on budget.

8.2 Legal and Governance

- 9.2.1 The provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 set out requirements for the Council to set a balanced budget with regard to the advice of its Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer).
- 8.2.2 The robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of the proposed reserves were considered under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 prior to the Council agreeing its 2023/24 budget.

8.3 **Relevant Policies and Plans**

9.3.1 The budget provides the financial resources to enable the Council to deliver on its plans and meet corporate priorities as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan.

8.4 **Risk**

- 8.4.1 The deliverability of the 2023/24 Revenue Budget is monitored by Budget Managers and Assistant Directors. Where any variances or emerging pressures are identified during the year then mitigating actions will be sought and management interventions undertaken.
- 8.4.2 Details of pressures, risks and mitigating actions implemented will be provided as part of the finance monitoring reports as the year progresses. The main risks identified include demand led services such as Adult Social Care, children's services and home to school transport together with the impact of high levels of inflation.
- 8.4.3 Whilst services will work hard to offset pressures, the Council holds a number of reserves to help safeguard against the risks inherent within the budget for 2023/24.

8.5 **Consultation**

8.5.1 The 2023/24 budget was subject to consultation prior to approval by Council in February 2023.

8.6 **Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel**

8.6.1 Not applicable.

8.7 **Consideration by Scrutiny**

8.7.1 The budget monitoring reports are presented to the Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee for review after they have been presented to the Executive Committee.

8.8 Equality Implications

8.8.1 There are no specific issues as a result of this report.

8.9 **Climate and Environment Impact**

8.9.1 Among the new Council's priorities will be putting in place plans to improve the local environment and tackle the ongoing climate emergency. Where these have a financial impact then it will be reflected in the budget.

8.10 **Community Impact**

9.10.1 No distinct community impacts have been identified because of the proposals included in this report.

8.11 Crime and Disorder Impact

8.11.1 There are no specific issues arising from this report.

9 Issues and Choices

9.1 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 and as such there are no specific choices within the report.

10 Background Papers

11.1 The following background papers can be considered in relation to this report.

Final Budget 2023/24 and Medium-Term Financial Plans, including the Council Tax Resolution, North Northamptonshire Council, 23rd February 2023.

Monthly Budget Forecast Reports to the Executive.

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Appendix A

Directorate	Assistant Director	Proposal Title	Proposal Description	2023/24 £000	Red	Amber	Green
Children & Education	Assistant Director Education	DFE SEND Review/Multi Agency SEND Self Assessment and Action Plan	Additional resources to meet the increase and clear the back log relating to Education and Health Care Plans. An additional amount of £700k was included in the 22/23 Budget.	(175)	(175)		
Children & Education	Assistant Director Education	Teachers Pensions	Budget Realignment for historical contribution for the Teachers Pensions Fund	(275)			(275)
Children & Education	Assistant Director Education	DSG Funding	Budget Realignment of the DSG contribution towards the historical contribution for the Teachers Pensions Fund	(462)			(462)
Children & Education	Commissioning & Partnerships	Additional Demand - Payments to other Establishments	Disaggregated Additional Demand - Payments to other Establishments Budget for Children, Families and Education, budget not utilised	(691)			(691)
Children & Education	Commissioning & Partnerships	Disaggregated Budget not required	Disaggregated Budget - budget not utilised	(412)			(412)
Adults, Health, Partnerships & Housing	Adult Services	CCG Discharge Packages Covid 19	Reversal of one off Covid Pressure relating to 2021/22	(513)			(513)
Adults, Health, Partnerships & Housing	Adult Services	Strengths based working	Transformation of adult social care pathways and processes to ensure focus on client outcomes, independence, better decision making and best practice approaches to reduce delays and spend.	(587)		(587)	
Adults, Health, Partnerships & Housing	Adult Services	Demographic and prevalence pressures adult social care	Reduction in demand due to Provider transformation Phase 1 - Specialist Care Centre	(1,189)		(1,189)	
Adults, Health, Partnerships & Housing	Adult Services	Staffing	Savings from review of wider staffing budget to fund Social Worker Market Forces	(100)			(100)
Adults, Health, Partnerships & Housing	Safeguarding and Wellbeing	Staffing	Disaggregation of Shared Lives to be managed within the wider provider services staffing	(23)			(23)
Adults, Health, Partnerships & Housing	Commissioning & Performance	Shaw PPP	Reduction in number of residential placements made in the independent sector owing to increase utilisation beds in PPP properties.	(1,192)		(1,192)	
Adults, Health, Partnerships & Housing	Commissioning & Performance	Shaw PPP	Increase utilisation of capacity within Discharge to Access	(1,058)		(1,058)	
Adults, Health, Partnerships & Housing	Commissioning & Performance	Contract Rationalisation	Increasing utilisation of framework providers for homecare and reduction of more expensive spot contracts	(67)			(67)
Adults, Health, Partnerships & Housing	Commissioning & Performance	Staffing	Saving of wider staffing budget to fund PBSS	(125)		(125)	
Adults, Health, Partnerships & Housing	Housing	Homelessness Policy Changes	Harmonisation of Homelessness Policies	(200)			(200)
Adults, Health, Partnerships & Housing	Housing	Maximisation of Grant	Capitalisation of posts for work relating to Disabled Facility Grants	(127)			(127)
Adults, Health, Partnerships & Housing	Director of Public Health	Realignment of Grant	Realignment of grant following disaggregation	(138)			(138)
Public Health & Communities	Communities	Income generation	Fees and Charges - Leisure	(195)			(195)
Public Health & Communities	Communities	Efficiencies	Legacy budgets no longer required	(42)			(42)
Public Health & Communities	Communities	Efficiencies	Review of Strategic Grants	(7)			(7)
Public Health & Communities	Communities	Staffing	Service Transformation	(360)			(360)
Public Health & Communities	Communities	Income Generation	External Funding for Events	(30)			(30)
Public Health & Communities	Communities	Efficiencies	Review of Neighbourhood Centres	(45)			(45)
Public Health & Communities	Communities	Income Generation	Introduce an E-Gym offer	(63)			(63)
Public Health & Communities	Communities	Income Generation	Repurposing of Public Health grant to fund wellbeing posts	(93)			(93)
Public Health & Communities	Communities	Public Health Grant	Grant funding to support services in addressing Public Health needs	(500)			(500)

