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Meeting: Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee
Date: Tuesday 5th April, 2022
Time: 7.00 pm
Venue: Council Chamber, Swanspool House, Wellingborough, Northants, NN8 1BP

To members of the Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Councillors Mark Pengelly (Chair), Richard Levell (Vice-Chair), Valerie Anslow, Scott Brown, Jim Hakewill, Ken Harrington, Larry Henson, Ian Jelley, King Lawal, Paul Marks, Steven North, Mark Rowley and Malcolm Ward

(Substitutes – Councillors Matt Binley, William Colquhoun, Emily Federowycz, Clive Hallam, Anne Lee, Jan O’Hara and David Sims)

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		Democratic Services Officer	
08	Items for future discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget Scrutiny Timetable; Matters arising from the Executive meeting held on 29 March 2022. 		
09	Close of Meeting		
<p>Adele Wylie, Monitoring Officer North Northamptonshire Council</p>  <p>Proper Officer Monday 28 March 2022</p>			

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ITEM	NARRATIVE	DEADLINE
Members of the Public Agenda Statements	Requests to address the committee must be received by 5pm, two clear working days before the meeting. Statements must relate to matters on the agenda and speakers will be limited to 3 minutes in which to make your statement.	5pm, Thursday 31 March 2022

If you wish to register to speak, please contact the committee administrator

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Minutes of a meeting of the Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Held at 7.00 pm on Tuesday 1st February, 2022 in the Council Chamber, Swanspool House, Wellingborough, Northants, NN8 1BP

Present:-

Members

Councillor Mark Pengelly (Chair)
Councillor Valerie Anslow
Councillor Scott Brown
Councillor Jim Hakewill
Councillor Ken Harrington

Councillor Richard Levell
Councillor Larry Henson
Councillor Ian Jelley
Councillor King Lawal
Councillor Malcolm Ward

Officers

Mark Dickenson
Claire Edwards
Janice Gotts
Paul Goult
Guy Holloway
Carol Mundy
Jack Pishhorn
Kerry Purnell
Raj Sohal
David Watts

Also in attendance – Councillor Wendy Brakenbury, Councillor Lloyd Bunday, Councillor Clive Hallam, Councillor Helen Howell, Councillor Anne Lee, Councillor Paul Marks, Councillor Mark Rowley, Councillor Jason Smithers

28 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Steven North – Councillor Clive Hallam was in attendance as a substitute.

29 Members' Declarations of Interest

The Chair invited those who wished to do so to declare interests in respect of items on the agenda.
No declarations were made.

30 Minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2021

RESOLVED that:

The minutes of the meeting held on 30th November 2021 were approved as a correct record.

31 Budget Forecast 2021/22 as at Period 7 Monitoring

The Committee considered a report by the Assistant Director of Finance and Strategy, which set out budget monitoring for period 7 of the financial year, reported to the Executive on 30th January 2022. The report was based upon income and expenditure and set out the pressures on the budget.

During discussion, members queried:

- Whether the Council would be reimbursed for business rates relief, during the pandemic?
- Whether there was cause for alarm at the collection rate of council tax?
- What operational changes had been made to enable the Council's £1.7m in savings?
- Why North Northamptonshire Council's inflation rate had only been increased in adult social care by 2%, since other local authorities had increased the rates of their providers?
- Whether Northamptonshire Children's Trust would be able to transfer funding between budget areas, should they produce underspends from other allocations, and if the £1.7m savings achieved by the Trust would be embedded into its budget?
- Whether the forecasted underspend of £500k, detailed in the report, was overly optimistic?
- Why it was listed in report that only if the claim made to central government was successful, then the pressure regarding COVID-19 expenditure could be reduced?
- Whether officers expected car parking income to return to normal, pre-COVID levels, over the course of the next financial year?
- Whether the £158k car parking budget pressure in Kettering, listed in the report, had considered the fact that a large portion of the car park had been taken up by ad hoc COVID-19 testing facilities?
- Why planning income was forecasted to be lower than its allocation within the budget?
- How the Council could explain the increased revenue it had received from waste management?
- Whether the same methodology was being used to continue to build up the 2022/23 budget?

In response, the Executive Director of Finance clarified that:

- Central government would reimburse the local authority for business rates relief, awarded during the pandemic.

- There was no cause for alarm concerning the collection rate of council tax, as the forecasted rate was still on track to be delivered.
- No Council activity had changed to allow for £1.7m in savings - this was part of the budget's medium-term plan and had arisen as a continuation of this plan.
- Different inflation increases were provided to different sectors. The authority was aware of the fragility of the social care provider market and would continue to engage with service providers, to determine the pressures they could face.
- The Northamptonshire Children's Trust would not be able to transfer funding as it wished. Representatives from the Trust regularly reported to senior officers, via a progress and operation group, and had met with the Chief Executives of the North and West Northamptonshire Councils. The movement of funding would be subject to further negotiations. The £1.7m of funds in savings was already in the base budget as part of the 2022/23 budget settlement's 'bottom line'.
- The authority still anticipated to achieve the forecasted underspend of £500k, detailed in the report.
- Regarding the mental health service, there had been a prior expectation that contributions would be spread evenly across the county. However, since there existed a greater concentration of people receiving mental health services residing in the West area, West Northamptonshire Council's proportional contribution to this shared service was greater.
- The caveat included in the report regarding the claim made to central government for additional funding to alleviate COVID-19 expenditure pressures was necessary until verification had been completed. Nevertheless, the authority anticipated that it would receive this additional grant funding.
- Car parking income would depend on several factors, such as whether residents would return to permanent in-person working. The Council could support this pressure in-year, if necessary, by utilising its 'risk reserves'. Nevertheless, the authority would seek to identify and implement all possible mitigations on this pressure before utilising these reserves.
- The Kettering car parking budget pressure had taken temporary COVID testing sites into account, as well as the fact that parking charges had been suspended for a period, during the pandemic.
- Officers felt that budgets inherited from the sovereign authorities were overly optimistic, regarding planning.

- The increased revenue from waste management had arisen as a culmination of improved deals with service providers and a diversion from landfills, leading to greater recycling activity.
- Officers had continued to assess the budget, to determine how it could be levelled up over the course of the coming financial year.

Members again requested that the Executive provide the Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee with detailed information, regarding staff vacancy figures across all service areas of North Northamptonshire Council. The Chair emphasised that this data would be necessary, for the Committee to carry out effective scrutiny of service capacity.

RESOLVED that:

The report be noted, and the Committee approve the use of the Business Rates Retention Pilot project reserve to fund the feasibility works for the telephony infrastructure scheme.

32 Performance Indicators 2021-22 - Period 7

The Committee considered a report by the Assistant Chief Executive, which provided an update on the performance of the Council's corporate support services as at Period 7, as measured by performance indicators, and set out the actions the Council was taking, to develop its performance monitoring arrangements.

During discussion, members queried:

- Why fluctuations had occurred regarding the percentage of the Council's invoices, which had been paid within 30 days?

In response, the Assistant Chief Executive clarified that:

- North Northamptonshire Council had adopted a new financial system (ERP) in April 2021, as well as new processes with suppliers. These systemic changes had caused delays however, since this period, service areas had responded well, and performance had improved. These fluctuations were not due to a cash flow problem.

RESOLVED that:

The report be noted.

33 Budget Report 2022/23 - Report from Scrutiny Task & Finish Groups - Appendix D and H to follow

One member questioned whether the Leader of the Council was confident in the human resources capacity of the local authority, to deliver the budget. The Leader of the Council maintained that he was confident the budget would be delivered and clarified that although there existed a multitude of staff vacancies across services, the authority sought to fill these vacancies. The Leader assured the Committee that more

information regarding staff vacancies would be provided when the next Executive report was received.

The Committee considered a report by the Business Development Manager, regarding the Chester House Estate.

During discussion, members queried:

- Why visitors were required to book car parking at Chester House and whether it would be possible to implement a simpler system?
- Whether walk-in visitors were considered in the calculation of the footfall of visitors to Chester House?
- What work was being done to encourage visitors to use the river moorings?
- How long Chester House would require contributions from the local authority before it would be self-sufficient?
- Which operations would be increased, to meet forecasted site operational costs, and whether it would be more cost efficient to hire permanent staff?
- Whether marketing and public relations work should be ramped up to increase public awareness around Chester House?
- Whether the £115k contingency funding was intended to be used to address budget shortfalls?

In response, the Business Development Manager clarified that:

- Online booking for car parking was required to manage capacity, during busy periods of the year, as the car park at Chester House could not be extended.
- Walk-in visitors were not included in the footfall of Chester House, which had been calculated based upon estimates of parked cars. Officers hoped to include walk-in visitors in these figures in the future.
- Officers were working with Nenescape partners, to promote the river moorings.
- The Chester House business plan was constantly refreshed, as a living document. It was anticipated that by the sixth year of operations, Council contributions would no longer be required, and the business would be self-sufficient.
- Chester House had budgeted in advance for ongoing maintenance and future repairs for its listed buildings, as operational costs. Regarding casual staffing, it was industry standard to use casual staff and volunteers. As the business would develop, the staff team would also increase during busy periods of the year. Chester House maintained a strong volunteer base and had claimed 4,000 volunteer hours.

- Chester House had sold-out over the October half-term school holiday and had not required a large marketing budget. Social media marketing had been both successful and cost-effective.
- The £115k contingency was in place to address forecasted shortfall. Nevertheless, officers forecasted a break-even position, therefore, the business plan would be updated to reflect this. Officers once again emphasised that following the initial five-year business plan, they expected Chester House to become fully self-sufficient.

Members requested the opportunity to scrutinise the updated business plan for Chester House Estate, as soon as it would become available.

The Leader of the Council acknowledged the positive work of Chester House in engaging with young people in North Northamptonshire and emphasised its value as an asset. He maintained that while financial scrutiny was necessary, members should also consider its societal worth.

The Committee then focused its attention on the budget process. Members were assured that queries regarding the budget would be put to the Executive, at its next meeting.

During discussion, members queried:

- What the source of funding would be for the planned cost of £1m for 'green initiatives'?
- Why there was no provision in place to cover free school meals during school holidays, as had been done during the pandemic – costing £1.8m?
- Whether the authority had progressed with assessing the cost of utilities, for the next financial year?
- How the authority planned to proceed following the expiration of the 'Voi' e-scooters contract in March 2022?

In response, the Executive Director of Finance clarified that:

- The Council's green initiatives would be funded by its financial reserves.
- Officers continued to assess issues concerning the cost of utilities and would seek to identify methods to mitigate this pressure across service areas. A contingency of £500k would be established, to address rising utilities costs.

The Leader of the Council clarified that:

- There was no provision built into the budget to facilitate free school meals however, grant funding would possibly be made available by central government. North Northamptonshire Council would lobby the government to receive the 'Household Support Fund'.

- It was likely that the Department for Transport (DfT) would seek to extend the 'Voi' trial in North Northamptonshire, as the area has seen the most successful launch across Europe. Nevertheless, if this trial was not extended by the DfT, the local authority would reassess the viability of the programme.

RESOLVED that:

The report be noted.

Chair

Date

The meeting closed at Time Not Specified

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Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee 5 April 2022

Report Title	Budget Forecast 2021/22 as at Period 10
Report Authors	Janice Gotts Executive Director of Finance Janice.gotts@northnorthants.gov.uk
Lead Member(s)	Councillor Lloyd Bunday, Executive Member for Finance and Transformation

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Savings Schedule

Appendix B – Children’s Trust Period 10 Monitoring

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The revenue budgets (2021/22) and Medium-Term Financial Plans for North Northamptonshire Council for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account were approved by the Shadow Authority at its meeting on 25 February 2021. The purpose of this report is to set out the forecast outturn position for the Council based on the Period 10 monitoring forecasts for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account.
- 1.2. The monitoring report sets out the material financial issues identified since the 2021/22 budget was set in February 2021, based on the income and expenditure as at end of January 2022 (Period 10) and the views of the budget managers.
- 1.3. The report recognises that the forecast outturn position is based on comparatively early indications of spend in the new Council. As previously reported, work is continuing to examine the spend and activity data, including the staffing details and forecasts, against the available budgets to ensure that the position presented is robust. This has also helped to shape the medium-term financial plan.
- 1.4. Some areas remain unchanged from Period 9 and the detail of those variations is included within the report for completeness.
- 1.5. This report was submitted to the Executive for consideration at its meeting on 17th March 2022.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The report provides commentary on the Council's current forecast financial outturn position for 2021/22 for both the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account. With the move to a new Unitary Council from 1 April 2022 and the continuing issues presented by COVID-19, financial forecasting remains challenging. The Council will continue to assess and refine the forecasts on a regular basis using the latest intelligence available. The forecast presented in the report is based on the best available data and information of the operations of the Council and the expected impact of the pandemic. However, determining the outturn under the current circumstances presents an element of risk which will continue to be closely monitored during the financial year.
- 2.2 As a new Unitary Council there are a number of areas which will impact on the forecast outturn that are still to be finalised. Most notably from a finance perspective these include the charging arrangements for the lead/host arrangements between West Northamptonshire Council and North Northamptonshire Council following Local Government Reorganisation; the forecasts for these areas are not yet available from the hosting authority. Therefore, these services remain forecast at budget at this stage with work continuing between the two authorities to confirm the charges.
- 2.3 The balances on the reserves brought forward to the Council will not be complete until the accounts of its predecessor Councils are signed off. The following Table provides an update on the current position for the four former Council's in North Northamptonshire;

Legacy Authority	2019/20	2020/21	Comments
Kettering	Completed	Completed	
Wellingborough	Completed	Completed	
Corby	Audited	Draft Accounts	Awaiting outcome of asset valuation to sign off accounts for 19/20. Draft accounts for 20/21 being finalised
East Northants	Audited	Draft Accounts	Awaiting outcome of asset valuation and opinion on legal case to sign off accounts for 19/20. Draft accounts issued audit to commence early April 22.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee:
- Notes the content of the report
 - Notes the recommendations approved by the Executive at its meeting on 17th March when considering the report on the budget forecast position as at Period 10, and which are set out below:

- Note the Council's forecast outturn position for 2021/22 and the associated risks and other considerations.
- Note the assessment of the current deliverability of the 2021/22 saving proposals in Appendix A.

3.2 Reason for Recommendations – to note the forecast financial position for 2021/22 as at Period 10 and consider the impact on this year and future years budgets.

4. Report Background

General Fund

4.1 The Council's Revenue Budget for 2020/21 was set at the meeting of the Shadow Authority in February 2021. The overall outturn forecast for the General Fund for 2021/22, as at Period 10 is a forecast underspend of £949k against the approved budget of £292.5m. This is summarised in the table below:

General Fund Forecast Outturn 2021/22			
	Net Budget	Forecast Position at 31/03/22	P10 Forecast Variance at 31/03/22
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Net Total Available Resources	292,505	292,505	0
Total Corporate Budgets	23,950	23,950	0
Children's & Education	59,498	59,498	0
Adults Communities & Wellbeing Services	120,581	121,200	619
Place & Economy	54,617	53,248	(1,369)
Enabling & Support Services	33,859	33,660	(199)
Total Directorate Budgets	268,555	267,606	(949)
Total Budget	292,505	291,556	(949)
Net Position 2021/22	0	(949)	(949)

4.2 The forecast underspend as at Period 10 of £949k is a favourable movement of £69k since the last report to Executive (Period 9) where an underspend of £880k was reported. The following table summarises the movement.

