

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive

At 9.00 am on Thursday 18th November, 2021 in the Council Chamber, Swanspool House, Doddington Road, Wellingborough, NN8 1BP

Present:-

Members

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

Also in attendance – Councillors Gill Mercer, Mike Tebbutt, Wendy Brackenbury, Dorothy Maxwell, Valerie Anslow, Mark Pengelly, Lyn Buckingham, Leanne Buckingham and Clive Hallam

78 Apologies for absence

No apologies for absence were received.

79 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 30th September 2021

RESOLVED that: The Executive Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 30th September 2021 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

80 Notifications of requests to address the meeting

The Chair, Councillor Jason Smithers, reported that there were six requests to address the meeting as set out below:

- Cllr Clive Hallam - Items 12 and 15
- Cllr Mark Pengelly – Items 5, 6, 7, 28, 30 and 36
- Cllr Leanne Buckingham – Items 18, 29 and 33
- Cllr Lyn Buckingham – Items 11 and 24
- Cllr Valerie Anslow – Items 20 and 35
- Cllr Dorothy Maxwell – Items 17 and 18

81 **Members' Declarations of Interest**

A personal interest was declared by Cllr Graham Lawman in Agenda Item 32 – Agreements at Chester House.

82 **Performance Indicator Report 2021/22 - Quarter Two**

The Chair, Cllr Jason Smithers invited Cllr Mark Pengelly to address the meeting. Cllr Pengelly raised concerns in relation to performance figures for the Council's customer service call centres and Business Rate collection rates.

The Chair thanked Cllr Pengelly for his contribution before introducing a report that sought to provide an update on the performance of the Council across a range of services as measured by performance indicators, as well as setting out the progress that was being made in the development of the Council's performance monitoring arrangements.

The Chair noted that the monthly performance indicator reports would remain a work in progress as targets and comparative data were developed, with all members of the Executive involved in feeding into that process. It was heard that a revised set of Performance Indicators that reflected the Council's forthcoming Corporate Plan would be discussed with the Executive prior to the end of the municipal year.

Responding to Cllr Pengelly's comments, the Executive Member for Finance and Transformation, Cllr Lloyd Bunday stated that in relation to customer service call centres, legacy systems were still in operation, although work was planned to move to a single system going forward. It was noted that the level of telephone support currently in operation remained the same as that available prior to Vesting Day. In relation to Business Rates, it was noted that collection levels had held up well in comparison to other authorities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cllrs Helen Harrison and Harriet Pentland welcomed the report and the encouraging progress being made in the development of performance measures, with Cllr Pentland making specific reference to indicators relating to the Climate Change agenda.

RESOLVED:-

That the Executive:

- a) Noted the performance of the Council measured by the available indicators at Period 6 for 2021/22 as set out in the appendices to the report; and
- b) Noted the approach that is being taken to develop the Council's performance monitoring arrangements.

Reason for Decision – to better understand the performance of the Council as measured by performance indicators as at Period 6, 2021/22.

83 Budget Strategy Process 2022-23

The Chair, Cllr Jason Smithers invited Cllr Mark Pengelly to address the meeting. Cllr Pengelly stated the importance of public consultation as part of the budget setting process and referenced the need to continue lobbying government in light of the saving requirements facing the Council. The Chair thanked Cllr Bunday for his comments.

Cllr Lloyd Bunday, Executive Member for Finance and Transformation introduced a report that set out the draft budget strategy for 2022/23 and covered the period to 2025/26. Members were asked to consider and approve the approach to consultation and Equality Impact Assessments as part of the budget setting process, alongside the process to scrutinise the draft budget and Medium-Term financial assumptions. The timeline for the process leading up to the setting of the budget was also included.

It was noted that public consultation in relation to the budget setting process was of great importance, with public accessibility to the scrutiny element of the budget also required to ensure that the Council was delivering best value for its residents.

Councillor Bunday thanked the former North Northamptonshire Shadow Authority for their work in setting the 2021/22 budget and stated that the Council's ongoing Transformation Project was critical to allow for the setting and delivering of a balanced budget going forward.