Appendix A

Directorate	Assistant Director	Proposal Title	Proposal Description	2023/24 Red £000	Amber	Green
Place & Economy	Growth & Regeneration	Increase in Fees & Charges	Increase in Fees & Charges	(10)		(1
Place & Economy	Assets and Environment	Additional income	Garage Income	(10)	(10)	
Place & Economy	Assets and Environment	Assets & Environment redesign	Assets & Environment Service Improvement and Redesign	(95)	(95)	
Place & Economy	Assets and Environment	Grounds Maintenance	Operational changes to grounds maintenance costs & services	(57)	(57)	
Place & Economy	Assets and Environment	Grounds Maintenance	Purchase of equipment resulting in reduction in equipment hire charges	(15)	(15)	
Place & Economy	Assets and Environment	Grounds Maintenance	Purchase of equipment resulting in reduction in equipment hire charges	(30)	(30)	
Place & Economy	Assets and Environment	Pay/Salaries	Operational changes to cleaning services	(14)	(14)	
Place & Economy	Assets and Environment	Pay/Salaries	Operational changes to Council Buildings.	(31)	(31)	
Place & Economy	Assets and Environment	Rental Income	Additional income from rent reviews across the commercial portfolio.	(80)	(80)	
Place & Economy	Assets and Environment	Enterprise Centre Business Case - Full year effects of previous decisions	Increase in income based on appointed operators business case.	(64)	(64)	
Place & Economy	Growth & Regeneration	Climate Change	Delivery of a range of climate change initiatives to reduce NNC's carbon footprint towards net zero	(250)		(25
Place & Economy	Highways & Waste	Highways Contract	Demobilisation costs for existing highways contract - reverses one-off pressure which was reflected in the 22/23 Budget	(201)	(201)	
Place & Economy	Highways & Waste	Waste Management	Disposal tonnage - HWRC Residual Waste	(79)	(79)	
Place & Economy	Highways & Waste	Waste Management	Disposal tonnage - HWRC Wood Waste	(27)	(27)	
Place & Economy	Highways & Waste	Green Waste	Harmonisation of Green Waste Charges	(1,358)		(1,35
Place & Economy	Highways & Waste	Promote food waste	Benefit of promoting the food waste service in the Corby and East Northants area	(50)	(50)	
Place & Economy	Highways & Waste	Refuse fees & charges	Increase refuse & recycling fees & charges	(135)	(135)	
Place & Economy	Highways & Waste	Highways fees & charges	Increase highways & transport fees and charges	(44)	(44)	
Place & Economy	Highways & Waste	Review Litter bin network	Reduction in street cleaning costs	(5)	(5)	
Place & Economy	Highways & Waste	HWRC Income	Increase income from HWRCs	(153)	(153)	
Place & Economy	Regulatory Services	Restructure	Rationalisation of service provision	(185)	(95)	(9
Place & Economy	Regulatory Services	Specialist Equipment For Service	Base budget allocation for incident response released	(280)		(28
Place & Economy	Regulatory Services	Deliverv Increase in Fees & Charges	Increase in Fees & Charges	(227)	(227)	
Enabling Services	Finance & Performance	Pensions	Pension - Historical Pension Fund Deficit	(232)		(23
Enabling Services	Finance & Performance	Pensions	Reduction in Employer's Pension Contribution Rate	(1,890)	(1,890)	
Enabling Services	Finance & Performance	Pensions	Disaggregation of Legacy Pensions	(450)		(45
Enabling Services	Finance & Performance	Housing Benefit Subsidy	Additional income relating to Housing Benefit Subsidy	(5)	(5)	
Enabling Services	Chief Executive's Office	Staffing	Staff Savings	(7)		(

