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Meeting: Corporate Scrutiny Committee
Date: Tuesday 13th February, 2024
Time: 7.00 pm
Venue: Council Chamber, Corby Cube, George Street, Corby, Northants, NN17 1QG

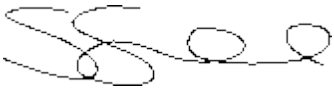
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To members of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee

Councillors Councillor Lyn Buckingham (Chair), Councillor Lora Lawman (Vice-Chair), Councillor Jim Hakewill, Councillor Richard Levell, Councillor Paul Marks, Councillor Zoe McGhee, Councillor Steven North, Councillor Dr Anup Pandey and Councillor Russell Roberts

| Agenda | | | |
|---------------|--|---|-----------------|
| Item | Subject | Presenting Officer | Page no. |
| 01 | Apologies for non-attendance | | |
| 02 | Members' Declarations of Interest | | |
| 03 | Notifications of requests to address the meeting | | |
| 04 | Minutes of the meetings held on 12 December 2023 and 23 January 2024 | | 5 - 16 |
| 05 | Key Performance Indicators Report 2023/24 - Period 8 | Tom Barden - Head of Performance , Intelligence and Partnerships | 17 - 30 |
| 06 | Forecast Draft Outturn 2023/24 - Period 8 | Mark Dickenson - Assistant Director of Finance and Strategy | 31 - 80 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---------------------|---------|
| 07 | Scrutiny Work Plan for the Corporate Scrutiny Committee | Democratic Services | 81 - 86 |
| 08 | Close of Meeting | | |
| <p>Sanjit Sull, Monitoring Officer (Interim) North Northamptonshire Council</p>  <p>Proper Officer 5 February 2024</p> | | | |

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Committee Administrator: Louise Tyers

☎01832 742198

✉democraticservices@northnorthants.gov.uk

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|---|---|--|
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Minutes of a Meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee

At 7.00 pm on Tuesday 12th December, 2023

Held in the Council Chamber, Corby Cube, George Street, Corby

Members

Councillor Lyn Buckingham (Chair)

Councillor Jim Hakewill

Councillor Richard Levell

Councillor Paul Marks

Councillor Steven North

Councillor Russell Roberts

Officers

Janice Gotts – Executive Director of Finance and Performance

Adele Wylie – Executive Director of Customer and Governance (Monitoring Officer)

David Watts – Executive Director of Adults, Health Partnerships and Housing &
Director of Children's Services

Graeme Kane – Interim Executive Director of Place and Economy

Guy Holloway – Assistant Chief Executive

Mark Dickenson – Assistant Director of Finance and Strategy

Claire Edwards – Assistant Director of Finance Accountancy

Nana Barfi-Sarpong – Chief Information Officer

Tom Barden – Head of Performance, Intelligence and Partnerships

Louise Tyers – Senior Democratic Services Officer

Also in attendance

Councillor Lloyd Bunday – Executive Member for Finance and Transformation

Colin Foster – Chief Executive, Northamptonshire Children's Trust

Andrew Tagg – Director of Finance and Resources, Northamptonshire Children's
Trust

29 Apologies for non-attendance

Apologies for non-attendance were received from Councillors Lora Lawman, Zoe McGhee and Dr Anup Pandey.

30 Members' Declarations of Interest

The Chair invited those who wished to do so to declare any interests in respect of items on the agenda.

No declarations of interest were made.

31 Notifications of requests to address the meeting

There were no requests to address the meeting.

32 Minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

33 Northamptonshire Children's Trust Budget Monitoring Report for Period 6

The Chair welcomed Colin Foster, Chief Executive and Andrew Tagg, Director of Finance and Resources from Northamptonshire Children's Trust to the meeting.

The Executive Director of Adults, Health Partnerships and Housing (DASS) and Interim DCS presented the report which provided Period 6 budget monitoring and the forecast outturn position for Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT).

The report contained a detailed review of the financial position of NCT as at the 30th September 2023 and also detailed the variances at individual service level, service demand pressures and proposed mitigations. The report also provided an update on the delivery of the agreed savings programme.

Mr Foster advised that the Trust welcomed challenge and they had recently attended two budget scrutiny sessions. The Trust and the councils were working to develop an effective system which helped families stay together. The level of demand on services had been recognised in the 2024/25 contract sum but other pressures were also recognised.

During discussion on the report, the following key points were made:

- i. A significant portion of the Council's budget was given to NCT and this was an opportune time to consider their budget. NCT was a risk to the financial position of the Council and this was an opportunity for Scrutiny to seek reassurance.
- ii. Mr Tagg explained that the report before the Committee was produced on a monthly basis and contained contractual information. The delivery of children's services was the most challenging it had ever been and the Trust were looking to transform the delivery of children's services.
- iii. In response to a question as to whether this year's pay award had been taken into account in the staffing variance, Mr Tagg advised that the contract sum included any pay award, but this year it had been higher than budgeted for. A vacancy factor was also included. The Trust had a significant number of agency staff and these could be up to 35% more in costs than permanent employees. Significant work was being undertaken to recruit social workers but it was a national problem.
- iv. Mr Foster explained that the Trust worked closely with Northampton University. Some of the students in the Social Work Academy came from the university and a significant number were expected this coming year.
- v. Retention of staff was one of the biggest issues. Staff were supported with caseloads and other support to stay. Social Workers were starting to feel that NCT was a safe place to practice.
- vi. The largest cause of the variance was due to placement costs. Assumed growth of £3m for placements had been included. There had been an increase of 30 places between October and December and some of these were in supported accommodation. The fluctuations were very challenging along with a very fluid

placement market. In one case, the cost of a mother and baby in care was £17k per week. Supported accommodation and accommodation for over-18s was at the mercy of the independent sector but the Trust were now working with housing colleagues.

- vii. A recent report had found that there was a significant level of profiteering within the independent sector, where demand outstrips supply. When young people had been taken into custody this was also a significant cost at £20k per week. A bid was being looked at to the Department of Education for a high needs children's home.
- viii. Mr Tagg also explained that the Trust were working with health and education for joint funded places. The Integrated Care Board (ICB) would also be challenged about funding which would reduce the placements budgets. It was important that all partners contributed.

It was moved by Councillor Jim Hakewill and seconded by the Chair that the three local MPs and Local Government Association be written to outlining our circumstances and the challenges we face with children's social care in North Northamptonshire.

On being put to the vote, there were three votes for the motion, none against and three abstentions, therefore the motion was carried.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To note the contents of the Period 6 Budget Monitoring Report for the Northamptonshire Children's Trust.
- (ii) That the three local MPs and Local Government Association be written to outlining our circumstances and the challenges we face with children's social care in North Northamptonshire.

34 Key Performance Indicator 2023/24 for Period 6

The Head of Performance, Intelligence and Partnerships presented the report which provide an update on the Council's performance across a wide range of services. The report provided a detailed assessment of the Council's performance in relation to Key Performance Indicators for 2023/24 for Period 6.

Comments on several specific indicators were made, including:

- Vacancies – how can Corporate Scrutiny Committee add value and scrutinise the stress on existing staff and understaffed departments? In response, the Executive Director of Customer and Governance advised that vacancy information provided in the report was only one piece of information and wider performance should be looked at. Was there a causal link between the performance and staff data? The Chair confirmed that there would be a report to this Committee on agency/OPUS in June.
- It was important that there was not information overload and perhaps 101 indicators was too many. In response, the Head of Performance, Intelligence and Partnerships advised that the number of indicators showed the diversity in

the Council's business. A review of the Performance Management Framework would take place early in the new year.

- Agency (MPS10) – were there issues in certain areas, for example Planning Services, where agency staff were needed? The Executive Director of Adults, Health Partnerships and Housing advised that agency staff levels were monitored in each department. However, some may only be for a day to cover a service to ensure that there were acceptable levels of staffing. Workforce planning and vacancies may be an issue the Chair and Vice Chair may wish to raise through the Scrutiny Management Board.

RESOLVED:

To note the performance of the Council and its services.

35 Forecast Draft Outturn 2023/24 for Period 6

The Assistant Director of Finance and Strategy presented the report which set out the draft outturn for 2023/24 as at Period 6. The report set out the material financial issues which had been identified since the budget had been set in February 2023.

The forecast outturn position for the General Fund was an overspend of £7.575m and an overspend of £52k for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The Dedicated Schools Grant was forecasting a £6.404m overspend.

The Children's Trust was forecasting an overspend of £23.434m, of which the cost to the Council was £10.348m. If these pressures were not mitigated, this would pose a significant financial risk to the Council.

During discussion on the report, the following key points were made:

- i. It was noted that the Children's Trust were looking at potential mitigations, however a potential risk was the delivery of efficiency savings. These costs could not be mitigated each year through contingency and cannot be ongoing.
- ii. The HRA had £1.5m in arrears but this was never shown as a pressure and not reported. In response, the Assistant Director of Finance and Strategy advised that these arrears will ultimately be a pressure and were included in the bad debts provision.

RESOLVED:

To note the draft outturn report for 2023/24 as at Period 6.

36 Capital Outturn 2023/24 for Period 6

The Assistant Director of Finance Accountancy presented the report which set out the Capital Forecast 2023/24 as at Period 6. The report set out the material financial issues which had been identified since the budget had been set in February 2023.

The forecast position following the review and reprofiling of budgets was a General Fund underspend of £21.6m and an underspend of £15.9m for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

A range of schemes had been delivered or were in progress during this year, including Corby Towns Fund – 6th Form College and Train Station to Town Centre, Street Lighting upgrades, a number of school related improvements such as completion of work at Prince William Academy, delivery of highways maintenance programme, Disabled Facilities Grants and the Refugee Resettlement Programme.

RESOLVED:

To note the capital forecast for 2023/24 as at Period 6.

37 ICT Update

The Assistant Chief Executive gave a verbal update on ICT. The key points made were:

- We all were reliant on ICT within the Council.
- There were three broad areas of ICT provision – NNC, services we received from WNC and a consortium of public service providers.
- NNC continued to be serviced by WNC and the former district and boroughs were serviced by NNC.
- The ICT Team was around 40 people, including service desk, applications support, infrastructure, cyber security, technical project implementation, service management and leadership.
- There had been a number of achievements since vesting day including:
 - Keeping services running effectively
 - Adjustment to the unitary authority
 - Coming out of the pandemic
 - Sustaining transformation
 - Moving from data centres – more efficient estate
- There had also been a number of challenges:
 - System upgrades
 - Efficient delivery of ICT to support services
 - How we moved forward with ICT – talks with WNC about taking on more services
 - Retaining staff in a buoyant market

During discussion on the item, the following key points were made:

- i. A number of systems appeared not to be used effectively and more work needed to be done to ensure they were more effective, including the costs of licences. In response, the Assistant Chief Executive advised that systems were being rationalised and we were looking to get the most out of them. Contract lengths and costs were also being looked at.
- ii. How was data managed when transferred to a new system? In response, the Chief Information Officer advised that this was a priority for ICT. Suppliers were fully vetted and we ensured that we had the appropriately skilled staff. There was a need to ensure that the data was accurate and correct.

- iii. How quickly can the website be amended to enable reporting of potholes and damage? The Executive Director of Place and Economy advised that potholes can be reported through the complaints and feedback page on the website.

RESOLVED:

To note the verbal update.

38 Scrutiny Work Plan for the Corporate Scrutiny Committee

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee received the Scrutiny Work Plan as it related to the Committee.

During discussion on the report, the following points were made:

- i. When items are referred to the Scrutiny Management Board for consideration, there needed to be a feedback process to advise when items were or were not accepted. The Executive Director of Customer and Governance advised that she would ensure that Democratic Services feedback when a decision was made on an item.

RESOLVED:

To note the Scrutiny Work Plan as it relates to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee.

39 Close of Meeting

The Chair thanked members and officers for their attendance and closed the meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

Chair

Date

Minutes of a Meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee

At 6.30 pm on Tuesday 23rd January, 2024

Held in the Council Chamber, Corby Cube, George Street, Corby

Present:-

Members

Councillor Lyn Buckingham (Chair)
Councillor Richard Levell
Councillor Paul Marks

Councillor Lora Lawman (Vice Chair)
Councillor Zoe McGhee
Councillor Dr Anup Pandey

Officers

George Candler, Interim Chief Executive
Janice Gotts – Executive Director of Finance and Performance
David Watts – Executive Director of Adults, Health Partnerships and Housing &
Director of Children’s Services
Graeme Kane – Interim Executive Director of Place and Economy
Jane Bethea – Director of Public Health & Wellbeing
Guy Holloway – Assistant Chief Executive
Mark Dickenson – Assistant Director of Finance and Strategy
Claire Edwards – Assistant Director of Finance Accountancy
Louise Tyers – Senior Democratic Services Officer

Also in attendance

Councillor Lloyd Bunday – Executive Member for Finance and Transformation

40 Apologies for non-attendance

Apologies for non-attendance were received from Councillors Jim Hakewill, Steven North and Russell Roberts.

41 Members' Declarations of Interest

The Chair invited those who wished to do so to declare any interests in respect of items on the agenda.

No declarations of interest were made.

42 Notifications of requests to address the meeting

There were no requests to address the meeting.

43 Budget 2024/2025 - Report from Budget Scrutiny Panel

The Chair presented the report which detailed the feedback from the budget scrutiny sessions which had been conducted on the Executive’s budget proposals for 2024/25. The Committee was now requested to determine its representation to the Executive for consideration at the Executive meeting on 8th February 2024. The final

budget proposals from the Executive would be forwarded to Full Council on 22nd February 2024 for determination.

At its meeting on 21st December 2023, the Executive set out its draft proposals for the Council's budget 2024/25. These draft proposals were submitted for public consultation, with the consultation period closing on 26th January 2024. As part of this consultation process, the Corporate Scrutiny Committee was invited to consider and scrutinise the draft budget proposals.

To assist the Committee in formulating its response, two phases of budget scrutiny sessions were timetabled through a Budget Scrutiny Panel. Phase 1 consisted of seven sessions during November 2023 and included an early indication of key issues to be taken into account in the formulation of the draft 2024/25 budget proposals. Phase 2 involved detailed scrutiny of the proposed budget and again took place over seven meetings between December 2023 and January 2024.

The Chair acknowledged that the scrutiny process had meant a lot of work for members. She thanked Ben Smith, Head of Democratic Services and the support team for supporting the sessions and pulling the response together. Thanks were also given to all service officers for their guidance and support and also to the Finance Team.

During discussion on the report, the following key points were made:

- i. Clarification was sought as to whether there was adequate funding to support schools to meet any RAAC requirements. In response, it was confirmed that no schools had been flagged as having RAAC. The Capital Programme contained a significant amount for schools.
- ii. It was noted with concern that the proposed pressure of £692k for domestic abuse funding was as a result of not knowing if government grant funding would continue. The Leader and Portfolio Holder were encouraged to lobby for continued funding for domestic abuse.
- iii. It was stated that funding through the highways contract was rising and what safeguards were in place to stop prices continuing to rise. Kier were also now undertaking our flood work, along with verge maintenance and was this putting more pressure on them to deliver more things. In response, the Executive Director for Place and Economy clarified that the contract had a set price, with inflationary increases each year. We were also investing more in maintaining our roads. Due diligence had been undertaken on Kier during the contract process and they were a company with financial stability and resilience. Checks would continue to be undertaken throughout the contract.
- iv. It was noted that for Place and Economy, 2024/25 would be a balanced budget but there would be pressures in the future. Asked to identify the top pressures, officers confirmed that these included inflationary pressures, growth of population and increases in contract costs.
- v. It was noted that a number of figures in the draft submission were incorrect and these would be corrected prior to submission to the Executive.

- vi. The significant pressures in future years was noted and members sought clarification as to whether reserves would need to be used to support the budget. Officers explained that some element of reserves would be used for planned investment but not for underlying costs of services. There would be pressures from 2025/26 and it was critical that these were looked at now. There would be a need to look at the costs of delivering services with reduced funding.
- vii. It was noted that spending and recruitment panels had now been introduced to review spending.

The Committee adjourned into a private session to consider the outcome of the private discussions following each scrutiny session.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To receive the draft budget submission and notes from the scrutiny budget sessions.
- (ii) That the budget submission, including the recommendations as detailed in Appendix A of these minutes, be submitted to the Executive.

44 Close of Meeting

The Chair thanked members and officers for their attendance and closed the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.02pm.

Chair

Date

Recommendations for Consideration by the Executive on 8th February 2024.

- a) That the Executive note and support the Budget Scrutiny process undertaken for 2024;
- b) That the Executive considers and responds to the issues raised within the Budget Scrutiny Submission at Appendix A (and the notes of the seven Budget Scrutiny Panel meetings held during December 2023 and January 2024 at Appendices 1-7);
- c) That Corporate Scrutiny Committee would draw to the attention of the Executive in particular:-
 - 1) That the Committee supports:-
 - (i) The efficacy of the 2024 Budget and Capital Programme, following detailed department by department scrutiny and questioning of officer and executive member assumptions and projections for the next and future years;
 - (ii) The raising of Council tax by 4.99% (inclusive of 2% adult social care precept). Whilst noting the impact of a rise in precepts on the cost of living, it is considered important to protect services and especially-vulnerable people as much as possible in the face of continued challenges of balancing budgets across the local government sector in this and future years;
 - (iii) That officers of the Council, particularly those based in finance, be thanked for all their hard work in putting together the 2024 budget over recent months.
 - 2) That the Committee considers:-
 - (i) That Children's Services' remains one of the budget areas of greatest concern, especially as the deficit on the High Needs Block continues to grow each year, appreciating that the aftermath of COVID has generated a significant backlog in cases and development issues in younger children.
 - (ii) There is also significant concern in relation to Adults, Health Partnerships and Housing service pressures of £19.947m in 2024/25, particularly in Adult Services of £18.648m, against savings of £4.217m. This will need to be monitored carefully in terms of maintaining a balanced budget for 2024/25.
 - (iii) Whilst noting the excellent progress made by the Council following its formation in difficult circumstances and during a

global pandemic, to achieve best value, savings and equality of service availability for tax payers across North Northamptonshire, it would be helpful for the Council to set clear defined goals and milestones for the transformation and harmonisation of the remaining prior Borough and District based service areas.

- (iv) That, to ensure effective scrutiny of the NCT, Scrutiny should undertake a further review of the NCT's transformation work and its progress around the end of the second quarter of 2024.
- (v) That the budget scrutiny process around NCT commence earlier moving forward, so that recommendations may be put forward before contracts are agreed.
- (vi) That for future budget scrutiny sessions, Equality Impact Assessments be provided to enable effective consideration of the impact of proposals on our vulnerable residents.

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Corporate Scrutiny Committee 13th February 2023

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Report Title | Key Performance Indicator Report Period 8 (November) 2023/24 |
| Report Author | Janice Gotts, Executive Director of Finance Email: Janice.Gotts@northnorthants.gov.uk |
| Executive Member | Cllr Lloyd Bunday Portfolio Holder for Finance and Transformation |

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Detailed Key Performance Indicator Report for Period 8 2023/24 (November 2023)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To provide members with an update on the Council's performance across a wide range of services, as measured by Key Performance Indicators, with the aim of informing scrutiny.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report provides an assessment of the Council's performance in relation to Key Performance Indicators for 2023/24 as at period 8.
- 2.2 A detailed assessment of the performance of services as measured by Key Performance Indicators for period 8 has been included as **Appendix A**.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Corporate Scrutiny Committee note the performance of the Council and its services as outlined in the appendices of this report, and use the information provided to aid the process of scrutiny.

4. Report Background

Context

- 4.1 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.

Performance Report

- 4.2 A detailed assessment of the performance of services as measured by Key Performance Indicators for period 8 have been included as **Appendix A**. This includes comments / exception reports on each of the performance indicators reported.
- 4.3 The organisation's workforce data for period 8 is provided within **Appendix B**. This is the first report which contains workforce data for 2023/24. The format and presentation of this data will continue to develop and evolve over time to ensure it is meaningful for members to accurately inform strategic decision making moving forward.
- 4.4 56 Key Performance Indicators are reported for this period, of which 53 are reported on a monthly basis, 3 on an annual basis.
- 4.5 The list of Key Performance Indicators to be reported throughout this financial year (2023-24) was approved at Executive Committee in March and can be found in item 405 ([Performance Management and Reporting Arrangements 2023-24](#)).
- 4.6 Queries raised by Members on the content of this report will be responded to within 12 working days of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee meeting.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1 There are no issues or choices arising from this report.