General Fund Forecast Movement (Period 9 v Period 10)				
	Report Reference	P9 Variance £000	Movement in Forecast £000	P10 Variance £000
Adults	5.13 – 5.34			
Adults – Commissioning	5.13 – 5.26	(227)	0	(227)
Adults – Public Health	5.27 – 5.29	596	0	596
Adults – Housing & Community	5.30 – 5.33	250	0	250
Place – Growth & Regeneration	5.39 – 5.42			
Place – Planning Service	5.39	372	108	480
Place – Temporary Toilets	5.40	36	0	36

General Fund Forecast Movement (Period 9 v Period 10)				
	Report Reference	P9 Variance £000	Movement in Forecast £000	P10 Variance £000
Place – Markets	5.41	16	0	16
Place – Growth and Regeneration Other	5.42	45	96	141
Place – Assets & Environment	5.43 – 5.52			
Place – Car Parking Income	5.43 – 5.45	529	9	538
Place – Facilities Management	5.46 – 5.48	571	(76)	495
Place – Commercial Income	5.49	(655)	0	(655)
Place – Transport	5.50	(480)	0	(480)
Place – Assets & Environment Other	5.51 – 5.52	78	26	104
Place – Highways & Waste	5.53 – 5.69			
Place – Highways	5.53	331	0	331
Place – Waste Management	5.54 – 5.59	(1,211)	(48)	(1,259)
Place – Concessionary Travel	5.60 – 5.62	(842)	0	(842)
Place – Bus Service	5.63 – 5.66	22	(15)	7
Place – Transport	5.67 – 5.68	617	(7)	610
Place – Highways Other	5.69	(116)	0	(116)
Place – Regulatory	5.70 – 5.76			
Place – Emergency Planning	5.70 – 5.71	(556)	0	(556)
Place – Trading Standards	5.72	81	5	86
Place – Environmental Health	5.73	(143)	(31)	(174)
Place – Other Regulatory	5.74 – 5.76	(93)	(38)	(131)
Enabling Services	5.77 – 5.92	(101)	(98)	(199)
Total		(880)	(69)	(949)

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 1 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 Housing Revenue Account as at Period 10, is a forecast pressure of £116k (Period 9 £183k) against the approved budget of £35.150m. This will be managed through seeking mitigation in year or use of the HRA reserve. 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.

Housing Revenue Account Forecast Outturn 2021/22				
Directorate	Expenditure	Income	Net	P10 Forecast Variance at 31/03/22
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Corby Neighbourhood Account	19,647	(19,647)	0	86
Kettering Neighbourhood Account	15,503	(15,503)	0	30
Net Position 2021/22	35,150	(35,150)	0	116

5. Overview of Forecast Position 2021/22

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 January 2022, 93.10% of Council Tax had been collected. The Council has re-introduced debt collection procedures for Council Tax following their suspension during 2020/21 as a result of the uncertainties posed by COVID-19 at that time.
- 5.2 Business Rates collection is 87.03% at the end of January 2022. The sum of Business Rates collected is particularly impacted by the volatility of appeals and the effect of COVID-19. Currently, a number of businesses are in receipt of business rates relief and other financial support because of COVID-19. The Government for the first three months of the 2021/22 financial year (April to June) extended the 100% relief available throughout 2020/21 so that there is 100% business rate relief for properties in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors. From July 2021, those properties will get 66% relief until March 2022. The impact of extended retail relief and the change from 100% relief to 66% during the year, aligned with the need to reapply for relief, has lowered the collection rate at this point in time, however, it is expected that this will level out over the year. Further to this the Government has recently announced further reliefs for the hospitality and leisure sector to run until March 2022. This was reported to Executive at its meeting on 13 January 2022.
- 5.3 It is unknown how businesses will be affected in the longer term following the reduction / cessation of financial support. Further to this discretionary rate relief applications have been issued and the impact of the subsequent awards is likely to be positive on the collection rate.

Corporate Resources

- 5.4 The total net budget for Corporate Resources is £23.950m which consists of the contingency budget and budgets for treasury related costs.

- 5.5 The contingency budget is held to meet unforeseen or unplanned/unbudgeted costs. The balance on the contingency budget as at Period 10 is £3.619m which is unchanged to that reported in Period 9.

Directorate Budgets

- 5.6 This section of the report provides an analysis of the forecast variations against the 2021/22 General Fund for each of the Directorates as set out in the table at paragraph 4.2.

Children's and Education Services – Balanced

- 5.7 The net revenue budget for Children's Services is £59.498m which includes the Northamptonshire Children's Trust and Education Services not funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant.

- 5.8 The budgeted figure for the Children's Trust is £137.18m for 2021/22. This is split £60.57m (44%) to North Northamptonshire Council and £76.61m (56%) to West Northamptonshire Council. The original contract for the services of the Trust will run for 17 months to 31 March 2022. It is currently forecast that the outturn position for the Trust will be within the contract sum, which has been confirmed with the Trust.

- 5.9 The Children's and Education Services remaining in the Council include the Intelligent Client Function for the Northamptonshire Children's Trust and the Local Authority statutory education functions as listed below:

- 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

- 5.10 The full year effect of prior year savings decisions already built into the budget is £1.7m with the bottom line having been adjusted to reflect this planned level of savings. The savings include improving the edge of care support and intervention (£400k), working to minimise the amount of time a child is in care (£300k), step down from high end residential placements to fostering placements (£200k), reduced requirement for inflation (£300k), reducing agency staff (£100k) and capacity building within foster care (£400k). These services and savings are currently being delivered through Northamptonshire Children's Trust.

- 5.11 The forecast outturn is for a balanced budget across Children's and Education Services which includes the delivery of the savings targets. The situation is kept under review and the Finance Director for the Trust is meeting regularly with senior finance officers of both North and West Northamptonshire Councils to provide a detailed update on the budget position. The Children's Trust at the end of Period 10 is showing a pressure of £3.461m (across the County). This may, in part, be mitigated through bids for COVID related funding totalling

£2.631m. These bids are currently being considered by both of the Unitary authorities. If the bids are successful, then the overspend would reduce to £830k, which would be met through the use of the carry forward reserve within the Trust and which relates to the period November 2020 to March 2021. However, if the bids are not successful, then any balance which cannot be funded through financial capacity and mitigations within the Trust will be met from Council resources, in line with the agreed funding arrangements. The main pressure item within the Trust's budget continues to relate to the numbers and costs for Looked After Children placements. A summary of the Children's Trust Budget Report for Period 10 is detailed at Appendix B.

Adults, Communities and Wellbeing Directorate - Forecast overspend of £0.619m

- 5.12 The net revenue budget covers Adult Social Services, Community Services and Public Health and Wellbeing and totals £120.581m in 2021/22. Significant work continues to be undertaken to understand the likely ongoing commitment to packages of care within the Council following disaggregation and the impact of the pandemic. The details of the forecast are set out in the paragraphs which follow and are in line with those previously reported.

Adult Social Care, Safeguarding and Wellbeing and Commissioning and Performance Services – Forecast underspend £227k.

- 5.13 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.
- 5.14 Care can take in 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.
- 5.15 The service has supported an uplift award ranging between 2.2% and 2.65% to care providers for providing care packages on framework rates during 2021/22, this is expected to cost approximately £1.2m during the year which has been met through additional investment in Adult Social Care as part of the 2021/22 budget setting process.
- 5.16 At this point in the year, whilst there is some capacity for further net growth in care costs there remains a risk to the financial position from the volatility of demand predominantly due to underlying care conditions and the ongoing pressures on the care sector from the pandemic.
- 5.17 Within Adult Social Care there is £1.3m for demographic growth of which £0.3m relates to Mental Health Services; these are driven by the forecast number of

additional clients requesting care. The past four years' growth in adult social care costs in Northamptonshire have tended to be driven by two factors, general market inflation (predominately wage related) and acute care needs for existing clients, rather than increased clients due to demographic changes. However, it is too early to confirm whether this trend will continue in Northamptonshire.

- 5.18 COVID-19 has had a significant impact in Adult Care budgets with additional pressures forecast in 2021/22 of £4.6m of which £3.9m relates to CCG discharges in to care facilities as part of the rapid response discharge process from hospital and £0.7m relates to pressures within the Mental Health Pooled Fund. There are budgeted care related savings of £4.4m proposed to be delivered by Adult Social Care in 2021/22. Prior year savings of £2.1m are also assumed to be delivered. The 2020/21 savings were not achieved in full due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, however due to a revised phasing methodology adopted as part of the 2021/22 budget proposals this has partly been mitigated down to £1.1m, and it is currently forecast that these will be met in 2021/22. The position will continue to be monitored throughout the year.
- 5.19 The existing savings programme includes saving proposals being delivered over a number of financial years. These include savings proposals that formed part of the Future Northants Transformation Programme covering:
- Admissions Avoidance Service (£1.9m), which is a new service (initially funded by the business rates pilot fund) provided by Adult Social Care with health partners. The Admission Avoidance care model focuses on patients/clients presenting at acute hospitals with relevant conditions who can be rapidly assessed, diagnosed and treated without being admitted to a ward, if clinically safe to do so. Currently the Crises Response Team supports the back-door discharges at the acute hospitals, where Admission Avoidance will focus on the significant opportunity to provide care on/at the front door to avoid hospital admissions and care costs increases client outcomes. These savings have been adversely impacted in 2021/22 as a result of COVID-19, however they have been mitigated in part through early discharge income.
 - Strength Based Working Project (£2.2m) which is the Transformation of Adults Services pathways and processes to ensure focus on client outcomes, independence, better decision making, and best practice approaches reduce delays and spend.
- 5.20 Additional savings for 2021/22 total £0.6m and cover Learning Disability Provider Framework efficiencies, Specialist centre for Step down Care Mental Health and Acquired brain injury, Prevention contract cessation/redesign and Sheltered Housing Contracts cessation/redesign.
- 5.21 The current forecast is a £227k underspend against budget as set out in the paragraphs which follow. However, it should be noted that further work is being undertaken within the service to review the service users assigned from the County to each of the successor Councils (North and West) at vesting day as well as the potential care commitments that are included within the position as both may impact on the forecast.

- 5.22 Specialist and Complex - Mental Health - forecast underspend of £1.5m. This is the result of clients transferring from the Mental Health Pool previously managed by the CCG and which Northamptonshire County Council gave notice to withdraw from the pool arrangements as at 31 March 2021. The disaggregation of the County Council budget was based on an initial analysis of the ordinary residence of 40% of the pool clients which suggested that the mix of pool clients included 45% to North Northamptonshire. However, analysis of the actual clients transferred is currently at c30% and therefore is forecasting an underspend against the allocated budget. Obviously, this service, like most services within Adult Social Care, is subject to demand fluctuation.
- 5.23 Specialist and Complex - Older People - there is a forecast pressure of £2.1m (variance of 3% against budget) against older people services which is related to the mix (costs) of clients and the number of clients, within this financial year compared to the bought forward disaggregated budget from 2020/21.
- 5.24 Specialist and Complex - Mental Health - there is a forecast underspend of £0.5m related to underlying Adults only Mental Health clients (non-pool) due to reduced number of actual clients being provided a service by the Council compared to the disaggregation analysis. The original disaggregation assumed 59% of the Countywide clients would be North Northamptonshire clients but to date c46% have transferred to the Council.
- 5.25 Additional income of £227k has been received from health partners to cover the first 4 weeks of care following hospital discharge covering costs already forecast within Older Persons Residential & Nursing care.
- 5.26 Other variances across the directorate total a forecast £0.1m underspend.

Public Health – Forecast pressure £596k

- 5.27 Public Health and Wellbeing is currently leading Northamptonshire's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The gross expenditure budget is funded by Public Health England.
- 5.28 The service is working with a number of funding streams that have been made available as a result of COVID-19 such as the Contain Outbreak Management Fund. The potential commitments against such funding streams are influenced by the incidence of COVID-19 cases which may change the priority and profile of spend against this funding.
- 5.29 A forecast pressure of £0.596m is reported and this reflects the split between grant and expenditure following disaggregation of the Public Health budget, this remains unchanged from that previously reported.

Housing and Community Services – Forecast pressure £250k

- 5.30 Housing and Community Services includes provision of housing services and support for homeless people. It also 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. The forecast remains in line with the previous report.

- 5.31 There is a forecast £0.1m pressure related to staffing costs within Housing, Homelessness and Community Leisure services due to the high level of temporary staff currently employed covering permanent posts due to a number of factors such as vacancies, maternity leave, etc. This is being reviewed by the service at present and exploring ways of mitigating costs.
- 5.32 The forecast also includes a pressure of £0.6m related to a reduction of income for leisure services mainly at the Corby International Pool (£0.3m) and Corby Lodge Park Sports Centre (£0.2m) with a further £0.1m in other areas, due to the current restrictions on visitor numbers. This is in part offset by lower staff costs which are estimated to be around £0.2m. The service has made a claim against COVID-19 funding which is available from Government until the end of June. This will reduce the pressure by £250k which has been included in the forecast.
- 5.33 The Chester House Estate has now had a successful go-live event. The revised Business Plan had projected a £115k pressure in the first six months of trading to the end of the 2021/22 financial year. The latest forecast indicates a position closer to breakeven, which will not require the use of contingency as planned, however West Northamptonshire Council has confirmed its intention to withdraw from the service as of 23rd October 2021 and there will be a reduction in contributions as a result, which will be met by North Northamptonshire Council. This shortfall will be around £99k for a full year and will amount to £41k for 2021/22 the use of the contingency has been reduced by £74k to reflect these changes.

Place and Economy - £1.369m Underspend

- 5.34 The Place and Economy net budget totals £54.617m and is forecasting an underspend of £1.369m, which is an adverse movement of £29k from Period 9. Place and Economy covers the following four areas:
- Growth and Regeneration
 - Assets and Environment
 - Highways and Waste
 - Regulatory Services
- 5.35 Services within Asset and Capital Management include the management of the Council's corporate assets and capital programmes, together with the effective management of the Council's strategic assets and landholdings.
- 5.36 Other key components within Place and Economy are Waste Management, Highways and Transportation, (including the Streetlighting PFI), Economic Development, Infrastructure and Funding, Trading Standards and Flood and Water Management.
- 5.37 Within Place the key budgets affected by demand/volumes are Home to School Transport, Concessionary Fares and Waste Disposal and Collection. The Directorate also includes responsibility for the Council's commercial estate which will often be influenced by economic conditions.

- 5.38 The Service has a forecast underspend of £1.435m which consists of the following main movements as outlined in the paragraphs below

Growth & Regeneration – £673k pressure

Planning Fees Income - £480k Pressure

- 5.39 Income from Planning Fees is forecast to be lower than budget, the forecast pressure is £38k this is unchanged from Period 9. Consultancy & legal costs remain unchanged from Period 9 with a forecast pressure of £76k. Staffing pressures relating to Development Management due to agency costs covering vacant posts and increased workload across the service has increased the forecast by £108k from £258k in Period 9 to £366k. This is an area that remains difficult to predict in the current economic climate and is one that will continue to be closely monitored. Overall, this results in an increase pressure of £108k from Period 9.

Temporary Toilets - £36k pressure

- 5.40 During COVID-19 temporary toilets were set up at Meadow Road in Kettering and these are expected to remain until the end of the year resulting in an additional pressure of £36k (Period 9 was £36k).

Markets - £16k Pressure

- 5.41 The responsibility for the markets is being transferred to Kettering Town Council (KTC) and the net impact is forecast to be around £16k, unchanged from last month, as the costs associated with managing the market will also transfer to Kettering Town Council.

Minor Variances - £141k Pressure

- 5.42 Other minor variances relating to Growth and Regeneration amount to £141k in Period 10.

Assets and Environment – £2k Overspend

Car Parking Income - £538k Pressure

- 5.43 As previously reported in Period 9 there was a forecast pressure for car parking income in relation to Kettering following the suspension of charges for a number of months, this pressure remains the same in Period 10 at £158k. Car Parking charges were reintroduced from 9 August following the removal of COVID-19 restrictions on 19 July.
- 5.44 There is also a forecast net pressure in Period 10 of £135k (Period 9 £135k) for Corby car parking income as, although charging is in place, receipts have been lower than would normally be expected. The Council will seek support from the Government Scheme to reimburse Local Authorities for lost income which is paid at 75% once the Council has met losses equivalent to 5% of the budget. This funding is only payable in respect of claims for losses in the first quarter of 2021/22 and is not available where Councils have chosen to suspend car

parking charges. This is reflected in the forecast net pressure. There is a further pressure of £35k (Period 9 £26k) relating to additional costs for maintenance work at the car parks in Corby.