Appendix A

Directorate	Assistant Director	Proposal Title	Proposal Description	2023/24 £000	Red	Amber	Green
Enabling Services	Chief Executive's Office	Communications	Communications - Savings on professional services not utilised.	(3)			(
Enabling Services	Chief Information Officer	ICT Disaggregation	Upfront work needed for ICT disaggregation - one-off, reversal of 2022/23 pressure	(100)			(100
Enabling Services	Chief Information Officer	ICT Contract Rationalisation	Rationalisation of service contracts - largely mobile telephone contracts	(50)			(5
Enabling Services	Chief Information Officer	ICT application rationalisation	Rationalisation of service usage - largely Microsoft contract	(50)			(50
Enabling Services	Human Resources	Pay and Grading Review	Delivery of Pay and Grading Review	(120)			(120
Enabling Services	Legal Services	Fleet	Changes to the operational arrangements for the mayor	(19)			(1
Enabling Services	Legal Services	Legal Income	Increase in Legal Income target	(150)			(15
Enabling Services	Legal Services	Upper Tier Legal Services	Anticipated saving from bringing upper tier legal services in house	(100)			(10
Enabling Services	Customer Services	Customer Services Replacement of Case Management System & Telephone System	Case management system and telephony replacement	(106)		(106)	
Enabling Services	Customer Services	Uniforms	Reduction in Staff Uniforms	(8)			(8
Enabling Services	Customer Services	Staffing	Transformation Staff Savings	(106)			(106
Corporate	Corporate	Treasury Management	Reversal of Covid Pressure from 2021/22 for £342k - based on interest recovery by 2023/24	(342)			(342
Corporate	Corporate	Treasury Management	Additional Income generated from higher than anticipated interest rates	(500)			(500
Corporate	Corporate	Treasury Management	Reduced costs following the repayment of loans	(109)			(10
			Total	(16,416)	(175)	(7,564)	(8,67

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EXECUTIVE 12th July 2023

Report Title	Capital Programme Update 2023/24
Report Author	Janice Gotts, Executive Director of Finance and Performance Janice.gotts@northnorthants.gov.uk
Lead Member	Councillor Lloyd Bunday, Executive Member for Finance and Transformation

Key Decision	⊠ Yes	□ No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	⊠ Yes	□ No
Are there public sector equality duty implications?	□ Yes	⊠ No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	□ Yes	⊠ No
Applicable paragraph number for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1974		

List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to request approval for capital schemes that have come forward for inclusion in within the Council's approved Capital Programme. Approval of the schemes and associated funding will allow these schemes to move forward to procurement and delivery.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 This report contains details of projects which have been submitted by officers to the Council's Strategic Capital Board as part of the Council's Capital Approval Process. Each scheme must complete a business case setting out the changes requested to the Capital Programme, including the purpose of the spend, the expected outcomes and the financial implications together with funding routes.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that Executive:
 - i) Approve 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) Recommend to Council to approve the borrowing proposals for:
 - a. Environmental Services grounds maintenance equipment £445k
- 3.2 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
- 3.3 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.

4. Report Background

- 4.1 The Capital Programme is the Council's plan for investing in assets to efficiently deliver its statutory services, and to improve the local infrastructure of North Northamptonshire, with the benefits lasting over a number of years. The Council is required to set a balanced revenue budget and therefore must ensure that where borrowing is proposed to fund the cost of capital that the cost of servicing the debt is affordable within the Council's revenue budget.
- 4.2 Resources come from several sources including Government grants, capital receipts from surplus land and buildings, revenue contributions, other external contributions and borrowing. The Council captures its projected capital expenditure within the Capital Programme to monitor the same, help to control costs and ensure transparency. Given that the Capital Programme is approved by Executive, changes to it are also approved by Executive unless authority has been delegated in accordance with the Council's constitution.
- 4.3 This report provides an update to the Capital Programme 2023/24 as adopted by the Council in February 2023 and requests that the proposed changes are approved and reflected within the programme.