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 economy. 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. The Council's Key Performance Indicators and associated reporting regime

form an important part of the Council's corporate governance arrangements. Robust scrutiny and challenge is 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 continue to be an area of careful focus for the Council as it further embeds and develops its performance management arrangements.

6.4 Consultation

6.4.1 Formal consultation was carried out in the development of the Corporate Plan.

6.4.2 Informal consultation with relevant stakeholders, including Executive Members was completed for the Key Performance Indicators included in this report.

6.4.3 Informal consultation with relevant stakeholders will continue to take place as we continue to develop the Council's Performance Management Framework.

6.5 Climate Impact

6.5.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2021 and has developed a range of actions to address this challenge. The Council continues to develop a set of indicators that provide information about how it is meeting its key commitment to helping deliver a green and sustainable environment.

6.5.2 The Council currently measure and report on the following Greener, Sustainable Environment performance indicators:

| Indicator Reference Number | Indicator Name | Frequency |
|----------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| GSE01 | Number of E-Scooter trips | This is reported quarterly. |
| GSE02 | Number of E-Scooter users | This is reported quarterly. |
| GSE03 | Co2 savings from E-Scooters | This is reported quarterly. |
| GSE04 | Number of electric vehicle charging points publicly available | This is reported quarterly. |
| GSE05 | Number of electric vehicles per charge point | This is reported quarterly. |
| GSE06 | Fly tipping: number of fly tips reported | This is reported quarterly. |
| GSE07 | Percentage of waste diverted from landfill | This is reported quarterly. |
| GSE08 | Co2 saving from Delivery Robots | This is reported quarterly. |

| | | |
|-------|--|---|
| GSE09 | Volume of pesticides used within NNC grounds services operations | This is reported quarterly. |
| GSE10 | Habitat area improved for pollinators (hectares) | This is a new KPI for 2023-24 and is to be reported annually. |

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

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 [Performance Indicator Report P6 \(September / Quarter 2\) 2023-24](#) reported at the Corporate Scrutiny Committee meeting on the 12th December 2023.

7.2 [Performance Management and Reporting Arrangements 2023-24](#) reported at the Executive Meeting on the 16th March 2023.

North Northamptonshire Council Performance Report - November 2023

Key to Performance Status Colours

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

| 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 Direction of Travel Key | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| ↑G | Performance improved since last month |
| → | Performance the same as last month |
| ↓A | Performance declined since last month |

Performance Terminology key

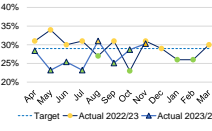
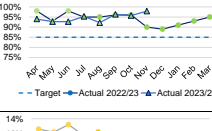
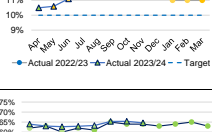
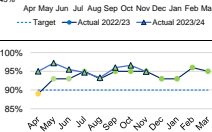
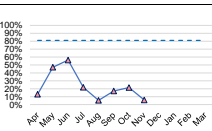
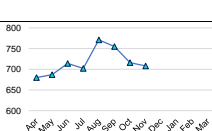
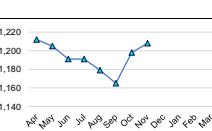

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| TBC | To be confirmed |
| TBD | To be determined |
| n/a | Not applicable |
| Actual | The actual data (number/percentage) achieved during the reporting period |
| Benchmark | A comparator used to compare the Council's performance against. The 2020/21 average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

| Place & Economy | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------|---|---------------------|--|---|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|---|------------------|--------|-----------|--|
| Key Commitment | Ref No. | Description of Performance Indicator | Infographic / Chart | Statutory Reporting Required? (Yes / No) | Benchmark | Quarter 1 23-24 | Quarter 2 23-24 | Year to Date 2023-24 | October 2023/24 | November 2023/24 | Direction of Travel (since previous period) | Polarity | Target | Tolerance | Comments |
| Growth & Regeneration | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Safe and thriving places | STP15 | Percentage of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks (or within agreed extension of time) | | Yes (we have set the target higher than statutory level) | 94% (Mean Average CIPFA Near Neighbours - LG Inform Q4 2022/23) | 92.31% | 82.35% | 82.00% | 83.33% | 62.50% | ↓ | Higher is better | 90% | 85% - 90% | Performance this month has dropped. The percentage performance is influenced by the higher number of decisions issued within the last two months as officers work to clear applications from the backlog of those in hand. The relatively small number of major decisions overall also means that percentage performance remains volatile. |
| | | | | | | 12 out of 13 | 14 out of 17 | 41 out of 50 | 10 out of 12 | 5 out of 8 | | | | | |
| Safe and thriving places | STP16 | Percentage of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks (or within agreed extension of time) | | Yes (we have set the target higher than statutory level) | 87% (Mean Average CIPFA Near Neighbours - LG Inform Q4 2022/23) | 73.91% | 84.54% | 79.09% | 82.05% | 74.29% | ↓ | Higher is better | 85% | 80% - 85% | Performance this month has dropped, although a significant number of applications have been determined again this month. Planning officer capacity remains challenging, but a recruitment campaign is in progress to increase the number of permanent planning staff which it is hoped will assist in improvements with longer-term performance. |
| | | | | | | 68 out of 92 | 82 out of 97 | 208 out of 263 | 32 out of 39 | 26 out of 35 | | | | | |
| Safe and thriving places | STP17 | Percentage of other (including householder applications) planning applications determined within 8 weeks (or within agreed extension of time) | | Yes (we have set the target higher than statutory level) | 88% (Mean Average CIPFA Near Neighbours - LG Inform Q4 2022/23) | 83.81% | 85.83% | 81.34% | 75.27% | 69.72% | ↓ | Higher is better | 88% | 83% - 88% | Performance has dropped this month but a significant number of applications have been determined during the period, as officers work to clear the backlog of applications in hand. Planning officer capacity remains challenging, but a recruitment campaign is in progress to increase the number of permanent planning staff which it is hoped will assist in improving longer-term performance. |
| | | | | | | 233 out of 278 | 218 out of 254 | 597 out of 734 | 70 out of 93 | 76 out of 109 | | | | | |

Place & Economy

| Key Commitment | Ref No. | Description of Performance Indicator | Infographic / Chart | Statutory Reporting Required? (Yes / No) | Benchmark | Quarter 1 23-24 | Quarter 2 23-24 | Year to Date 2023-24 | October 2023/24 | November 2023/24 | Direction of Travel (since previous period) | Polarity | Target | Tolerance | Comments |
|-----------------------------|---------|--|---------------------|--|-----------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|---|------------------|---|--|---|
| Highways & Waste | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Safe and thriving places | STP29 | Number of Defects Outstanding on the network (at end of period), split by category | | No - Contractual | n/a | 4069 | 1982 | 1804 | 1788 | 1804 | ↑ | Lower is better | No target-tracking indicator or only | N/A | The total number of defects increased a little in November, which is to be expected over the winter. There was an increase in P2 from 15 to 37 and an increase in P3 from 147 to 195. This reflects the defect mix rather than contractor performance as STP31 shows that the contractor is meeting target performance for repair timescales. |
| | | 0 | | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | → | | | | | |
| | | 0 | | | | 2 | 37 | 15 | 37 | ↑R | | | | | |
| | | 608 | | | | 91 | 195 | 147 | 195 | ↑R | | | | | |
| | | 3461 | | | | 1889 | 1572 | 1626 | 1572 | ↓G | | | | | |
| Safe and thriving places | STP30 | Number of Defects Repaired in the network in period, split by category | | No - Contractual | n/a | 4953 | 3957 | 11141 | 1348 | 883 | ↓R | Higher is better | No target-tracking indicator or only | N/A | The number of P2 and P3 repairs completed this period has increased compared to the previous month, this is in response to the increase in the number of P2 and P3 defects on the network, as reported in STP29 above. Given the winter weather, this increase was anticipated, and the service has been able to respond to this demand because they completed considerably more P4 repairs in October in order to have sufficient capacity to focus on P2 and P3 defects in November. Generally, fewer repairs are made during the winter months as resources are required to be redirected to respond to weather events including flooding and winter gritting. |
| | | 6 | | | | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | → | | | | | |
| | | 217 | | | | 202 | 442 | 23 | 87 | ↑G | | | | | |
| | | 2863 | | | | 1410 | 4544 | 271 | 409 | ↑G | | | | | |
| | | 1867 | | | | 2345 | 5266 | 1054 | 387 | ↓R | | | | | |
| Safe and thriving places | STP31 | Percentage of defects responded to within the timeframes specified, split by category | | No - Contractual | n/a | 86.81% (3737 out of 4305) | 97.28% (3178 out of 3267) | 96.39% (9169 out of 9685) | 98.31% (1278 out of 1323) | 98.58% (976 out of 990) | ↑G | Higher is better | P1 and P2 97.5% and P3 and 97.5% No Tolerance | All targets have been met again this month. P2's have increased which is to be expected over the winter. | |
| | | 100% (6 out of 6) | | | | 100% (0 out of 0) | 100% (6 out of 6) | 100% (0 out of 0) | 100% (0 out of 0) | → | | | | | |
| | | 99.09% (217 out of 219) | | | | 100% (209 out of 209) | 99.66% (528 out of 530) | 100% (23 out of 23) | 100% (79 out of 79) | → | | | | | |
| | | 86.72% (2293 out of 2644) | | | | 95.53% (1132 out of 1185) | 92.68% (4030 out of 4454) | 96.8% (333 out of 344) | 96.8% (272 out of 281) | → | | | | | |
| | | 85.03% (1221 out of 1436) | | | | 98.08% (1837 out of 1873) | 93.23% (4605 out of 4895) | 97.94% (822 out of 956) | 99.21% (625 out of 630) | ↑G | | | | | |

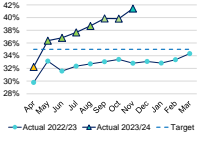
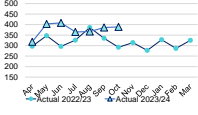
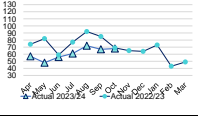
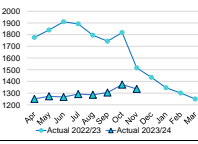
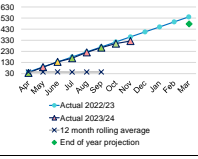
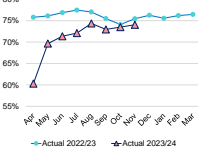
| Key Commitment | Ref No. | Description of Performance Indicator | Infographic / Chart | Statutory Reporting Required? (Yes / No) | Benchmark | November 2022/23 | Quarter 1 23-24 | Quarter 2 23-24 | Year to Date 2023/24 | October 2023/24 | November 2023/24 | Direction of Travel (since previous period) | Polarity | Target | Tolerance | Comments |
|--------------------------------|---------|--|---------------------|--|---|---|--|--|---|---|---|--|------------------|---------------------|--------------|--|
| Revenues & Benefits | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Modern Public Services | MPS05 | % of council tax collected in the year debit raised | | Yes, reported on a quarterly basis but no target set by government | 95.97% (Mean Average CIPFA Near Neighbours - LG Inform 2022/23) | 77.02% (YTD) 102.69% achieved of the monthly target (75.00%) £20,814,051.72 (collected in Nov) | 28.30% (YTD) 104.96% achieved of the target (28.00%) £71,233,944.18 (collected YTD) | 56.36% (YTD) 101.75% achieved of the target (56.00%) £57,038,947.66 (collected in Q2) | 75.30% (YTD) 100.40% achieved of the monthly target (75.00%) £192,862,573.32 (collected YTD) | 66.25% (YTD) 100.38% achieved of the monthly target (66.00%) £22,584,968.75 (collected in Oct) | 75.30% (YTD) 100.40% achieved of the monthly target (75.00%) £22,002,213.23 (collected in Nov) | ↑G (Cumulative KPI so direction of travel is based on the % achieved of the target) | Higher is better | 98% (Annual target) | No tolerance | Performance is above target but below the same point in time last year. We will continue to monitor closely. Data for the Corby area was taken early (27th November) as the system was closed down due to the conversion of the system taking place. The monies collected for the period 27 - 30 November will be reflected in December figures. |
| Modern Public Services | MPS04 | % of business rates collected in the year debit raised | | Yes, reported on a quarterly basis but no target set by government | 97.13% (Mean Average CIPFA Near Neighbours - LG Inform 2022/23) | 75.44% (YTD) 100.59% achieved of the monthly target (75.00%) £12,980,314.14 (collected in Nov) | 28.92% (YTD) 103.29% achieved of the target (28.00%) £47,156,437.48 (collected YTD) | 55.72% (YTD) 93.50% achieved of the target (56.00%) £42,709,697.20 (collected in Q2) | 72.32% (YTD) 96.43% achieved of the monthly target (75.00%) £116,022,542.7 (collected YTD) | 64.02% (YTD) 97% achieved of the monthly target (66.00%) £13,368,317.14 (collected in Oct) | 72.32% (YTD) 96.43% achieved of the monthly target (75.00%) £13,620,180.85 (collected in Nov) | ↓ (Cumulative KPI so direction of travel is based on the % achieved of the target) | Higher is better | 98% (Annual target) | No tolerance | Performance has dropped slightly below target, this was anticipated due to the the cost of living issues and current economic climate. We will monitor this closely. Data from Corby was taken early (27th November) as the system was closed down due to the conversion of the system taking place. The monies collected for the period 27 - 30 November will be reflected in December figures. |

| Children's Services | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|--|---|--|--|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|---|------------------|--------|-----------|--|
| Key Commitment | Ref No. | Description of Performance Indicator | Infographic / Chart | Statutory Reporting Required? (Yes / No) | Benchmark | Quarter 1 2023-24 | Quarter 2 2023-24 | Year to Date 2023-24 | October 2023/24 | November 2023/24 | Direction of Travel (since previous period) | Polarity | Target | Tolerance | Comments |
| Children's Trust (This data is for the whole of Northamptonshire) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Better, brighter futures | BBF05 (KPI 2) | % of referrals with a previous referral within 12 months |  | Yes (also contractual) - target is contractual but not statutory | 21.9% Mean for Northamptonshire Children's Services LAIT near neighbours 2021/22 | 25.4% (2,585) | 26.2% (1,986) | 26.9% (6,269) | 28.7% (882) | 30.3% (792) | ↓ A | Lower is better | 29% | 25% - 40% | Re-referrals have increased this month above target but within tolerance. It remains an area of ongoing focus with audit and review for learning. The dedicated education roles in MASH (Multi-Agency Support Hub) are working positively with schools to ensure appropriate referrals and compliments from schools about their roles are increasing. Work with all partners continues to ensure appropriate and robust application of thresholds, and right support at right time for families. Steps have been taken to strengthen the Early Help partnerships with Partnership Support Team (Early Help MASH) being placed in the MASH pods and a leaner step down process. Stepdown practice has been reviewed and warm handovers promoted. Transformation activity in response to the peer review and findings from Ofsted focused visit expected to enable reduction in re-referral rates and further improvements. COVID-19 and cost of living crisis has an impact on volume and quality of re-referrals (Trust commentary, November 2023). |
| Better, brighter futures | BBF06 (KPI 3) | % of single assessments authorised within 45 working days |  | Yes (also contractual) - target is contractual but not statutory | 85% We are in the process of identifying more up to date benchmark data for this PI. | 92.9% (2,792) | 94.3% (2,695) | 94.4% (7,286) | 95.7% (830) | 97.9% (969) | ↑ G | Higher is better | 85% | 85% - 95% | Assessment timescales remain consistently above target and national average, increasing to 97.9% this month. All managers monitor this very closely via daily reports. A narrative is provided for cases that go beyond 45 days and this remains a very small minority. Whilst staffing has presented challenges due to vacancies and staff performance issues in DAAT (Duty and Assessment Team), there is now a positive move towards more appropriate staffing levels being achieved and sustained. In addition to timeliness, we work on increasing the quality of assessments and more effective use of SoSf in our interventions (Trust commentary, November 2023). |
| Better, brighter futures | BBF07 (KPI 8) | % Children in care with three or more placements in the previous 12 months |  | Yes (also contractual) - target is contractual but not statutory | 10% Mean for Northamptonshire Children's Services LAIT near neighbours 2021/22 | 11.1% (1,191) | 12.4% (1,165) | 11.9% (1,209) | 12.0% (1,198) | 11.9% (1,209) | ↑ G | Lower is better | 10% | 5% - 15% | Performance has improved to 11.9% this month after an increase in children in care since last month. Consideration of various options to improve sufficiency is continuing, including exploration of capital investment, additional in house resources, as well as improved engagement with the market. Planning permission granted for two new emergency homes and valuing care project progressing successfully. Through improved edge of care arrangements, the close oversight on admissions to care, and the developments within placement sufficiency, we are confident we can reduce the need for child to move home as frequently. Positively, Children's Home Capital Programme application with the DIE has been successful, and that should also support progress in this area. COVID-19 Placement sufficiency remains a challenge, sustained performance in this work should also have a positive impact on KPI 7 (Trust commentary, November 2023). |
| Better, brighter futures | BBF08 (KPI 9) | % of young people now aged 17 - 21 and living in suitable education or training who were looked after when aged 16 |  | Yes (also contractual) - target is contractual but not statutory | 56.95% Mean for Northamptonshire Children's Services LAIT near Neighbours 2021/22 | 62.7% (684) | 65.3% (678) | 64.6% (689) | 65.4% (677) | 64.6% (689) | ↓ A | Higher is better | 55% | 50% - 60% | This month has seen performance decline slightly to 64.6%, comparing favourably with 58% across England. Focus in this area continues to be driven through arrangements with local colleges, the virtual school and the senior personal advisor (Education and Employment) with further review of contracted arrangements (Prospects) to be undertaken to ensure we have the best approach/s support for young people. Work with councils to ensure EET (Education, Employment & Training) opportunities and support in place for our care leavers. West Northants Council have signed up for care leaver's covenant offer. COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the mental health and wellbeing of care leavers, targeted work support care leavers to access EET (Trust commentary, November 2023). |
| Better, brighter futures | BBF09 (KPI 10) | % of young people now aged 17 - 21 and living in suitable accommodation who were looked after when aged 16 |  | Yes (also contractual) - target is contractual but not statutory | 89% (All English Authorities 2020/21 - LG Inform) | 95.5% (684) | 96.0% (678) | 94.9% (689) | 96.6% (677) | 94.9% (689) | ↓ A | Higher is better | 90% | 85% - 95% | Performance for this month declined to 94.6%, still above the target of 90%. We know that we have some young people in unsuitable accommodation, including a number of young people sentenced to custody, and some who have no accommodation at all. We work hard to address this, tenaciously seeking to engage with young people who may see our attempts at support as interference. The care leavers housing protocol is in place and work is being progressed under the governance of a strategic group; this includes a review of the housing panels and engagement with the housing associations. Helpful discussions with colleagues in the Councils is placing the housing sufficiency needs of care leavers as central to their housing strategies. The Accommodation Transitions Panel is now in operation and ensures all young people have a comprehensive, accommodation-focused, shared, and timely transition plan (Trust commentary, November 2023). |
| Better, brighter futures | BBF27 (KPI 5) | % of initial child protection conferences held within 15 days of a strategy discussion being initiated |  | Yes (also contractual) - target is contractual but not statutory | 84.3% Mean for Northamptonshire Children's Services LAIT near neighbours 2021/22 | 36.4% (343) | 13.2% (288) | 23.2% (810) | 21.5% (93) | 5.8% (86) | ↓ A | Higher is better | 81% | 66% - 86% | For November, performance is negatively impacted by chair capacity to manage initial and review conferences and business support vacancies in SQAS (Safeguarding & Quality Assurance Service), Child Protection (CP) Chair resource caseload remains above 100 (well above recommended levels); additional temporary CP Chair resource has been recruited and expected to have positive impact in the next couple months. Recruitment is in progress for business support in SQAS. Average no. days from strat. to Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) in November = 32. Multi-agency safety plans in place for families waiting for a conference. There are now lower numbers of conferences late due to delayed convening requests from DAAT (Duty and Assessment Team) and Safeguarding, which is positive. All ICPCs are tracked and referring managers are challenged to identify causes of delay and ensure individual, team or whole-service learning is addressed. DAAT managers support SWs with additional training on process, recording and requesting strategy discussions and convening conferences. A refreshed duty CP Chair flowchart is in place to assist referring managers with threshold decision-making and this has been shared with all teams. Additional work has been completed with the CP Chair to ensure consistency of the discussion with managers (Trust commentary, November 2023). |
| Better, brighter futures | BBF28 | Number of children with a Child Protection Plan |  | Yes | 565 Mean for Northamptonshire Children's Services LAIT near neighbours 2021/22 | 714 | 755 | 708 | 716 | 708 | ↓ | No polarity | TBD | | October comment: 716 children were subject to a Child Protection Plan in October 2023. The cohort has decreased by 39 children since last month. Yet, there were 47 children less in the cohort twelve months ago. Prior to June 2023, there were less than 700 children were in the cohort. June-October 2023 have produced the highest number of Child Protection Plans of the last three financial years. An average of 732 children had a Child Protection Plan in the last five months. By comparison, an average of 643 children were subject to Child Protection Plan during the same period of last year. There are now 44 children more in the cohort than in October 2022, and 98 children more than in October 2021. An average of 670 children were subject to a Child Protection Plan in the last twelve months. This marks an increase from last year when an average of 620 children had a Child Protection Plan. 85.3% of children on Child Protection Plan had up-to-date CP visits in October 2023, a slight decline from last month's performance of 88.5%. In the last twelve months, an average of 86.6% of children on CP plans has up-to-date CP visits. This is slightly behind the average during the same period of last year (88.6%) and two years ago (87.7%) (Intelligent Client Function commentary, October 2023). |
| Better, brighter futures | BBF29 | Number of children in care |  | Yes | 1,050 Mean for Northamptonshire Children's Services LAIT near neighbours 2021/22 | 1,191 | 1,179 | 1,208 | 1,198 | 1,208 | ↑ | No polarity | TBD | | October comment: 1,198 children were in care in October 2023, 33 children more than last month. Following a short period of decrease between March and September 2023, the population of children in care grew again this month. October 2023 marks the highest record in five months. Even so, there are now 23 children less in the cohort than a year ago. Prior to July 2022, the cohort had never exceeded 1,200. October 2023 marks the fifth consecutive month where less than 1,200 children have been recorded in this cohort. So far in 2023-24, an average of 1,191 children have been reported to be in care. September 2023 accounts for the lowest volume of children in care of the last twelve months. An average of 1,209 children have been reported to be in care in the last 12 months. This is slightly higher than the average during the same period of last year (1,192) and two years ago (1,153). At the end of October 2023, 120 children in care were also identified in the EHC cohort. The number of children in care who were also in the EHC cohort has decreased by 2 since June 2023 (Intelligent Client Function commentary, October 2023). |