- 5.45 The forecast pressure on the number of Fixed Penalty Charges for on-street parking in Period 10 is estimated to be £210k (Period 9 £210k).

Facilities Management - £495k Pressure

- 5.46 There is a reduction in income due to the expiry of a lease at Eaton Walk in May 2021. The year-to-date impact of this is a loss of income is £143k (Period 9 £143k). In addition, there is an underspend on street lighting of £16k (Period 9 £28k), offset by minor pressures elsewhere in the service of £75k (Period 9 £18k). This reflects a saving on the budget for repairs and maintenance works.
- 5.47 Further pressures in facilities management relating to one-off maintenance at Grosvenor House and Corby Cube were identified amounting to £108k. In addition, this is offset through salary and lower running costs of £145k.
- 5.48 There are pressures of £330k (Period 9 £330k) relating to Knuston Hall which is a facility which provides various types of learning, both residential and day courses, for international and national customers. Over the past two years of the pandemic Knuston Hall has suffered losses of income due to lockdown and COVID-19 rules for indoor gatherings etc. The facility is now providing a greatly reduced service because of social distancing rules and clients moving to virtual meetings, with maintenance issues also requiring the closure of the site to overnight guests. The facility is expected to return to normal trading during 2022/23.

Commercial Income - £655k Underspend

- 5.49 The Council's commercial estate remains an important source of income to the Authority as well as providing a good basis for regeneration and increasing economic activity and jobs creation. The Council's Property Management Team continue to work closely with tenants and despite the challenging economic climate the commercial income portfolio is forecast to be around £655k better than budget (Period 9 £655k).

Transport - £480k Underspend

- 5.50 Additional income of £480k was identified in relation to identifying dedicated routes across North Northamptonshire which aim to aid traffic flow in Wellingborough, this remains unchanged in Period 10.

Other Assets & Environment Areas - £104k Pressure

- 5.51 A pressure of £89k (Period 9 £75k) for fleet costs has been identified, although fuel consumption remains broadly on budget the cost of fuel has increased.
- 5.52 Minor Variances for Assets and Environment amount to £15k in Period 10 (£3k Period 9).

Highways and Waste – £1.269m Underspend

Highways and Traffic Management - £331k Pressure

- 5.53 There is a forecast pressure of £24k relating to highways and grass verge maintenance, this remains unchanged to that reported in Period 9. Additional pressures include Street lighting £84k (Period 9 £84k), winter maintenance £89k (Period 9 £89k) and additional maintenance work of £134k delivered through the Highways Contract (Period 9 £134k).

Waste Management - £1.259m Underspend

- 5.54 There is a forecast net underspend of £95k (Period 9 £149k) on the Refuse and Recycling Collection Service across the Kettering and Corby areas. This comprises a projected saving of £259k on co-mingled waste and a projected saving of £19k on food waste due to reduced gate fees. This is partly offset by pressures on garden waste of £121k due to a higher gate fee and a pressure of £62k as the Council previously received an income stream for paper.
- 5.55 There is a total net underspend (overachievement of income) of £359k in Period 10 (Period 9 - £304k) from waste income, this results from forecast additional income for Kettering and Corby trade waste of £216k (Period 9 £216k), additional recycling income of £203k (Period 9 £202k) and additional bulk waste income of £145k (£97k Period 9); these are partially offset by additional costs of £6k (Period 9 £13k) relating to East Northamptonshire area trade waste and £199k relating to an increase in disposal costs for the Wellingborough area (Period 9 £199k).
- 5.56 There is work being undertaken to migrate the Wellingborough disposal service from Norse into an inhouse function. Migration costs are currently estimated to be around £130k (Period 9 £100k) which have been reflected in the forecast outturn position.
- 5.57 The Waste Management service is also forecasting an underspend of £297k (Period 9 £272k) due to lower than anticipated tonnages for:
- Domestic waste £165k
 - Hazardous Waste £79k
 - Closed landfill sites £53k
- 5.58 There are savings relating to Street cleansing staff of £98k (Period 9 £107k) due to a higher number of vacant posts.
- 5.59 The Housing Waste Recycling Centres are forecasting an underspend of £540k (Period 9 £479k). The variances relate to;
- Basket price of commodities £273k
 - Transportation efficiencies from haulage contractors £82k
 - Income from Permits £26k
 - Disaggregation savings £195k
 - Staffing savings £29k
 - Additional Site Opening £37k pressure, and

- Traffic signage pressure £28k

Concessionary Fares - £842k Underspend

- 5.60 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).
- 5.61 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 estimated underspend is £242k (Period 9 - £242k).
- 5.62 Further to this it is forecast that the Council will underspend against the budget determined through the disaggregation principles by around £0.6m.

Subsidised Bus Services - £9k Underspend

- 5.63 There is a forecast underspend of £9k which is a movement of £15k from Period 9 where a £6k pressure was reported this reflects a forecast pressure of £6k on subsidised bus services due to the potential difference between the anticipated cost of the service and the funding available from parish councils, S106 developer contributions and Bus Services Ring-Fenced Grant and a £15k saving on lower IT costs.

Bus Service W8 Wollaston and Bozeat: Local Bus Contract - £16k Pressure

- 5.64 The operator informed the Transport Authority that the service is no longer commercially viable and without subsidy, it will withdraw the service. Furthermore, the driver shortage situation that is reported nationally has affected the service locally, whereby it may not be able to provide a service even with subsidy from the Council. Therefore, the operator submitted a formal notice of intention to terminate the service on 15th November 2021.
- 5.65 In order to find an alternative operator, a tendering exercise under the Northamptonshire County Council Local Bus Services Framework was conducted and has generated a compliant bid from Stagecoach Midlands. In a subsidy-based bid, they have requested £139/day from the Council to support the service. Under this agreement, they will retain all on-bus revenue as a subsidy-based arrangement.
- 5.66 In accordance with the Constitution the requirement for an urgent decision was agreed between the Executive Director of Finance (S151 Officer) and the Executive Member for Finance and Transformation to provide funding up to £16,263 to the operator of the Bus Service W8 between Wollaston, Bozeat and Wellingborough to cover the period from 20th October 2021 (or as soon as reasonably practical to start the service after this date) to 1st April 2022.

Transport - £610k Pressure

- 5.67 Transport pressures include a contract management pressure of £158k (£158k Period 9). Loss of income from roundabout sponsorship remains unchanged from Period 9 at £11k. In addition, there is a pressure on the Home to school transport of £740k due to higher student numbers and vehicle related costs. (Period 9 £740k) due to two items, namely, walking routes which have not been completed as initially envisaged when setting the budget, leading to a pressure of £232k from unachievable savings, together with a £508k pressure due to confirmed higher pupil numbers.
- 5.68 These pressures have been partially offset by a number of underspends, these relate to staffing savings of £28k and Bridge Maintenance, hire of skips and scaffolding of £68k. In addition, savings have been identified in relation to disaggregation of Highways amounting to c£203k

Other Highways and Waste - £116k Underspend

- 5.69 As part of the disaggregation process a budget of £125k remains unallocated and is forecast to be underspent. A £9k pressure reflects minor variances within Highways and Waste.

Regulatory Services – £775k Underspend

Emergency Planning - £556k Underspend

- 5.70 There is an underspend of £276k for emergency planning due to higher-than-expected staff turnover. The underspend remains unchanged from Period 9.
- 5.71 In Period 9 a favourable variance of £280k was identified as costs previously relating to PPE and funded through emergency planning are covered through COVID-19 funding.

Trading Standards - £86k Pressure

- 5.72 There is a pressure of £86k for trading standards (£81k Period 9), this is due to increased costs of £99k for a new Trading Standards Database; partially offset by costs recovered from a fraud prosecution case of £21k. There is also a net pressure of £8k due to the impact of the disaggregation.

Environmental Health - £174k underspend

- 5.73 Staffing vacancy savings of £201k (Period 9 £170k), partially offset by a pressure of £27k (£27k Period 9) from reduced income for training courses.

Other Regulatory Services - £131k underspend

- 5.74 Savings were identified in relation to Licensing amounting to £256k (Period 9 £182k) reflecting staffing savings due to vacant posts.
- 5.75 These savings have been partially offset by £93k relating to maintenance costs at Wellingborough Doddington of £40k and utility charges at Kettering Crematorium of £53k in Bereavement Services

- 5.76 A number of smaller savings amounting to £32k account for the remaining variance

Enabling and Support Services - £199k underspend

- 5.77 Enabling and Support Services consists of the following main grouping of services which also includes a number of corporate budget areas:

- Finance, Procurement and Revenues and Benefits Service
- Human Resources, Legal and Democratic Services
- Transformation, ICT and Customer Services

- 5.78 Overall, for these services the net revenue budget is £33.865m in 2021/22. Currently there is a forecast saving of £199k (Period 9 - £101k) which is set out in the following paragraphs.

- 5.79 There is a forecast pressure of £534k (Period 9 £534k) relating to income assumptions within the treasury management function. This is due to two pressures which have arisen following the disaggregation of the County Council's budget, the first is a budget for the capitalisation of interest of £282k, the second variance relate to interest on equity of £212k both remain unchanged from period 9. Both areas of income are no longer considered achievable and will become a pressure in 2021/22 and the longer term. In addition, there is a £40k shortfall in the investment income forecast which assumes that the historically low interest rates will continue throughout the year.

- 5.80 Work is ongoing to mitigate budget pressures through reviewing the council's investment portfolio and seeking further opportunities.

- 5.81 The Revenue and Benefits Service are forecasting an overspend of £17k at the end Period of 10 which is a movement of £50k from Period 9 where an underspend of £33k was reported. The Council received additional New Burdens Grant of £127k from Government for the distribution of grants. The remaining variance relates to the under recovery of court costs of £345k, offset by additional income relating to the business rates cost of collection of £53k. The under recovery of court costs reflects the decision the Council made in not taking recovery action for Council Tax arrears in the first quarter of the financial year, leaving a shortfall against the budget. Recovery commenced in quarter two of this year. The additional income for business rates cost of collection reflects the position calculated for the annual estimated return to Government, which was higher than the prior year legacy budgets on which the 2021/22 budget was based. This is further offset by additional grant income of £148k for the Housing Benefit Administration Grant which was higher than the prior year legacy budgets on which the 2021/22 budget was based.

- 5.82 During Period 5 an ongoing levy of £31k was identified in relation to the management of historic insurance liabilities associated with the former Councils within North Northamptonshire through Municipal Mutual Insurance (MMI). This remains unchanged in Period 10.

- 5.83 Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) is the body a number of local authorities have used to appoint external auditors. The revenue PSAA receives

covers the costs of its auditors and operating expenses. As PSAA operates on a not-for-profit basis surplus funds are redistributed to those authorities who opted into the PSAA, this amounts to one off income for the Council of £41k. This has been offset by a £10k pressure which relates to additional audit fees for the Kettering audit in 2018/19 due to additional work carried out by the external auditors in relation to valuations and pensions. The fee is set by the PSAA.

- 5.84 During Period 9 additional Income of £84k was identified in relation to the Dedicated Schools Grant. This income variance reflects the Council's Statutory and Regulatory duties in this area and remains unchanged in Period 10.
- 5.85 The required level of Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) for 2021/22 has been reviewed, together with the provisional slippage of the capital programme in 2020/21 from the legacy authorities, realising a potential underspend of £500k.
- 5.86 The contingency budget is held to meet unforeseen or unplanned/unbudgeted costs. The balance on contingency budget for Period 10 is £3.619m which is unchanged to that reported in Period 9.
- 5.87 North Northamptonshire Council has a dedicated transformation team working to deliver the changes required in the North to bring services together effectively and move towards more efficient operating models for services. This will include reviewing how the Council interacts with its customers, residents, partners and other stakeholders and will involve contractual arrangements, opportunities to expand and enhance the digital experience and realising property efficiencies, thereby reducing costs and improving services going forward.
- 5.88 As approved within the 2021/22 budget the service is, in the main, funded through a time limited contribution from reserves. Any variance against the £2.3m budget will be met through an adjustment to the movement to or from reserves.
- 5.89 A review of all income budgets within the Transformation Directorate is currently underway, with £300k already being identified as unachievable in relation to ex LGSS income budgets for business systems and change management. These budgets were allocated between Councils as part of the general disaggregation principles for the County Council's budget. This has now been reflected as a pressure within the ICT budget.
- 5.90 There is an estimated underspend of £605k (Period 9 - £400k) in relation to in year transformation salaries and customer services. This reflects the significant level of vacancies held by those teams during 2021/22, plans are in place to recruit to the majority of these vacancies.
- 5.91 The ICT budget is forecasting a pressure of £143k (Period 9 £75k). This is in relation to a historical budget pressure inherited from a legacy borough in relation to contract inflation and remote support from a contract with Capita.
- 5.92 There are other savings which amount to £4k this is a movement of £11k from Period 9 where a pressure of £7k was reported.

Summary of General Fund Savings Delivery

5.93 The Council had a savings requirement of £19.161m (including income proposals) within its 2021/22 budget. The deliverability of these proposals is being monitored by each accountable service lead, budget manager and senior officer up to Service Director level. These are summarised in the following Table and full details are provided in Appendix A. It is recognised that the continuing numbers of COVID-19 cases may put some savings at risk particularly with regard to Adult Social Care. Where there is concern regarding the achievement of savings mitigations are being sought. The position is unchanged from Period 9.

	Children's & Education	Adults, Communities and Wellbeing Services	Place and Economy	Enabling & Support Services	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Service Savings					
Demographic/ service demand	0	(25)	(2,817)	(750)	(3,592)
Legislative changes	0	0	0	(356)	(356)
Full year effects of previous decisions	(1,706)	(8,637)	(452)	(723)	(11,518)
Pay	(113)	(46)	0	(667)	(826)
Technical changes	(142)	0	(383)	0	(525)
LGR	0	(44)	0	(2,300)	(2,344)
Service Savings	(1,961)	(8,752)	(3,652)	(4,796)	(19,161)

6. Housing Revenue Account

- 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, these being.
- 6.2 The forecast position for the Corby Neighbourhood Account at the end of Period 10 shows a pressure of £86k which is a reduction of £88k from Period 9 (£174k). Rental income from dwellings is forecast to be £92k less than budget – this is a result of the Right to Buy Sales and the void rates being higher than budgeted. There is also a pressure of £44k from lower service charge income. These pressures are partly offset by salary savings from vacant posts within General Management (£16k) and Special Services (£45k).

Corby Neighbourhood Account			
	Current Budget 2021/22	Projection P10 2021/22	Variance
	£000	£000	£000
INCOME			
Rents - Dwellings Only	18,956	18,864	92
Service Charges	622	578	44
HRA Investment Income	69	69	0
Total Income	19,647	19,511	136
EXPENDITURE			
Repairs and Maintenance	5,550	5,556	6
General Management	5,176	5,160	(16)
HRA Self Financing	12,963	12,963	0
Revenue Contribution to Capital	3,791	3,791	0
Transfer To / (From) Reserves	(8,946)	(8,946)	0
Special Services	692	647	(45)
Other	421	426	5
Total Expenditure	19,647	19,597	(50)
Net Operating Expenditure	0	86	86

- 6.3 The forecast position for the Kettering Neighbourhood Account at the end of Period 10 shows a pressure of £30k which is an increase of £21k to that reported in Period 9 (£9k). Rental income from dwellings is forecast to be £45k less than budget – this is a result of higher void rates than budgeted and there is also a pressure of £19k from lower service charge income. These pressures are partly offset by savings of £34k in General Management which relate to salary savings due to vacant posts.