5. Issues and Choices – Further Detail on the Recommendations and Updates to the Capital Programme

- 5.1 UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) £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 development pool The UKSPF Core Funding was announced in early 2022. Eligible Local Authorities were invited to submit an Investment Plan to secure their allocation. North Northamptonshire was allocated a total of £4.8m across the three years of the programme (2022/23 to 2024/25). This is a mix of revenue and capital funding. The Investment Plan set out the priority interventions and was submitted following approval of a Members' panel (and approval from the Chief Executive, Leader, S151 officer and local MPs). The Investment Plan was approved in December 2022.
- 5.2 This request seeks approval for years two and three of the programme, as reported to Executive in November 2022.
- 5.3 Kettering High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) increase in existing budget of £371.4k in 2023/24 which is to be funded £93.9k from external grants, £132.5k from S106 contributions and £145k of virements from schemes already approved within the capital programme (overall change to 2023/24 programme of £226.4k) this scheme was originally approved in 2020/21 by Kettering Borough Council, where a total budget of £3.884m for the scheme was originally approved, securing £1.48m of Historic England grant funding towards public realm and building improvements within Kettering.

Additional Historic England funding of £150k and £504k was then secured with extensions to the scheme, with additional reports being taken to the Executive in August 2021 and February 2022.

- 5.4 The project team has been successful in meeting, and indeed exceeding expectations of the Kettering HSHAZ scheme, having received numerous complements from Historic England Historic England have completed a review of all HSHAZ projects across the country, identifying less successful scheme with a view to re-allocating unspent funds. The Kettering scheme has been successful in leveraging an additional £93.3k of funding towards additional extensions to the scheme, due to its success to date.
- 5.5 In addition, to meet the requirements of the Historic England grant agreement, funds that were originally planned to be revenue are now required to be repurposed as capital spend. Amounting to £277.5k, this increase is to align the scheme with the original match funding agreement percentages. To ensure no additional internal resources are required, work has been completed by the Place Directorate to identify £132.5k additional Section 106 contributions that can be applied to the scheme, plus £145k of virements from other schemes within the capital programme. Transferring funds from the following four schemes through budget virements will have a net nil impact on the capital programme for 2023/24:

Virements from	£000
Public Realm	48
Conservation Area	4
Meadow Road Urban Park	43
London Road	50
Total to vire to HSHAZ scheme	145

- 5.6 Warren Bridge Flood Defence £303k in 2023/24 which is to be funded from the following sources: £213k from external grants and £90k from residents' contributions Following three separate flood incidents affecting Warren Bridge in Oundle, a Section 19 Flood Investigation Report was subsequently carried out which resulted in a study into how flood events at this location could be mitigated. The study aimed to identify protection measures against flooding from the Lyveden Brook and investigate ways in which the measures could be funded. As a result of the initial study, a capital works scheme is proposed to mitigate the issue through construction of a flood defence wall on the right bank adjacent to residential properties and garden reinstatement / landscaping.
- 5.7 The scheme is proposed to be funded through £213k of external grants plus £90k of resident contributions. A legal agreement will be in place between the Council and the residents before any works on the scheme start to both ensure that funds are in place and that the ownership and any associated commitments in respect of the defence wall is transferred to the residents.

- 5.8 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 The NNC corporate plan provides a commitment to taking a lead in improving the local environment and ensuring its sustainability for generations, alongside modern services which make a difference to our local connected communities. To meet this commitment, it is vital that NNC invests in the maintenance of its green infrastructure. This proposal is seeking vital funds necessary to ensure the environment service continues to be deliverable.
- 5.9 Within the grounds and parks services, equipment which is no longer in a serviceable state and not economically viable to continue in active service has been identified. There is also an environmental impact in continuing to use outdated technology and there are risks to users as the equipment deteriorates. Modernising elements of the equipment and fleet will ensure service provision beyond 2030.
- 5.10 Leasing vehicles rather than purchasing has been explored as an alternative option, however the annual rental payment for the contract term was found to be cost prohibitive, being considerably more expensive than outright purchase.
- 5.11 An early estimate of grounds maintenance equipment replacement of £400k was previously included within the Development Pool in 2024/25 but due to the recent failure of several vehicles and equipment there is now an urgent need for this to be utilised in 2023/24 to enable the continuation of a quality service across the teams. The fully costed scheme of £440k is proposed to come from borrowing, due to lack of external grants available for the purchase of plant equipment. The request to borrow will be presented to Full Council for approval.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 The Warren Bridge scheme in sections 5.6-5.7 requires completion of a legal agreement between the Council and the residents who are impacted by the flood defence proposal. No funds will be committed until satisfactory completion of this agreement.
- 6.2 The grounds maintenance equipment scheme in sections 5.8–5.11 proposes borrowing as the funding source. If agreed by Executive, this will require approval of the borrowing by Full Council.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 **Resources, Finance and Transformation**