Children's Services

| Key Commitment | Ref No. | Description of Performance Indicator | Infographic / Chart | Statutory Reporting Required? (Yes / No) | Benchmark | Quarter 1 2023-24 | Quarter 2 2023-24 | Year to Date 2023-24 | October 2023/24 | November 2023/24 | Direction of Travel (since previous period) | Polarity | Target | Tolerance | Comments |
|---|-----------|---|---------------------|--|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|------------------|---|------------------|---------------------|-----------|---|
| Learning, Skills & Education | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Better, brighter futures | BBF18b | % of EHC (education health care) plans completed in month issued within 20 weeks (including exceptions) | | Yes (part of SEN 2 return) | 37.8% Mean for NNC Children's Services LAIT near neighbours 2021/22 | 66.7% | 74.2% | 70.6% | 66.7% | 55.9% | ↓R | Higher is better | Target under review | n/a | The summer has allowed the team to focus on writing and finalising plans. Again, this is the impact of the new assessment team which has been piloted as part of the new EHC Team reorganisation. Whilst the team have written and finalised plans, many are finalised on type due to late lead professional advice not allowing the EHC Team time to consult. RSA (referral for Statutory assessment) decisions are being made by week 6 (no decisions have been made after 6 weeks), advice is requested but often not returned until Week 16-17 of the process leaving the EHC team a few days to write the plan and 15 days for the draft to be commented on by the parent. To meet the statutory 20 week timescales, there is no time to send consults for pupils and staff have to amend plans naming a school once they are finalised. The EHC Team are working collaboratively with the EP (Educational Psychology) service and health to try to improve this (Service commentary, November 2023). |
| Better, brighter futures | BBF22 | Number of children missing education (previously named Number of children without a school place) | | No | | 274 | 313 | 242 | 226 | 242 | ↑R | Lower is better | Target under review | n/a | A total of 242 children were missing education at the end of November 2023, 7% more children missing than last month. 46.7% of children missing education are in SEN (Special Educational Needs) Support/ EHC (Education Health Care) Services, 33.9% are in School Admissions and 19.4% are in EIP Services. So far, August 2023 accounts for the highest proportion of children missing education. While the lowest proportion of children missing education was recorded in May 2023. An average of 278 children were missing education in the last five months (Children's Performance Team commentary, November 2023). |
| Better, brighter futures | T49 BBF23 | % Children achieving a good level of development in Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) | 66.1% | | 64.9% Mean for NNC Children's Services LAIT near neighbours 2021/22 | n/a annually reported in Dec | n/a annually reported in Dec | 66.1% | n/a annually reported in Dec | 66.1% | ↑G | Higher is better | N/A - Tracking | n/a | EYFSP good level of development has increased by 4.0% from 62.1% in 2021/22 to 66.1% in 2022/23. This is equivalent to approximately 163 more pupils achieving a good level of development in 2022/23 compared to 2021/22. |
| Better, brighter futures | T50 BBF24 | % Children achieving Age Related Expectations or above in reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2 | 55.6% | | 58% Mean for NNC Children's Services LAIT near neighbours 2021/22 | n/a annually reported in Dec | n/a annually reported in Dec | 55.6% | n/a annually reported in Dec | 55.6% | ↓ | Higher is better | N/A - Tracking | n/a | Expected standard percentage in Reading, Writing & Maths has decreased by 0.3% from 55.8% in 2021/22 to 55.5% in 2022/23. This is equivalent to approximately 14 fewer pupils achieving the expected standard in 2022/23 compared to 2021/22. |
| Better, brighter futures | T51 BBF25 | Percentage of children achieving grade 9-4 in English and Maths (previously A*-C) | 61.0% | | 68.6% Mean for NNC Children's Services LAIT near neighbours 2021/22 | n/a annually reported in Dec | n/a annually reported in Dec | 61.0% | n/a annually reported in Dec | 61.0% | ↓R | Higher is better | N/A - Tracking | n/a | English & Maths 4+ percentage has decreased by 3.3% from 64.3% in 2021/22 to 61.0% in 2022/23. This is equivalent to approximately 129 fewer pupils achieving a grade of 4 or more in 2022/23 compared to 2021/22. |
| Better, brighter futures | BBF32 | Current number of home educated children | | Not yet statutory but reported as part of "Elective Home Education/ Children missing in education" data return to DfE. | | 855 | 837 | 899 | 854 | 899 | ↑ | No polarity | N/A - Tracking | n/a | 899 children were electively home educated in November 2023, of which 32.5% children home educated for 2+ years, 18.6% home educated between 1-2 years, 19.8% home educated between 1-2 months, 9.0% home educated between 3-6 months and 21.1% home educated between 0-3 months. The children electively home educated cohort has increased by 5% since last month. There are now 22 children more than in October 2023. There were less than 750 electively home educated children twelve months ago. The population of home educated children has increased by 25% (177) in twelve months. So far in Autumn Term 2023, an average of 863 children were home educated. By comparison, an average 680 children were home educated during the same period of last year. An average of 822 children were electively home educated in the last twelve months. This is 18.1% higher than the average during the same period of last year (671). In November 2023, 21 home educated children were also in the social care caseload, 18 were in the children in need cohort, 3 were in the child protection cohort, 6 were in the children missing education cohort and 62 were in the children with EHCs (Education Health Care Plan) cohort. The latest recording in November is higher than the East Midlands and England's average in Spring 2023, but lower than the statistical neighbours' average (Children's Performance Team commentary, November 2023). |
| Better, brighter futures | BBF33 | Number of children who are absent from education for prolonged periods (Previously named Number of children currently missing from education (Year 1-11)) | | Not yet statutory but reported as part of "Elective Home Education/ Children missing in education" data return to DfE. | | 103 | 225 | 111 | 114 | 111 | ↓G | Lower is better | N/A - Tracking | n/a | 111 children were absent from education for prolonged periods in November 2023. 73.9% of children have been absent between 0-3 months (82), 13.5% of children have been absent between 3-6 months (15), 7.2% of children have been absent between 6-12 months (8), 5.4% of children have been absent between 1-2 years (6). The population of children absent from education has slightly decreased. There are now 2 children less in the cohort than last month. So far in Autumn Term 2023, an average of 150 were absent from education for prolonged periods. By comparison, an average of 199 children were absent from education during the same period of the academic year 2022-23. The cohort has decreased by 18% since December 2022. An average of 139 children were absent from education for prolonged periods in the last twelve months. In November 2023, 4 children absent from education were also in the social care caseload, 1 child was in the children in need cohort, 3 children were in the child protection cohort, 6 children were in the electively home educated cohort and 2 children were in the children with EHCs (Education Health Care Plan) cohort. The latest recording in November is lower than the East Midlands and England's average in Spring 2023 (Children's Performance Team commentary, November 2023). |
| Better, brighter futures | BBF36 | % Education Health Care Plan Annual Reviews completed within 4 weeks of meeting | | Statutory Duty but not reported | | 66.7% | 58.3% | 63.0% | 55.2% | | ↑G | Higher is better | N/A - Tracking | n/a | A new Annual Review (AR) template has been designed and training organised for all settings (Early Years (EY), primary, secondary, college, Out of Authority (OOA), independent, special) for the 26th September. The team feel that updated training is needed to all settings to improve the standard of annual reviews being returned to the team. Clear expectations and a consistent approach will be shared – this should make the amendments completed by the EHC (Education Health Care) team much more streamlined. The weekly data dashboard illustrates the returned annual reviews and we can see the types of settings where annual reviews are not being completed – again with the new team organisation, we will be able to contact settings and challenge this. The caseworkers have been allocated a group of settings and have issued a spreadsheet of the Annual Review's due date for 2023-24 academic year and highlighted if previous Annual Review's are out of time. The annual review team manager has developed a system for monitoring these moving forward. The annual review team leader will complete the weekly data dashboard and capture any issues arising – these will be discussed at the weekly leadership team meeting. This system will enable the team to give a % for each setting of the return AR data which again will enable the team to challenge and ensure that Annual Review's are taking place consistently in all settings. A small percentage of this is also due to a decrease in the number of staff employed and staff absence in the annual review team. There is also an impact seen of not being able to access the EHC plans due to the difficulties in moving them from Sharepoint. The team were unable to update plans following the review as they were unable to access the plans. The plans have now been moved and there are only a small number of plans (less than 30) that we are trying to locate. The restructuring of the EHC Team and the work of the annual review team and Provision and Placement team have really supported this improvement in timeliness. The team have developed clear monitoring processes which are also working well (Service commentary, November 2023). |

Adults & Housing

| Key Commitment | Ref No. | Description of Performance Indicator | Infographic / Chart | Statutory Reporting Required? (Yes / No) | Benchmark | Quarter 1 23-24 | Quarter 2 23-24 | Year to Date 2023-24 | September 2023/24 | October 2023/24 | November 2023/24 | Direction of Travel (since previous period) | Polarity | Target | Tolerance | Comments | |
|--------------------------|---------|--|--|--|---|--|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|---|----------------------------------|------------------|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| Adult Social Care | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Active, fulfilled lives | AFL03 | Percentage of New Requests for Services (all ages) where Route of Access was Discharge from Hospital, that had a sequel of short term services to maximise independence (ST-MAX i.e. reablement) |  | No | The source data is from the SALT (Statutory) return. There are no gov targets. This indicator is included in our regional benchmarking. | 2021/22 SALT Report: - England: 37% | 37% | 40% | 39% | 40% | 40% | 41% | ↑G | Higher is better | 35% | 5% points | BI comments: There were 41 new requests for people aged 18-64 and 584 for people aged 65 and over. There is positive growth year to date, with the rate higher than those reported throughout 2022/23 and above year end target. |
| | | | | | | 229 out of 622 | 472 out of 1184 | 2785 out of 7128 | 472 out of 1184 | 541 out of 1358 | 625 out of 1509 | | | | | | |
| Active, fulfilled lives | AFL04 | Number of new safeguarding concerns received per month |  | Yes | (Annually in the SAC (Safeguarding Adults Collection) return) | n/a - there are differences in what authorities record as a 'concern' | 1129 | 1098 | 3002 | 386 | 389 | N/A Reporting one month in arrears | ↑ | No polarity | No target - tracking indicator only | N/A | BI comments: The number of new concerns received remained stable from the previous period and remains notably higher than the average seen over the previous financial year (318). |
| Active, fulfilled lives | AFL05 | New safeguarding concerns determined to be enquiries (both s42 and other) *A s42 enquiry must take place if there is reason to believe that abuse or neglect is taking place |  | Yes | (Annually in the SAC (Safeguarding Adults Collection) return) | n/a | 161 | 195 | 502 | 67 | 68 | N/A Reporting one month in arrears | ↑ | No polarity | No target - tracking indicator only | N/A | BI comments: There was only a slight increase in the proportion of concerns determined to be enquiries (+1). It is still higher than the YTD average of 61 |
| Active, fulfilled lives | AFL06 | Total number of open Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard (DoLS) cases |  | Yes | (Annually) | n/a | 1267 | 1305 | 1336 | 1305 | 1373 | 1336 | ↓G | Lower is better | No target - tracking indicator only | N/A | BI comments: The number of open DoLS cases decreased by 37. This still remains notably lower than the average observed across the previous financial year (299 fewer). |
| Active, fulfilled lives | AFL07 | Long-term support needs met by admission to residential and nursing care homes, per 100,000 population (older people 65 years +) |  | No | The source data is from the SALT (Statutory) return. This indicator is included in ASCOF (Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework) and BCF (Better Care Fund) returns. | 546.17 (Mean Average CIPFA Neighbourhoods - LG Inform) 2021/22 SALT Report: - East Midlands: 562 - England: 539 | 135.6 | 263.7 | 323.1 | 263.7 | 300.2 | 323.1 | ↓G (Oct-Nov compared to Sep-Oct) | Lower is better | Year-end target: 564 Monthly target: 47 | TBD - for now applied standard 5% | BI comments: This is a cumulative measure which increases throughout the financial year, resetting in April. Admissions year to date total 212; 161 following an assessment for new people, 5 following an episode of reablement for new people, 2 following an episode of reablement for existing people, and 44 as a result of change in setting following a review. Average monthly growth has reduced again this month; now at 40.9 which is positive and suggests the year end rate will be lower than planned. |
| Active, fulfilled lives | AFL08 | Number of people who were prevented from requiring statutory care, or whose need was reduced *Delaying and reducing the need for care and support having received short term services to maximise independence (ST-MAX) services* |  | No | The source data is from the SALT (Statutory) return. There are no gov targets. This indicator is included in ASCOF and regional benchmarking. | 84.6% East Midlands Average, we are in the process of identifying more up to date benchmark data for this PI. This is an 'Office for Local Government' OFLOG Metric. | 71.40% | 73.0% | 74.1% | 73.0% | 73.5% | 74.1% | ↑G | Higher is better | 80% | 5% points | BI comments: The rate shows positive growth April - August with a slight reduction in September and October. The rate has improved this month but remains lower than expected compared to 2022/23 trends, which typically ranged between 74-77%. |
| | | | | | | 152 out of 213 | 348 out of 477 | 468 out of 632 | 348 out of 477 | 416 out of 566 | 468 out of 632 | | | | | | |

Adults & Housing

| Key Commitment | Ref No. | Description of Performance Indicator | Infographic / Chart | Statutory Reporting Required? (Yes / No) | Benchmark | Quarter 1 23-24 | Quarter 2 23-24 | Year to Date 2023-24 | September 2023/24 | October 2023/24 | November 2023/24 | Direction of Travel (since previous period) | Polarity | Target | Tolerance | Comments |
|-------------------------|---------|---|---------------------|---|--|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|---|------------------|---|--------------|---|
| Housing Services | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Active, fulfilled lives | AFL12 | Number of rough sleepers - single night snapshot | | Yes (DLUHC monthly rough sleeping survey, and target agreed with our RSI adviser from DLUHC) | 7 (Mean Average CIPFA Near Neighbours - LG Inform) | 16 | 13 | n/a | 13 | 19 | 9 | ↓G | Lower is better | 9 | 9 to 12 | During the month of November, we have seen a reduction in numbers (9 single night). The reason for the reduction in numbers is due to the continuation of positive work the rough sleeping team are doing with securing accommodation for individuals direct from the streets, a total of 8 people were helped to leave the streets and placed direct into a suitable provision. The team also helped to accommodate 7 people into discretionary temporary accommodation to ensure their time on the streets is brief whilst we continue our support work. The team have also secured moves on accommodation from our discretionary rough sleeper accommodation for 3 people and have already in the month of December have positive move on's planned for the other individuals being supported. |
| Active, fulfilled lives | AFL13 | Number of households whose homelessness was prevented | | Yes (DLUHC - quarterly H-CLIC returns, no target set) | 101 (Mean Average CIPFA Near Neighbours - LG Inform) Demand in some areas must be much higher. | 75 | 63 | 167 | 22 | 32 | 17 | ↓R | Higher is better | 252 (21 per month) | 18-21 | Performance continues to fluctuate between months due to a variety of factors. This reflects the difficulties the Housing Options Team are having trying to secure accommodation solutions, particularly in the private sector in order to prevent or relieve households homelessness locally. There is a recognised need for the team to move its focus further upstream to maximise homelessness prevention opportunities and action plan is being developed in this regard. |
| Active, fulfilled lives | AFL14 | Number of households whose homelessness was relieved | | Yes (DLUHC - quarterly H-CLIC returns, no target set) | 75 (Mean Average CIPFA Near Neighbours - LG Inform) Demand in some areas must be much higher. | 86 | 82 | 219 | 36 | 30 | 21 | ↓R | Higher is better | 300 (25 per month) | 22-25 | Performance continues to fluctuate between months due to a variety of factors. This reflects the difficulties the Housing Options Team are having trying to secure accommodation solutions, particularly in the private sector in order to prevent or relieve households homelessness locally. There is a recognised need for the team to move its focus further upstream to maximise homelessness prevention opportunities and action plan is being developed in this regard. |
| Active, fulfilled lives | AFL15 | Total number of homeless approaches | | Yes (DLUHC - quarterly H-CLIC returns, no target set) | n/a | 1468 | 1404 | 3954 | 430 | 528 | 554 | ↑ | N/A | Tracking - monitoring levels of demand only | N/A | 3,863 households approached the Council as homeless during 2021/22, which is an average of 320 approaches per month. 4778 households approached the Council as homeless during 2022/23. This is an increase of just over 900, and an average of 400 approaches per month. Currently the Housing Options Team have a live caseload of 1006 cases. During November there was a further increase in the number of approaches from 528 to 554. Please note the figure for October has now been updated to include 31/10/23. |
| Active, fulfilled lives | AFL17 | Total number of households living in temporary accommodation | | Yes (DLUHC - quarterly H-CLIC returns, no target set) | 202 (Mean Average CIPFA Near Neighbours - LG Inform) | n/a | n/a | n/a | 239 | 239 | 248 | ↑ | Lower is better | 245 | No tolerance | Please note that this figure includes 9 units through the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) programme for homeless Afghan and Ukrainian families. As these placements will need to be retained on homelessness and temporary accommodation caseloads because of tenancy/letting issues, a future rise in the number of households living in temporary accommodation should be expected (LAHF Round 1 and 2 will deliver 41 units altogether). *This figure is for statutory duty placements only and does not include the additional cohort of rough sleepers accommodated using discretionary powers* |
| Active, fulfilled lives | AFL18 | Number of households with family commitments* living in bed and breakfast accommodation | | Yes (DLUHC - quarterly H-CLIC returns, no target set) | 11 (Mean Average CIPFA Near Neighbours - LG Inform) | n/a | n/a | n/a | 1 | 4 | 0 | ↓G | Lower is better | 5 | No tolerance | As a result of the team's efforts, there are no households with family commitments placed in B&B. * Households with family commitments are a) a pregnant woman; (b) with whom a pregnant woman resides or might reasonably be expected to reside; or (c) with whom dependent children reside or might reasonably be expected to reside. |

| Adults & Housing | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------|--|---------------------|--|-----------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|---|
| Key Commitment | Ref No. | Description of Performance Indicator | Infographic / Chart | Statutory Reporting Required? (Yes / No) | Benchmark | Quarter 1 23-24 | Quarter 2 23-24 | Year to Date 2023-24 | September 2023/24 | October 2023/24 | November 2023/24 | Direction of Travel (since previous period) | Polarity | Target | Tolerance | Comments |
| Active, fulfilled lives | AFL24 | Number of Temporary Accommodation placements out of NN area | | Yes (DLUHC - quarterly H-CLIC returns, no target set) | TBD | n/a | n/a | n/a | 1 | 0 | 0 | → | Lower is better | 3 | No tolerance | As a result of the team's efforts, there are no households placed out of area as at the end of November 2023. |
| Safe and thriving places | STP38 | Percentage of rent collected | | No | n/a | 96.37 | 97.28% | 96.87% | 97.28% | 96.77% | 96.87% | ↑G | Higher is better | 97% | 5% | This is a cumulative rent collected as a percentage of rent owed figure. There has been a higher collection rate in November due to 5 week reporting month. |
| | | | | | | 14564310.81 out of 15112272.58 | 45456854.22 out of 46729345.20 | 75281173.82 out of 77713350.80 | 45456854.22 out of 46729345.20 | 58946042.43 out of 60913738.56 | 75281173.82 out of 77713350.80 | | | | | |
| Safe and thriving places | STP12 | Number of (council house) dwellings vacant and ready to let at month end | | Yes (Annual LAMS return to DLUHC, no target set) | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | 8 | 3 | 6 | ↑ | Lower is better | 10 | 10 to 15 | At the end of November there were 6 properties Ready to Let. The weekly void meetings are helping to ensure that this number is kept to a minimum. |
| Safe and thriving places | STP36 | Number of voids - Kettering Area | | No | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | 69 | 63 | 54 | ↓G | Lower is better | No target - tracking indicator only | N/A | This indicator provides a snapshot at the month end of the number of live Housing Revenue Account (HRA) voids. At the end of November there was a reduction in the number of voids. The overall NNC snapshot was 111 compared with 122 at the end of October. Note: This is the number of HRA voids only and does not include non-HRA temp, acquisitions or Out of Management properties. |
| | | Number of voids - Corby Area | | No | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | 57 | 59 | 57 | ↓G | Lower is better | | | |

