

North Northamptonshire Council – Decisions taken by the Executive on Thursday 12 October 2023

Issued: 12th October 2023

The following decisions in this notice were made by the Executive on Thursday 12 October 2023.

Any decisions identified below as a **KEY DECISION** will come into force and may be implemented on Friday 20th October 2023, unless the decision is subject to call-in, in accordance with section 18 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules within North Northamptonshire Council's Constitution.

Requests for Call-In

A request for call-in shall only be considered to be valid if signed by at least 8 members of the Council (10% of the total number of members) who are not members of the Executive. One of the requestors must identify themselves as the originator of the request and the request must specify the nature of the grounds relied upon. A call-in request must be in the form of a written notice submitted to the Monitoring Officer and received before the published deadline. Either one notice containing all required signatures or up to 8 separate e-mails (as appropriate) will be acceptable.

The notice must set out:-

- (a) the resolution or resolutions that the member(s) wish to call in;
- (b) the reasons why they wish the relevant Scrutiny committee to consider referring it back to the Executive, with particular reference to the principles of decision making set out elsewhere within this Constitution; and
- (c) the alternative course of action or recommendations that they wish to propose.

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Part A – Items considered in public

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| Item 5 | Performance Indicator Report 2023/24 (Period 5 - August 2023) | RESOLVED That the Executive: a) Noted the performance of the Council as measured by the available indicators at Period 5 (August) 2023/24, set out in the appendix to this report. |
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| | | <p>Reason for Recommendations – to better understand the Council’s performance as measured by Key Performance Indicators as at Period 5 (August) 2023/24.</p> <p>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.</p> |
| Item 6 | North Northamptonshire Future Vision - Big50 Progress Update | <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>That the Executive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Noted the progress that has been made on developing an area-wide vision for North Northamptonshire up to 2050. b) Acknowledged the positive contribution made towards the development of the vision through the work of the Big50 Steering Group, the Big50 conference and all who took part in it. c) Endorsed the co-design of a short, medium and longer-term action plan with the Steering Group. <p>Reason for Recommendations – Local councils are ideally placed to act as place shapers and enablers of change in their area. North Northamptonshire Council, in its Corporate Plan adopted in December 2021, made a clear commitment to work in partnership with a wide range of organisations from public, private and voluntary</p> |

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| | | <p>sectors to help improve the quality of life in North Northamptonshire. The work on setting out a broader, longer-term vision for North Northamptonshire represents the next natural step in the achievement of this aim. A shared vision for the future of North Northamptonshire will help focus the efforts of organisations working locally on achieving a common set of priorities and goals for the area. The recommendations ensure that the work carried out to date by all entities involved progresses in a transparent, inclusive and engaging way.</p> <p>Alternative Options Considered:</p> <p>i) Continue ‘as is’ without a wider area vision – In practical terms, this would mean continuing to focus on the Council’s own vision and leave partner agencies to focus on theirs. There is nothing wrong with this approach. Indeed, there is already a lot of activity focused on aligning approaches and target outcomes which are embedded in the current ways of working. It would however leave a gap in terms of a cross-cutting, widely adopted vision for the area. Given the clear support for a wider area vision evident at the Big50 conference, failure to pursue the opportunity would represent a suboptimal position</p> |
| Item 7 | Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Strategy Annual Report 2022/23 | <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>KEY DECISION</p> <p>That the Executive:</p> <p>i) Approved the content of the Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report which gives an overview of the Corporate Parenting Board’s activities.</p> |

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| | | <p align="center">ii) Noted that the Northamptonshire Children’s Trust Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-25 sets out four key priorities and the update on each areas progress contained in the annual report.</p> <p>Reasons for Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote and monitor the Northamptonshire Children’s Trust Corporate Parenting Strategy. • To encourage all Members and employees to recognise their role as corporate parents. • Provides members with an overview of the work of Northamptonshire Children’s Trust and supports the discharge of their Corporate Parenting duties. <p>Alternative Options Considered – Do Nothing – The Council has statutory duties as Corporate Parent for children in care and care leavers. Whilst the role of the Director of Children’s Services and Lead Member is defined in legislation there are wider corporate responsibilities on all staff and elected Members. Not approving the Corporate Parenting Annual Report would mean that the Council may fail to deliver all or parts of its statutory responsibilities in this area.</p> |
| Item 8 | Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Funding | RESOLVED |