Kettering Neighbourhood Account			
	Current Budget 2021/22	P10 Projection 2021/22	Variance
	£000	£000	£000
INCOME			
Rents - Dwellings Only	15,066	15,021	45
Service Charges	430	411	19
HRA Investment Income	7	7	0
Total Income	15,503	15,439	64
EXPENDITURE			
Repairs and Maintenance	3,964	3,964	0
General Management	2,784	2,750	(34)
HRA Self Financing	4,585	4,585	0
Revenue Contribution to Capital	2,632	2,632	0
Transfer To / (From) Reserves	(119)	(119)	0
Special Services	1,111	1,111	0
Other	546	546	0
Total Expenditure	15,503	15,469	(34)
Net Operating Expenditure	0	30	30

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The forecast underspend as at Period 10 is £949k which is a favourable movement of £69k since Period 9 where an underspend of £880k was reported.
- 7.2 The key risks which are set out in the report will continue to be monitored and mitigations sought as required throughout 2021/22. The achievement of the approved savings targets is also integral to this process and will continue to be closely monitored and reported. Further work is ongoing in a number of areas to strengthen the forecast, most notably related to the disaggregation of the budget and services from the County Council.
- 7.3 The prior year outturn position and accounts of the predecessor Councils are yet to be reported and formally signed off. The Council may be required to consider any legacy issues arising as a result of the closedown and subsequent audits. Further updates relating to this will be provided at future meetings of the Executive.
- 7.4 The Council holds a contingency budget of c£3.6m as referenced in paragraph 5.86. This will support unforeseen risks and is particularly important for a new Council, where a number of transactions remain to be actioned to enable a full year of operation to be assessed, and also at a time of increased uncertainty as COVID-19 continues to impact.

8. Implications (including financial implications)

Resources and Financial

- 8.1 The resource and financial implications of North Northamptonshire Council are set out in this report. The current forecast position for the General Fund is an underspend of £949k and the Housing Revenue Account is forecasting an overspend of £116k.
- 8.2 The Council retains a contingency for in-year, unfunded requirements. If the contingency is not utilised, then it can be used to replenish reserves for greater resilience and/or future use.

Legal

- 8.3 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).
- 8.4 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 Shadow Authority agreeing its 2021/22 budget.

Risk

- 8.5 The deliverability of the 2021/22 Revenue Budget is monitored by Budget Managers. However, it is acknowledged that the Council's budget has been arrived at through using a number of disaggregation methodologies from the predecessor County Council budget rather than being built up over a period of time and as such there are inherent risks in the forecast position as the actual activity for North Northamptonshire takes place during the year which may not directly align to the split within the disaggregation.
- 8.6 Where any variances or emerging pressures are identified during the year then mitigating actions will be sought and management interventions undertaken.
- 8.7 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, commercial income which is at risk due to the prolonged impact of COVID-19 and the continuing review of budgets disaggregated from the County Council against actual/likely commitments both expenditure and income.
- 8.8 The staffing budget is a significant part of this review and officers are working to ensure that funded posts and associated costs are understood and within budget. Controls are in place with regard to approval of recruitment requests whilst the budgets are reviewed.
- 8.9 The Council holds a contingency and a number of reserves to help safeguard against the risks inherent within the budget for 2021/22. Where required pressures and other movements were included as part of the Council's 2022/23 budget and medium-term financial plan approved by Council at its meeting on 24th February 2022.

Consultation

- 8.10 The 2021/22 budget was subject to consultation prior to approval by the North Northamptonshire Shadow Authority in February 2021.

Climate Impact

- 8.11 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.

Community Impact

- 8.12 No distinct community impacts have been identified because of the proposals included in this report.

9. Issues and Choices

- 9.1 The report focuses on the forecast revenue outturn against budget for 2021/22 and makes recommendations for the Executive to note the current budgetary position as such there are no specific choices within the report.

10. Background Papers

- 10.1 The following background papers can be considered in relation to this report.

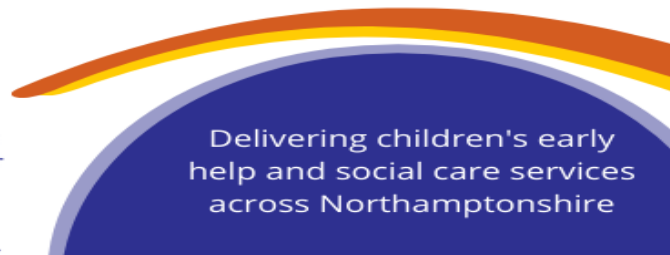
Final Budget 2021/22 and Medium-Term Financial Plans, including the Council Tax Resolution, North Northamptonshire Shadow Authority, 25 February 2021.

Monthly Budget Forecast Reports to the Executive.

Budget Savings

Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description	Proposal Ref	Category	2021/22 £000	RAG
Children & Education	Improvement in capacity building in foster care	Ensuring that adolescents are not placed in residential home settings due to lack of in house fostering capacity, skill and abilities through the development of an in house specialist fostering service. Positive impact on children placed in a family setting, and savings will through reduced reliance on residential placements.	04-02-02-01	Full year effects of previous decisions	(458)	A
Children & Education	Reducing Reliance on Agency Staff	A proposal to increase the proportion of permanent staffing within the Children's Trust, reducing reliance on agency staff, through a refreshed Workforce Strategy and Quality Assurance Framework that creates a stable and effective workforce.	04-02-02-02	Full year effects of previous decisions	(115)	A
Children & Education	Reduction in Residential Care	Step down from high end residential places to Independent Fostering Agencies through reviews and joint working/incentives that drive better outcomes. This will drive reduced placement costs and more children will be cared for in a family setting.	04-02-02-03	Full year effects of previous decisions	(179)	A
Children & Education	Improved children's outcomes	Ensuring that only children and young people who need to be in public care are placed, as a result of improved Edge of care support and intervention with families. Working towards minimising the amount of time a child is in care before they are united with their parents.	04-02-02-04	Full year effects of previous decisions	(301)	A
Children & Education	Supported Accommodation	A new model of progressive semi-independent accommodation to support the transition for young people to self-supported housing.	04-02-02-05	Full year effects of previous decisions	(85)	A
Children & Education	In-House Foster Carers	Increase use of in-house fostering through an improved recruitment and retention strategy for standard carers. This will reduce reliance on agency placement.	04-02-02-06	Full year effects of previous decisions	(194)	A
Children & Education	Transport optimisation	Review of transport requirements to reduce costs to ensure an efficient use of service.	04-02-02-07	Full year effects of previous decisions	(97)	A
Children & Education	UASC	Changes to the Council subsidy required in addition to Home Office funding of support for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) and former UASC (those aged 18 and over). (Ref 04-02-01-02)	04-02-02-08	Full year effects of previous decisions	(277)	A
Children & Education	Innovate Team and PIP (Partners in Practice) team	Removal of one off expenditure for additional social worker capacity in the duty and assessment team throughout April-May 2020 to safely manage current demand and stabilise the service, and an extension of the Court Team throughout April-June 2020 as provided by Partners in Practice to ensure skills transfer and an exit strategy are in place.	05-02-02-02	Pay	(113)	A
Children & Education	Family Group Conferencing	Removal of one off funding in respect of DfE grant funding for the Supporting Families: investing in practice programme. The DfE are working with a number of local authorities, including NCC, to test a model of Family Group Conferencing to gather robust and usable evidence on the effectiveness in keeping children and parents together.	06-02-02-01	Technical changes	(142)	A
Adults, Communities & Wellbeing	Library Book Fund	Reduction in budget spent on book supplies for libraries - reflection of move to on line resources	03-01-02-01	Demographic/service demand	(25)	A
Adults, Communities & Wellbeing	Library Agency Staff	Removal of budget only required during transformation period	03-01-02-02	Pay	(46)	A
Adults, Communities & Wellbeing	Theatre Interim Mgt Costs	Reduction in Contract Costs relating to the Castle Theatre	04-01-02-01	Full year effects of previous decisions	(8)	A
Adults, Communities & Wellbeing	Specialist centre for – Step down Care Mental Health and Acquired brain injury	Moray Lodge development providing specialist and step down supported living for people with an acquired brain Injury and mental health support needs.	04-01-02-02	Full year effects of previous decisions	(154)	A
Adults, Communities & Wellbeing	Rapid response falls & admission avoidance service	A new service (initially funded by business rate pilot fund) provided by health, social care and East Midlands Ambulance Service providing support following falls in the home to reduce hospital admissions and likelihood of long term social care.	04-01-02-03	Full year effects of previous decisions	(1,918)	R
Adults, Communities & Wellbeing	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.	04-01-02-04	Full year effects of previous decisions	(2,153)	A

Directorate	Proposal Title	Proposal Description	Proposal Ref	Category	2021/22 £000	RAG
Adults, Communities & Wellbeing	Rebaselining	This reduction in care budgets is to realign the base budget to the position reported for 20-21, where the service has seen a reduced demand against original budget.	04-01-02-05	Full year effects of previous decisions	(3,209)	A
Adults, Communities & Wellbeing	Prevention contract cessation/redesign	The new adult social care Target Operating Model has resulted in the decision to cease (following their termination dates expiring) a number of contracts. These services will now be delivered through an overarching approach to service delivery.	04-01-02-06	Full year effects of previous decisions	(149)	A
Adults, Communities & Wellbeing	Sheltered Housing Contracts cessation/redesign	The adult social care Target Operating Model has resulted in the decision to cease (following their termination dates expiring) a number of sheltered housing contracts. These services will now be delivered through an overarching approach to service delivery.	04-01-02-07	Full year effects of previous decisions	(71)	A
Adults, Communities & Wellbeing	Independent Care - Physical Disability	Rebaselining based on latest monitoring position against the Physical Disability cohort budget.	04-01-02-08	Full year effects of previous decisions	(762)	A
Adults, Communities & Wellbeing	Learning Disability Provider Framework efficiencies	Review activity to support progression for people with a Learning Disability, including implementation of new provider framework with improved pricing strategy, outcomes and incentivised step down	04-01-02-09	Full year effects of previous decisions	(213)	A
Adults, Communities & Wellbeing	Housing Options Saving	Saving relating to the harmonisation of the Housing Options Allocation System	08-03-02-03	LGR	(44)	A
Place & Economy	additional income	Additional income from fees and charges relating to additional demand	03-06-02-01	Demographic/service demand	(230)	A
Place & Economy	Home to School Transport Demography	Change required reflecting the population trend in the county. Trend analysis has been used to provide a forecast position. (Ref 03-06-01-03)	03-06-02-02	Demographic/service demand	(22)	G
Place & Economy	Recycling Credits	Realignment of Recycling Credits Budget	03-06-02-03	Demographic/service demand	(565)	G
Place & Economy	Enterprise Centre Business Case	Increase in income based on appointed operators business case.	04-06-02-03	Full year effects of previous decisions	(202)	A
Place & Economy	Concessionary Fares	Removal of surplus budget for Concessionary Fares based on forecast underutilisation of the scheme.	04-06-02-05	Full year effects of previous decisions	(95)	G
Place & Economy	Volume changes on Waste Budgets	Forecast based on projections of how much waste will be produced in the area including recycling, composting and food waste tonnages.	03-06-02-04	Demographic/service demand	(2,000)	A
Place & Economy	Reduction in Grants	This reflects a reduction due to a one off increase in Grants in 2020/21 returning to the substantive budget.	04-06-02-01	Full year effects of previous decisions	(140)	G
Place & Economy	Country Parks	Annual revenue benefit of capital investment in Sywell Country Park sewage treatment plant.	04-06-02-07	Full year effects of previous decisions	(15)	G
Place & Economy	Fees and Charges	Harmonisation of Prioritised Fees and Charges	06-03-02-01		(37)	A
Place & Economy	Fees and Charges	Inflationary Uplift of Fees and Charges owing to a new charging strategy.	06-03-02-02		(346)	A
Enabling & Support Services	Insurance Contract	Estimated reduction in the Insurance Contract due to self insuring	03-04-02-05		(750)	A
Enabling & Support Services	Removal of ICT, FM & General Risk Budgets	Removal of specific Contingency Budgets owing to the creation of a corporate contingency.	04-04-02-01	Full year effects of previous decisions	(493)	G
Enabling & Support Services	Reductions in Technical Finance Budgets	Removal of base budget relating to the cost of Commissioners.	04-04-02-02	Full year effects of previous decisions	(230)	G
Enabling & Support Services	Vacancy Factor	Increase in the Council's Vacancy Factor by £250k to £1.6m	05-04-02-01	Pay	(250)	A
Legal & Democratic Services & HR	Local Elections	Removal of one off increases in budget to cover local elections, subsequently deferred to May 2021.	07-05-02-01	Legislative changes	(356)	G
Enabling & Support Services	Pension contributions	Reduction in Council contribution payment to Pension Fund following transfer of staff to Children's Trust (Ref 05-02-01-01)	05-04-02-02	Pay	(417)	A
All Directorates	Staffing Savings	Estimated savings related to the Senior Leadership Structure	08-03-02-01	LGR	(2,300)	A
Total Savings					(19,161)	



Appendix B

Revenue Forecast Outturn Report

2021-22

1 Purpose of report

1.1 To report the forecast outturn position at period 10.

2 Background Summary

2.1 The controllable budget for 2021/22 as approved in the contract is £123.348m. This also includes the impact of the full £6.8m savings programme, the element relating to the 21/22 financial year is £3.260m.

3 Summary

Table 1 – Forecast outturn by service area

Service Area	Budget £'000	Gross Outturn £'000	Less Covid Funding £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000	Outturn Variance £'000	Prior Month Variance £'000	Movement £'000
Corporate Parent Service	43,998	44,746	(856)	43,890	(108)	102	(210)
Children, Young People and Family Support Services	5,692	5,115	-	5,115	(576)	(526)	(50)
Prevention & Safeguarding	14,314	15,676	(1,656)	14,020	(294)	(499)	205
Quality Assurance and Commissioning	57,579	59,471	(120)	59,351	1,772	1,642	130
NCT Central	1,765	1,801	-	1,801	36	36	-
Northamptonshire Children's Trust	(123,348)	126,809	-	(123,348)	-	-	-
Total	-	3,462	(2,632)	830	830	755	75

3.1 The forecast outturn position for 2021/22, is an overspend of £0.830m against the approved budget of £123.348m, an adverse movement of £0.075m from period 10. Also factored into the outturn at period 10 to mitigate the overspend is £2.632m of assumed approved covid funding from the Unitaries.

3.2 **Key Variances and Management mitigations**

3.3 The forecast outturn position for 2021/22, is an overspend of £0.830m against the approved budget of £123.348m. The trust will mitigate this pressure through the use of the carry forward reserve of £0.812m (relating to the financial period Nov 2020–Mar 2021.) This would result in a net overspend of £0.018m. The carry forward reserve figure has reduced by £0.280m from £1.092m due to an end of year adjustment relating to accumulated absences £0.277m and minor admin expenses £0.003m.

Through the detailed monthly financial reporting key budget risk areas will continue to be reported to ensure effective monitoring is in place.

3.4 **LAC and Leaving care staffing (£0.711m)**

Is reporting an overspend of £0.711m based on the review of staff on payroll and agency including ongoing C-19 funded arrangements. The overspend is due to high level of agency staff across the teams, while permanent recruitment takes place. We have launched our recruitment and retention strategy, but recruitment of social workers remains both a local and national.

3.5 **Mother and Baby assessments is reporting an overspend of (£0.250m).**

The budget was set for 19 assessments i.e. 230 weeks. Although the service is proactively reviewing the cases to curtail the spend, the current trend expects the costs will be in the region of 25 assessment or 272 weeks resulting in the forecast overspend. Work is ongoing to improve understanding of throughput of expectant mothers who have been identified as at risk. This will provide some assurance concerning the expectant growth within the forecast.

3.6 **Fostering (£200k underspend)**

The in-house foster care services is reporting an underspend of £0.200m due to lower than planned placements based on data at the end of the quarter two. This is having an impact on the placements budget, with the lower costs in this service area due to the lack of recruitment of foster carers the impact having a higher impact in costs in placements budget due to higher costs in agency/ independent placements. At the end of quarter two payments made to mainstream foster carers each week were lower, from 256 to 247, than the benchmark set at the end of March @ 256 beds. Foster Care recruitments is one of the key strategies to reduce placement pressure.

3.7 **Strengthening Families and Young Peoples Service (£576k underspend)**

Strengthening families and young people's service is reporting an underspend of £0.526m as there are a number of vacant posts across the service. As part of the improvement journey and the reduction of placement costs is the development of a strong redesigned early help offer. The posts are unlikely to be recruited before the year end and will be part of the mitigation.