Adults & Housing

| Key Commitment | Ref No. | Description of Performance Indicator | Infographic / Chart | Statutory Reporting Required? (Yes / No) | Benchmark | Quarter 1 23-24 | Quarter 2 23-24 | Year to Date 2023-24 | September 2023/24 | October 2023/24 | November 2023/24 | Direction of Travel (since previous period) | Polarity | Target | Tolerance | Comments |
|--------------------------|---------|---|---------------------|---|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|---|------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| Safe and thriving places | STP37a | Average time taken to re-let NNC standard void properties | | Yes (Annual LAMS return to DLHC) | 8 weeks (56 days) House Mark | 60.9 days | 57.8 days | 54.5 days | 57.8 days | 55.1 days | 54.5 days | ↓G | Lower is better | 56 days | 56 to 60 days | From April 2023 onwards, void turnaround time is reported by standard and major properties for NNC. The figure reported is the cumulative average turnaround time for those properties let in the month. This will help remove the impact of a long-term major void when it has been empty for a long time and provide a more accurate reflection of void turnaround for standard properties. In November 2023 there were 44 standard void properties let. The total number of void days for these 44 properties was 2234 days, which provides a monthly average turnaround for November of 50.8 days. This has given a cumulative average turnaround time of 54.5 days, which is within the target for the second consecutive month. |
| Safe and thriving places | STP37b | Average time taken to re-let NNC major void properties | | No | n/a | 217 days | 248 days | 254 days | 248 days | 252 days | 254 days | ↑ | Lower is better | No target - tracking indicator only | N/A | In November 2023 there were 7 major void properties let. These 7 properties had a total number of void days of 1927. The number of void days for these properties meant there was a slight increase in the overall cumulative average void days to 254 days. Using turnaround days for major voids at the present time is not the best indicator as there is no set approach to how major voids are resourced has been agreed. Number of major voids may be a more appropriate indicator to monitor. |
| Safe and thriving places | STP08 | % of properties with a valid gas safety certificate | | Yes (Regulator of Social Housing - TSM, no target set) | n/a | 99.8% | 99.8% | n/a | 99.8% | 99.7% | 99.7% | → | Higher is better | 100% | 99.5% and above is green, 99% and above is amber | As at the end of November, 17 out of total 7,900 properties did not have a valid gas certificate. Of the 17 properties outstanding, the 8 outstanding properties in the Kettering area are going through the legal process to gain access. In the Corby area, 1 property has since been serviced. 4 properties have court dates booked for 05/12/23 and 4 properties have court dates booked for 19/12/23. |
| Safe and thriving places | STP04 | Number of active households on Keyways (as at 1st month) | | No | n/a | 5263 | 5642 | 5785 | 5642 | 5650 | 5785 | ↑ | N/A - Tracking | N/A - monitoring levels of demand | N/A | This provides a snapshot of the number of applicants active on the Council's housing Register (Keyways). New applications being received remains high (see KW2). Please note that as applications are made active, previously active applications have the status changed to pending, suspended, closed, and housed. This figure therefore is not how many applications are being assessed in total. Annual renewals are currently suspended due to staff resources. Once in place this will reduce the active total due to applicants non-contact and change of circumstances. |
| Safe and thriving places | STP05 | Number of new Keyways applications received | | No | n/a | 1850 | 1793 | 4710 | 568 | 575 | 492 | ↓ | N/A - Tracking | N/A - monitoring levels of demand | N/A | 492 new applications last month which was a decrease on the previous month. Remains high figure of new applications each month. Average for the year to date 588 (last year for same period was 503). |
| Safe and thriving places | STP39 | Number of repair jobs awaiting completion | | No | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | Data unavailable | Data unavailable | Data unavailable | | N/A - Tracking | N/A - monitoring levels of demand | N/A | On review of the data, an error in the figures has been picked up. The 2023-24 data is currently being reviewed by the team and we will begin reporting in April 2024. |
| Safe and thriving places | STP40 | Number of repair jobs awaiting completion which are outside of target timescale | | No | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | Data unavailable | Data unavailable | Data unavailable | | N/A - Tracking | N/A - monitoring levels of demand | N/A | On review of the data, an error in the figures has been picked up. The 2023-24 data is currently being reviewed by the team and we will begin reporting in April 2024. |



Corporate Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 13th February 2024

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Report Title | Forecast Draft Outturn for 2023/24 at 30th November 2023 (Period 8) |
| Report Author | Janice Gotts Executive Director of Finance and Performance Janice.gotts@northnorthants.gov.uk |

| | |
|--|---|
| Are there public sector equality duty implications? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 | |
| Which Corporate Plan priority does the report most closely align with? Our priorities for the future North Northamptonshire Council (northnorthants.gov.uk) | Choose an item. |

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Budget Forecast 2023/24 as at Period 8

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The attached report is for consideration by this Committee. It sets out the forecast outturn for 2023/24 at Period 8 and was presented to the Executive at its meeting on 18th January 2024.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. This report requests that the Committee to note and comment on the report in Appendix A as presented to the Executive Committee on 18th January 2024.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. It is recommended that the Corporate Scrutiny Committee:
 - a) Note and comment on the report attached as Appendix A.
- 3.2. Reason for Recommendations – to note the forecast outturn position as at 30th November (Period 8) for 2023/24 and consider the impact on this year and future years budgets.

4. Report Background

- 4.1. Shown in Appendix A is the forecast outturn report as presented to the Executive at its meeting on 18th January 2024. The monitoring report sets out the material financial issues identified since the 2023/24 budget was set in February 2023.
- 4.2. The forecast Outturn position for 2023/24 at 30th November 2023 (Period 8) for the General Fund is an overspend of £8.552m and an overspend of £121k for the Housing Revenue Account, the Dedicated Schools Grant is forecasting a £9.019m overspend.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1. There are no specific choices for this Committee arising from this report. The Committee is requested to scrutinise the financial position in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. Future Budget Monitoring reports will be presented to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee for them to note and comment on the Council's forecast outturn position for 2023/24.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources, Financial and Transformation

- 7.1.1. As outlined in report at Appendix A (Section 9.1).

7.2. Legal and Governance

- 7.2.1. As outlined in the report at Appendix A (Section 9.2).

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

- 7.3.1. As outlined in the report at Appendix A (Section 9.3).

7.4. Risk

7.4.1. As outlined in the report at Appendix A (Section 9.4).

7.5. Consultation

7.5.1. As outlined in the report at Appendix A (Section 9.5).

7.6. Consideration by the Executive

7.6.1. The Executive considered the Period 8 - Budget Forecast Report 2023-24 at its meeting on the 18th January 2024. The recommendations are outlined in the report at Appendix A (Section 3.1).

7.7. Equality Implications

7.7.1. None – as outlined in the report at Appendix A (Section 9.8).

7.8. Climate Impact

7.8.1. As outlined in the report at Appendix A (Section 9.9),

7.9. Community Impact

7.9.1. As outlined in the report at Appendix A (Section 9.10).

7.10. Crime and Disorder Impact

7.10.1. As outlined in the report at Appendix A (Section 9.11).

8. Background Papers

8.1. As outlined in the report at Appendix A (Section 11).

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EXECUTIVE 18th January 2024

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Report Title | Budget Forecast 2023-24 at Period 8 |
| Report Authors | Janice Gotts, Executive Director of Finance and Performance Janice.gotts@northnorthants.gov.uk |
| Lead Member | Councillor Lloyd Bunday, Executive Member for Finance and Transformation |

| | |
|--|---|
| Key Decision | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Are there public sector equality duty implications? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Applicable paragraph number for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1974 | |

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Savings Schedule

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The revenue budgets (2023/24) and Medium-Term Financial Plans for North Northamptonshire Council for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account were approved by Council at its meeting on 23rd February 2023. The purpose of this report is to set out the forecast outturn position for the Council for 2023/24 for the General Fund the Housing Revenue Account and the Dedicated Schools Grant.
- 1.2. This monitoring report sets out the material financial issues identified since the 2023/24 budget was set, based on the income and expenditure as at the end of November 2023 (Period 8) and reflects the views of the Assistant Directors and budget managers within the Directorates.
- 1.3. As part of the ongoing monitoring process, work will continue to examine income and expenditure and activity data, against the available budgets to support the position presented and help to shape the medium-term financial plan.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report provides commentary on the Council's forecast for the revenue outturn position 2023/24. This is an early indication based on information available as at Period 8 (November 2023) – the forecast position for each of the funds is as follows:
- General Fund - overspend of £8.552m - (Period 7 - £6.198m).
 - Housing Revenue Account – overspend of £121k – (Period 7 – £185k).
 - Dedicated Schools Grant is forecasting a pressure of £9.019m (Period 7 - £8.598m).
- 2.2 The forecast is based on the emerging data for 2023/24 and the Council will continue to assess and refine the position on a regular basis using the latest intelligence available. The forecast presented in this report is based on the best available data and information of the operations of the Council and represents the view of the Budget Holders and Directors.
- 2.3 In order to help safeguard the financial position of the Council, officers will continue to seek efficiencies in year to offset the forecast overspend. The Council has a contingency budget and reserves available to call on to help fund in-year pressures, however, it will look to achieve alternative mitigations in the first instance before these are applied.
- 2.4 National factors continue to be challenging and the Council, like its residents and businesses are facing inflationary pressures which impacts on the cost of services with CPI in November 2023 at 3.9%. UK interest rates were left unchanged for the third consecutive time at 5.25% following the meeting on 14th December 2023. Interest rates were already at their highest for 15 years. The Bank of England had previously raised rates for the past 14 times in a row.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Executive:
- a) Note the Council's forecast outturn position for 2023/24 as summarised in Section 4, alongside the further analysis, risks and other considerations as set out in Section 5 to Section 7 of the report.
 - b) Note the assessment of the current deliverability of the 2023/24 savings proposals in **Appendix A**.
- 3.2 Reason for Recommendations – to note the forecast financial position for 2023/24 as at Period 8 and consider the impact on this year and future years budgets.
- 3.3 Alternative Options Considered: The report focuses on the forecast revenue outturn against budget for 2023/24 and makes recommendations for the Executive to note the current budgetary position as such there are no specific choices within the report.

4. Report Background

General Fund

- 4.1 The Council's Revenue Budget for 2023/24 was set at the Council meeting on 23rd February 2023. The overall outturn forecast for the General Fund for 2023/24, as at Period 8 is a forecast overspend of £8.552m (Period 7 - £6.198m) against a budget of £339.034m. This is summarised in the Table below.

| General Fund Forecast Outturn 2023/24 | | | | |
|--|-------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Description | Net Budget | Forecast Position 31/03/24 | Forecast Variance 31/03/24 | Forecast Variance 31/03/24 |
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | % |
| Net Available Resources | 339,034 | 341,700 | (2,666) | (0.79) |
| Total Corporate Costs | 23,079 | 14,451 | (8,628) | (37.38) |
| Children & Education | 70,187 | 82,383 | 12,196 | 17.38 |
| Adults, Health, Partnerships and Housing | 126,182 | 137,062 | 10,880 | 8.62 |
| Public Health & Communities | 8,999 | 8,739 | (260) | (2.89) |
| Place & Economy | 70,436 | 68,975 | (1,461) | (2.07) |
| Enabling & Support Services | 40,151 | 38,642 | (1,509) | (3.76) |
| Total Directorate Costs | 315,955 | 335,801 | 19,846 | 6.28 |
| Total Costs | 339,034 | 350,252 | 11,218 | 3.31 |
| Net Position | 0 | 8,552 | 8,552 | 1.00 |

Note – Favourable variances are shown in brackets.

- 4.2 The forecast position at Period 8 is an overspend of £8.552m (Period 7 - £6.198m). The following table summarises the overspend.

| | Report Ref | Net Budget | P7 Forecast | Movement in Forecast | P8 Forecast | |
|--|------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------|--------------|
| | | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | % |
| Children & Education | | 70,187 | 11,725 | 471 | 12,196 | 17.38 |
| Assistant Director of Education | 5.14 | 5,793 | 1,165 | 0 | 1,165 | 20.11 |
| Commissioning & Partnerships | 5.16 | 1,114 | 178 | 0 | 178 | 15.98 |
| Northamptonshire Childrens Trust - NNC Only | 5.19 | 63,280 | 10,382 | 471 | 10,853 | 17.15 |
| Adults, Health, Partnerships & Housing | | 126,182 | 6,479 | 4,401 | 10,880 | 8.62 |
| Adult Services | 5.33 | 99,897 | 6,884 | 4,401 | 11,285 | 11.30 |
| Safeguarding and Wellbeing | 5.36 | 9,901 | 178 | 0 | 178 | 1.80 |
| Commissioning & Performance | 5.38 | 13,677 | (983) | 0 | (983) | 0.00 |
| Strategic Housing, Development and Property Services | 5.40 | 2,707 | 400 | 0 | 400 | 14.78 |
| Public Health & Communities | | 8,999 | (260) | 0 | (260) | 0.00 |
| Public Health | 5.43 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Communities & Leisure | 5.46 | 8,999 | (260) | 0 | (260) | 0.00 |
| Place & Economy | | 70,436 | (1,509) | 48 | (1,461) | 0.00 |
| Assets & Environment | 5.49 | 4,050 | (1,080) | 1 | (1,079) | 0.00 |
| Growth and Regeneration | 5.51 | 4,602 | 114 | 0 | 114 | 2.48 |
| Highways & Waste | 5.53 | 57,882 | (315) | 47 | (268) | 0.00 |
| Regulatory Services | 5.55 | 3,237 | (294) | 0 | (294) | 0.00 |
| Directorate Management | 5.57 | 665 | 66 | 0 | 66 | 9.92 |
| Enabling & Support Services | | 40,151 | (1,314) | (195) | (1,509) | 0.00 |
| Finance & Performance | 5.58 | 16,967 | (1,343) | (75) | (1,418) | 0.00 |
| Chief Executive's Office | 5.60 | 1,366 | (378) | (76) | (454) | 0.00 |
| Chief Information Officer | 5.62 | 10,405 | 298 | 0 | 298 | 2.86 |
| Human Resources | 5.64 | 3,932 | (50) | 0 | (50) | 0.00 |
| Legal & Democratic Services | 5.66 | 5,251 | 300 | 0 | 300 | 5.71 |
| Customer Services | 5.68 | 2,230 | (141) | (44) | (185) | 0.00 |
| Available Resources | 4.50 | 0 | (2,666) | 0 | (2,666) | 0.00 |
| Corporate Costs | 5.2 | 23,079 | (6,257) | (2,371) | (8,628) | 0.00 |
| Total | | 339,034 | 6,198 | 2,354 | 8,552 | 2.52 |

Note – Favourable variances are shown in brackets.

- 4.3 The net budget was increased by £482k from £336.590m in Period 2 to £337.072m in Period 3. This reflects the use of the Climate Change reserve to support the development and operation of climate change projects and initiatives which was approved by the Executive at the meeting on 12th July 2023.

- 4.4 The net budget was increased in Period 6 by £1.962m from £337.032m to £339.034m. This reflects the use of the Transformation Reserve to fund the Education Case Management System (£1,362m) and the Development and Regulatory Case Management System (£600k).
- 4.5 It is estimated that Business Rates income for 2023/24 is £2.666m above the original budget, this was reflected in the Period 7 monitoring and is unchanged in Period 8 and results in the resources line increasing from £339.034m to £341.700m.

Housing Revenue Account

- 4.6 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.
- 4.7 Within North Northamptonshire prior to 1st April 2021 there were two HRA accounts, covering the sovereign Councils of Kettering and Corby respectively. As part of the move to a single unitary council for North Northamptonshire, there was a statutory requirement to create a single HRA for the area. Whilst North Northamptonshire Council must only operate one HRA it will, for a period of time, operate two separate Neighbourhood Accounts, these being:
- the Corby Neighbourhood Account - responsible for the stock that was managed by Corby Borough Council and
 - the Kettering Neighbourhood Account - responsible for the stock that was managed by Kettering Borough Council.
- 4.8 The Council's overall outturn forecast for the Housing Revenue Account as at Period 8, is a forecast overspend of £121k (Period 7 - £185k overspend) against the approved budget of £38.752m. This is summarised in the table below and further details are set out in Section 6. It is important to note that this is subject to continual review.

| Housing Revenue Account Forecast Outturn 2023/24 | | | | |
|--|---------------|-----------------|----------|---|
| Directorate | Budget | | | P8 Forecast Variance at 31/03/24 £'000 |
| | Expenditure | Income | Net | |
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | |
| Corby Neighbourhood Account | 21,481 | (21,481) | 0 | (158) |
| Kettering Neighbourhood Account | 17,271 | (17,271) | 0 | 279 |
| Net Position 2023/24 (under)/over | 38,752 | (38,752) | 0 | 121 |

Dedicated Schools Grant

- 4.9 The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is a ringfenced grant allocated to Local Authorities by the government to support a range of education related services.

- 4.10 The Council's overall outturn forecast for the DSG as at Period 8, is a forecast pressure of £9.019m (Period 7 - £8.598m) the Net Spend is forecast to be £129.682m against the approved budget of £120.663m. 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.

| Dedicated Schools Grants Forecast Outturn 2023/24 | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Block | Gross Budget | July DSG Allocation Adjustment | Revised Budget | Recoupment | Net Budget | Forecast Net Spend | Variance |
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| Schools Block | 270,284 | 0 | 270,284 | 222,910 | 47,374 | 47,374 | 0 |
| Central Schools Block | 3,287 | 0 | 3,287 | 0 | 3,287 | 3,287 | 0 |
| High Needs Block | 57,851 | 74 | 57,925 | 11,082 | 46,843 | 55,862 | 9,019 |
| Early Year Block | 23,541 | (382) | 23,159 | 0 | 23,159 | 23,159 | 0 |
| Total | 354,963 | (308) | 354,655 | 233,992 | 120,663 | 129,682 | 9,019 |

National Context

- 4.11 The national, and indeed the global, economy continues to see significant inflationary pressures, with energy prices pushed to record levels, which in turn has contributed to high inflation. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Bank of England has taken action to get inflation under control; this in part has resulted in higher interest rates.
- 4.12 The Bank of England kept the Base Rate unchanged at 5.25% on 14th December 2023. There had previously been fourteen consecutive increases since December 2021 and the rate is at its highest level for 15 years (February 2008 – 5.25%).
- 4.13 The inflation figures for November 2023 are lower than in October 2023 the 12-month CPI figure for November is 3.9% (October 4.6%) and the 12-month RPI figure for November is 5.3% (October 6.1%).
- 4.14 Councils like most organisations have experienced the impact of significant price rises, particularly around fuel and energy costs (for example, the street lighting PFI). A number of services are provided under contract, and the Authority is experiencing some pressure from suppliers regarding current arrangements and any new contracts entered in to. As part of the budget setting for 2023/24, the Council included growth to address forecast inflationary increases in light of the position known at the time.
- 4.15 Further risk to Local Government funding comes from the high street as individuals have less disposable income and businesses face higher energy and supply costs. This poses a risk for the Council's future income generation from business rates should businesses cease to trade. It may also see more people seeking to access Council Tax Support and other financial support which could reduce the overall Council Tax yield. The continued increases in interest rates also have an impact on the number of new homes that are being occupied which can also have an adverse impact on the Council Tax yield.