It was heard that when considering the report at its meeting on 30th November 2021, the Council's Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee had generally approved of the contents but requested an additional reserve budget scrutiny session be put in place for each Directorate to allow for additional scrutiny if required. In addition, the Committee had requested that a dedicated scrutiny session be allocated specifically for the Children's Trust and that public consultation on the draft budget should be as wide as possible, with the option to access consultation documents made available at all libraries in North Northamptonshire, not just those of the Council.

As a consequence of these recommendations, Cllr Smithers, as the Leader of the Council and Cllr Bunday, in consultation with the Assistant Chief Executive and Executive Director of Finance would be working together to put together the most robust budget consultation process possible.

RESOLVED:-

That the Executive:

- a) Approved the budget setting process set out within this report to allow a balanced budget to be set by the Council; and in consideration of the comments of the Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee as set out in Section 6 of the report;
- b) Noted the proposed timeline for the setting of the budget may be subject to change in line with Government announcements;
- c) Endorsed the proposed scrutiny arrangements as set out in Section 6 of this report following comments from the Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee also shown in Section 6.

- d) Approved the consultation proposals set out in Section 7 of the report.
- e) Delegated authority, on an equal basis, to the Leader and Executive Member for Finance and Transformation, in consultation with the Assistant Chief Executive and the Executive Director of Finance, to determine the final arrangements for the consultation process.

Reason for Decision – To seek approval for the budget strategy process for the 2022/23 budget and the medium-term financial plan to 2025/26.

84 Capital Monitoring 2021/22 - Period 6

The Chair, Cllr Jason Smithers invited Cllr Mark Pengelly to address the meeting. Cllr Pengelly raised concerns regarding underspends to the Capital and Housing Revenue Account Programmes and queried how the Council would catch up on outstanding work in regard to the affected schemes. The Chair thanked Cllr Pengelly for his contribution.

Cllr Lloyd Bunday, the Executive Member for Finance and Transformation then introduced a report which sought to set out the provisional capital outturn position for 2020/21 for all the sovereign North Northamptonshire Council authorities, and the subsequent carry forward requests from each authority due to the rephrasing of scheme expenditure profiles.

The report also detailed the latest revised capital budgets (2021/22) for the Council's General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme, including new schemes approved since 1st April 2021.

The report highlighted significant slippage in the delivery of Capital Programme schemes during 2021, most notably in relation to schemes inherited from the former Northamptonshire County Council. It was heard that the COVID-19 pandemic was a significant causal factor in highlighted delays, with a review of any risks along with a review of the appropriateness of continuing with the schemes given the priorities of the new Council to be undertaken by the Directorates and the Council's Section 151 Officer as part of the ongoing financial and project management of the programme.

Cllr Andy Mercer, Executive Member for Housing and Community responded to Cllr Pengelly's comments by noting that two of the main areas affected by programme delivery slippage were repairs and maintenance due to lockdown and other complications associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. A number of projects had been significantly delayed and a series of further reports would need to be submitted to the Executive to allow these to be restarted.

RESOLVED:-

(KEY DECISION)

That the Executive:

- a) Noted the draft capital outturn position of all sovereign council authorities for the financial year 2020/21;

- b) Noted the proposed capital carry forwards for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programmes as detailed in Appendix A.
- c) Noted the new schemes that have been approved since 1st April 2021
- d) Noted the capital outturn position for the General Fund Capital Programme and HRA Capital Programme for 2021/22 initial monitoring commentary

Reason for Decision - This is in line with the Council's constitution and financial regulations in relation to governance.

85 **Mid-Year Report 2021 – Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) and Annual Investment Strategy (AIS)**

Cllr Lloyd Bunday, Executive Member for Finance and Transformation introduced a report that provided a review of the Council's treasury management and prudential indicators following progress on the disaggregation of the assets and liabilities that were previously held by Northamptonshire County Council. In addition, the report provided an update regarding North Northamptonshire Council's treasury management activities and performance in the six months to 30th September 2021, in accordance with the CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management.

It was heard that CIPFA's Code of Practice required that members were informed at least twice annually in regard to treasury management, including updates regarding prudential indicators.