7.1.1 The additional budget requirements in this report are funded from the use of external grants, S106 contributions, resident contributions and borrowing. The funding source for each scheme is set out in the recommendations in section 3 and within the scheme details as set out within section 5.

7.2 Legal

- 7.2.1 The Council must utilise funding and deliver schemes in line with the restrictions and requirements as set out in the agreements linked to that funding and the requirements as set out in the Council's Constitution, in particular the budget setting and policy framework and the financial regulations.
- 7.2.2 A legal agreement will be required between the Council and the residents involved as part of the Warren Bridge Flood Defence Scheme before the works are undertaken. This is to ensure that the funding is secure and that ownership remains with the residents.
- 7.2.3 New borrowing must be approved by Council. The scheme identified for grounds maintenance equipment in sections 5.8–5.11 is proposed to be funded from borrowing, therefore the Executive is requested to recommend the funding route to Council for approval as set out in section 3.1 (ii).

7.3 **Risk**

- 7.3.1 The deliverability of the 2023/24 Capital Programme is monitored by each accountable project manager and senior officer. There is further review throughout the financial year reported through the Executive.
- 7.3.2 If any overspends or emerging pressures are identified during the year, then mitigating actions will be sought and management interventions undertaken.
- 7.3.3 With most capital projects there is a risk that delays, and cost increases may arise as a result of the impact of inflation. Generally, this relates to the supply and price of materials with projects requiring increased lead in times. Whilst every attempt is made to cost these implications into the project, the risks remain. However, it must be recognised that the current "Cost of Living Crisis" has driven up the level of inflation, which is much higher than in previous periods and indeed when funding bids were originally submitted. This therefore poses a risk to the deliverability of the projects as originally envisaged, where reductions to the scope of projects may be required to ensure budgets are not overspent.
- 7.3.4 There is a risk in relation to funding, particularly where it is from third parties including grants. Appropriate agreements must be entered into to ensure that the funding is secured and spend is in accordance with any criteria stipulated by the funder, this includes both the nature of the spend and the timing (where a deadline applies).

7.4 **Relevant Policies and Plans**

7.4.1 The schemes provide a strategic fit with the Council's priorities as set out within the Corporate Plan.

7.5 **Consultation**

7.5.1 The 2023/24 Capital Strategy and Capital Programme were subject to consultation prior to approval by the North Northamptonshire Authority in February 2023. The programme was approved by Council at its meeting on 23rd February 2023 and was subject to consultation from 22nd December 2022 to 27th January 2023. These changes are in addition to the approved programme.

7.6 **Consideration by the Executive Advisory Panel**

7.6.1 Not applicable.

7.7 **Consideration by Scrutiny**

7.7.1 The schemes recommended in this report have not been considered by Scrutiny. However, monitoring against the programme is subject to Scrutiny.

7.8 Equality Implications

7.8.1 Nothing specific within this report.

7.9 **Climate and Environmental Impact**

7.9.1 The climate and environmental impact of each capital project will be considered and managed within the relevant scheme.

7.10 **Community Impact**

7.10.1 These proposals can be considered to have a positive impact on the community as the Capital Programme delivers a range of schemes to support and connect communities.

7.11 Crime and Disorder Impact

7.11.1 Nothing specific within this report.

8. Background Papers

8.1 The following background papers can be considered in relation to this report.

Capital Programme Budget 2023/24 – Full Council, 23rd February 2023 - <u>Capital</u> <u>Programme Report 2023-26 - Feb Council.pdf (moderngov.co.uk)</u> UK Shared Prosperity Fund – Executive 10th November 2022 - <u>UK Shared</u> <u>Prosperity Fund.pdf (moderngov.co.uk)</u>

Kettering High Street Heritage Action zone (HSHAZ) - Executive 5th August 2021- <u>11. Kettering High Street Heritage Action Zone HSHAZ - FINAL.pdf</u> (moderngov.co.uk)

Kettering High Street Heritage Action zone (HSHAZ) - Executive 22nd February 2022 - <u>Kettering High Street Heritage Action Zone HSHAZ.pdf</u> (moderngov.co.uk)