- 4.16 Alongside this there is a recognition that the demand for services may increase which will need to be taken into account as part of financial and service planning.
- 4.17 The context of the national and global economy along with potential changes to the local government financial landscape in the future through reforms are key considerations for the Council.

5. Overview of Forecast Position 2023/24

Available Resources and Corporate Costs

- 5.1 The Council is responsible for the collection of local taxes (Council Tax and Business Rates). At the end of November 2023 75.30% of Council Tax had been collected (November 2022 – 75.81%). Business Rates collection was 75.32% at the end of November 2023 (November 2022 – 75.44%).

Corporate Resources

- 5.2 The total net budget for Corporate Resources is £23.079m. The composition of the budget together with the forecast variances are shown in the following Table.

| Description | Net Budget | P8 Forecast Variance | |
|---------------------------------|---------------|----------------------|----------------|
| | | £'000 | % |
| | £'000 | £'000 | % |
| Corporate Contingency | 1,524 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) | 7,970 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Pay Contingency | 1,406 | (1,406) | (100.00) |
| Pay and Grading Review | 2,479 | (2,066) | (83.34) |
| Treasury | 8,830 | (5,156) | (58.39) |
| Bad Debts Provision | 870 | 0 | 0.00 |
| | | | |
| Total | 23,079 | (8,628) | (37.38) |

- 5.3 The Council's Corporate Contingency Budget for 2023/24 was £3.746m, which represents around 1% of the net budget. The contingency budget is held to meet unknown or unplanned / unbudgeted costs. The recent pay award has resulted in a pressure of £2.222m this has been funded from the Contingency Budget leaving a balance of £1.524m. At this stage the Contingency Budget is currently assumed to be used in full during the year and this will include inflationary and demand pressures.
- 5.4 The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) reflects the minimum amount a Council must charge to the revenue budget each year to set aside a provision for repaying borrowing. This has been calculated as £7.970m which was an increase of £1.538m from 2022/23 and ensures that the provision is aligned to the MRP policy moving into the medium term.
- 5.5 The Council had set aside £5.708m in 2023-24 as a Pay Contingency to allow for annual increments and potential pay changes of 4%, as detailed at Section 5.3 the additional pressure from the payaward of £2.222m will be funded

through the Corporate Contingency Budget. This budget has been allocated to services in Period 8 to meet the increase costs. The annual increments have been charged across the authority and the cost of this has been absorbed through existing budgets, resulting in a saving within the overall Pay Contingency of £1.406m.

- 5.6 Additionally, a pressure of £2.479m was included in the 2023-24 budget, which reflected the initial costings for the implementation of the Pay and Grading review for staff recruited to interim contracts with North Northamptonshire Council, which is predominantly staff that have been appointed since 1st April 2021. Other staff transferred across to the new unitary authority on their existing terms and conditions through TUPE arrangements. The proposals for the new pay and grading structure are yet to be agreed, however the budget reflected the cost for a full year. It is now anticipated that this would not be implemented until February 2024, savings of £2.066m have been reflected in the Period 8 monitoring which is equivalent the costs over a 10-month period.
- 5.7 The net Treasury Management Budget for 2023/24 is £8.830m. The composition of the budget and the forecast outturn is as follows:

| Description | Net Budget | P7 Forecast Variance |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| Investment Income | (3,173) | (5,810) |
| Borrowing Costs | 11,273 | 0 |
| Other Treasury Management costs | 730 | 654 |
| Total | 8,830 | (5,156) |

- 5.8 The movement for investment income reflects the increase in the Bank of England base rate on future investments and is based on an average cash balance of £175.6m at a weighted average rate of 5.04% for a full year. This offsets the additional pressure of £654k, relating to increased bank charges of £232k, unrealised internal interest income of £267k and recovery of debt management expenses of £155k.
- 5.9 If interest rates remain high over the longer term this will also create risk in relation to acquiring new loans to finance future capital programmes. The current PWLB rate for borrowing over a 30-year period is around 5.50%, for every £1m borrowed this would be an additional interest payable of £55,000.
- 5.10 There continues to be risks around the overall cash and loan position for North Northamptonshire, not only from a volatile marketplace, but also due to the outstanding legacy audits for 2020/21 and the disaggregation of the opening position from Northamptonshire County Council. Any changes in these risks and balances will be reflected in future forecasts.
- 5.11 The bad debt provision for 2023/24 amounts to £870k – the bad debts position is based on the age of the debt which reflects the risks associated with the collection of the debt and is forecast to be delivered on budget.

Directorate Budgets

- 5.12 This section of the report provides an analysis of the forecast variations against the 2023/24 General Fund for each of the Directorates as set out in the table at paragraph 4.2.

Children's Services Directorate

- 5.13 The budget for Children's and Education Services includes the Commissioning and Partnerships including Northamptonshire Children's Trust and Education Services not funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

Assistant Director of Education

- 5.14 The **Assistant Director of Education** is responsible for all learning, pupil attainment and achievement and school improvement functions. The forecast outturn position for the **Assistant Director of Education** is set out in the following table (Period 7 - £1.165m).

| Assistant Director of Education | £'000 |
|--|--------------|
| Expenditure | 10,156 |
| Income | (4,363) |
| Net Budget | 5,793 |
| Forecast | 6,958 |
| Variance | 1,165 |

- 5.15 The forecast variance relating to the **Assistant Director of Education** is set out in the following Table and explanations for the variances are provided in the table below.

| Ref | Description | Budget | Forecast Variance | |
|-----|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|
| | | | £'000 | % |
| | | £'000 | £'000 | |
| 1 | Employees | 8,569 | 1,548 | 18.07 |
| 2 | Supplies and Services | 1,259 | (196) | (15.57) |
| 3 | Income | (4,363) | (299) | 6.85 |
| 4 | Other budgets | 328 | 112 | 34.15 |
| | | | | |
| | Total | 5,793 | 1,165 | 20.11 |

- 1) The budget pressure within Education Services predominantly relates to staffing costs. The Education Health and Care (EHC) service is continuing to rely heavily on interim workers to fulfil its statutory obligations. This is due to an increasing level of need, a high number of vacancies, and backlog of historic assessments. The service has started to gradually phase out the existing agency staff from July 2023. The service is making effort to fill all the vacant posts before the financial year-end. Also, the initiative to upskill the existing staff remains the service's priority in ensuring the future needs of children, young people and their families can be met. Whilst there are service areas with substantial amount of savings on salaries, particularly Educational Entitlement (£99k), Governance (£177k), Specialist Support (£340k), the

salary budget forecast pressure in EHC (£1.591m), Strategic Planning (£522k) and other service areas (£51k) results in a net pressure of £1.548m.

- 2) The forecast underspend for supplies and services of £196k relates to the reduced forecast spend on professional fees and hired services (£113k) and external legal fees (£53k) in Strategic Planning and Education Health Care service areas, respectively. In addition, there are other net minor savings of £30k. The Strategic Planning is one of the service areas contributing to the significant forecast overspend of £1.548m on salaries. As such, the forecast underspend of £113k will be used to partly mitigate the service's salary budget pressure.
- 3) Income has a forecast net benefit of £299k of which £338k relates to Teachers' Pension. The budget was set at £468k, while the forecast DSG contribution is £806k. Also, the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering grant has now ceased, leaving the service with a pressure of £227k. Additionally, the EHC team is benefiting from the use of the residual Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) of £220k. The funding will partly mitigate the staffing pressure associated with support to the most vulnerable Children and Young People. There are other net minor pressures of £32k across the services.
- 4) In respect of the other budget areas, there is a pressure of £112k. There has been an increase in the spend against Educational Psychologist Trainees and the service is anticipating an increased bursaries payment to the respective cohort, resulting in a pressure of £45k. There are other net pressures of £67k, of which £84k relates to internal contributions and recharges that are not practically chargeable since the disaggregation of the budget between the North and the West.

Assistant Director Commissioning and Partnerships

5.16 The **Assistant Director of Commissioning and Partnerships** leads the commissioning functions for Children's Services across North Northamptonshire and the contract management of the Northamptonshire Children's Trust and the commissioning of education services. The Children's and Education Services remaining with the Council includes the Intelligent Client Function (ICF) for the Northamptonshire Children's Trust and the Local Authority statutory education functions as follows:

- Education Inclusion
- Education Psychology
- Support for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- School Improvement
- Virtual Schools (lead in the North Northamptonshire Unitary Authority)
- School admissions and school place planning
- Early Education and Childcare

5.17 The forecast outturn position for the **Assistant Director of Commissioning and Partnerships** (excluding the Children's Trust) is set out in the following Table (Period 7 - £178k)

5.20 The forecast variance relating to the **Northamptonshire Children’s Trust** is set out in following Table and explanations for the variances are provided below the Table.

| Ref | Description | Budget | Forecast Variance | |
|-----|----------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------|
| | | | £'000 | % |
| | | £'000 | £'000 | |
| 1 | Third Party Payments | 67,645 | 10,853 | 16.04 |
| 2 | Income | (4,365) | 0 | 0.00 |
| | | | | |
| | Total | 63,280 | 10,853 | 17.15 |

5.21 The Northamptonshire Children’s Trust delivers children’s social care and targeted early help on behalf of North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council. The Councils set the strategic outcomes and priorities and the Trust is responsible for delivering those outcomes. Services provided by the Trust include:

- Targeted early help services to children and families.
- Front door and safeguarding services
- Support and placements for Children in Care
- Support and placements for Disabled Children
- In house fostering and residential provision
- Commissioning of external placements and contracts
- Commissioned legal services and transport for children in care.

5.22 The total contract value for the Children’s Trust is £150.938m. The Councils share of this is £66.654m this reflects how the contract sum is split between North Northamptonshire Council (44.16%) and West Northamptonshire Council (55.84%).

5.23 The Children’s Trust are forecasting an overspend of £24.577m – this is an increase of £1.068m to that previously reported to the Executive where the forecast pressure was £23.509m. The cost to the Council based on an overspend of £24.577m is £10.853m. If these pressures are not mitigated this will pose a significant financial risk to the Council. The Trust are looking at potential mitigations, however there is a risk that this position could worsen before year end. A key risk is the delivery of the efficiency savings of £7.672m which formed part of the contract sum. At present, the Trust is forecasting that £3.017m of these savings are at risk of non-delivery, this could increase the overall pressure from £24.577m to £27.594m. The following table summarises the contract sum and the forecast variances (excluding the risk on savings).

| Description | Contract Sum | Forecast Variance Period 7 | Movement | Forecast Variance Period 8 | |
|----------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | % |
| Staffing | 49,732 | 2,826 | 313 | 3,139 | 6.31 |
| Other non staffing costs | 358 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Placements | 66,286 | 20,199 | 753 | 20,952 | 31.61 |
| Contracts | 5,001 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Children's Homes | 3,767 | 212 | 2 | 214 | 5.68 |
| Legal | 4,788 | 511 | 0 | 511 | 10.67 |
| Adoption | 7,776 | (79) | 0 | (79) | (1.02) |
| Transport | 2,870 | 173 | 0 | 173 | 6.03 |
| Other care | 5,889 | (88) | 0 | (88) | (1.49) |
| NCT Central - Other budget | (762) | (245) | 0 | (245) | 32.15 |
| Support Services / SLA | 5,233 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Total | 150,938 | 23,509 | 1,068 | 24,577 | 16.28 |

5.24 The main pressure within the Children's Trust relates to placements for children in care – this amounts to £20.952m and is an adverse movement of £753k to the pressure of £20.199m reported in Period 7. The market and availability of placements remains challenging. The placements budget will continue to remain under pressure as it remains extremely volatile both locally and nationally. The Trust is working on how these pressures can be mitigated this year and how this can be reduced in future years. The following table provides further detail around the pressures from placements.

| Description | Contract Sum | Forecast Variance Period 7 | Movement | Forecast Variance Period 8 | |
|-------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | % |
| In House Fostering | 8,532 | 51 | (188) | (137) | (1.61) |
| Agecny Fostering | 16,895 | 1,919 | 97 | 2,016 | 11.93 |
| Independent Residential | 31,087 | 7,267 | 12 | 7,279 | 23.41 |
| Supported Accommodation | 3,400 | 10,439 | 364 | 10,803 | 317.74 |
| 18+ Agency Placements | 4,400 | 307 | 219 | 526 | 11.95 |
| Welfare Secure | 339 | (211) | 0 | (211) | (62.24) |
| Parent & Baby | 910 | 685 | 245 | 930 | 102.20 |
| UASC | 6,918 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 0.06 |
| Remand Secure | 300 | 185 | 0 | 185 | 61.67 |
| Income | (6,495) | (443) | 0 | (443) | 6.82 |
| Total | 66,286 | 20,199 | 753 | 20,952 | 31.61 |

5.25 The contract sum included a pay provision of 4%, this was in line with the provision that both North and West Northamptonshire Council included in their budgets. NCT are not aligned to national pay negotiations and a proposed offer aligned to West Northamptonshire Council would require additional funding of

£1.007m a formal offer has been accepted by the Unions and this is reflected in the outturn. The forecast outturn also reflects a pressure of £1.087m for managed teams. A change control request to increase the contract sum by £2.094m has been made. In addition, there are further staff related pressures of £1.045m.

- 5.26 The legal services budget remains a challenge with increasing demand and additional inflationary costs in this area. The budget forecast is a projected overspend of £511k this is unchanged to Period 7.
- 5.27 There are also pressures on transport costs of £173k, this is unchanged from Period 7 and is as a result of inflationary pressures above the net contract sum of £2.870m. There is a risk that the inflation on transport costs could be above current levels. There are further minor savings which amount to £198k.
- 5.28 As part of the contract negotiations, it was agreed an amount of £2.243m was included for one off investments – the Council's share of this was £991k – it is currently forecast that this will be delivered within budget.
- 5.29 The Children's Trust Budget is monitored in year through regular meetings between officers of both North and West Northamptonshire Councils and the Trust.

Adults, Health Partnerships and Housing

- 5.30 The revenue budget within this section covers Adult Social Services, Health Partnerships and Housing (excluding the HRA).
- 5.31 Under the 2014 Care Act, local authority Adults Services have a responsibility to make sure that people aged over 18 years who live in their areas are provided with personal day to day care (helping people get dressed, washed, going to the bathroom, eating etc) where they cannot do things for themselves or access family support. The service also provides other physical or psychological support to people with disabilities in order to help them live a full life. The overriding responsibility is to keep people safe and protect them from harm or neglect.
- 5.32 Care can take many forms and can be provided directly by the Council, through contracted organisations or families can receive a personal budget to buy suitable care for themselves. Although receiving formal or long-term care is subject to people meeting the Council's eligibility criteria, the service also has a key responsibility for helping people to stay independent and preventing or delaying the need for care.

Assistant Director of Adult Services

- 5.33 The **Assistant Director of Adult Services** is responsible for the strategic planning, engagement, operational and statutory delivery of Adult Social Care This includes the independent care budgets for all people aged over 18 and the social care and reablement teams. The forecast outturn position for the **Assistant Director of Adult Services** is set out in the following table (Period 7 £6.884 m overspend).

| Assistant Director of Adult Services | £'000 |
|---|---------------|
| Expenditure | 119,334 |
| Income | (19,437) |
| Net Budget | 99,897 |
| Forecast | 111,182 |
| Variance | 11,285 |

5.34 The forecast outturn relating to the **Assistant Director of Adult Services** is set out in the following table. The overspend assumes most savings detailed in Appendix A are achieved in year. However, £617k of the savings for the increase of the utilisation of Shaw PPP beds for Discharge to Assess is assumed to be at risk of delivery. These savings will continue to be tracked, and any further impact of the achievability will form part of future reports.

| Ref | Description | Budget | Forecast Variance | |
|-----|----------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------|
| | | | £'000 | % |
| | | £'000 | £'000 | |
| 1 | Employees | 9,195 | 289 | 3.14 |
| 2 | Third Party payments | 95,277 | 11,546 | 12.12 |
| 3 | Transfer Payments | 14,258 | 0 | 0.00 |
| 4 | Income | (19,437) | (550) | 2.83 |
| 5 | Other budgets | 604 | 0 | 0.00 |
| | Total | 99,897 | 11,285 | 11.30 |

- 1) The employee related costs are currently forecasting an overspend of £289k this is as a result of agency staff owing to the number of vacancies.
- 2) The main areas of spend in relation to Third Party Payments are in respect of independent care spend including Residential and nursing care for both 65+ year old and the 18-64 years old clients. The service is seeing a significant increase in service demand including more people and, in some areas, higher costs. Client numbers have increased since April 2022 by 25% in the 65+ cohort and 15% in the 18-64 cohort with similar costs to existing cohorts. Previously there had been 14 years of stable demand in the 65+ cohort so this level of increase is unprecedented.

During 2022-23 the council received an additional £6m of one-off funding which mitigated the pressures of this increased demand for part of the year, with similar allocations for 2023-24 being expected to meet need for the full year. There are currently no indications that there will be further grant funding that will offset this growth.

Whilst Thackley Green transferred on 1st July 2023, it is still in the transition stage and not yet at full capacity. This will result in some double running costs in the short term but will generate savings through demand management, promoting independence and delivering reablement programmes at a greater scale in future years.

In September 2023, increased spend controls were introduced within adult social care aiming to mitigate against the increased demand, however it is

prudent to highlight a continued negative movement in the forecast as a result of this increased demand. It is important to note that whilst an additional £4.401m risk is being forecast at Period 8 compared to Period 7, the financial risk is higher; however, this is after mitigations have been applied across the directorate, these mitigations and interventions will be closely monitored. Transformation resources within the directorate have also been redirected in order to prioritise additional demand and cost management activity.

- 3) The transfer payments relate to direct payments these costs are currently forecast to be delivered on budget.
- 4) The main areas of income include client contributions to care costs. This is forecast that an additional £350k is received.
- 5) The main area of spend shown as Other include other support costs this is forecasted to be delivered on budget.

5.35 Due to the volatile nature of the Adults Social Care budget, there may be further emerging risks whilst we progress through the financial year. This may include an unexpected increase in demand during the winter period, e.g., an increase in flu and other respiratory diseases, unexpected provider failures, additional pressures from acute hospitals, changes in caseload and adverse weather. Mitigations would be sought to manage these pressures including, in exceptional circumstances, the use of reserves. This is an area the Council will continue to monitor closely.

Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Wellbeing

5.36 The **Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Wellbeing** is responsible for the strategic planning, engagement, operational and statutory delivery of key services for Adult Social Care. This includes ensuring services, practice and standards meet statutory requirements and that all professionals work together to deliver Making Safeguarding Personal to promote and secure the safety of local residents. The forecast outturn position for the **Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Wellbeing** is set out in the following table (Period 7 – overspend £178k).

| Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Wellbeing | £'000 |
|---|--------------|
| Expenditure | 10,895 |
| Income | (994) |
| Net Budget | 9,901 |
| Forecast | 10,079 |
| Variance | 178 |

5.37 The forecast outturn relating to the **Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Wellbeing** is set out in the following table and explanations for the variances are provided below the Table.

| Ref | Description | Budget £'000 | Forecast Variance | |
|-----|-----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------|
| | | | £'000 | % |
| 1 | Employees | 9,700 | 178 | 1.84 |
| 2 | Premises | 382 | 0 | 0.00 |
| 3 | Transport | 324 | 0 | 0.00 |
| 4 | Supplies and Services | 489 | 0 | 0.00 |
| 5 | Income | (994) | 0 | 0.00 |
| | Total | 9,901 | 178 | 1.80 |

- 1) The employee related costs are currently forecast to be overspent by £178k this is as a result of agency staff owing to the number of vacancies.
- 2) The premises costs include costs associated with the running of the internal provider services. These are forecast to be delivered on budget.
- 3) The transport costs include £203k for leased cars and other travel costs associated with running the internal care provision. These are forecast to be delivered on budget.
- 4) The supplies and services include £150k of professional fees for the DOLS service and £155k for non-staffing expenses across the internal care provision. These are forecast to be delivered on budget.
- 5) The main income sources are from client contributions towards their care. These are forecast to be delivered on budget.