The report before members detailed:-

- An economic update by the council's treasury advisors Link
- A review of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy
- The Council's capital expenditure, as set out in the Capital Strategy, and prudential indicators
- A review of the Council's investment portfolio for 2021/22
- A review of the Council's borrowing strategy for 2021/22
- A review of any debt rescheduling undertaken during 2021/22; and
- A review of compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits for 2021/22

It was noted that the Council currently invested cash balances in excess of £200m as part of its Treasury Management arrangements with this being linked to cash flow forecasts and the ability to invest cash over different periods of time to maximise returns whilst maintaining the necessary liquidity.

RESOLVED:-

That the Executive:

- a) Noted the treasury management and prudential indicators as set out in **Appendix A** to the report;

- b) Noted the half year treasury management report detailing the activity undertaken during the first half of the financial year to 30th September 2021 and the performance achieved set out in **Appendix A** to this report; and
- c) Noted that all treasury activities were undertaken in line with the approved Treasury Management Strategy/Annual Investment Strategy.

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

86 Draft 2020/21 Outturn Positions for Corby Borough Council, East Northamptonshire District Council and Northamptonshire County Council

Cllr Lloyd Bunday, Executive Member for Finance and Transformation introduced a report that set out the draft outturn position for Corby Borough Council (CBC) and East Northamptonshire District Council (ENC) for 2020/21 and compared this to the approved budget. In addition, the report provided the latest published outturn position for the closure of the former Northamptonshire County Council's 2020/21 accounts that were being led by West Northamptonshire Council.

Cllr Bunday noted that underspends for CBC and ENC had assisted in improving the reserves position of North Northamptonshire Council. A formal Statement of Accounts was being completed for both former councils, recognising that both sets of accounts had been significantly delayed as result of complications arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

It was heard that the draft Statement of Accounts for 2019-20 for both CBC and ENC had been presented to the Audit and Governance Committee on 8th November with an expectation that the accounts would be signed off by external audit in early 2022. Accounts for Kettering Borough Council and the Borough Council of Wellingborough were nearing sign-off following audit, subject to there being no material changes.

Accounts for the former County Council were being finalised by West Northamptonshire Council with North Northamptonshire Council receiving a share of the County Council's assets and liabilities based on agreed disaggregation principles.

RESOLVED:-

That the Executive:

- a) Noted the forecast outturn position for 2020/21 for Corby Borough Council, East Northamptonshire District Council and Northamptonshire County Council including a summary of the main variations as set out in this report.
- b) Noted that the full detailed statement of accounts for Corby Borough Council and East Northamptonshire Council remain subject to External Audit and will be presented to the Council's Audit and Governance Committee once this is complete.

- c) Noted the draft outturn 2020/21 for Northamptonshire County Council and that the Statement of Accounts for the County Council will be presented to West Northamptonshire Council's Audit Committee, in line with the requirement that West Northamptonshire Council lead on the closure of the County Council's accounts.

Reason for Decision – To inform Members of the outturn position for 2020/21 for Corby Borough Council, East Northamptonshire District Council and Northamptonshire County Council as the outturn will form part of the Statutory Statement of Accounts for these Councils.

87 Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2022/23

Cllr Lloyd Bunday, Executive Member for Finance and Transformation introduced a report that updated the Executive on the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2021/22 and proposed the continuation of the scheme for 2022/23.

Cllr Bunday noted that the scheme was proposed to continue as in 2021/22 without the need to increase the minimum contribution (25%) and would remain cost neutral in 2022/23. It was heard that a change in the contribution of payment of 1% would impact the Council's budget by approximately £80,000 and any change made to the scheme would require statutory consultation. The proposal to retain the existing scheme would not require such consultation.

The proposal had been submitted to the Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 2nd November 2021 with a recommendation to Executive to continue with the existing scheme.

RESOLVED:-

(KEY DECISION)

That the Executive:

- a) Considered the information as set out in the report and endorse a proposed 2022/23 Local Council Tax Support Scheme which maintained the current 2021/22 scheme, allowing for the changes required to reflect the annual uprating of allowances and premiums and any statutory base legislation changes which are required to be made to the scheme; and
- b) Recommended the proposed LCTS Scheme 2022/23 to Council for approval at its meeting in December 2021.

Reason for Decision – to deliver a Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2022/23 that meets statutory requirements.

88 Household Support Fund: Proposed Distribution of Funds 2021/22

The Chair, Cllr Jason Smithers invited Cllr Lyn Buckingham to address the meeting. Cllr Buckingham welcomed the initiative before members and thanked the Executive for its creation.