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| | | <p>KEY DECISION</p> <p>That the Executive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Welcomed the award for LEVI Capital Funding and identification of North Northamptonshire as a Tranche 1 area ii) Delegated authority to the Executive Member for Highways, Travel & Assets, in consultation with the Executive Directors for Place & Economy and Finance, to agree the submission of a LEVI Business case to Government following the approach set out in this report and the principles outlined in Appendix A of the report iii) Subject to Government approval of the LEVI Business Case, delegated authority to Executive Member for Highways, Travel & Assets, in consultation with the Executive Director for Place and Economy and Executive Director for Finance and Performance, to procure a provider to supply, install, operate and maintain a network of publicly available electric vehicle charging points across North Northamptonshire iv) Following Government review of the tender process and contract documents, delegated authority to the Executive Member for Highways, Travel & Assets, in consultation with the Executive Director for Place and Economy and Executive Director for Finance and Performance, to agree appointment of a preferred supplier and signing of related contracts and agreements v) Noted the recent public consultation on the Council’s draft Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy which closed on 11th October 2023 |

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| | | <p>vi) Delegated authority to the Executive Member for Highways, Travel & Assets, in consultation with the Executive Member for Climate Change & the Green Environment and the Executive Director for Place & Economy to consider the responses to the recent consultation on the draft strategy and approve the final version for publication</p> <p>Reasons for Recommendations: The recommendations will enable the Council to submit a business case to Government which will secure the provisional LEVI Capital allocation, undertake a procurement process using the capital funding to secure private sector investment to install, operate and manage a publicly accessible EV chargepoint (EVCP) network across North Northamptonshire, and appoint a successful supplier. The recommendations will also enable the council’s Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy to be approved following consideration of responses to the recent public consultation.</p> <p>Alternative Options Considered: There are two main alternatives to the recommended approach. Firstly, the Council could decide to delay submitting a business case beyond 30th November 2023. This would mean that it would be submitted at a later date and NNC would be moved to Tranche 2 rather than Tranche 1. A delayed procurement could place NNC in a more difficult procurement environment as the capacity of Charge Point Operators could be more limited by local authority contracts already awarded elsewhere. Secondly, the Council could decide not to submit a business case. It is likely that this approach would result in the funding allocation being directed to other local authority areas. This would mean that there would be very little opportunity for the Council to attract additional investment to expand the provision of publicly accessible EVCPs beyond areas which are commercially attractive.</p> |

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| Item 9 | NNC Development Services and Regulatory Services Case Management Systems (CMS) Replacement | <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>KEY DECISION</p> <p>That the Executive:</p> <p>a) Approved the commencement of the procurement process via the Crown Commercial Services Vertical Application (VAS) Framework, reference Page 162 RM6259, using a Direct Award to purchase and implement a single cloud hosted Idox Case Management System for North Northamptonshire Council.</p> <p>b) Recommended to Full Council:</p> <p>i) The approval of the use of the Transformation Reserve to fund the one-off implementation costs of up to £600,000</p> <p>ii) The approval of the inclusion of the ongoing annual revenue savings of £40,400 resulting from the implementation of the new Case Management System in the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP)</p> <p>c) Delegated authority to the Executive Member for Growth & Regeneration in consultation with the Executive Director of Place and Economy and the Chief Information Officer to take any further decisions and/or actions required to conclude this procurement process. This will include, but not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approving award of the contract to the preferred supplier • Finalising the Terms and Conditions of the service |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter into a contract with the preferred supplier for the provision of the service <p>Reasons for Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expiry of the incumbent contracts – the current system contracts expire 31st March 2024. • NNC will gain significant benefits from having a single CMS. Levels of service will be improved, and process efficiencies implemented. <p>Alternative Options Considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do Nothing • Do Minimal - Replacement Solution for Kettering • New supplier single solution <p>All the alternative options shown above have been discounted as they do not provide an effective solution, for reasons set out in section 5 of this report.</p> |
| Item 10 | Procurement of a Heating Contractor for Housing Stock | <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>KEY DECISION</p> <p>That the Executive delegated authority to the Executive Member for Housing, Communities and Levelling Up in consultation with the Executive Director for Adults,</p> |