Assistant Director of Commissioning and Performance

- 5.38 The **Assistant Director of Commissioning and Performance** is responsible for ensuring services, practice and standards meet statutory requirements and includes the commissioning and monitoring of Adults Social Care external contract. The forecast outturn position for the **Assistant Director of Commissioning and Performance** is set out in the following table (Period 7-£983k underspend).

| Assistant Director of Commissioning and Performance | £'000 |
|--|---------------|
| Expenditure | 24,243 |
| Income | (10,566) |
| Net Budget | 13,677 |
| Forecast | 12,694 |
| Variance | (983) |

- 5.39 The forecast variance relating to the **Assistant Director Commissioning and Performance** is set out in following table and explanations for the variances are provided below the Table.

5.41 The forecast outturn relating to the Assistant Director **Strategic Housing, Development and Property Services** is set out in the following table. The forecast at Period 6 assumes that the service will be delivered on budget and that any savings detailed in **Appendix A** are achieved in year. Savings will continue to be tracked and changes to the deliverability will form part of future reports.

| Ref | Description | Budget | Forecast Variance | |
|-----|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|
| | | | £'000 | % |
| 1 | Employees | 2,275 | 200 | 8.79 |
| 2 | Premises | 203 | 0 | 0.00 |
| 3 | Supplies and Services | 3,451 | 200 | 5.80 |
| 4 | Third Party Payments | 501 | 0 | 0.00 |
| 5 | Other | 33 | 0 | 0.00 |
| 6 | Income | (3,756) | 0 | 0.00 |
| | | | | |
| | Total | 2,707 | 400 | 14.78 |

- 1) The employee related costs are currently forecasting an overspend of £200k in relation to the homelessness service, this is as a result of additional agency costs.
- 2) The main area of spend in relation to premises include cost associated with temporary accommodation £141k. This is forecast to be delivered on budget.
- 3) The main areas of spend relate to temporary accommodation within the homelessness service. This is forecast to be overspent by £200k this is due to the increase in demand in the homelessness service.
- 4) The third-party payments include payments to private and independent contractors This is forecast to be delivered on budget.
- 5) Other costs include other minor costs. This is forecast to be delivered on budget.
- 6) Income is mainly made up of grants this includes the Homelessness Prevention grant (£1.019m), the Rough Sleepers Initiative (£926k) and other homelessness grants (£565k). In addition, there is income from property rents of £1.076m. The income is forecast to be delivered on budget.

5.42 All services across Adults, Health Partnerships and Housing undertake regular budget monitoring, track fluctuations in spend, and work to identify additional efficiencies and savings to either mitigate forecasted overspends within the directorate or to contribute to the overall corporate position in year of the Council. Ongoing work continues to identify any further efficiencies, savings or income that can be identified to improve the overall position in-year, to set budgets for the following year, and in contributing to the medium-term financial strategy.

Public Health and Communities

- 5.43 The **Director of Public Health and Wellbeing** is a statutory officer and the principal adviser on all health matters to elected members, officers, and partners, with a leadership role spanning health improvement, health protection and healthcare public health. This includes delivering core public health services in line with grant funding and statutory requirements.
- 5.44 The grant is ringfenced and any variances will result in a movement to or from reserves ensuring that all grant conditions are met.

| Director of Public Health and Wellbeing | £'000 |
|--|--------------|
| Expenditure | 26,312 |
| Income | (26,312) |
| Net Budget | (0) |
| Forecast | (0) |
| Variance | 0 |

- 5.45 The forecast outturn relating to the **Director of Public Health and Wellbeing** is set out in following Table.

| Description | Budget | Forecast Variance | |
|----------------------|---------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| | | £'000 | % |
| | £'000 | £'000 | % |
| Employees | 4,891 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Supplies & Services | 6,808 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Support Costs | 1,240 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Third Party Payments | 7,620 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Transfer Payments | 5,635 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Income | (26,312) | 0 | 0.00 |
| Other | 118 | 0 | 0.00 |
| | | | |
| Total | 0 | 0 | 0.00 |

Assistant Director Communities and Leisure

- 5.46 The **Assistant Director Communities and Leisure** includes libraries, cultural facilities (such as museums, theatres, art galleries and heritage sites), sports and leisure facilities (such as swimming pools, tennis courts, golf, playing pitches, indoor courts/sports halls etc), archaeological archiving and activities and access to parks and open spaces for play and recreation. The Service is also responsible for community grants as well as providing education and outreach services and advice and support, encouraging physical and mental wellbeing of residents through sport and leisure-based activities. The forecast outturn position for the **Assistant Director Communities and Leisure** is set out in the following Table (Period 7 - £260k)

| Assistant Director Communities and Leisure | £'000 |
|---|--------------|
| Expenditure | 17,944 |
| Income | (8,945) |
| Net Budget | 8,999 |
| Forecast | 8,739 |
| Variance | (260) |

5.47 The forecast outturn relating to the **Assistant Director of Communities and Leisure** is set out in following table and explanations for the variances are provided in the paragraphs that follow.

| Ref | Description | Budget | Forecast Variance | |
|-----|----------------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------|
| | | | £'000 | % |
| | | | | |
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | % |
| 1 | Employees | 7,661 | 0 | 0.00 |
| 2 | Premises | 3,034 | 0 | 0.00 |
| 3 | Supplies & Services | 4,106 | 140 | 3.41 |
| 4 | Third Party Payments | 3,699 | 0 | 0.00 |
| 5 | Income | (8,945) | (400) | 4.47 |
| 6 | Other | (556) | 0 | 0.00 |
| | | | | |
| | Total | 8,999 | (260) | 0.00 |

- 1) The employee related costs are currently forecast to be delivered on budget.
- 2) The premises related costs are currently forecast to be delivered on budget.
- 3) The supplies and services costs are currently forecasting a pressure of £140k this is due to contractual increases. The service is continuing to look at how these costs can be mitigated.
- 4) The third-party payments are mainly made up of £2.893m for payments for the Ukraine resettlement programme these are currently forecast to be delivered on budget.
- 5) The main areas of income include £5.041m of grant income and £2.66m relating to fees and charges. The income is forecast to be £400k greater than budget and is a result of changes in VAT.
- 6) Other costs are forecast to be delivered on budget.

Place and Economy Directorate

5.48 The Place and Economy budget covers the following four functional areas plus Management Costs:

- Assets and Environment
- Growth and Regeneration
- Highways and Waste

- Regulatory Services

Assistant Director Assets and Environment

5.49 The **Assistant Director Assets and Environment**, includes Facilities Management, Property Estate Management, Energy and Fleet Management, Grounds Maintenance, Parks and Open Spaces and On and Off-street parking enforcement. It also includes Asset and Capital Management of the Council's corporate assets and capital programmes, together with the effective management of the Council's strategic assets and landholdings. Key income and cost drivers include parking income, number of visitors to country parks and open space, demand for commercial rental spaces, use of corporate workspaces and use of energy. The forecast outturn position for the **Assistant Director of Assets and Environment** is set out in the following table (Period 7 - £1.080m).

| Assistant Director Assets and Environment | £'000 |
|--|----------------|
| Expenditure | 25,160 |
| Income | (21,110) |
| Net Budget | 4,050 |
| Forecast | 2,971 |
| Variance | (1,079) |

5.50 The forecast variance relating to the **Assistant Director Assets and Environment** is set out in following Table and explanations for the variances are provided below the Table.

| Ref | Description | Budget | Forecast Variance | |
|----------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------|----------------|
| | | | £'000 | % |
| | | £'000 | £'000 | % |
| 1 | Employees | 10,242 | (622) | (6.07) |
| 2 | Premises | 9,246 | 166 | 1.80 |
| 3 | Transport | 4,591 | (195) | (4.25) |
| 4 | Supplies and Services | 1,566 | 28 | 1.79 |
| 5 | Third Party Payments | 1,024 | 69 | 6.74 |
| 6 | Income | (21,110) | (479) | 2.27 |
| 7 | Other | (1,508) | (46) | 3.05 |
| | Total | 4,050 | (1,079) | (26.64) |

- 1) The underspend of £622k (6.07%) against Employees relates to staff underspends from vacant posts due to ongoing work on restructures. Work is underway to recruit to posts through the restructure during 2023/24.
- 2) The main areas of spend within Premises are Business Rates (£1.592m), Utilities (£3.392m), Building Repairs and Maintenance (£1.718m), Rents and Service Charges (£856k), Building cleaning (£538k) and other premises costs of £1.150m.

There is a pressure of £401k relating to outstanding liabilities for business rates (£283k), cleaning costs (£42k), Water charges (£29k) and further minor net pressures which amount to £47k. This is offset by a saving of £177k on utility costs across the service. There is also a £58k underspend on Repairs and Maintenance based on the current programme of works and the realignment of budgets to support repairs required across the portfolio.

- 3) The main areas of spend within Transport relates to Vehicle leasing (£3.047m), Fuel (£1.245m) and other transport costs (£299k).

There is an overall saving of £195k (4.26%) based on the current cost of fuel being lower than anticipated and reflects the reduction in the cost of fuel.

- 4) There is an overall pressure of £28k (1.79%) on Supplies and Services. £63k (23% of the £268k Equipment and Tools Budget) which relates to the maintenance of play equipment. Other minor savings amount to £35k.

- 5) There is an overall pressure of £69k (6.79%) within Third Party Payments of which £46k relates to a Private Contractor for Ash dieback trees works. Other minor pressures amount to £23k.

- 6) The main income sources are Rent and Leases (£16.453m), Parking Income (£2.192m) and various other forms of income amounting to £2.464m.

There is a pressure of £86k relating to external income that the Council had budgeted to receive to fund posts for projects such as Corby Town Funds. This pressure is offset by additional grant funding received for tree maintenance within Environment Services of £116k (51% of £226k Grants budget). There is also additional income from rent reviews (£449k).

- 7) Other minor net pressures amount to £46k.

Assistant Director Growth and Regeneration

- 5.51 The **Assistant Director Growth and Regeneration** includes Planning Services, Economic Development, Growth and Infrastructure, Regeneration, Digital Infrastructure, Climate Change and Flood and Water Management. Key income/costs drivers include local demand and volume of applications for the Planning service, including major development fees, availability of Planning resources e.g., planning professionals and demand for economic activities. The forecast outturn position for the **Assistant Director of Growth and Regeneration** is set out in the following Table (Period 7 - £114k).

| Assistant Director Growth and Regeneration | £'000 |
|---|--------------|
| Expenditure | 10,103 |
| Income | (5,501) |
| Net Budget | 4,602 |
| Forecast | 4,716 |
| Variance | 114 |

5.52 The forecast variance relating to the **Assistant Director Growth & Regeneration** is set out in following Table. Explanations for the variances are provided below the Table.

| Ref | Description | Budget | Forecast Variance | |
|-----|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------|
| | | £'000 | £'000 | % |
| 1 | Employees | 6,329 | 95 | 1.50 |
| 2 | Supplies and Services | 3,668 | 282 | 7.69 |
| 3 | Income | (5,501) | (200) | 3.64 |
| 4 | Other | 106 | (63) | (59.43) |
| | Total | 4,602 | 114 | 2.48 |

- 1) There is a pressure of £95k (1.57%) within Employees which relates to agency costs to cover vacant posts, which are predominantly covering vacancies due to the restructure of the service and challenges with recruiting hard to fill posts, particularly in the Planning Service. Work is underway to recruit to these posts following the restructure in 2023/24.
- 2) There is a pressure of £282k within Supplies and Services. This variance relates to professional and legal fees associated with appeals and judicial reviews within Planning Management and Enforcement.
- 3) The main income sources are Planning Income (£2.89m) and other income, mainly external grants, which amounts to (£2.82m).

There is currently additional income of (£200k) (6.92%) forecast for planning income based on received and forecasted income for the financial year. This is due to Planning Performance Agreements that have been negotiated with a number of developers on major schemes.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities responded to its consultation on increasing planning fees and performance which will result in an increase to Fees and Charges relating to Planning applications. The new fees will come into force from 6th December 2023. It should be noted that the forecast for the remaining year is influenced by the result of the current economy, with both inflationary cost increases and an increased cost of borrowing detrimentally affecting investment in development.

- 4) There are minor savings amounting to £63k.

Assistant Director Highways and Waste

5.53 The **Assistant Director for Highways and Waste** includes street cleaning, waste and recycling collections and disposals, including the household waste and recycling centres and Transport Management. The highways services maintain the extensive network of public roads, footpaths, and rights of way, including highway related infrastructure such as streetlights, traffic signals, bridges, gullies, and highway trees. Services also include School Transport and Concessionary fares. Key cost drivers include the tonnes of waste materials collected from households, businesses, and litter bins for recycling and disposal, variations to costs per tonnage, investment on various highway assets, as well

as the impact of extreme weather conditions, school age population for school transport and the agility of the older population for concessionary fares. The forecast outturn position for the **Assistant Director of Highways and Waste** is set out in the following Table (Period 7 - £315k).

| Assistant Director Highways and Waste | £'000 |
|--|---------------|
| Expenditure | 67,680 |
| Income | (9,798) |
| Net Budget | 57,882 |
| Forecast | 57,614 |
| Variance | (268) |

5.54 The forecast variance relating to the **Assistant Director for Highways and Waste** is set out in following Table. Explanations for the variances are provided below the Table.

| Ref | Description | Budget | Forecast Variance | |
|------------|-----------------------|---------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| | | | £'000 | % |
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | % |
| 1 | Employees | 10,375 | 795 | 7.66 |
| 2 | Supplies and Services | 9,795 | 182 | 1.86 |
| 3 | Transport | 19,341 | (388) | (2.01) |
| 4 | Third Party Payments | 28,998 | 36 | 0.12 |
| 5 | Income | (9,798) | (927) | 9.46 |
| 6 | Other | (829) | 34 | (4.10) |
| | Total | 57,882 | (268) | (0.46) |

- 1) There is a pressure on Employees of £853k mainly relating to overtime and agency costs within Refuse and Recycling, work is ongoing to mitigate these pressures as part of a restructure. This is offset by a saving of £58k within Transport services & Waste Management due to vacant posts.
- 2) There is a pressure of £182k within Supplies and Services. This consists of a pressure of £65k relating to the Garden waste service (additional developer costs for ongoing direct debit solution) and £95k additional Highways and transport work. There is a Waste Management procurement pressure of 21k.
- 3) The main areas of spend within Transport relate to contract payments for Home to School Transport, Social Care Transport and Concessionary payments to transport operators.

The Department for Transport had requested that authorities continue to reimburse bus operators based on the average number of journeys in the winter months prior to the COVID-19 outbreak (December 2019 to February 2020).

The alternative is that the Council reverts to paying bus operators on the actual number of journeys. Reimbursing bus operators based on the average rather than the actual usage is estimated to be between £500k and £700k higher. The Council's support to the bus industry helps safeguard

local bus services for residents throughout the pandemic and during the recovery period. The forecast underspend is £388k (13% of £2.868m Concessions budget).

The DfT are rebasing the reimbursement methodology for 2024/25 and announcements around this will be made later this year.

- 4) The main areas of spend relate to Waste Disposal (£17.470m), Street Lighting (£6.638m) and Highways Maintenance (£4.157m) and other third-party payments (£1.757m). These are currently forecast to come in on budget. There are budgetary challenges with regard to Highways Maintenance and the increased requirement for repairs due to the deterioration of the highway network, together with the effect of inflation on the cost of services. Work is ongoing to identify how the service can be delivered differently in order to remain within the allocated budget; this may require a change in approach to maintaining the highways network.

There is a net pressure of £36k relating to the Waste disposal due to increased tonnage levels and treatment costs.

- 5) There is a favourable variance of £583k within income which relates to the Garden Waste subscription service performing better than initially predicted. It is worth noting that whilst subscriptions have gone up, the associated costs to deliver the service have also increased.

There is also additional income of £312k (92% of £307k Highways income budget) for Highways regulations and investigation searches arising because of higher-than-expected residential developments coming forward, house sales and utility works. Other minor savings amount to £32k.

- 6) Other minor pressures amount to £34k.

Assistant Director Regulatory Services

- 5.55 The **Assistant Director Regulatory Services** includes Bereavement Services, Building Control and Local Land Charges, Emergency Planning, Environmental Health and Licensing, Trading Standards, Private Sector Housing and the Travellers Unit. The main income and cost drivers include the local economy and market for Building Control income, age/morbidity demographic rate for bereavement services (burials and cremations), public health demand for Environmental Health services, and legal/statutory obligations for building regulations and licensing. The forecast outturn position for the **Assistant Director of Regulatory Services** is set out in the following table (Period 7 - £294k).

| Assistant Director Regulatory Services | £'000 |
|---|--------------|
| Expenditure | 7,486 |
| Income | (4,249) |
| Net Budget | 3,237 |
| Forecast | 2,943 |
| Variance | (294) |

5.56 The forecast variance relating to the **Assistant Director Regulatory Services** is set out in following Table. Explanations for the variances are provided below the Table.

| Ref | Description | Budget | Forecast Variance | |
|-----|--------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------|
| | | | £'000 | % |
| 1 | Employees | 6,078 | (489) | (8.05) |
| 2 | Premises | 680 | 81 | 11.91 |
| 3 | Income | (4,249) | 73 | (1.72) |
| 4 | Other | 728 | 41 | 5.63 |
| | Total | 3,237 | (294) | (9.08) |

1) There is an underspend of £489k (8%) within Employees primarily relating to salary savings which is offsetting the pressure on agency costs to support service delivery across Regulatory Services pending the restructuring of the service during 2023/24. An MTFP saving for 2023/24 of £185k for the restructure within Regulatory Services was approved of which £155k has been identified, leaving a pressure of £30k which will be covered by vacancies across the service. Work is currently being undertaken within the service area to deliver the saving.

2) The main areas of spend relate to Grounds Maintenance (£266k), Business Rates (£135k), Utilities (£213k) and other premises costs of £76k.

There are minor pressures of £65k within premises relating to increased business rates and utility pressures in Bereavement Services. Other minor pressures amount to £16k.

3) The main income sources are Bereavement Services (£2.226m), Building Control and Local Land Charges Income (£1m), Licensing Income (£683k), other minor income sources which amount to £340k.

The overall income forecast is a pressure of £73k. The forecast outturn for income from Bereavement Services is £117k higher than budget this is reflective of the 2022/23 outturn and activity levels remain similar in 2023/24. This is offset by a pressure on Building Control income where income levels are forecast to be £190k lower than budget with the forecast being based on 2022/23 activity levels due to a combination of unachievable income targets, market share reduction and the economic climate.

4) There is a minor pressure amounting to £41k.

Place and Economy Management

5.57 This area includes the management costs for the Place and Economy Directorate and is forecasting a pressure of £66k due to agency costs and advertising (Period 7 - £66k).

- 2) There is a forecast pressure of £443k within Supplies and Services (Period 7 - £443k). This pressure is a combination of an increase in Insurance premiums of £300k and a net pressure of £143k within the Revenues and Benefits Service, which mainly arises from a legal requirement to write to all direct debit customers following the implementation of the Council's new revenues system.
- 3) Transfer Payments relate to Housing Benefit payments, which are forecast to be delivered on budget.
- 4) Amounts shown within Other costs are largely payments to the Lead Authority Board for shared services provided to the Council (£619k), where there is a forecast net saving of £38k (Period 7 - £38k). This is due to a pressure in the Account Payable and Receivable functions (£97k) being offset by savings on historic LGSS inter-authority charge budgets (£116k) and other minor savings of £19k.
- 5) The main areas of Income are Housing Benefit Subsidy and income received from government to cover the costs of collecting NNDR & Council Tax. There is a forecast net saving of £87k (Period 7 - £87k), arising from £172k grant funding received by the Revenues & Benefits service to offset the costs of additional work undertaken during the cost-of-living crisis. This additional income is partially offset by unachievable legacy income targets of £85k.

