

**North Northamptonshire Council – Decisions taken by the Council on Thursday 25 April 2024**

Agenda Item No	Topic	Decision
<b>Item 8</b>	Annual Report of the Service Delivery Contract between Northamptonshire Children's Trust and West and North Northamptonshire Councils 2022/23 and Update on the Annual Review	This item was withdrawn.
<b>Item 9</b>	Audit & Governance Committee Annual Report 2023	<p>That Council:</p> <p>a) Welcomes the work of the Audit and Governance Committee during the twelve-month period of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> September 2023;</p> <p>b) Approve the Audit and Governance Committee Annual Report 2023.</p> <p><i>Reason for Decisions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>To comply with the Audit and Governance Committee's terms of reference and best practice guidance on effective audit committees.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Alternative Options Considered:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>None – it is best practice and consistent with the Council's Code of Corporate Governance for Council to consider and approve the annual report of the Audit and Governance Committee.</i></li> </ul>

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Item 10	Planning Improvement Board	<p>That Full Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Approves the establishment of the Planning Improvement Board and its draft Terms of reference (attached at Appendix B to the report). The Board will be chaired by a member of the administration and will be made up of 4 conservative members (including the chair) plus one representative from each of the recognised political groups;</li> <li>b) Approves the establishment of a Planning Improvement Plan that will be overseen by the Planning Improvement Board and reported on to Place and Environment Scrutiny Committee, Audit and Governance Committee, Executive and full Council as required;</li> <li>c) Notes the specific remedial actions taken thus far and proposed with regards to the processing of planning applications as set out at paragraph 4.9 of the report;</li> <li>d) Notes the proposed governance arrangements as set out at paragraphs 4.11 to 4.14 to ensure effective oversight and monitoring of progress in relation to the Planning Improvement Plan and the work of the Planning Improvement Board.</li> </ol> <p><i>Reasons for Decision:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The PIP and PIB would be formulated to address the issues identified in the independent review. The review has highlighted a need for the Council to address issues that appear to have developed following LGR specifically relating to the processing of planning applications. Upon identification of specific issues, the Council has responded promptly and diligently to rectify weaknesses and the PIP will show a significant and continuing commitment to improving standards in the</i></li> </ul>

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		<p><i>planning service.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Council, as local planning authority has a duty to comply with legislation and its own policies in processing planning applications. Failure to do so leaves the Council vulnerable to challenge and negatively impacts public and stakeholder confidence in the service.</i></li> <li>• <i>The proposal to establish a PIP and PIB reporting to Place and Environment Scrutiny, the Audit and Governance Committee, and full Council, as required, provides a focus on key areas which means there is greater oversight and accountability from the leadership of the organisation and Councillors to address the issues that have been identified within the planning service as a key priority. Officers will support development of the PIP. The governance arrangements proposed will provide even greater focus and scrutiny from Councillors giving assurance to the Council of the work that is to be undertaken.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Alternative Options Considered:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Given the Council’s statutory duties as Local Planning Authority and the risks highlighted in respect of compliance, maintaining the status quo (do nothing) is not deemed acceptable and further resource and focus will be required to ensure compliance with legislation and planning policy.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Item 11</b>	Start time of Full Council meetings	That the start time of ordinary council meetings not be changed.

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		<p><i>Reason for Decision</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The Council has trialled afternoon and evening start times for full Council meetings since 1 April 2021. Having done so it is prudent to review the effectiveness and efficiency of meetings during this period so that a start time can be settled on.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Alternative Options Considered</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The start time of full Council meetings is a matter of local choice for Council.</i></li> </ul>																																																												
<b>Item 12</b>	Political Balance on Council Committees	<p>a) That Council approves, in order to maintain political balance on Ordinary Committees, the revised distribution of seats across the political groups as follows:-</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th><b>Standing Committees (subject to political balance)</b></th> <th><b>Total seats</b></th> <th><b>Conservative</b></th> <th><b>Labour</b></th> <th><b>Green Alliance</b></th> <th><b>Independent Alliance</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Scrutiny Management Board</td> <td>6</td> <td>5</td> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Corporate Scrutiny</td> <td>9</td> <td>6</td> <td>2</td> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Health Scrutiny</td> <td>9</td> <td>6</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Place &amp; Environment Scrutiny</td> <td>9</td> <td>6</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Audit and Governance</td> <td>10</td> <td>7</td> <td>2</td> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Democracy and Standards</td> <td>13</td> <td>9</td> <td>3</td> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Employment</td> <td>13</td> <td>8</td> <td>3</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Licensing and Appeals</td> <td>13</td> <td>9</td> <td>3</td> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Total Seat Entitlement</i></td> <td></td> <td><b>56</b></td> <td><b>18</b></td> <td><b>4</b></td> <td><b>4</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<b>Standing Committees (subject to political balance)</b>	<b>Total seats</b>	<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Green Alliance</b>	<b>Independent Alliance</b>	Scrutiny Management Board	6	5	1	0	0	Corporate Scrutiny	9	6	2	0	1	Health Scrutiny	9	6	2	1	0	Place & Environment Scrutiny	9	6	2	1	0	Audit and Governance	10	7	2	0	1	Democracy and Standards	13	9	3	1	0	Employment	13	8	3	1	1	Licensing and Appeals	13	9	3	0	1	<i>Total Seat Entitlement</i>		<b>56</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
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		<p><i>Alternative Options Considered</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>None, as the revised political balance calculation is required to be reported to full Council under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Item 13</b>	Request for Dispensation for Attendance	<p>That Council grants a dispensation to Councillor Peter McEwan from attending meetings of the Council for a six-month period, from the date of this meeting, by reason of illness.</p> <p><i>Reason for Decision</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Pursuant to Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 where a Councillor fails to attend any meeting of the Council for six months, they cease to be a Member of the Council unless a dispensation has been granted by the Council.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Alternative Options Considered</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>To not approve the dispensation. This was not recommended as the reasons for it were considered reasonable and failure to grant would result in Councillor Peter McEwan ceasing to be a member of North Northamptonshire Council.</i></li> </ul>