The Chair thanked Cllr Buckingham for her contribution before introducing the report which set out the local strategy for distribution of the Household Support Fund to families and individuals experiencing specific hardship and provided details as to how Community Resilience and Community Engagement teams would attract appropriate referrals across a wide set of situational needs.

The Chair stated that at this time many residents in North Northamptonshire and across the country were feeling the pressure of ever-rising costs associated with utilities and inflation, and the Government grant of £2.465m would be vital in supporting these households going forward to the end of March 2022. As the fund was capped, there was a need for the Council to be clear as to how it would deliver support, mindful of the stipulation that a minimum of 50% of the fund must be used to support families with children. There was also a need to ensure grants awarded were not duplicated from other funding sources.

Cllrs Edwards, Harrison and Howes all welcomed the initiative and noted that the proposed levels of support would not be possible without the grant contribution from the Government. Cllr Edwards also highlighted the need to work alongside local organisations to ensure that the support was received by those who needed it most.

RESOLVED:-

(KEY DECISION)

That the Executive:

- a) Noted that the Household Support Fund investment is to be managed locally;
- b) Approved the Proposed Scope and Diversity Distribution Recommendations detailed in 4.1;
- c) Approved the control and oversight approach set out in the Appendix to the report.

Reasons for Decision:

- The distribution of funds must meet the wider communities' financial needs, where other grants and funding are not available
- Where possible the level of duplication of grants for the same purpose must be minimised which is why this year the in-house team is recommended
- It reflects the 'Levelling Up' agenda as defined by the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities.

89 Isham Bypass

The Chair, Cllr Jason Smithers invited Cllr Clive Hallam to address the meeting. Cllr Hallam acknowledged that the grant for development costs associated with the A509 Isham Bypass was positive news and thanked those involved in reaching the current position. Cllr Hallam stated that momentum must be maintained, and residents kept abreast of timescales involved in implementation of the scheme. The Chair thanked Cllr Hallam for his contribution.

Cllr Graham Lawman, Executive Member for Highways, Travel and Assets then introduced the report that informed the Executive of the grant received from the Department for Transport for the development work for the A509 Isham bypass and the intention to spend these amounts to progress this scheme to Outline Business Case and planning permission.

Cllr Lawman stated the pressures on traffic affecting Isham were well-known, and it was important that these were alleviated given the ongoing development surrounding the village. Cllr Lawman stated that a strategic outline business case had been approved with an expectation that a more detailed Outline Business Case could be submitted to the Department for Transport by July 2022 with full planning approval secured by early 2023. The funding from the Government would enable the Council to:

- Prepare and submit an Outline Business Case to the Department for Transport;
- Update the bypass design for a new planning application;
- Prepare and submit a new planning application;

Cllr Lawman praised the work of officers in regard to the scheme and noted that the construction of the Isham Bypass had been a manifesto priority.

The Chair welcomed a further £1.85m of investment in the local area as a result of lobbying the Government and acknowledged the tireless efforts of Peter Bone MP in this regard.

RESOLVED:-

(KEY DECISION)

That the Executive:

- a) Noted and accepted the receipt of the government funding totalling £1,859,000 for development work on the A509 Isham bypass; and
- b) Agreed to spend the funding on developing the Outline Business Case (OBC) and planning application for the A509 Isham bypass.

Reason for Decision - utilisation of government funding to progress the development work for the A509 Isham bypass scheme.

90 The Corporate Plan 2021-2025

The Chair, Cllr Jason Smithers introduced a report that presented the draft Corporate Plan 2021-25 for endorsement by the Executive and for recommendation to Council for formal adoption. The report also set out additional information with regard to how progress in the delivery of the Corporate Plan would be monitored.

The Chair noted that the Corporate Plan before members was the culmination of work undertaken since a report was submitted to Executive at its July meeting regarding the development of a Corporate Plan for the Council. It was heard that the plan should essentially remain a work in progress, to allow the Council to be responsive to change and had therefore been drafted in a manner that would facilitate this.

The Chair offered thanks to Executive members and the Executive Advisory Panels (EAPs) for their assistance in the development of the plan, highlighting the important role of EAPs in assisting the development of the policies of the Council.