Chief Executive's Office

- 5.60 The functions managed through the **Chief Executive's Office** include the Chief Executive, the Assistant Chief Executive, Executive Support, Communications, Consultation, Engagement and Corporate Equalities, Print Room and the Web Team. The service supports teams across the authority, providing leadership and strategic direction to secure a cohesive and coordinated approach to the delivery of improved organisation-wide service provision, resource allocation and prioritisation. The forecast outturn position for the **Chief Executive's Office** is set out in the following table (Period 7 - £378k).

| Chief Executive's Office | £'000 |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Expenditure | 1,393 |
| Income | (27) |
| Net Budget | 1,366 |
| Forecast | 912 |
| Variance | (454) |

- 5.61 The forecast variance for the Chief Executives Office is set out in following table. Explanations for the variances are provided below the table.

| Ref | Description | Budget £'000 | Forecast Variance | |
|-----|---------------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| | | | £'000 | % |
| 1 | Employees | 1,824 | (497) | (27.25) |
| 2 | Supplies & Services | 432 | 33 | 7.64 |
| 3 | Other | (863) | 0 | 0.00 |
| 4 | Income | (27) | 10 | (37.04) |
| | | | | |
| | Total | 1,366 | (454) | (33.24) |

- 1) There are anticipated savings within the Executive Support, Communications and Printing services of £497k (Period 7 - £413k). This is due to staff vacancies within the team's new structure, which are actively being recruited (£742k), partially offset by the use of agency staff (£245k).
- 2) Although the main areas of spend within Supplies and Services are printing and postage costs for the corporate print and post rooms, the forecast pressure of £33k is due to inflationary increases in corporate subscriptions of £20k (Period 7 - £20k) and other minor pressures £13k (Period 7 - £5k).
- 3) 'Other' spend relates to internal recharges and is forecast to be delivered on budget.
- 4) The income budget relates to printing on behalf of third-party organisations. There is an anticipated pressure of £10k as demand for these services has fallen.

Chief Information Officer

- 5.62 The **Chief Information Officer** is responsible for the delivery of efficient and effective management of all aspects of IT operations, Digital, IT programmes of work, IT commercial contracts and supplier relationships, IT Service delivery teams and for transforming the IT and Digital Services team. This includes managing IT services provided by West Northamptonshire Council. The forecast outturn position for the **Chief Information Officer** is set out in the following Table (Period 7 - £298k).

| Chief Information Officer | £'000 |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Expenditure | 10,407 |
| Income | (2) |
| Net Budget | 10,405 |
| Forecast | 10,703 |
| Variance | 298 |

- 5.63 The forecast variance relating to the **Chief Information Officer** is set out in following table and explanations for the variances are provided below the table.

| Ref | Description | Budget | Forecast Variance | |
|-----|----------------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------|
| | | | £'000 | % |
| 1 | Employees | 2,292 | 100 | 4.36 |
| 2 | Supplies & Services | 5,110 | (186) | (3.64) |
| 3 | Third Party Payments | 3,609 | 384 | 10.64 |
| 4 | Other | (606) | 0 | 0.00 |
| | Total | 10,405 | 298 | 2.86 |

- 1) Employee costs are forecast as a pressure of £100k (Period 7 - £100k). This comprises a pressure of £91k, arising from staff costs that were previously capitalised. These costs can no longer be treated as capital where the system is Cloud based, as this is a revenue cost. A further £245k pressure arises from agency costs and both are partially offset by forecast savings from vacant posts of £236k.
- 2) A saving of £186k is forecast in Supplies and Services, where the main areas of spend are software license costs, data line rental and telephone costs. The saving is made up of savings on software licences (£194k), mainly relating to Microsoft licences, offset by minor pressures (£8k).
- 3) Third Party Payments relate to the shared IT service with WNC. The pressure reflects estimated inflationary increases within this arrangement, which amount to £384k (Period 7 - £384k). Detailed work is ongoing to identify and evaluate other pressures within the WNC IT Shared Service.
- 4) 'Other' relates to internal income recharges and these are forecast to be delivered on budget.

Customer and Governance

Assistant Director of Human Resources

- 5.64 The **Assistant Director of Human Resources** is responsible for the leadership, development and implementation of relevant strategies for the area and council, enabling the delivery of corporate HR priorities, including HR Advisory, Workforce Planning & Development, Learning & Development and Health & Safety. The forecast outturn position for the **Assistant Director of Human Resources** is set out in the following Table (Period 7 - £50k).

| Assistant Director of Human Resources | £'000 |
|--|--------------|
| Expenditure | 5,469 |
| Income | (1,537) |
| Net Budget | 3,932 |
| Forecast | 3,882 |
| Variance | (50) |

- 5.65 The forecast outturn relating to the **Assistant Director of Human Resources** is set out in following Table:

| Ref | Description | Budget £'000 | Forecast Variance | |
|-----|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------|
| | | | £'000 | % |
| 1 | Employees | 5,204 | (66) | (1.27) |
| 2 | Supplies & Services | 500 | (53) | (10.60) |
| 3 | Third Party Payments | 418 | 0 | 0.00 |
| 4 | Other | (653) | (7) | 1.07 |
| 5 | Income | (1,537) | 76 | (4.94) |
| | | | | |
| | Total | 3,932 | (50) | (1.27) |

- 1) Employees budgets have forecast savings of £66k, which relate to transitional vacancies carried in year.
- 2) The main areas of spend in Supplies and Services arise from work on the Pay & Grading project (£100k) and I-learn licences (£91k) and both are forecast to be delivered on budget. There is a net forecast saving of £53k (Period 7 - £53k) arising from underspends against occupational health budgets (£40k) and other professional services budgets (£44k), partially offset by an increased demand for learning and development within the Adults Directorate (£31k).
- 3) The main area of spend in Third Party payments is the recharge from WNC for the shared Payroll function and this is forecast to be delivered on budget.
- 4) 'Other' relates to support service recharges. There are minor forecast savings totalling £7k.
- 5) Income is mainly generated through Inter Authority Agreements (IAA) with WNC and NCT and a net pressure of £76k is forecast. This arises from a pressure of £90k relating to apprenticeship delivery, partially offset by minor savings of £14k.

Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services

5.66 The **Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services** is responsible for developing and delivering a strong governance and ethical framework and the management of the internal Legal Services Team, Democratic & Election Services, FOI & Data Governance and Registration and the Coroners Services. The forecast outturn position for the **Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services** is set out in the following Table (Period 7 – £300k).

| Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic | £'000 |
|---|--------------|
| Expenditure | 6,127 |
| Income | (876) |
| Net Budget | 5,251 |
| Forecast | 5,551 |
| Variance | 300 |

5.67 The forecast variance relating to the **Assistant Director of Legal Services** is set out in the following Table and explanations for the variances are provided below the Table.

| Ref | Description | Budget | Forecast Variance | |
|-----|----------------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------|
| | | £'000 | £'000 | % |
| 1 | Employees | 3,702 | 77 | 2.08 |
| 2 | Supplies & Services | 2,152 | (15) | (0.70) |
| 3 | Third Party Payments | 762 | 179 | 23.49 |
| 4 | Other | (489) | (21) | 4.29 |
| 5 | Income | (876) | 80 | (9.13) |
| | | | | |
| | Total | 5,251 | 300 | 5.71 |

- 1) The forecast pressure on the Employees budget of £77k (Period 7 - £77k) is due to vacancies £1.272m (Period 7 - £1.272m), offset by the use of agency staff £1.349m (Period 7 - £1.349m). The majority of the use of agency staff is in Legal Services.
- 2) The main areas of expenditure within Supplies and Services are members allowances, ward initiative funds and external legal fees. There are minor forecast savings of £15k (Period 7 - £15k).
- 3) The main area of spend within Third Party Payments is the shared coroners service with WNC, where there is a forecast pressure of £179k (Period 7 - £179k).
- 4) 'Other' relates mainly to support service recharges, members travel expenses and staff mileage. There is a forecast saving of £21k (Period 7 - £21k) relating to a series of minor items.
- 5) The main areas of income are Legal fees (£200k) and Registration Services fees (£630k). There are also other minor income sources within the service (£46k). There is a forecast pressure of £80k within Registration Services due to a lower number of marriage ceremonies being delivered this year.

Assistant Director of Customer Services

5.68 The **Assistant Director of Customer Services** is responsible for leading and implementing the transformation and aggregation of all the Customer Service and Complaints teams and for setting the key priorities and direction for Customer Services and Complaints in line with the corporate plan. The role is also responsible for the leadership, development and implementation of customer and digital strategies for the council, to deliver an improved customer experience and the administration of the 'Blue Badges' parking scheme. The forecast outturn position for the **Assistant Director of Customer Services** is set out in the following Table (Period 7 – £141k).

| Assistant Director Customer Services | £'000 |
|---|--------------|
| Expenditure | 2,338 |
| Income | (108) |

| | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| Net Budget | 2,230 |
| Forecast | 2,045 |
| Variance | (185) |

5.69 The forecast outturn relating to the **Assistant Director of Customer Services** is set out in the following table.

| Ref | Description | Budget | Forecast Variance | |
|-----|---------------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------|
| | | £'000 | £'000 | % |
| 1 | Employees | 3,049 | (158) | (5.18) |
| 2 | Supplies & Services | 157 | (27) | (17.20) |
| 3 | Other | (868) | 0 | 0.00 |
| 4 | Income | (108) | 0 | 0.00 |
| | | | | |
| | Total | 2,230 | (185) | (8.30) |

- 1) There is a forecast saving on Employees of £158k due to vacant posts within the Customer Service team (Period 7 - £140k).
- 2) Although the main area of spend within Supplies and Services relates to the issuing of Blue badges (£70k), the saving of £27k (Period 7 - £1k) arises from a series of minor budgets.
- 3) Other budgets are internal recharges and are expected to be delivered on budget.
- 4) The income budget relates to the issuing of blue badges (£80k) and rent from the NHS Phlebotomy unit in the Kettering Offices (£28k). These are anticipated to be delivered on budget.

6 Housing Revenue Account

6.1 Whilst North Northamptonshire Council must only operate one HRA it will, for a period of time, operate two separate Neighbourhood Accounts (Corby Neighbourhood Account and the Kettering Neighbourhood Account).

Corby Neighbourhood Account

6.2 The forecast position for the Corby Neighbourhood Account at the end of Period 8 shows an underspend of £158k (Period 7 - £94k underspend). This is summarised in the following Table:

| Corby Neighbourhood Account | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Current Budget 2023/24 | Projection P8 2023/24 | Forecast Variance |
| | £000 | £000 | £000 |
| INCOME | | | |
| Rents - Dwellings Only | 20,692 | 20,698 | (6) |
| Service Charges | 641 | 603 | 38 |
| HRA Investment Income | 148 | 148 | 0 |
| Total Income | 21,481 | 21,449 | 32 |
| EXPENDITURE | | | |
| Repairs and Maintenance | 6,440 | 6,804 | 364 |
| General Management | 5,438 | 4,969 | (469) |
| HRA Self Financing | 2,125 | 2,061 | (64) |
| Revenue Contribution to Capital | 4,875 | 5,061 | 186 |
| Transfer To / (From) Reserves | 807 | 807 | 0 |
| Special Services | 1,014 | 876 | (138) |
| Other | 782 | 713 | (69) |
| Total Expenditure | 21,481 | 21,291 | (190) |
| Net Operating Expenditure | 0 | (158) | (158) |

- 6.3 The forecast position for rental income from dwellings at Period 8 is £6k higher than budget – a rent gain of £68k is a result of the Right to Buy Sales being 15 less than the budgeted amount of 50 in 2022/23, resulting in a higher number of dwellings on 1st April 2023 resulting in a higher rental yield. RTB sales were budgeted at 50 the current forecast is 40 which results in a rent gain of £23k being the part year effect from RTB sales. The reduction is in part from the current economic climate and the increased costs in borrowing, however, this is reduced by a shortfall of £85k due to lost income from a higher void rate. The number of sales and void rates are areas that will be closely monitored during the course of the year.
- 6.4 The pressure on income from Service Charges is £38k this is a result of a £19k increase in the budget not being realised and £19k of optional emergency alarm charges not being taken up in the sheltered schemes.
- 6.5 The forecast position for Period 8 includes a total reduction in expenditure of £190k (Period 7 - £126k). The movements are set out in Sections 6.6 to 6.10.
- 6.6 There are pressures on repairs and maintenance costs of £364k, which relate to the higher cost of general repairs (£222k), overspends on salaries due to pay award (£110k) and agency costs (£41k), and overspends on services costs due to disrepair claims (£139k). These are partly offset by savings on insurance (£50k) and increased income from recharged services (£100k). There are other minor adverse variances of £2k.
- 6.7 There are savings of £469k in General Management and £138k in Special Services. This relates to salary savings due to vacant posts and pension costs (£423k) which is reduced by pay award pressures (£93k); savings on insurance (£194k), savings on services (£40k) and utilities (£42k) due to lower-than-expected costs. There were further minor favourable variances of £1k.

- 6.8 There is a saving of £64k against the HRA Self-financing line which relates to savings on loan interest charges due to loans not being enacted. This is as a result of a lower spend on the HRA capital programme resulting in a saving on interest costs.
- 6.9 The HRA holds a depreciation charge that recognises the cost of managing and maintaining the Council stock at the current level. This funding represents a revenue cost to the HRA that is then used to support the capital programme to deliver the required enhancements to the stock to keep it fit for purpose. The Revenue Contribution to Capital Expenditure (RCCO) as a minimum must equal the depreciation charge, owing to the increase in the value of the stock this has resulted in a higher depreciation charge of £186k, which will be available to fund future capital programmes.
- 6.10 There are savings within 'Other' of £69k which relates to the bad debt provision being £43k less than budgeted - owing to higher collection on arrears (Period 7 - £50k), there are further net favourable variances which amount to £26k. The contingency budget of £66k has been used in full to part fund the higher payaward.

Kettering Neighbourhood Account

- 6.11 The forecast position for the Kettering Neighbourhood Account at the end of Period 8 shows an overspend of £279k (Period 7 - £279k overspend). This is summarised in the following Table:

| Kettering Neighbourhood Account | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | Current Budget 2023/24 | Projection P8 2023/24 | Forecast Variance |
| | £000 | £000 | £000 |
| INCOME | | | |
| Rents - Dwellings Only | 16,763 | 16,768 | (5) |
| Service Charges | 487 | 444 | 43 |
| HRA Investment Income | 21 | 21 | 0 |
| Total Income | 17,271 | 17,233 | 38 |
| EXPENDITURE | | | |
| Repairs and Maintenance | 4,632 | 4,817 | 185 |
| General Management | 2,988 | 2,838 | (150) |
| HRA Self Financing | 4,986 | 4,986 | 0 |
| Revenue Contribution to Capital | 3,268 | 3,604 | 336 |
| Transfer To / (From) Reserves | (565) | (565) | 0 |
| Special Services | 1,257 | 1,225 | (32) |
| Other | 705 | 607 | (98) |
| Total Expenditure | 17,271 | 17,512 | 241 |
| Net Operating Expenditure | 0 | 279 | 279 |

- 6.12 The forecast position for rental income from dwellings at Period 8 is £5k higher than budget – a rent gain of £67k is a result of the Right to Buy Sales being 14 less than the budgeted amount of 30 in 2022/23, resulting in a higher number of dwellings on 1st April 2023 resulting in a higher rental yield. RTB sales were

budgeted at 30 the current forecast is 17 which results in a rent gain of £31k being the part year effect from RTB sales. The reduction is in part from the current economic climate and the increased costs in borrowing, however, this is reduced by a shortfall of £93k due to lost income from a higher void rate. The number of sales and void rates are areas that will be closely monitored during the course of the year.

- 6.13 There are pressures of £43k as a result of income from service charges being lower than budget.
- 6.14 The forecast position for Period 8 is a pressure in expenditure of £241k (Period 7 - £26k). The movements are set out in Sections 6.15 to 6.18.
- 6.15 There are pressures in Repairs and Maintenance of £185k, which relates to the higher cost for materials (£167k), overspends on salaries due to pay award (£89k) and pressures from agency costs (£67k). These are partly offset by savings on subcontractor costs (£26k), equipment costs (£38k) and cyclical maintenance costs (£95k). There are also minor adverse variances of £21k.
- 6.16 There are savings of £150k in General Management and £32k in Special Services. This relates to salary savings due to vacant posts and pension costs (£258k) which is reduced by pay award pressures (£92k); There were further minor favourable variances of £16k.
- 6.17 The HRA holds a depreciation charge that recognises the cost of managing and maintaining the Council stock at the current level. This funding represents a revenue cost to the HRA that is then used to support the capital programme to deliver the required enhancements to the stock to keep it fit for purpose. The Revenue Contribution to Capital Expenditure (RCCO) as a minimum must equal the depreciation charge, owing to the increase in the value of the stock this has resulted in a higher depreciation charge of £336k, which will be available to fund future capital programmes.
- 6.18 There are savings within 'Other' of £98k which relates to the bad debt provision being £98k less than budgeted - owing to higher collection on arrears (Period 7 - £98k). The contingency budget of £176k has been used in full to part fund the higher pay award.

7 Dedicated Schools Grant

- 7.1 The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is a ring-fenced specific grant allocated to the Council by the Government to support a range of education related services.
- 7.2 The Department for Education (DfE) currently operate a four-block funding model for funding schools and pre-16 education including early years as set out in the following table:

| Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| Schools Block | Central Schools Services Block | High Needs Block | Early Years Block |
| The School's Block is the largest element of the DSG and is allocated to Schools and Academies for day-to-day spending in their individual budgets. | The Central Schools Block provides funding for local authorities to carry out central functions on behalf of maintained schools and academies. | The High Needs funding system supports provision for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) from their early years to age 25. | The Early Years Block provides funding for 2, 3 and 4-year-olds. |

7.3 The original DSG Budget for 2023/24 amounts to £354.963m. After allowing for recoupment, which is where a local authority's DSG allocation is adjusted to reflect the grant that has been paid direct to academies. In July, the DSG allocation was revised to reflect a reduction of £537k, there was a reduction of £382k in the Early Years Block due to lower participation numbers, this was partially offset by a slight increase in the High Needs Block of £74k resulting from additional funding for special free schools. The remaining reduction of £229k relates to the recoupment amount for the High Needs Block being adjusted from £10.853m to £11.082m this is due to an adjustment to the High Needs places. The revised net DSG budget for the Council is £120.663m. The forecast outturn is a pressure of £9.019m, this is summarised in the following Table:

| Dedicated Schools Grants Forecast Outturn 2023/24 | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Block | Gross Budget | July DSG Allocation Adjustment | Revised Budget | Recoupment | Net Budget | Forecast Net Spend | Variance |
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| Schools Block | 270,284 | 0 | 270,284 | 222,910 | 47,374 | 47,374 | 0 |
| Central Schools Block | 3,287 | 0 | 3,287 | 0 | 3,287 | 3,287 | 0 |
| High Needs Block | 57,851 | 74 | 57,925 | 11,082 | 46,843 | 55,862 | 9,019 |
| Early Year Block | 23,541 | (382) | 23,159 | 0 | 23,159 | 23,159 | 0 |
| Total | 354,963 | (308) | 354,655 | 233,992 | 120,663 | 129,682 | 9,019 |

7.4 The national pressure on services to support the education of children with additional needs is well documented. This has been exacerbated by the ongoing impacts of COVID on children and young people's health and wellbeing. Many Councils are struggling to contain expenditure within the budget available to meet needs. The mitigation actions that are available often have front loaded costs and benefits are felt over the course of many years. Whilst funding has been increased, this has not reflected the full increase in needs that are being identified.

7.5 In the financial year 2022/23 NNC reported an overspend of £1.743m on the HNB. This was offset against the historic surplus of £2.573m brought forward from 2021/22. A net adjustment of £110k has been made to the reserves to reflect Early Years clawback, resulting in an opening reserves position of £720k. For 2023/24, pressures have continued to increase, and it is now forecast that the HNB will be overspent by £9.739m. The remaining reserves of £720k have been used to partly mitigate this, leaving a forecast overspend of £9.019m. The composition of these pressures prior to the use of reserves is as follows:

- The ongoing increase in the number of requests for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP), at Early Years and statutory school age, has exceeded the rate that was used in setting the budget, this pressure is forecast to be around £1.976m.
- Sufficiency issues in local SEND placements meaning greater use of Independent Providers at significantly higher cost, this pressure is forecast to be around £2.905m.
- The identification of historic commitments that remain outstanding and must now be paid is a one-off pressure and amount to around £500k.
- Pressures in Mainstream Top Ups are related to an ongoing increase in the number of requests for statutory assessment over and above the level budgeted for. By supporting mainstream schools to meet higher levels of need, pressure is reduced on the specialist placement budgets, this pressure is forecasted to around £2.252m.
- Further analysis has been conducted on the Alternative Provision budget, the pressure is forecasted to be around £2.180m. This reflects the impact of the limited access NNC has to high quality AP places locally. As a result, more pupils are having to be provided with individual tutoring to ensure they have the required access to education. This significantly increases costs and restricts the breadth of curriculum that can be offered. Efforts are ongoing to create additional AP in NNC, including a strategic partnership with an outstanding Academy Trust that was brokered by DfE, and a bid for a new AP school in NNC, the outcome of which is due in Autumn 2023.
- The High Needs budget saw an increase due to an adverse movement in the import-export review and an increase in funding allocated to Special schools the net favourable effect was a £74k increase.