3.8 **Placements (£1.874m overspend)**

Placements remains the biggest single risk and is incredibly volatile, with a single placement costing £500k. The current levels of volatility, efficiency of joint funding process and current flux of emergency placements and increasing complexity of need.

We will continue to mitigate and strive to secure placements at a lower cost. However, the market and availability of placements remains extremely challenging and the inflation pressures from the independent sector is in excess of budgetary provision. The placements budget will remain under significant pressure as it remains extremely volatile both locally and also nationally. The expenditure could increase, and this risk is identified in the contract sum.

The proposed creation of a placement reserve may provide mitigation of in year pressures for 2022/23. As part of the placement sufficiency strategy a capital bid to create local provision, match funded has been submitted to both North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire as part of their respective capital programmes.

It is also worth noting that significant placements savings were taken from the NCT budget in both the 20/21 and 21/22 financial years totalling £4.9m.

4.0 Covid funding

4.1 The following requests have been made to the Unitaries and subsequent approval has been received and included as part of the forecast.

Description	2021/22 £000's	Narrative
Children's Social Care - Sickness cover across Children's homes and block bed provision	130	Funding for childrens Homes Staffing pressures with additional agency staff
Children's Social Care - Additional Social Worker capacity	700	Additional Social Worker capacity and reliance and agency staff.
Recruitment of Permanent social worker – additional interim capacity	572	Additional agency capacity due to challenges around permanent recruitment. Innovate teams
Children's Social Care - M&B assessments	250	Increase in Mothers requiring residential placements and assessments due to late observation/presentation of pregnancies due to restrictions
Children's Social Care - disabled children additional home care packages	134	Additional hours of support for disabled children at home due to school closures to prevent them from coming into care
Children's Social Care - ARE Support	276	It is not possible to progress the 'All Rights Exhausted' cases due to lock down, as such this cohort are having to be supported for longer than anticipated
Child protection conferencing	49	Additional child protection capacity
Disabled Children's review	200	Social care packages increasing, and additional support required at home. It is not currently possible to quantify the full impact.
In-House Foster Carers	200	It is expected that foster carer applicants, as well as the availability of resources to progress recruitment campaign will reduce considering the pandemic.
Looked after Children Transport	120	Additional transport costs and inflation above budgeted provision
Total Covid Funding	2,631	

4.2 Additional cost due to the increase in mothers and babies requiring residential placements and assessments due to late observation/presentation of pregnancies due to Covid restrictions. Although the Service continues to proactively review the cases to curtail the spend, the current trend indicates the volume of assessments provided over the financial year to be 25 with 272 weeks' support. Requested, £0.250m.

- 4.3 Accommodation and support for Appeals Rights Exhausted (former UASC). Currently the service is supporting 27 ARE cohort within HMO and external placements with forecast net growth of 4 before year end. 10 of this cohort are supported in external placements with a forecast year end cost of £209k, impact of Covid due to border controls. Requested, £0.209m.
- 4.4 Across the 5 Children Homes there are 19.2 FTE vacancies that are being covered by agency and overtime expenditure providing a pressure to the service budget as a result of the impact of Covid. Requested, £0.130m.
- 4.5 There has been growth in the over 21 and NEET population of 7 above that budgeted in year due to impact of Covid. Requested, £0.067m. P10 forecast indicates a further pressure of £0.059m.
- 4.6 Additional cost of agency care staff required to cover in house residential unit staff shortages due to staff sickness and self-isolation to ensure safe staffing levels across Children's in house residential homes. Additional cost of agency also due to challenges around permanent recruitment, Innovate teams/Peripatetic. Requested, £1.272m.
- 4.7 Additional hours of support for disabled children at home due to school closures to prevent them from coming into care. Additional hours of support for disabled children at home due to school closures to prevent them from coming into care.
- 4.8 Additional child protection conferencing, Requested, £0.049m.
- 4.9 It is expected that foster carer applicants, as well as the availability of resources to progress recruitment campaign will reduce considering the pandemic. Requested, £0.200m.
- 4.10 Increased levels of support for Children with Disabilities, social care packages increasing, and additional support required at home. Requested, £0.200m.
- 4.11 Additional transport costs and inflation above budgeted provision. Requested, £0.120m.

5 Outturn by service area

5.1 Corporate parenting

5.2 Table 2, outturn by service

Service	Budget £'000	Gross Forecast Outturn £'000	Covid Funding £'000	Outturn Variance £'000	Prior Month Variance £'000	Movement £'000
Children's Homes	3,413	3,451	-	38	130	(92)
Fostering and Adoption Staffing	4,479	4,366	-	(113)	(38)	(75)
Disabled Children's Team - Staffing	1,595	1,431	-	(165)	(275)	110
Disabled Children's Team - Care Provision	3,031	2,861	-	(170)	64	(234)
LAC & Leaving Care - Staffing	7,662	8,373	-	711	689	22
CFN - No Recourse to Public Funds	319	169	-	(150)	-	(150)
LAC & Leaving Care - Care Provision - Exc. Placements	1,396	1,405	-	9	6	3
Mother & Baby Assessments	923	923	-	-	-	-
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children – Staffing	556	530	-	(26)	15	(41)
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children – Placements	4,318	4,470	-	152	152	-
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children - Care Prov.	573	573	-	-	-	-
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children – Funding	(4,557)	(4,809)	-	(252)	(252)	-
Social Work Legal Provision - Costs	4,535	4,535	-	-	150	(150)
In House Fostering Care Provision	8,866	8,666	-	(200)	(250)	50
Adoption Care Provision	6,753	6,813	-	60	43	17
Corporate Parenting AD	136	134	-	(2)	(2)	-
Covid Pressure/Funding/Bal figure	-	856	(856)	-	(330)	330
Corporate Parent Service Total	43,998	44,746	(856)	(108)	102	(210)

5.3 Corporate parent service is reporting an underspend of £0.108m, a favourable movement of £0.210m from period 9.

5.4 Fostering and adoption staffing team is reporting an underspend of £0.113m.

5.5 Disabled children's team is reporting an underspend of £0.165m due to vacancies an adverse movement of £0.110m from period 9.

5.6 Disabled children's care provision is reporting an underspend of £0.170m, factoring in the coving funding.

5.7 LAC & leaving care staffing is reporting an overspend of £0.711m and adverse movement of £0.22m based on the review of staff on payroll and agency including C-19 funded arrangements. The overspend is mainly due to high level of agency staff across the teams, while permanent recruitment takes place.

- 5.8 Mother and baby assessments is reporting a nil pressure. The current forecast service pressure will be mitigated by C-19 funding.
- 5.9 The unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) service is forecasting a net underspend of £0.126m for placement costs for young persons who have exhausted all appeal rights. The current forecast service pressure will be mitigated by C-19 funding bid if it is approved.
- 5.10 The legal budget was forecast to overspend by £0.150m, this has been excluded from the forecast due to ongoing discussions around charging errors by the provider, Pathfinder. By year end we will have reviewed the legal spend in greater detail with the service. The majority of the expenditure relates to S.31 proceedings that are in the court arena for an average 48 weeks. The increasing number of S31 cases and impact of increasing time in proceedings may result in increasing our current monthly bill from LGSS. September billing saw increased cost of disbursements from counsel and court fees that have provided the stated overspend. The budget provides a considerable risk given the high volume of S31 cases progressing through the judiciary.
- 5.11 The in-house foster care services is reporting a £0.200m underspend. At the end of Quarter 2 payments made to mainstream Foster carers each week were below the budget benchmark set end of March @ 256 beds. This indicates that no growth has been achieved during the period and therefore no contribution to the savings target. There has been growth in the number of kinship arrangements within the budgeted assumption, however this does not realise savings, these arrangements can be attributed to cost avoidance.
- 5.12 Adoption care is reporting a forecast overspend of 0.060m. This is due to expenditure on therapeutic services. While quarter 1 revealed net growth of 31 SGO arrangements, quarter 2 has seen this growth number reduce to 17 with a number of existing arrangements ending. The budget has allowed for net growth in year of 32 new SGO arrangements and therefore the previous reported budget pressure has been removed.
- 5.13 Corporate parenting AD is forecasting an underspend of £0.002m.
- 5.14 **Children, Young People and Family Support Services**

Table 3, outturn by service

Service	Budget £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000	Outturn Variance £'000	Prior Month Variance £'000	Movement £'000
Youth Offending Service	1,563	1,563	(1)	-	-
Strengthening Families and Young People's Service Staffing	4,098	3,678	(421)	(371)	(50)
Strengthening Families and Young People's Service Care Provision	30	30	-	-	-
Supporting Families Programme Staffing	778	778	-	-	-
Supporting Families Programme Funding	(1,389)	(1,760)	(371)	(371)	-
Supporting Families Programme Care Provision	611	827	216	216	-

Children, Young People and Family Support Services Total	5,692	5,115	(576)	(526)	(50)
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5.15 Strengthening families and young people's service is reporting an underspend of £0.576m due to a number of vacant posts across the service.

5.16 The key factors impacting the change in forecast are:

5.17 The full drawdown of £0.844m from supporting families staffing costs to the strengthening families programme.

5.18 The Chief Executive has approved for vacancies to be filled using agency to meet demand pressures and clear existing bottlenecks and backlogs. £0.250m has been assigned to cover future agency and recruitment costs to 31st March. The impact will be monitored; however, it is evident from the staffing tables that the numbers have further reduced over the winter months.

5.19 **Prevention and safeguarding**

Table 4, outturn by service

Service	Budget £'000	Gross Forecast Outturn £'000	Covid Funding £'000	Outturn Variance £'000	Prior Month Variance £'000	Movement £'000
Prevention & Safeguarding Management	326	303	-	(23)	(9)	(14)
Safeguarding & Care Planning - Staffing	7,599	7,338	-	(261)	(392)	131
Safeguarding & Care Planning - Care Provision	717	478	-	(239)	(50)	(189)
Duty & Assessment - Staffing	3,222	3,431	-	210	268	(58)
Duty & Assessment - Care Provision	85	60	-	(25)	-	(25)
MASH & EDT Care Provision	12	12	-	-	-	-
MASH & EDT - Staffing	2,354	2,398	-	45	69	(24)
Covid Pressure/Funding/Bal Figure	-	1,656	(1,656)	-	(384)	384
Prevention & Safeguarding Total	14,314	15,676	(1,656)	(294)	(499)	205

5.20 At period 10 the prevention and safeguarding service is forecasting an underspend of £0.294m, a favourable movement of £0.205m from the position reported at period 9.

5.21 £1.66m of C-19 activities will be funded by arrangements provided by the unitary authorities to 31st March and having no impact on budget performance. This includes the extension of Innovate Team contract to 31st March providing additional pressure of £0.210m.

5.22 Safeguarding and care planning – Staffing is forecast to underspend by £0.261m due to vacancies.

5.23 Safeguarding and care planning care provision is forecasting an underspend of £0.239m for S17 related costs.

5.24 Duty and Assessment staffing is forecasting to overspend by £0.210m due to agency costs.

5.25 MASH & EDT staffing is forecast to overspend by £0.045m, a favourable movement of £0.025m on period 9.

5.26 Quality assurance and commissioning

Table 5, outturn by service

Service	Budget £'000	Gross Forecast Outturn £'000	Covid Funding £'000	Outturn Variance £'000	Prior Month Variance £'000	Movement £'000
Northampton Social Work Academy	469	489	-	21	21	0
Social Work Transport Provision	1,146	1,228	-	82	132	(50)
Business Support & Development	1,292	1,192	-	(100)	(74)	(26)
Commissioning & Strategy	6,131	6,131	-	8	8	0
Agency Placements	45,368	47,241	-	1,874	1,759	115
Quality & Performance Management	136	145	-	9	9	0
Quality & Assurance	3,038	2,915	-	(123)	(94)	(29)
Public Health Projects – Invest to Improve	0	0	-	0	0	(0)
Covid Pressure/Funding/Bal Figure	-	120	(120)	0	(120)	120
Quality Assurance and Commissioning Total	57,579	59,471	(120)	1,772	1,642	130

5.27 Quality Assurance and Commissioning are reporting an overspend of £1.772m, an adverse movement of £0.130m from period 9.

5.28 Northampton social work academy is forecasting an overspend of £0.021m for cost of step-up social work students who were employed in the intervening period between the end of their placements and their qualification as social workers before they can be permanently employed.

5.29 Social work transport provision is forecasting an overspend of £0.082m . Transport costs will be offset from the underspend of S17 monies from Prevention & Safeguarding. A covid bid of £120k has been submitted to the Unitaries to mitigate the remaining overspend.

5.30 The NCT transport hub pilot has been set up to improve and challenge approval process to ensure efficiency. A monthly review of transport forecasting will be ongoing.

5.31 Business support staffing budgets are reporting an underspend of £0.100m due to the staffing vacancies. The establishment for the service had been historically underfunded due to structural issues from past restructures/reorganisations. This deficit was addressed in the 21/22 budgets from unutilised non-staffing budgets plus an increase in the vacancy factor rate. There are currently several vacant posts across the service off-setting the total impact of the vacancy factor budget which is £0.369m.

5.32 Commissioning and strategy are reporting a forecast overspend of £0.008m due to a £0.150m uplift to the residential short breaks contract with Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust , mitigated by additional ad-hoc income of £0.025m for services provided to other local authorities , £0.036m for Care Planning - Therapies, Tests & Assessments contracts and £0.081m underspend on staffing

5.33 The placements budget is reporting a forecast overspend of £1.874m an adverse movement of £0.115m from P9.

There are 2 new welfare placements included in the forecast with a commitment of £0.174m, offset by savings within the DCT agency budget

A detailed placement and forecasting model is in place tracking at an individual placement level. The model will be used to inform the placement sufficiency strategy and commissioning within the Trust.

5.34 Quality & assurance are reporting a forecast underspend of £0.123m mainly due to vacancies across the service. The forecast underspend on staffing is £0.224m, this is offset by vacancy factor budget of £0.169m and £0.015m forecast spend on car mileage and allowances for advocacy visit and £0.008m underspend on non-pay budgets and £0.161m impact of pay award.

6. Savings target and delivery

6.1 The savings requirement of £3.260m is for the full financial year. The performance of these savings is reviewed at the monthly transformation and efficiency board meetings. A revised savings and transformation programme will be developed in 21/22 to ensure delivery.

Table 6 – Savings delivery

REF	Name	Target 21/22 (£000's)	SRO	Estimated not Deliverable (£000's)	Savings Estimated as Deliverable but at risk (£000's)	Savings Delivered (£000s)	Savings mitigated in year (£000's)
19-002-02	Improvement in capacity building in foster (BRR)	1,084	Olivia Ives	£239	£327	£517	-
19-002-05	Reducing Reliance on Agency Staff (BRR)	388	Andrew Tagg	-	£388	-	-
19-002-07	Improved children's outcomes (BRR)	843	Olivia Ives	£247	£20	£576	-
19-002-09	Supported Accommodation	197	Louise Mackender	-	-	-	£197
19-002-10	In-House Foster Carers	433	Olivia Ives	-	£433	-	-
19-002-12	Transport Optimisation	316	Louise Mackender	-	£316	-	-
	TOTAL	3,261		£486	£1,484	£1,093	£197

RAG	Work stream	Deliverable/action	Financial
Red	Delays being experienced across the work stream Escalation required SRO/SLT intervention/recovery plan needed	Deadline missed Escalation to SRO/Service lead required Recovery plan required	Planned amount not achievable
Amber	Risk of delay / key deliverables Corrective action required Being managed within work stream	At risk of missing scheduled date	Forecast as deliverable with elements of risk
Green	Work stream is on track to deliver all scheduled dates	On track to meet scheduled date	Delivered pending financial verification
Blue	Complete	Complete	Fully Delivered and verified
BLANK	Not started	Not started	N/A

Green - £1.093m (Including 2020/21 delivery of savings of £3.540m)
Amber - £1.484m (Plans in place, potential risk to full year delivery target - in year mitigation required)
Red - £0.486m (Alternative Savings required)
Blue - £0.197m (Savings mitigated in year)
Total - £3.260m

- 6.2 BRR funded improvement in capacity building in foster care seeks to develop specialist resilient foster carers to be able to foster young people with higher complex needs. 5 Carers have placements attached which has delivered savings to date of £0.517m, with £0.566m still at risk.
- 6.3 The service is forecasting 6 placements to be matched to carers before the end of the financial year. All 6 have yet to be approved by NFA, with expectation these will be matched and providing contribution to in-year savings of £0.206m.
- 6.4 The BRR funded savings project reducing reliance on agency staffing seeks to reduce the high levels of agency staff covering permanent vacancies.
- 6.5 BRR funded improved children outcomes project was originally based on reducing the number of young people in care but has been formally replaced by the high-cost placements review project as an alternative delivery model. Savings are expected to be generated from a review of high-cost placements, which is on-going. Currently the saving of £0.336m is at risk due to the increasing demand of placements and spend.
- 6.6 Reduction in residential care project seeks to generate savings from reduced use of external residential care.
- 6.7 The supported accommodation savings project generated savings through the commissioning of managed accommodation for young persons. This saving overlaps

with the high-costs placement review, therefore savings delivered will be allocated across both projects. The supported accommodation savings has been fully delivered as at period 5, of £0.197m.