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| | | <p>Health Partnerships and Housing, to procure, negotiate, award, and enter into a contract for the servicing, repairs and maintenance of the Council’s Housing Heating Systems, to ensure that the Council’s housing stock is maintained and that the legal obligation to annually service gas and oil appliances is met.</p> <p>Reasons for Recommendation: By approving this recommendation, Council officers will be able to: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closely align services with Government legislation, regulation and initiatives, through the use of a procured contractor across the two Housing Property Services team areas. • Ensure a fully compliant procurement process is conducted in the most efficient and timely manner and a new contract is in place for the delivery of the services. • Provide better value for money to the Council. • Ensure tenants benefit from the delivery of this statutory service in the housing stock across North Northamptonshire. <p>Alternative Options Considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue with existing separate systems for both Corby and Kettering teams. This option is not recommended as it would not result in a joined-up team working across North Northamptonshire. • Set up an in-house Gas team covering all NNC Council Homes. This option is not recommended due to the current difficulties in recruiting to vacant posts within the in-house Kettering team. Operating an in-house service with an even higher number of agency staff than at present would come with significant risks |

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| | | <p>to delivery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procure a contractor to provide a service to all NNC Council Homes for all of the different parts of the Gas service. This option is not recommended as there were a number of benefits identified to retaining the installation of new boilers and void gas works in-house. Mainly, that there was no identified financial benefit from new boiler installations being contracted out as opposed to being completed in-house and the loss of direct control of void works, that could lead to an impact on voids performance |
| Item 11 | Home to School Transport Dynamic Purchasing System | <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>KEY DECISION</p> <p>That the Executive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Authorised a Direct Award of a contract with the Access Group under the YPO Framework for the Dynamic Purchasing System known as “adam”, to facilitate ongoing procurement of home to school transport and related services. ii) Delegated authority to the Executive Member for Highways, Travel and Assets in consultation with Executive Director of Place and Economy to take any further decisions and/or actions required to conclude the procurement process, appoint the preferred supplier and enter into respective contracts for the delivery of Home to School transport and related services. <p>Reasons for Recommendations:</p> |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. This proposal will facilitate the disaggregation of the financial processes from WNC, giving the Council better monitoring of forecasting and spend and is a key part of the Transformation of the service to meet the needs and requirements of the Council. b. Taking its own contract under a Direct Award from the YPO Framework would allow the Council to work with the DPS provider to further optimize the system to meet the specific needs of North Northamptonshire as a standalone Council, rather than compromise to meet needs of the two councils together. c. Taking this decision at this time allows sufficient time to prepare and develop the market and ensures that there is an ongoing process and platform for procurement after the expiry of the current term of the DPS contract. This gives a degree of certainty to both the Council and the service providers contracting with it and helps to ensure that the Council can continue to meet its statutory obligations after April 2024. d. Alternative procurement provisions would need extensive development and potentially data migration to similarly meet the Council's needs. There is no guarantee that the current service providers would be prepared to sign up to a different platform, or that the potential new platform can replicate the levels of operational service provided within the current DPS platform. e. Transitioning to a new system without sufficient lead in time to support providers is likely to lead to procurement and service issues. Providers will need to be supported in changing their processes to support the new ways of working which could lead to greater engagement from officers to ensure |

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| | | <p>effective service delivery and contract management. The launch of a new system without adequate support may deter providers from bidding for routes in the future.</p> <p>f. The increased cost of the proposal is minimal against the overall budget for Home to School Transport and can be absorbed within it. There is potential for savings from utilising more local service providers to off-set the additional costs.</p> <p>g. Re-development of the current service to include more local service providers and resolve current finance issues would incur additional costs which need to be considered against the time remaining in the current contract.</p> <p>Alternative Options Considered:</p> <p>a) Do nothing: The current contractual arrangement under the DPS will expire at the end of March 2024, subject to any extensions undertaken by WNC. If the contract is allowed to expire without any action being taken, the Council will have no process for procuring Home to School and social care transport. This will leave the Council unable to meet its statutory responsibilities in this area.</p> <p>b) Undertake a full procurement exercise to identify an alternative system that may meet the Council's needs. Soft market testing has not identified a system that would be able to immediately meet the Council's needs without further development of both the system and Council's processes and internal systems within the timescales required.</p> |
| Item 12 | Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Report | RESOLVED |

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| | 2022-23 | <p>That the Executive noted the content and recommendations of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman’s annual review letter, and the outcomes of its investigations completed in 2022-23 that relate to the Council.</p> <p>Reason for Recommendation: To appraise the Executive of the annual review letter and relevant information. Receipt of regular complaints data demonstrates good governance.</p> <p>Alternative Options Considered: It would not be considered good practice to not provide the annual Ombudsman report to the Executive and as such there are no alternative options to be considered.</p> |
| Item 13 | Oakley Vale Infrastructure Works | <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>KEY DECISION</p> <p>That the Executive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Noted the obligations on NNC to progress the adoption of roads and infrastructure on the Oakley Vale development. b) Approved that the budget of £971,350, as per the value of the external works deposit held, be added to the Capital Programme to allow works to road |