7.6 Significant work has already been undertaken to put in place actions to mitigate pressures, these include:

- Collaborative work with two local special schools to create outreach service to support inclusion in mainstream settings and identify needs, and strategies to meet these, at the earliest opportunity.
- The creation of additional SEND places in Special Schools and Special School satellite provision on mainstream school sites.

- The creation of new SEND units in mainstream schools.
- Development of an early Years SEND provision.
- Partnership working with an outstanding Alternative Provision (AP) Academy Trust to create new capacity in NNC.
- Improved commissioning arrangements with independent providers to control costs and provide greater consistency of delivery.
- Joint commissioning work with health services to improve and widen provision of Speech and Language services.
- Greater focus on the Annual Review process to identify where needs have reduced or an EHCP is no longer required.
- Investment in the EHCP team to ensure needs are assessed in as accurate and timely manner as possible.
- Improved decision-making processes that ensure thresholds and funding decisions are robust and consistent.

7.7 This work is ongoing, and a key focus will be the identification of opportunities to create further capacity. NNC was not successful in a bid to DfE for a new Special Free School in the area, as such other routes to creating this capacity are being investigated. A separate bid for a Free AP provision is with DfE and an outcome is expected shortly.

7.8 Further opportunities to create SEND places are being developed in partnership with local Special and Mainstream schools. The impact of the outreach services is being assessed with a view to extending these and targeting resources as effectively as possible as part of a wider focus on inclusion. A simplification of EHCP funding through the adoption of a banded system will reduce pressure on the EHCP team and give schools and providers greater clarity and stability. The Education Case Management System will offer significantly improved financial functionality and rigour, improve parental access to information about the progress of an EHCP and create efficiencies in the EHCP process.

7.9 Where a local authority has an overall deficit on its DSG account at the end of the financial year, or where a surplus has substantially reduced during the year, they must provide information to the DfE about pressures and savings on the High Needs Budget as part of a DSG Deficit Management Plan. In addition, where there is a deficit, this will have an adverse impact on the Council's cashflow position and will impact on the resources available for investment – which will result in the investment income being lower.

7.10 Looking to 2024/25, it seems unlikely that any increase in government funding will meet the impact of the ongoing pressures identified, however the mitigation actions taken will continue to contribute to minimise these, but further actions will be required and the Schools Forum agreed to a transfer of funding from the

Schools Block (SB) of the DSG to HNB, this amounts to circa £1.5m additional funding for the HNB. Forum will also be asked to look at measures that will support inclusion in mainstream settings and provide challenge where any school may not be meeting this standard.

- 7.11 Identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND at the earliest opportunity and putting in place appropriate actions to meet these needs, remains the central focus of all of this work. Ensuring that the whole system works in an inclusive and joined up way is key to meeting this aspiration and to ensuring the efficient use of available resources to manage costs effectively.
- 7.12 At Spring Budget, the Chancellor announced additional funding for the existing early years entitlements worth £204m in 2023-24 (from September 2023) and £288m in 2024-25. This is for local authorities to increase hourly rates paid to childcare providers for the government's existing entitlement offers.
- 7.13 In July the Government announced that for 2023-24, that this will be distributed to LAs through a new standalone top-up grant called the Early Years Supplementary Grant (EYSG) the allocation received by NNC is £1.112m for Sept 2023 to March 2024 and this will be allocated on a monthly basis out to providers. From 1st April 2024 the supplement grant will be removed, and the additional funding will form part of the base rate.

8 Conclusions

- 8.1 The P8 forecast for 2023/24 is an overspend of £8.552m (Period 7 - £6.198m) A contingency is held to help offset potential costs that were not known at the time of budget setting. Currently £1.524m of the contingency is available to meet further pressures. Service Directors will be working to mitigate these pressures in-year, including those of the Children's Trust. The Council also holds earmarked reserves which may be utilised if mitigations are not identified to fund the current pressures.
- 8.2 The key risks which are set out in the report will continue to be monitored and actions sought as required throughout 2023/24. The achievement of the approved savings targets is also integral to this process and will continue to be monitored and reported.

9 Implications (including financial implications)

9.1 Resources, Financial and Transformation

- 9.1.1 The financial implications are set out in this report. The current forecast position for the General Fund is an overspend of £8.552m (Period 7 - £6.198m) and the Housing Revenue Account is forecasting an overspend of £121k (Period 7 - £185k overspend), the Dedicated Schools Grant is forecasting a pressure of £9.019m (Period 7 - £8.598m).

9.2 Legal and Governance

- 9.2.1 The provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 set out requirements for the Council to set a balanced budget with regard to the advice of its Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer).
- 9.2.2 The robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of the proposed reserves were considered under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 prior to the Council agreeing its 2023/24 budget.

9.3 Relevant Policies and Plans

- 9.3.1 The budget provides the financial resources to enable the Council to deliver on its plans and meet corporate priorities as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan.

9.4 Risk

- 9.4.1 The deliverability of the 2023/24 Revenue Budget is monitored by Budget Managers and Assistant Directors. Where any variances or emerging pressures are identified during the year then mitigating actions will be sought and management interventions undertaken.
- 9.4.2 Details of pressures, risks and mitigating actions implemented will be provided as part of the finance monitoring reports as the year progresses. The main risks identified include demand led services such as Adult Social Care, children's services, and home to school transport together with the impact of high levels of inflation.
- 9.4.3 Whilst services will work hard to offset pressures, the Council holds a number of reserves to help safeguard against the risks inherent within the budget for 2023/24.

9.5 Consultation

- 9.5.1 The 2023/24 budget was subject to consultation prior to approval by Council in February 2023.

9.6 Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel

- 9.6.1 Not applicable.

9.7 Consideration by Scrutiny

- 9.7.1 The budget monitoring reports are presented to the Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee for review after they have been presented to the Executive Committee.

9.8 Equality Implications

9.8.1 There are no specific issues as a result of this report.

9.9 Climate and Environment Impact

9.9.1 Among the new Council's priorities will be putting in place plans to improve the local environment and tackle the ongoing climate emergency. Where these have a financial impact then it will be reflected in the budget.

9.10 Community Impact

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

9.11 Crime and Disorder Impact

9.11.1 There are no specific issues arising from this report.

10 Issues and Choices

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

11 Background Papers

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

Final Budget 2023/24 and Medium-Term Financial Plans, including the Council Tax Resolution, North Northamptonshire Council, 23rd February 2023.

Monthly Budget Forecast Reports to the Executive.

| Directorate | Assistant Director | | Proposal Description | 2023/24 £000 | Red | Amber | Green |
|--|------------------------------|---|--|-----------------|-------|---------|-------|
| Children & Education | Assistant Director Education | DFE SEND Review/Multi Agency SEND Self Assessment and Action Plan | Additional resources to meet the increase and clear the back log relating to Education and Health Care Plans. An additional amount of £700k was included in the 22/23 Budget. | (175) | (175) | | |
| Children & Education | Assistant Director Education | Teachers Pensions | Budget Realignment for historical contribution for the Teachers Pensions Fund | (275) | | | (275) |
| Children & Education | Assistant Director Education | DSG Funding | Budget Realignment of the DSG contribution towards the historical contribution for the Teachers Pensions Fund | (462) | | | (462) |
| Children & Education | Commissioning & Partnerships | Additional Demand - Payments to other Establishments | Disaggregated Additional Demand - Payments to other Establishments Budget for Children, Families and Education, budget not utilised | (691) | | | (691) |
| Children & Education | Commissioning & Partnerships | Disaggregated Budget not required | Disaggregated Budget - budget not utilised | (412) | | | (412) |
| Adults, Health, Partnerships & Housing | Adult Services | CCG Discharge Packages Covid 19 | Reversal of one off Covid Pressure relating to 2021/22 | (513) | | | (513) |
| Adults, Health, Partnerships & Housing | Adult Services | Strengths based working | Transformation of adult social care pathways and processes to ensure focus on client outcomes, independence, better decision making and best practice approaches to reduce delays and spend. | (587) | | (587) | |
| Adults, Health, Partnerships & Housing | Adult Services | Demographic and prevalence pressures adult social care | Reduction in demand due to Provider transformation Phase 1 - Specialist Care Centre | (1,189) | | (1,189) | |
| Adults, Health, Partnerships & Housing | Adult Services | Staffing | Savings from review of wider staffing budget to fund Social Worker Market Forces | (100) | | | (100) |
| Adults, Health, Partnerships & Housing | Safeguarding and Wellbeing | Staffing | Disaggregation of Shared Lives to be managed within the wider provider services staffing | (23) | | | (23) |
| Adults, Health, Partnerships & Housing | Commissioning & Performance | Shaw PPP | Reduction in number of residential placements made in the independent sector owing to increase utilisation beds in PPP properties. | (1,192) | | (1,192) | |
| Adults, Health, Partnerships & Housing | Commissioning & Performance | Shaw PPP | Increase utilisation of capacity within Discharge to Access | (1,058) | (617) | (441) | |
| Adults, Health, Partnerships & Housing | Commissioning & Performance | Contract Rationalisation | Increasing utilisation of framework providers for homecare and reduction of more expensive spot contracts | (67) | | | (67) |
| Adults, Health, Partnerships & Housing | Commissioning & Performance | Staffing | Saving of wider staffing budget to fund PBSS | (125) | | (125) | |
| Adults, Health, Partnerships & Housing | Housing | Homelessness Policy Changes | Harmonisation of Homelessness Policies | (200) | | | (200) |
| Adults, Health, Partnerships & Housing | Housing | Maximisation of Grant | Capitalisation of posts for work relating to Disabled Facility Grants | (127) | | | (127) |
| Adults, Health, Partnerships & Housing | Director of Public Health | Realignment of Grant | Realignment of grant following disaggregation | (138) | | | (138) |
| Public Health & Communities | Communities | Income generation | Fees and Charges - Leisure | (195) | | | (195) |
| Public Health & Communities | Communities | Efficiencies | Legacy budgets no longer required | (42) | | | (42) |
| Public Health & Communities | Communities | Efficiencies | Review of Strategic Grants | (7) | | | (7) |
| Public Health & Communities | Communities | Staffing | Service Transformation | (360) | | | (360) |
| Public Health & Communities | Communities | Income Generation | External Funding for Events | (30) | | | (30) |
| Public Health & Communities | Communities | Efficiencies | Review of Neighbourhood Centres | (45) | | | (45) |
| Public Health & Communities | Communities | Income Generation | Introduce an E-Gym offer | (63) | | | (63) |
| Public Health & Communities | Communities | Income Generation | Repurposing of Public Health grant to fund wellbeing posts | (93) | | | (93) |
| Public Health & Communities | Communities | Public Health Grant | Grant funding to support services in addressing Public Health needs | (500) | | | (500) |

Appendix A

| Directorate | Assistant Director | Proposal Title | Proposal Description | 2023/24 £000 | Red | Amber | Green |
|-------------------|--------------------------|---|---|-----------------|------|-------|---------|
| Place & Economy | Growth & Regeneration | Increase in Fees & Charges | Increase in Fees & Charges | (10) | | | (10) |
| Place & Economy | Assets and Environment | Additional income | Garage Income | (10) | (10) | | |
| Place & Economy | Assets and Environment | Assets & Environment redesign | Assets & Environment Service Improvement and Redesign | (95) | | (95) | |
| Place & Economy | Assets and Environment | Grounds Maintenance | Operational changes to grounds maintenance costs & services | (57) | | (57) | |
| Place & Economy | Assets and Environment | Grounds Maintenance | Purchase of equipment resulting in reduction in equipment hire charges | (15) | | (15) | |
| Place & Economy | Assets and Environment | Grounds Maintenance | Purchase of equipment resulting in reduction in equipment hire charges | (30) | | (30) | |
| Place & Economy | Assets and Environment | Pay/Salaries | Operational changes to cleaning services | (14) | | (14) | |
| Place & Economy | Assets and Environment | Pay/Salaries | Operational changes to Council Buildings. | (31) | | (31) | |
| Place & Economy | Assets and Environment | Rental Income | Additional income from rent reviews across the commercial portfolio. | (80) | | (80) | |
| Place & Economy | Assets and Environment | Enterprise Centre Business Case - Full year effects of previous decisions | Increase in income based on appointed operators business case. | (64) | | (64) | |
| Place & Economy | Growth & Regeneration | Climate Change | Delivery of a range of climate change initiatives to reduce NNC's carbon footprint towards net zero | (250) | | | (250) |
| Place & Economy | Highways & Waste | Highways Contract | Demobilisation costs for existing highways contract - reverses one-off pressure which was reflected in the 22/23 Budget | (201) | | (201) | |
| Place & Economy | Highways & Waste | Waste Management | Disposal tonnage - HWRC Residual Waste | (79) | | (79) | |
| Place & Economy | Highways & Waste | Waste Management | Disposal tonnage - HWRC Wood Waste | (27) | | (27) | |
| Place & Economy | Highways & Waste | Green Waste | Harmonisation of Green Waste Charges | (1,358) | | | (1,358) |
| Place & Economy | Highways & Waste | Promote food waste | Benefit of promoting the food waste service in the Corby and East Northants area | (50) | | (50) | |
| Place & Economy | Highways & Waste | Refuse fees & charges | Increase refuse & recycling fees & charges | (135) | | (135) | |
| Place & Economy | Highways & Waste | Highways fees & charges | Increase highways & transport fees and charges | (44) | | | (44) |
| Place & Economy | Highways & Waste | Review Litter bin network | Reduction in street cleaning costs | (5) | | | (5) |
| Place & Economy | Highways & Waste | HWRC Income | Increase income from HWRCs | (153) | | (153) | |
| Place & Economy | Regulatory Services | Restructure | Rationalisation of service provision | (185) | | (30) | (155) |
| Place & Economy | Regulatory Services | Specialist Equipment For Service Delivery | Base budget allocation for incident response released | (280) | | | (280) |
| Place & Economy | Regulatory Services | Increase in Fees & Charges | Increase in Fees & Charges | (227) | | (227) | |
| Enabling Services | Finance & Performance | Pensions | Pension - Historical Pension Fund Deficit | (232) | | | (232) |
| Enabling Services | Finance & Performance | Pensions | Reduction in Employer's Pension Contribution Rate | (1,890) | | 0 | (1,890) |
| Enabling Services | Finance & Performance | Pensions | Disaggregation of Legacy Pensions | (450) | | | (450) |
| Enabling Services | Finance & Performance | Housing Benefit Subsidy | Additional income relating to Housing Benefit Subsidy | (5) | | (5) | |
| Enabling Services | Chief Executive's Office | Staffing | Staff Savings | (7) | | | (7) |

Appendix A

| Directorate | Assistant Director | Proposal Title | Proposal Description | 2023/24 £000 | Red | Amber | Green |
|-------------------|---------------------------|--|---|-----------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Enabling Services | Chief Executive's Office | Communications | Communications - Savings on professional services not utilised. | (3) | | | (3) |
| Enabling Services | Chief Information Officer | ICT Disaggregation | Upfront work needed for ICT disaggregation - one-off, reversal of 2022/23 pressure | (100) | | | (100) |
| Enabling Services | Chief Information Officer | ICT Contract Rationalisation | Rationalisation of service contracts - largely mobile telephone contracts | (50) | | (50) | |
| Enabling Services | Chief Information Officer | ICT application rationalisation | Rationalisation of service usage - largely Microsoft contract | (50) | | | (50) |
| Enabling Services | Human Resources | Pay and Grading Review | Delivery of Pay and Grading Review | (120) | | | (120) |
| Enabling Services | Legal Services | Fleet | Changes to the operational arrangements for the mayor | (19) | | | (19) |
| Enabling Services | Legal Services | Legal Income | Increase in Legal Income target | (150) | | | (150) |
| Enabling Services | Legal Services | Upper Tier Legal Services | Anticipated saving from bringing upper tier legal services in house | (100) | | | (100) |
| Enabling Services | Customer Services | Customer Services Replacement of Case Management System & Telephone System | Case management system and telephony replacement | (106) | | | (106) |
| Enabling Services | Customer Services | Uniforms | Reduction in Staff Uniforms | (8) | | | (8) |
| Enabling Services | Customer Services | Staffing | Transformation Staff Savings | (106) | | | (106) |
| Corporate | Corporate | Treasury Management | Reversal of Covid Pressure from 2021/22 for £342k - based on interest recovery by 2023/24 | (342) | | | (342) |
| Corporate | Corporate | Treasury Management | Additional Income generated from higher than anticipated interest rates | (500) | | | (500) |
| Corporate | Corporate | Treasury Management | Reduced costs following the repayment of loans | (109) | | | (109) |
| | | | Total | (16,416) | (802) | (4,877) | (10,737) |

CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9 April 2024

Detailed Scrutiny Items

| | Suggested Topic | Reasons for Scrutiny | Officer, Chair and Executive Member | Notes |
|---------|---|---|---|--|
| Page 81 | 1. Customer Service Operations and Out of Hours Service | To include an update on the performance and bedding in of the new telephony system, rolled out in summer/autumn 2023. | Assistant Chief Executive/Assistant Director of Customer Experience, Executive Member for Finance and Performance | |
| | 2. Children's Trust Update | Quarterly Update | Executive Director, Children's Services/ Children's Trust Executive Member for Children's Services | Requested to be added to Workplan by Scrutiny Management Board on 27/11/23 |

Pre-Scrutiny of Executive Reports

| | Suggested Topic | Reasons for Scrutiny | Officer, Chair and Executive Member | Notes |
|----|--|---|--|--------------|
| 1. | Annual Review of Performance Management Framework and Key Performance Indicators | To scrutinise performance management arrangements and key performance indicators to inform Executive’s decision on reports for 2024-25. | | |
| 2. | | | | |

Regular Scrutiny Items

| | Topic | Reasons for Scrutiny | Officer and Executive Member | Notes |
|----|--------------------------------|---|--|--------------|
| 1. | Performance Indicators 2023/24 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide members with an update on the Council’s performance across a wide range of services, as measured by Key Performance Indicators, with the aim of informing scrutiny, to include quarterly complaints reporting. | Executive Director of Finance and Performance Executive Member for Finance and Transformation | |
| 2. | Forecast Draft Outturn 2023/24 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A regular monitoring report setting out the material financial issues identified since the 2023/24 budget which was set in February 2023. | Executive Director of Finance and Performance Executive Member for Finance and Transformation | |

CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

June 2024

Detailed Scrutiny Items

| | Suggested Topic | Reasons for Scrutiny | Officer, Chair and Executive Member | Notes |
|---------|--|--|---|--------------|
| Page 83 | 1. Agency/OPUS figures | To scrutinise whether best value is being received from the contract and the impacts of vacancies on the Council. | Executive Director of Customer and Governance, Executive Member for Finance and Performance | |
| | 2. Review of Implementation of Pay and Grading | To scrutinise the implementation of the new pay structure and terms and conditions following approval by full Council on 31 August 2023. | Assistant Director for Human Resources | |
| | 3. | | | |

Pre-Scrutiny of Executive Reports

| | Suggested Topic | Reasons for Scrutiny | Officer, Chair and Executive Member | Notes |
|----|------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--------------|
| 1. | | | | |
| 2. | | | | |

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Regular Scrutiny Items

| | Topic | Reasons for Scrutiny | Officer and Executive Member | Notes |
|---------|-----------------------------------|---|--|--------------|
| Page 84 | 1. Performance Indicators 2023/24 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide members with an update on the Council's performance across a wide range of services, as measured by Key Performance Indicators, with the aim of informing scrutiny, to include quarterly complaints reporting. | Executive Director of Finance and Performance Executive Member for Finance and Transformation | |
| | 2. Forecast Draft Outturn 2023/24 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A regular monitoring report setting out the material financial issues identified since the 2024/25 budget which was set in February 2024. | Executive Director of Finance and Performance Executive Member for Finance and Transformation | |

CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Topic Areas Beyond June 2024

Detailed Scrutiny Items

| | Suggested Topic | Reasons for Scrutiny | Officer and Executive Member | Notes |
|---------|------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Page 85 | 1. ICT Working Party | | Assistant Chief Executive, Executive Member for Finance and Transformation | Requested to be added to Workplan by Scrutiny Management Board on 27/11/23 |
| | 2. Transformation | | CLT, Executive Member for Finance and Transformation | Requested to be added to Workplan by Scrutiny Management Board on 27/11/23 |
| | 3. | | | |
| | 4. | | | |
| | 5. | | | |
| | 6. | | | |

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