- 6.8 In-house foster carers project seeks to generate savings by increasing the capacity of in-house foster carers and thus reducing the reliance on other costlier placements types.
- 6.9 The transport optimisation project seeks to deliver savings through a tighter management and application of the transport policy. The NCT transport hub pilot has been set up to improve and challenge approval process to ensure efficiency.
- 6.10 A review of transport at period 8 determined that the service was overspending. The overspend relates to higher demand for taxis as well as the cost of taxi travel has increased since COVID, due to pressures and changes in the market as well as inflation and more recently fuel prices. Demand is no longer a sole measure of saving when the cost of travel continues to rise.
- 6.11 A revised savings programme has been implemented to deliver the full £6.840m savings deducted from the initial 17th month contract sum. The governance, monitoring and reporting will be managed through the transformation and efficiency board.

7. Reserves and ring-fenced funding

Table 7 – Reserves

Reserves	Opening Balance £'m	YTD Commitment £'m	Balance £'m
Litigation costs (HRA)	0.051	0.051	-
Family Group Conferencing	0.289	0.289	-
International Social Worker visa costs	0.148	0.056	0.092
Youth Offending Service	0.427	-	0.427
Troubled Families	0.844	0.844	-
Staff Retention	0.650	0.650	-
Total Reserves	2.410	1.890	0.519

- 7.1 Total reserves carried forward to 21/22 are £2.410m as detailed in table 9.
- 7.2 In addition to the above the underspend of £0.812m was also carried forward from 20/21.
- 7.3 Litigation costs (HRA)
- This reserve is to support children who have had court judgement in their favour from Human Rights Assessments claims. Expenditure incurred to date is £0.051m.
- 7.4 Family group conferencing
- £0.289m payment to Leicestershire County Council for the delivery of the Family Group Conference Service as part of a DfE funded pilot.

DfE funded eighteen-month, controlled trial of family group conferencing (FGC), a comprehensive process through which the child's extended family create their own plan of how they will all come together to look after the child. This trial is for a select cohort of families to assess the impact of FGC in reducing the number of children that come into care.

7.5 International social worker visa costs

To provide assistance for overseas social workers in their visa application.

7.6 Youth Offending Service

This provides help and support to the most vulnerable families, at the earliest possible stage, in order that children's outcomes across a range of areas improve. The programme is focused on happier, healthier children with improved educational attendance, attainment and improved life chances. Parents are supported to engage in preparation for work and towards financial independence so that they and their children can escape poverty and hardship.

7.7 Supporting families

This reserve is help achieve significant and sustained progress against multiple problems to make work and ambition possible for all families. Funding by central government is allocated based on level of need by application.

7.8 Staff retention

Three-year retention scheme for qualified social workers to reduce staffing cost, turnover and the reliance on agency staffing.

7.9 Table 8 – Ring fenced funding

Other ring-fenced funding	Opening balance	YTD Commitment	Balance
	£'m	£'m	£'m
Edge of Care	0.349	0.359	-
Early Help	0.285	0.285	-
Strengthening Practice -Signs of Safety	0.131	0.131	-
Digital & IT	0.170	0.170	-
Balance	0.041	0.041	-
Subtotal DfE invest to improve	0.976	0.976	-
PH Funded interventions	1.341	0.807	0.534
BRR Fostering	0.276	-	0.276
BRR Practice improvement	0.079	-	0.079
Total ringed fenced funding	2.672	1.783	0.889

In addition to the reserves identified at table 9, other ringed fenced funding totalling £2.672m was also carried forward.

7.10 DfE Invest to Improve comprises of four priority areas that was identified as most likely to have a positive impact upon the improvement plan for children's services as below:

- Edge of Care – to reduce the numbers of children looked after through supporting family networks to meet needs of children and generally reduce levels of residential placements.

The majority of this funding is supporting staffing arrangements with current forecast costs of £318k. the balance of the funding is to support training qualification and hardship support.

- Early Help – to reduce pressure upon the front door through among other things lowering rate of contacts and referrals and improving pathways to early help responses.

Current staffing arrangements are committing £0.100m and a further £0.134m transferred to assist the NCT financial position, funding originally set aside for MASH Education Lead and Family Hubs improvements.

- Strengthening practice for impact and outcomes - to improve effective strengths-based and relationship-based practice and improve consistency of practice.

- Digital and IT – to facilitate more efficient working practices and communications.

7.11 PH Funded interventions to improve outcomes for children and young people and specifically contribute to public health outcomes. There are three strands to this intervention as below:

- Care leavers mental health and wellbeing – this seeks to address the significant disadvantages that care leavers face in a number of areas, a significant factor of this being their prior experience in the care system. The project links to addressing the Ofsted inspection outcomes, learning from serious incidents, the high levels of self-harm, the JSNA findings, the views of care leavers and wider issues for children in care and care leavers.

- Mentoring for Adolescents – this is to invest in a sustainable mentoring programme to provide targeted mentoring support in school environments. This will broaden the offer of support for young people to ensure their needs are met in the right way and at the earliest opportunity.

- Fostering support capacity building – this programme seeks to deliver an agreed range of interventions, support and training for foster carers to give them a greater level of confidence and expertise to understand and address the complex health needs.

- 7.12 BRR Fostering is ring fenced for the recruitment and capacity building of resilient foster carers to foster young persons with complex needs and reduce costly external placements costs.
- 7.13 BRR Practice Improvement seeks to reduce the admission to and the re-unification of children and young persons from foster care and residential placements.

FINANCE & RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 5 APRIL 2022

Report Title	Performance Indicator Report for Corporate Services 2021/22 – Period 10 (Corporate Support Services)
Report Author	Guy Holloway Assistant Chief Executive guy.holloway@northnorthants.gov.uk
Executive Member	Cllr Jason Smithers, Leader of the Council

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Summary Performance Indicator Report for Corporate Services Period 10 (January 2022)

Appendix B – Detailed Performance Indicator Report for Corporate Services Period 10 (January 2022)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide an update on the performance of the Council's corporate support services as at Period 10 as measured by performance indicators.
- 1.2 Set out some of the actions the Council is taking to develop its performance monitoring arrangements.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Performance indicators for the Council's corporate support service functions up to and including period 10, 2021/22 have been provided within **Appendix A and Appendix B**.
- 2.2 The performance information presented via this report mirrors that which is considered at meetings of the Executive. This report includes two appendices: Appendix A provides a summary of the performance of Council corporate support services; Appendix B provides more detail, including trend lines and exception reports.
- 2.3 The Council's corporate support functions include services such as Finance, Legal and Human Resources. The current performance reports are based on the consolidated performance monitoring arrangements of the legacy councils.

- 2.4 The content and format of the Council's performance reports are in development. In particular, a revised set of performance measures have been developed to better reflect the desired outcomes set out at a high level through the Council's Corporate Plan. This revised set of corporate support service indicators features within a subsequent report being presented at this meeting. These will be put in place and measured as a provisional set from April 2022, with a final set being formally adopted by the Executive following feedback from Scrutiny members.
- 2.5 In reality, the revised dataset includes many of the indicators set out within the appendices of this report. This is because the majority of these continue to provide important information about the performance of the Council's corporate support services, as well as other key outcomes as identified within the Council's Corporate Plan.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- a) Note and comment on the performance indicators for the Council's corporate support services as at Period 10, 2021/22 as set out in the appendices to this report.
 - b) Note the actions that are being taken to develop the Council's performance monitoring arrangements.
- 3.2 *Reason for Recommendations – to support scrutiny of the performance of the Council's support services as measured by performance indicators as at Period 10, 2021/22.*

4. Background Information

Scope of this performance report

- 4.1 The performance measures provided within Appendix A and Appendix B reflect the requirements of the Constitution for the Finance and Resources Committee which defines the need to "*consider organisational performance for corporate support services (ICT, legal, financial and HR services)*".
- 4.2 Performance measures reported to this committee will be further expanded from April 2022 in accordance with the new Corporate Plan Indicators that have been developed in support of the Council's Corporate Plan.

Developing the Council's performance management arrangements

- 4.3 Latest information about how the Council is developing its approach to performance monitoring and its performance management culture is set out within the [Performance Indicator Report for Period 10 \(January\)](#) taken to the meeting of The Executive on the 17th March 2022.

- 4.4 The performance and the budget monitoring reports have now been synchronised. In addition, a number of improvements have been made to the format of the Council's performance reports set out in the appendices to this report.
- 4.5 The appended performance information represents a fraction of the overall performance data measured by the Council. The scope of data collected by areas described as corporate support services has been expanded based on the new suite of Corporate Plan performance indicators that has been developed.

Target setting

- 4.6 The target data set out in **Appendix B** continues to be reviewed. New targets have been set for many indicators for the 2022/23 financial year. Targets set out in the Corporate Plan are likely to remain under review for some time as the Council better establishes its baseline performance position post the unitary process and attains better comparative data post pandemic.

5. Implications

5.1 Resources and Financial

- 5.1.1 This report should be considered alongside the budget report. By looking at the reports together, a broader view of the performance of the Council can be understood.

5.2 Legal

- 5.2.1 None at this stage.

5.3 Risk

- 5.3.1 There are a number of risks relating to performance information:

- (a) Poor data quality – Inaccurate data will inevitably lead to less accurate decision making and scrutiny of those decisions and services.
- (b) Lack of data – Failing to measure key service activities can leave the Council sightless of its performance. Given the importance of many of the services it provides, this would be an undesirable position.
- (c) Incorrect interpretations – caution should be applied to the interpretation of performance data, particularly given the adjustments that have been made by services to adopt to the COVID pandemic. Misunderstanding the performance picture can lead to the ineffective scrutiny and potential reputational damage.

5.4 Consultation

5.4.1 More information is set out in the Corporate Plan report which was taken to the Executive on the 18th November on how consultation has been used to help shape the Council's future plans and linked performance indicators.

5.5 Climate Impact

5.5.1 Some of the Council's performance indicators relate to climate change. These are outside the scope of the performance update provided within this report.

5.6 Community Impact

5.6.1 Effective scrutiny, guided by good quality, timely and relevant performance data can make a real difference to the delivery of public services. It can have an equally significant impact on local communities.

6 Issues and Choices

6.1 None at this stage

7 Background Papers

7.1 [Performance Indicator Report Period 7 \(October\)](#) for corporate support services, reported to the meeting of the Finance And Performance Scrutiny Committee on the 1st February 2022.



North Northamptonshire Council Performance Report - January 2022

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
Turquoise - Tracking Indicator only

Direction of Travel Key	
An acceptable 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
↓	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
↑	Actual increased - neither higher or lower is better
⇌	Actual has stayed the same since the last period - neither higher or lower is better
↓	Actual decreased - neither higher or lower is better

Children's Trust Progress Status Key:
Green - At target or better
Amber - Below target - within tolerance
Red - Below target - outside tolerance
Grey - No RAG

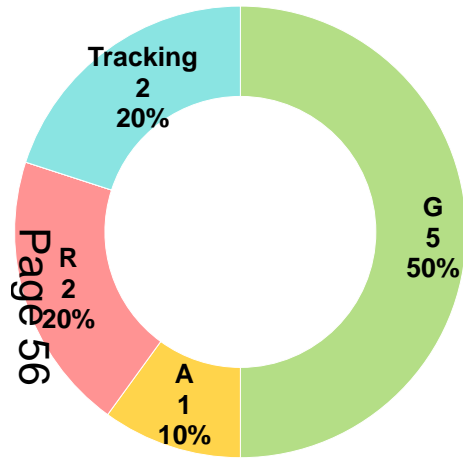
Children's Trust Direction of Travel Key	
↑G	Performance improved since last month
→	Performance the same as last month
↓A	Performance declined since last month

Terminology key

TBC	To be confirmed
TBD	To be determined
n/a	Not applicable
Actual	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 England has been used where available unless otherwise stated.

North Northamptonshire Council Performance Report - January 2022

January 2022 Performance Summary



- G - On target or over-performing against target
- A - Under-performing against target but within 5% corporate tolerance (or other agreed tolerance as specified)
- R - Under-performing against target by more than 5% (or other agreed tolerance as specified)
- Target under review
- Tracking indicator only

Directorate	Underperforming Indicators	Variance from target
Legal & Democratic	T13 % Individual Rights Requests completed in 1 calendar month	-25.92%
Finance Services	% National Non Domestic Rates collected	-7.41%

Directorate	Indicators where Direction of Travel has deteriorated (not including PIs still with Green RAG)	% change from last month
Legal & Democratic	T13 % Individual Rights Requests completed in 1 calendar month	-33.33%
Legal & Democratic	T20 Number of working days lost to sickness per employee (Long Term)	+23.68%

Legal & Democratic			
	Performance Indicator	January Progress Status	Direction of Travel (Dec-Jan)
Human Resources	T19 Number of working days lost to sickness per employee (short-term)	TRACKING	↓G
	T20 Number of working days lost to sickness per employee (long-term)	TRACKING	↑R
Information Governance	T11 % of Freedom of Information Requests completed in 20 working days	G	↑G
	T12 % Environmental Information Regulation Requests completed in 20 working days	G	↑G
	T13 % Individual Rights Requests completed in 1 calendar month	R	↓R

Finance Services			
	Performance Indicator	January Progress Status	Direction of Travel (Dec-Jan)
Finance	T14 % of invoices paid within 30 days	G	↓
Revenues & Benefits	T15 % of Council Tax collected	A	↓
	T16 % National Non Domestic Rates collected	R	↓
	T17 Average time taken to process benefits & Council Tax Support Claims (days)	G	↑R
	T18 Average time to process benefits & Council Tax Support Changes of circumstances (days)	G	↑R

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North Northamptonshire Council Performance Report - January 2022

Key to Performance Status Colours

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Children's Trust Direction of Travel Key	
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TBD	To be determined
n/a	Not applicable
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Benchmark	A comparator used to compare the Council's performance against. The 2020/21 average for Unitary Councils in England has been used where available unless otherwise stated.