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| | | <p>adoptions at Oakley Vale Phase 5.</p> <p>c) Delegated authority to the Executive Member for Highways, Travel & Assets in consultation with the Executive Director for Place & Economy to procure the necessary remedial works to the road and infrastructure at Oakley Vale Phase 5 and recover these costs from the external works deposit.</p> <p>Reasons for Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To fulfil the obligations entered into by CBC, completing the works and spending the external monies in accordance with the Infrastructure Works Agreement and supplemental agreements to progress the adoption of roads and infrastructure. • To procure and undertake the required works in line with the Council’s constitution and financial regulations in relation to governance. <p>Alternative Options Considered: The only other option available is to do nothing, however given the legal obligations on the Council, as the works deposit covers the budget cost of the works and because of the negative public perception if adoption was not progressed, this option is not recommended.</p> |
| Item 14 | Partnership Governance Framework and Register of Significant Partnerships | <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>KEY DECISION</p> <p>That the Executive:</p> |

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| | | <p>a) Approved the adoption of the Partnership Governance Framework as a policy that forms part of the assurance framework for the Council; and</p> <p>b) Approved the proposed next steps with regard to progressing the work on the Register and ensuring an annual cycle of self-assessment.</p> <p>Reason for Recommendations: These recommendations are made to support improved assurance around partnerships as part of the Council’s assurance framework.</p> <p>Alternative Options Considered: The alternative option of not introducing the Partnership Governance Framework has been rejected as it will not improve assurance or support risk management in areas where the Council has significant risks because partnership services are delivering statutory obligations/key objectives and/or overseeing the expenditure of significant resources.</p> |
| Item 15 | National Non-Domestic Rates and Housing Benefit Overpayment Write Offs | <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>That the Executive reviewed and approved the proposed write off of outstanding debts as summarised in Appendix A of the report.</p> <p>Reason for Recommendation: The Council’s Constitution (Financial Procedure Rules) requires the approval of Executive to write off debt in excess of £25,000. It is considered that this debt cannot be recovered.</p> |

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| | | <p>Alternative Option Considered: The alternative option would be to periodically review and pursue the debt. However, following the action already undertaken and the status of the organisations, it is considered irrecoverable at this time and would not be economical to continue to pursue.</p> |
| <p>Item 16</p> | <p>Capital Programme Update 2023/24</p> | <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>KEY DECISION</p> <p>That the Executive:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">i) Approved the following changes into the capital programme:</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">a. Oakley Vale, Corby Highway Adoption - £971k – budget approval for £971k, £495k in 2023/24, £476k in 2024/25 which is to be funded from external funds as part of the initial Infrastructure Agreement.</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">b. North Northamptonshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Project (NNEVI) £2.90m - £285k in 2024/25, £810k in 2025/26 and £1.8m in 2026/27 which is to be funded from an external grant.</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">c. Integrated Transport Block 2023/24 – reduction to existing capital scheme of £184k to align the scale of the programme with the confirmed grant funding from the Department of Transport.</p> <p>Reasons for Recommendations: These are set out in greater detail within section 5 of the report but can be summarised as:</p> |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support the statutory delivery of school places and SEND school places across North Northamptonshire. • To meet corporate plan objectives, for instance in leading in improving the local environment <p>Alternative Options Considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As all the schemes in this report are grant funded/S106 funded, the use of the funding is in line with the agreements, so there are no alternative option proposed in this report. • Where individual schemes are over £500k, individual reports are presented elsewhere on the agenda that set out the wider options that were considered before reaching the proposed schemes identified for grant funding. |
| Item 17 | Budget Forecast Update 2023-24 - Period 5 | <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>That the Executive:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Noted the Council’s forecast outturn position for 2023/24 as summarised in Section 4, alongside the further analysis, risks and other considerations as set out in Section 5 to Section 7 of the report. b) Noted the assessment of the current deliverability of the 2023/24 savings proposals in Appendix A. |

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| | | <p>Reason for Recommendations – to note the forecast financial position for 2023/24 as at Period 4 and consider the impact on this year and future years budgets.</p> <p>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.</p> |