North Northamptonshire Council Performance Report - January 2022
January 2022 Progress Report

Legal & Democratic																																														
Key Commitment	Ref No.	Description of Performance Indicator	Infographic / Chart	Benchmark	Quarter 1 Progress (Apr, May, Jun)	Quarter 2 Progress (Jul, Aug, Sep)	Quarter 3 Progress (Oct, Nov, Dec)	Year to Date	December 2021/22	January 2021/22	Direction of Travel (December - January)	Target	Comments																																	
Human Resources																																														
TBC	T19	Number of working days lost to sickness per employee (Short Term)	<table border="1"> <caption>Days lost per FTE</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Month</th> <th>Short Term</th> <th>Long Term</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Apr</td><td>0.19</td><td>0.36</td></tr> <tr><td>May</td><td>0.16</td><td>0.36</td></tr> <tr><td>Jun</td><td>0.23</td><td>0.43</td></tr> <tr><td>Jul</td><td>0.3</td><td>0.46</td></tr> <tr><td>Aug</td><td>0.28</td><td>0.56</td></tr> <tr><td>Sep</td><td>0.27</td><td>0.54</td></tr> <tr><td>Oct</td><td>0.34</td><td>0.57</td></tr> <tr><td>Nov</td><td>0.60</td><td>0.40</td></tr> <tr><td>Dec</td><td>0.58</td><td>0.38</td></tr> <tr><td>Jan</td><td>0.49</td><td>0.47</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Month	Short Term	Long Term	Apr	0.19	0.36	May	0.16	0.36	Jun	0.23	0.43	Jul	0.3	0.46	Aug	0.28	0.56	Sep	0.27	0.54	Oct	0.34	0.57	Nov	0.60	0.40	Dec	0.58	0.38	Jan	0.49	0.47	Local Government 'single tier' national average - 9.2 days lost per employee over 12 months (0.77 days lost per month)	n/a	n/a	n/a	3.02 days lost	0.58 days lost	0.49 days lost	↓ G	*LG Benchmark (Apr-Jan) split: 3.16 days lost short term and 4.5 days lost long term	There has been a decrease in ST sickness from December to January. The YTD sickness shows that we are lower than the benchmark so far in 2021/22 for short term sickness and higher than the benchmark for long term sickness. (Note:- the YTD sickness may total up slightly differently to the monthly sickness rates reported as monthly sickness is recorded on the 1st of following month, each month and the YTD sickness is calculated at the end of the year to date period. So for January the YTD sickness is recorded on the 1st March. This can therefore lead to slight discrepancies as sickness days will have been added retrospectively throughout the year.)
	Month	Short Term		Long Term																																										
Apr	0.19	0.36																																												
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T20	Number of working days lost to sickness per employee (Long Term)	n/a	n/a	n/a	5.21 days lost	0.38 days lost	0.47 days lost	↑ R																																						
Information Governance																																														
TBC	T11	% of Freedom of Information Requests completed in 20 working days		93%	82.62%	82.22%	85.87%	84.16%	91.30%	93.33%	↑ G	85%	9 active requests as at 22/02. Performance has continued to improve with volume being lower than previous months. This shows that the processes in place work provided there is sufficient resource to back it up.																																	
					271 out of 328	282 out of 343	243 out of 283	866 out of 1029	63 out of 69	70 out of 75 (9 active requests)																																				
TBC	T12	% Environmental Information Regulation Requests completed in 20 working days		93%	98.82%	99.07%	98.71%	98.98%	99.32%	100.00%	↑ G	85%	11 active requests as at 22/02. The IG team need to remain vigilant on performance as they will soon be taking on full responsibility for the processing of EIR requests which is an increase to their already high workload.																																	
					335 out of 339	318 out of 321	458 out of 464	1260 out of 1273	146 out of 147	149 out of 149 (11 active requests)																																				
TBC	T13	% Individual Rights Requests completed in 1 calendar month		81%	74.42%	92.68%	100.00%	85.00%	100.00%	66.67%	↓ R	90%	3 active requests as at 22/02. Lack of resource across supporting directorates impacted results this month. The team will continue to analyse their performance to ensure improvements can be made where applicable. Staff members within IG continue to receive training in this area which should enhance performance moving forward.																																	
					32 out of 43	38 out of 41	25 out of 25	102 out of 120	8 out of 8	6 out of 9 (3 active requests)																																				

Finance Services														
Key Commitment	Ref No.	Description of Performance Indicator	Infographic / Chart	Benchmark	Quarter 1 Progress (Apr, May, Jun)	Quarter 2 Progress (Jul, Aug, Sep)	Quarter 3 Progress (Oct, Nov, Dec)	Year to Date	December 2021/22	January 2021/22	Direction of Travel (December - January)	Polarity	Target	Comments
TBC	T14	% of invoices paid within 30 days	<p>Legend: ● Actual --Target --Trend</p>	n/a	91.80%	91.98%	97.82%	94.23%	97.69%	95.1%	↓	Higher is better	95%	<p>This calculation is based on the invoices paid within the month (rather than invoices received in the month). April data was inaccurate as the dates invoices were received were not available.</p> <p>Invoices not being paid within deadline is due to service users not completing goods receipts or invoice approvals within the required timescales. We will reiterate the correct process to the service users.</p>
Finance Strategy & Accountability														
					6697 out of 7295	8709 out of 9468	9932 out of 10153	28261 out of 29991	3261 out of 3338	2,923 out of 3,075				

Key Commitment	Ref No.	Description of Performance Indicator	Infographic / Chart	Benchmark	Quarter 1 Progress (Apr, May, Jun)	Quarter 2 Progress (Jul, Aug, Sep)	Quarter 3 Progress (Oct, Nov, Dec)	Year to Date	December 2021/22	January 2021/22	Direction of Travel (December - January)	Polarity	Target	Comments
Revenues and Benefits														
TBC	T15	% of Council Tax collected		96.41%	29.05% (Apr - Jun) 103.8% achieved of the target	56.79% (Apr-Sep) 101.4% achieved of the target	84.11% (Apr-Dec) 100.13% achieved of the target	93.1% (YTD) 99.04% achieved of the target	84.11% (YTD) 100.13% achieved of the target	93.1% (YTD) 99.04% achieved of the target	↓	Higher is better	94%	Dec 21 comment - This is slightly above target and will continue to be monitored. The direction of travel is calculated based on the actual performance achieved as a proportion of the target each month.
					£63,069,552.08	£123,531,775.70	£183,281,458.52	£202,916,527.22	£183,281,458.52	£202,916,527.22				
TBC	T16	% National Non Domestic Rates collected		97.93%	27.97% 99.9% achieved of the target	48.72% (Apr-Sep) 88.6% achieved of target	78.06% (Apr-Dec) 95.2% achieved of the target	87.03% 92.59% achieved of the target	78.06% (YTD) 95.2% achieved of the target	87.03% 92.59% achieved of the target	↓	Higher is better	94%	Dec 21 comment - Collection remains below the target due to affects of extended retail relief and uncertainty within the business sector. The direction of travel is calculated based on the actual performance achieved as a proportion of the target each month.
					£31,646,562.22	£65,922,739.58	£104,818,314.03	£116,929,260.37	£104,818,314.03	£116,929,260.37				
TBC	T17	Average time taken to process benefits & Council Tax Support Claims (days)		18 days	22.74 days 2827 claims	20.53 days 2306 claims	19.71 days 2062 claims	21.12 days 7803 claims	18.72 days 685 claims	20.65 days 608 claims	↑R	Lower is better	21 days	Dec 21 comment - Performance in month is exceeding target and remains on track for year, fluctuation is expected throughout year as Furlough ends and potential increases in Council tax claims.
TBC	T18	Average time taken to process benefits & Council Tax Support Changes of circumstances (days)		5 days	6.61 days 14748 changes	6.66 days 12358 changes	6.02 days 11894 changes	6.39 days 42647 changes	4.33 days 3115 changes	5.83 days 3647 changes	↑R	Lower is better	9 days	Dec 21 comment - This remains within target.

FINANCE & RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 5 APRIL 2022

Report Title	Proposed Corporate Plan Performance Indicator Set for Corporate Services 2022/23
Report Author	Guy Holloway, Assistant Chief Executive Email: Guy.holloway@northnorthants.gov.uk
Executive Member	Cllr Jason Smithers Leader of the Council

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Proposed Corporate Plan Performance Indicator Set for Corporate Services 2022/23

Appendix B – Existing Indicators not included in the Corporate Plan Indicator set for Corporate Services 2022/23

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To provide members of the Finance & Resources Scrutiny Committee with the opportunity to review and provide feedback to the Executive on the proposed Corporate Plan Performance Indicators for corporate services 2022/23.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 It is considered good practice for local authorities to have a set of publicly reported performance indicators that show how they are performing against key areas.
- 2.2 The performance indicators that North Northamptonshire Council have measured and reported on during 2021/22 represent an amalgamation of the common indicators that were measured by the local councils prior to the creation of the new unitary council.
- 2.3 It is important that the performance indicators the Council routinely publishes in public are relevant, timely and accurate. It is quite normal for a council to have a public set of data that it reports to show progress against priorities, supported by an internal set of data that it uses for management purposes.
- 2.4 Following the adoption of the Council's Corporate Plan, service areas have been working to identify performance indicators that will help measure how the Council is performing against its key commitments outlined within the adopted Corporate Plan.

- 2.5 As part of this piece of work, the existing set of performance indicators have been reviewed against the key commitments outlined within the Corporate Plan to identify:
- a. Indicators that are considered relevant and to be retained in the future Corporate Plan Indicator Set.
 - b. Indicators that are no longer relevant and therefore not proposed for retention.
 - c. The need for new indicators to help better measure the delivery of the Corporate Plan, especially where there are perceived gaps.
- 2.6 Based on the above piece of work, it is proposed that many of the performance indicators that have been measured and reported within 2021/22 will remain within the Corporate Plan Indicator set for corporate services for 2022/23.
- 2.7 Where gaps have been identified, or where there has been a clear business need, new indicators have been proposed. These existing and new indicators proposed for inclusion within the Corporate Plan Indicator set for corporate services have been provided as **Appendix A**.
- 2.8 Some of the indicators that have been reported on over the last year do not directly measure the performance of the Council's key commitments. Some have been superseded by proposed new indicators. Where these two factors are the case, the measures have not been included within the proposed Corporate Plan Indicator set for corporate services for 2022/23. Many of these however, will be retained as internal performance indicators and will continue to be measured by the Council, particularly where they provide useful management information.
- 2.9 The indicators that have been reported during 2021/22 that are not proposed for inclusion within the Corporate Plan Indicator set for corporate services are provided as **Appendix B**. An explanation of why they are not proposed for inclusion has been provided.
- 2.10 Members should be mindful that performance indicators are just one of the tools the Council can use to measure and understand achievement of its Corporate Plan objectives. Information such as financial performance, project delivery outcomes, customer feedback, committee reports, audit reports, external assessment, along with members own experience of the reality of services all play a vital role in forming this judgement.
- 2.11 The Finance & Resources Scrutiny Committee are invited to provide feedback to the Executive on the proposed Corporate Plan Performance Indicator Set for corporate services 2022/23.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Finance & Resources Scrutiny Committee note the proposed Corporate Plan Indicator set for corporate services 2022/23 and provide feedback to the Executive as appropriate.

4. Report Background

- 4.1 There are a number of factors that have to be considered when developing performance indicators. They should be relevant, specific, measurable and be collectable in a timely fashion. It is inevitable that not all activities will lend themselves to being measured by performance indicators. They should also be seen as just one of the tools that can be used to help form a judgement about the performance of the Council and its services.
- 4.2 This report sets out a new proposed set of indicators that aims to more effectively measure the delivery of the Corporate Plan against its key commitments, specifically in respect of the Council's corporate services. A range of other information will be available to help members understand the progress that is being made in this area.
- 4.3 **Appendix A** outlines the proposed Corporate Plan Indicator Set for corporate services 2022/23. It includes both the existing to be retained and new measures to be added. For ease, information about whether the indicator is new or existing has been included within the table. The name of the indicator, the key commitment it supports, the service owner and target information has also been provided along with a provisional reference number to aid debate.
- 4.4 Appendix B outlines the existing performance indicators that are not proposed for inclusion within the Corporate Plan Indicator Set for corporate services moving forward. The name of the indicator alongside a justification of why it no longer features has been provided. Members may wish to note that some of the indicators that will not be included within the Corporate Plan Indicator Set for corporate services will be maintained as internal indicators which it can use for management purposes.
- 4.5 It is important that the public facing Corporate Plan Indicators only include those indicators most proximate to measuring its Corporate Plan key commitments. There is a danger that if this distinction is not made, then the suite of data reported public becomes unwieldy and difficult to manage.
- 4.6 Members should be mindful that there will still be areas that require further development.
- 4.7 The availability of accurate, timely and relevant information about the performance of services is good practice. It enables operational and policy decisions to be made, and it informs healthy debate and scrutiny of services.
- 4.8 Performance monitoring at North Northamptonshire will continue to be developed. Development activities include:
- Working with service areas to ensure that they are aware of and using performance data to understand and improve services.
 - Developing and embedding the suite of indicators that are measured to ensure that they reflect the Council's vision, values, key commitments and priorities – those areas that matter the most to the Council.
 - Ensuring we have comparable benchmark data enabling the council to better understand and enhance its performance moving forward.

- Utilise data to build up insights as to what is happening and also likely to happen in the future. Members may hear this approach being referred to as 'data intelligent'. The aim, in relevant cases, is to predict what may happen in the future and take pre-emptive action. There are clearly significant benefits to this approach.
- The way performance data is presented will continue to be monitored to ensure information is reported in the most effective way.

4.9 Executive Members have been consulted with on the proposed suite of Corporate Plan Indicators for 2022/23 and in many cases have contributed to its content.

4.10 Feedback from scrutiny members form a valuable and important part of the process of shaping the Council's future approach. Feedback provided by members of the Finance & Resources Scrutiny Committee will be included within the report to Executive that proposes the new Corporate Plan Indicator Set for 2022/23.

5. Issues and Choices

5.1 Choices have had to be made about which indicators to retain in the proposed new indicator set, which ones to remove. The justification for the choices made have been set out in the appendices.

5.2 The Council could choose not to measure performance indicators. There are some councils that do very little routine performance measurement. North Northamptonshire Council has set out in its Corporate Plan a priority for developing best practices approaches for performance management and so is keen to do all it can to make accurate performance data routinely available to support both policy and operational decision making.

6. Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Resources and Financial

6.1.1 There are no direct resource or financial implications arising from this report. However, the financial performance of the Council is an important metric when gauging how the Council is performing. The scarcity of resources inevitably means there is a trade-off between performance and affordability. The goal is to ensure that efficiency, economy and effectiveness are maximised within realistic parameters.

6.2 Legal

6.2.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6.3 Risk

6.3.1 There are no significant risks associated with the recommendations of this report.

6.3.2 There are risks associated with not scrutinising the performance of the Council as measured by performance indicators. The indicators and associated reporting regime form an important part of the Council's corporate governance arrangements. A laissez-faire approach to the Council's performance would be counterproductive. Robust scrutiny and challenge is considered a healthy feature of any large, outcome-focused organisation.

6.3.3 There are other risks associated with performance indicators. Data quality, for example, is an important consideration. The decisions the Council makes will be impaired by poor quality information. The Council is therefore working to ensure that data quality arrangements are built into the chain of information that underpins performance reporting. This will nevertheless continue to be an area of careful focus for the Council as it further beds down and develops its performance management arrangements.

6.4 Consultation

6.4.1 The Council carried out a public consultation on its vision, values, key commitments and priorities during the Autumn of 2021. These were used to help guide the development of the revised set of Corporate Plan performance indicators for 2022/23.

6.5 Climate Impact

6.5.1 A Council that is performing well is likely to be more efficient and effective in what it does. This will inevitably yield a range of benefits, including reducing the negative impact on the environment. The Council is working hard to develop further indicators and targets for reducing its negative impact on climate change. These, however, fall outside of the scope measured and reported within corporate services.

6.6 Community Impact

6.6.1 Council services that are performing well will have a significant positive impact on the local community. The monitoring and scrutiny of the Council's performance plays an important role in both understanding this impact and in driving future performance improvement.

7. Background Papers

7.1 [Corporate Plan](#) adopted by Full Council at their meeting on the 9th December 2021.

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New Corporate Performance Indicators Proposal - For Reporting in 2022/23 to Finance & Resources Scrutiny

Directorate	Team	Ref	Performance Indicator Name	Corporate Plan Key Commitment	New (not currently reported to CLT) or Existing (reported to CLT currently)	Provisional Target for 2022-23 (or explanation if not possible to set target)
Finance Services	Finance Strategy & Accountancy	MPS01	% invoices paid within 30 days	Modern public services	Existing	95% (subject to change following SLA review, but unlikely)
Finance Services	Procurement	MPS02	% of actual spend with local suppliers where economically justifiable.	Modern public services	New	For information only - the procurement team cannot influence which suppliers staff choose to use.
Finance Services	Procurement	MPS03	% count of local suppliers where economically justifiable.	Modern public services	New	For information only - the procurement team cannot influence which suppliers staff choose to use.
Finance Services	Revenues & Benefits	MPS04	% of business rates collected in the year debit raised	Modern public services	Existing	Annual target of 98.5%, monthly breakdowns given
Finance Services	Revenues & Benefits	MPS05	% of council tax collected in the year debit raised	Modern public services	Existing	Annual target of 98.5%, monthly breakdowns given
Legal & Democratic	Human Resources	MPS06	Average number of working days lost per FTE employee (short term)	Modern public services	Existing	3.8 days lost (LG single tier national average)
Legal & Democratic	Human Resources	MPS07	Average number of working days lost per FTE employee (long term)	Modern public services	Existing	5.4 days lost (LG single tier national average)
Legal & Democratic	Human Resources	MPS08	HEADCOUNT AND FTE (total figures split by directorate)	Modern public services	New	N/A
Legal & Democratic	Human Resources	MPS09	VACANCY LEVELS (Total number of vacancies split by directorate)	Modern public services	New	N/A
Legal & Democratic	Human Resources	MPS10	Number of Agency Staff within each directorate	Modern public services	New	No target
Legal & Democratic	Human Resources	MPS11	Amount of Spend on Agency Staff within each directorate	Modern public services	New	No target
Legal & Democratic	Information Governance	MPS12	% FOI requests completed in 20 working days	Modern public services	Existing	95%
Legal & Democratic	Information Governance	MPS13	% EIR requests completed in 20 working days	Modern public services	Existing	95%
Legal & Democratic	Information Governance	MPS14	% Data Subject Rights requests completed within statutory timescale	Modern public services	Existing	90%
Legal & Democratic	Information Governance	MPS15	Total number of breaches (split by service eventually)	Modern public services	New	Track for info
Legal & Democratic	Information Governance	MPS16	Number of complaints to ICO (with respect to handling of FOI requests following internal review).	Modern public services	New	1 per month
Legal & Democratic	Information Governance	MPS17	Number of complaints to ICO upheld by ICO (with respect to handling of FOI requests following internal review).	Modern public services	New	0 per month
Legal & Democratic	Information Governance	MPS18	Number of complaints to ICO (with respect to handling of DP Right to Access requests).	Modern public services	New	1 per month
Legal & Democratic	Information Governance	MPS19	Number of complaints upheld by ICO (with respect to handling of DP Right to Access requests)	Modern public services	New	0 per month
Legal & Democratic	Information Governance	MPS20	Number of direct disclosure requests (ADR) received	Modern public services	New	Track for info
Legal & Democratic	Information Governance	MPS21	% Transparency publications completed on time.	Modern public services	New	100%
Legal & Democratic	Information Governance	MPS22	Number of external ICO complaints relating data management of data/breaches	Modern public services	New	Track for info
Legal & Democratic	Information Governance	MPS23	Number of reportable breaches to ICO (split by service area)	Modern public services	New	1 per month

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Corporate Performance Indicators which have been reported to Finance & Resources Scrutiny Members since 1st April 2021 but are not featured in the proposal for reporting in 2022/23

Performance Indicator	Comments / Reason for proposed change
Finance	
T17 Time taken to process new Housing Benefit / Council Tax Support claims	Proposing to keep as internal indicator
T18 Time taken to process Housing Benefit / Council Tax Support change circumstances	Proposing to keep as internal indicator

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FINANCE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 5 April 2022

Report Title	Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22
Report Author	Louise Tyers, Senior Democratic Services Officer louise.tyers@northnorthants.gov.uk

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To enable the Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee to contribute and comment on the Scrutiny Annual Report for 2021/22, prior to it being referred to full Council, in line with the Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Annual Report summarises the first year of work for the Scrutiny Commission and Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee. The impact of the work of Scrutiny will be evidenced over time by the implementation and impact of its recommendations. The Scrutiny Annual Report will ensure that full Council is informed on the work of Scrutiny, in accordance with statutory guidance.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee:
- a) Contribute and comment on the contents of the draft Scrutiny Annual Report.
 - b) Delegates the final wording of the Annual Report to the Chairs of the Scrutiny Commission and Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee, prior to its submission to full Council.

4. Report Background

- 4.1 The Scrutiny function forms an integral part of the Council's decision-making process. Each year, the Scrutiny Annual Report will provide a summary of the work and impact of the Council's Scrutiny function.

- 4.2 At the Annual Meeting in May 2021, the Council established two scrutiny committees, namely the Scrutiny Commission and Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee, as part of a hybrid model of governance.
- 4.3 The Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny¹ states “*part of communicating scrutiny’s role and purpose to the wider authority should happen through the formal, public role of full Council – particularly given that scrutiny will undertake valuable work to highlight challenging issues that an authority will be facing and subjects that will be a focus of full Council’s work. Authorities should therefore take steps to ensure full Council is informed of the work the scrutiny committee is doing.*”

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1 The Scrutiny Annual Report is an opportunity for all those involved in the new committees to reflect on the first year, to consider what has worked well and where further improvements to the process could be made. It provides an opportunity to highlight the important scrutiny work that has taken place during this municipal year.
- 5.2 The draft report is attached at Appendix 1.
- 5.3 The Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee is now asked to comment and contribute on the contents of the Scrutiny Annual Report.

6. Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Resources and Financial

- 6.1.1 There are no resources or financial implications arising from the report.

6.2 Legal and Governance

- 6.2.1 There are no legal implications arising from the report.

6.3 Relevant Policies and Plans

- 6.3.1 Include which of the Corporate Plan priorities the report supports.

6.4 Risk

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

6.5 Consultation

- 6.5.1 Consultation on the contents of the Scrutiny Annual Report will be undertaken with the Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

¹ [Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities](#)

6.6 **Equality Implications**

6.6.1 There are no equality implications arising from the report.

6.7 **Climate Impact**

6.7.1 There are no climate impacts arising from the report.

6.8 **Community Impact**

6.8.1 There is no community impact arising from the report.

6.9 **Crime and Disorder Impact**

6.9.1 There are no crime and disorder impacts arising from the report.

7. **Background Papers**

7.1 Agendas and minutes of the Scrutiny Commission and Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee during 2021/22
[Scrutiny Commission](#)
[Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee](#)

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SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

Introduction

To be supplied by the Chairs of the Scrutiny Commission and Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

Scrutiny in North Northamptonshire

Scrutiny is a key part of the democratic process of North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) and enables those members who are not part of the Executive to engage with and influence the decision-making of the Council. The North Northamptonshire model of governance is a hybrid model where the Executive has established Executive Advisory Panels, which support and encourage cross party involvement in developing policy. In a traditional scrutiny model, this would be considered to be “pre-decision scrutiny” but this new NNC hybrid model does not diminish from the important role that scrutiny has in keeping key policies under review, monitoring performance and reviewing the Forward Plan to identify those items that it feels it needs to look further into.

The model of scrutiny adopted by the Council is of two committees:

- An overarching **Scrutiny Commission** who can establish task and finish groups to complete work on the agreed work plan. This means that not only does the Commission take on its own substantive work, it also provides co-ordination of several task and finish groups for matters that have been identified as important within the organisation.
- A **Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee** to specifically scrutinise and monitor the finances of the Council.

The terms of reference of both committees are set out in the Scrutiny Procedure Rules in the Council’s Constitution¹.

This model of fewer committees and more task and finish groups, focussing on specific pieces of work, is intended to reflect a modern and flexible approach to scrutiny.

Scrutiny Work Plan

For Scrutiny members to be at their most effective, to have an impact and to make a tangible difference to the work of the Council, a work plan has been agreed which outlines the areas of work which is expected to be scrutinised over the coming months/year by or on behalf of the Scrutiny function and any Panels/Task and Finish

¹ [Scrutiny Procedure Rules](#)

Groups convened for review work. This work plan is a live document which allows the flexibility to accommodate any short-term issues which may arise during the year.

Scrutiny Conference

To develop the work plan, members of both Scrutiny committees agreed that a North Northamptonshire Scrutiny Conference be organised to facilitate the drafting of the work plan. The Conference was facilitated by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny and members welcomed the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive who showed their support for an effective and impactful scrutiny function.

Prior to the Conference, a survey was opened to understand the important issues that North Northamptonshire wanted Scrutiny to include in its work plan. It was sent to various contacts including stakeholders, partners and staff and was also regularly pushed out on the website and social media. The survey was also sent by the Scrutiny Chairs to all NNC members to ensure that there was engagement with a wide range of elected members, including the Executive.

The results of the survey were presented at the Conference to assist members in identifying key topics to include in the work plan. Most responses received were from those people working or living in North Northamptonshire. It was also noted that around 50% of respondents were either “not aware” or did not provide a substantive response to if they were aware of what the scrutiny function was. The Scrutiny Chairs are keen therefore that greater promotion of Scrutiny is undertaken, particularly considering that Scrutiny should be a public facing function.

Members identified the key issues that they considered were important to include on the work plan and a simple scoring methodology was used to prioritise the topics into a long list of topics. Following the conclusion of the Conference, this list of topics was sent to all Scrutiny members to identify specific outcomes. As many of the topics identified were generic and wide ranging, it was important to narrow them down and understand what outcomes members wanted to get from scrutinising them.

Any topics added to the work plan will be expected to have outcomes which add value to the services delivered by the Council and its partners and/or improve the quality of lives of North Northamptonshire residents.

Report of the Scrutiny Commission

The membership of the Scrutiny Commission during 2021/22 was:

Councillor Wendy Brackenbury (Chair)

Councillor Kevin Watt (Vice Chair)

Councillor Matt Binley

Councillor Robin Carter

Councillor John Currall

Councillor Mark Dearing

Councillor Jim Hakewill

Councillor Philip Irwin
Councillor John McGhee
Councillor Gill Mercer (from January 2022)
Councillor Elliot Prentice (until January 2022)
Councillor Simon Rielly
Councillor Geoff Shacklock
Councillor Lee Wilkes
Councillor Ken Harrington (Sub)
Councillor Ian Jelley (Sub)
Councillor Tom Partridge-Underwood (Sub)
Councillor Lyn Buckingham (Sub)
Councillor Peter McEwan (Sub)
Councillor Sarah Tubbs (Sub)

The Scrutiny Commission has met six times during the year and full details of the reports and minutes of those meetings can be found [here](#).

The specific items which have been considered at meetings of the Commission include:

- Scrutiny Work Planning
- Review of the Planning Service
- Levelling Up Communities Scrutiny Review
- Performance Indicators 2021/22
- Corporate Plan Indicators 2022/23
- Forward Plan
- Assets Rationalisation and Use Scrutiny Panel
- Draft Transformation Plan 2022-2025
- Major Highways Capital Works
- Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22

Scrutiny Reviews

Several more detailed scrutiny reviews, which are undertaken outside of the formal meeting structure, have been established during the year.

Outside Bodies Scrutiny Panel

The purpose of this review was to ensure that appointments to Outside Bodies on behalf of the Council are regularly reviewed and add value to the organisation and to ensure that proper governance is adopted in relation to appointments.

Membership:

Councillor Jim Hakewill
Councillor Ian Jelley
Councillor David Jenney

Councillor Simon Rielly
Councillor Geoff Shacklock

The Panel met once and considered whether the Council should make appointments to the organisations on the Outside Bodies list. The Outside Bodies were also categorised into Key Strategic Partnerships and Community Partnerships. Those identified as Key Strategic Partnerships are appointed by the Leader of the Council and Community Partnerships appointed by Council.

A review of Outside Bodies will be undertaken each year by a Scrutiny Panel. Those Members appointed to Outside Bodies will also be asked to complete an annual review submission to assist the Scrutiny Panel in their review.

Levelling Up Communities Scrutiny Review

The following motion was agreed at Full Council in July 2021:

“North Northamptonshire Council notes that Kingswood in Corby, Avondale Grange in Kettering, and Queensway in Wellingborough are among the neighbourhoods identified across the country by an All-Party Parliamentary Group as ‘left behind’. This motion calls for the Scrutiny Commission to review the underlying data and associated report relating to areas highlighted as “left behind”. Working with our communities and partners to propose an approach on the way forward, including learning from the Big Local Programme in Kingswood, in order to develop a plan on how we can level up - as per the government’s levelling up agenda - those left behind neighbourhoods here in North Northamptonshire in an appropriate and agreed timeframe. This may involve specifically targeting health inequalities, youth unemployment and new skills, and improving housing in these areas.”

In response, the Scrutiny Commission established a Scrutiny Review Group, from which there was at least one member from each of the wards which covered the neighbourhoods mentioned in the motion.

Membership:

Councillor Zoe McGhee (Chair)
Councillor Valerie Anslow
Councillor Robin Carter
Councillor King Lawall
Councillor Anne Lee
Councillor Paul Marks
Councillor Kevin Watt

The Scrutiny Review Group has met on four occasions and has also held walks and community meetings in each of the three neighbourhoods.

Agreed recommendations:

To be added following Scrutiny Commission meeting on 17 May 2022.

Asset Rationalisation and Use

As part of the Scrutiny Work Plan, in January 2022 the Scrutiny Commission established a Scrutiny Panel to consider the Council's assets and ensure that they were being utilised appropriately.

Membership:

Councillor Wendy Brackenbury
Councillor Robin Carter
Councillor Gill Mercer
Councillor Simon Rielly

The Scrutiny Panel has met once, to review its scoping document and to consider how to take this work forward.

Report of the Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee

The membership of the Scrutiny Commission during 2021/22 was:

Councillor Mark Pengelly (Chair)
Councillor Richard Levell (Vice Chair)
Councillor Valerie Anslow
Councillor David Brackenbury (until September 2021)
Councillor Scott Brown
Councillor Jim Hakewill
Councillor Ken Harrington
Councillor Larry Henson
Councillor Ian Jelley
Councillor David Jenney (until November 2021)
Councillor King Lawal
Councillor Steven North (from September 2021)
Councillor Malcolm Ward
Councillor Matt Binley (Sub)
Councillor William Colquhoun (Sub)
Councillor Emily Fedorowycz (Sub)
Councillor Clive Hallam (Sub)
Councillor Anne Lee (Sub)
Councillor Jan O'Hara (Sub)
Councillor David Sims (Sub)

The Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee has met seven times during the year and full details of the reports and minutes of those meetings can be found [here](#).

The specific items which have been considered at ordinary meetings of the Committee include:

- Capital Approval Process
- Scrutiny Work Planning
- Budget Monitoring 2021/22
- Capital Monitoring 2021/22
- Budget Strategy Process 2022/23
- Revenue and Benefits Performance
- Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2022/23
- Performance Indicators 2021/22
- Northamptonshire Children's Trust Budget Monitoring
- Budget 2022/23

Budget Consultation

At its meeting on 2 November 2021, the Committee agreed the Scrutiny arrangements for the budget setting process for 2022/23. The process was to meet with the Executive members and officers of each directorate in eight task and finish groups (two per directorate) in January 2022. The initial four meetings included summary presentations which set out the activities each directorate undertook, and which went on to explain the budget numbers which were included in the draft budget report which was presented to the Executive on 23 December 2021. The Committee was able to ask questions and request additional information to be supplied at the four follow-up meetings.

A detailed submission on the budget was submitted to the Executive on 10 February 2022 which referenced several aspects of the draft budget and made a number of recommendations. The detailed submission can be found [here](#).

Response from the Executive:

The Executive will provide a full written response on each aspect of the recommendations.

Call-in

The Scrutiny Committees has a key power to review decisions of the Executive which have been made but not yet implemented. Any key decision and/or a decision which has been entered onto the Forward Plan is subject to call-in.

There have been no call-in of Executive decisions during the year.

What has Worked Well?

To be supplied by the Scrutiny Commission and Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

Challenges for Scrutiny in 2022/23

To be supplied by the Scrutiny Commission and Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

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