The Chair also noted that the public consultation exercise associated with the plan had resulted in over 600 responses being received which compared positively with similar consultations, with strength of support for the Council's vision, key commitments and priorities.

It was heard that should the Executive endorse and recommend the Corporate Plan for adoption, Full Council would be requested to take this action at its meeting on 1st December 2021.

Members welcomed the Corporate Plan and the involvement of the EAPs, with Cllr Harriet Pentland noting the focus on greener, sustainable environments and that the volume of consultation responses received highlighted the importance of the plan.

Cllr David Howes requested that future reports coming to Executive should make reference to which area of the plan the subject related to, while Cllr Helen Harrison stated that the plan would prove to be a useful document for partner organisations and the communities the Council served.

RESOLVED:-

That the Executive:

- a) Endorsed the Corporate Plan 2021 – 2025, as set out in Appendix A.
- b) Recommended that Council adopt the Corporate Plan 2021 - 2025; as set out in Appendix A.
- c) Noted that progress in the delivery of the Corporate Plan, subject to Council adoption, will be regularly reported to the Executive and the Plan will remain responsive to change.

Reasons for Decisions - A Corporate Plan is a key document which sets out the overarching future policy direction of the Council. The Executive provide strategic leadership to the authority, and they will lead the organisation using the approved Corporate Plan as a framework. It is important therefore that they endorse the Plan and recommend its approval to the decision-making body which is Council.

91 Procurement of Contract for the Haulage and Treatment of Kerbside Collected Dry Recycling Material

Cllr Graham Lawman, Executive Member for Highways, Travel and Assets introduced a report that sought approval from the Executive to commence a procurement project for a contract for the haulage and treatment of dry recycling material collected as part of the Council's kerbside waste collection service.

Cllr Lawman noted that the report represented a further step towards harmonisation of waste collections in North Northamptonshire with the Council seeking best value and

to ensure recycling material was collected and recycled in an environmentally sound manner.

RESOLVED:-

(KEY DECISION)

That the Executive:

- a) Authorised procurement for the haulage and treatment of kerbside collected Dry Recycling Material (DRM) in accordance with the Council's Constitution.
- b) Delegated to the Executive Member for Highways, Travel and Assets, in consultation with Executive Director for Place & Economy, Executive Director for Finance and the Executive Member for Finance, the authority to take any further decisions and/or actions required in connection with the procurement and award of the contract, without the need to return to the Executive.

Reasons for Decision:

- The recommended course of action is the most cost-effective and enables the Council to make informed decisions regarding its medium-term financial planning.
- This option ensures the authority has a legally procured and compliant processor for its DRM.

92 Destination Nene Valley - Board Representation

The Chair, Cllr Jason Smithers invited Cllr Clive Hallam to address the meeting. Cllr Hallam welcomed Executive involvement with Destination Nene Valley and spoke in favour of further work in relation to river taxis, physical local information guides and communications with local users and groups.

The Chair thanked Cllr Hallam for his attendance and input, before Cllr Helen Howell, Executive Member for Sport, Leisure, Culture and Tourism introduced a report that sought Executive agreement in respect of representation from North Northamptonshire Council on the Destination Nene Valley Board. The report also outlined the importance of the visitor sector in the local economy and detailed some of the current initiatives being delivered to support the sector by both the Council and Destination Nene Valley.

Cllr Howell also thanked Cllr Hallam for speaking on the subject and noted that the Council would be looking at the whole area of North Northamptonshire, not just Nene Valley, the project being an important partner-based initiative in increasing the cultural, social and environmental offer, with a view to making the area a destination of choice.

It was heard that the COVID-19 pandemic had significantly impacted on the art, entertainment and recreation sector, with a range of initiatives being delivered in North Northamptonshire to provide support, both in the short-term to help the

economic recovery, and longer term to enable the visitor economy to grow and local businesses to flourish. Destination Nene Valley was noted as being an important part of this work.

The meeting also noted that new representation from the Council on the Destination Nene Valley Strategic Board would reflect new Executive roles and the need for senior level officer involvement.

Members welcomed the work being undertaken that would make the area a standard destination as well as improving the health and wellbeing for residents and offering a beneficial environmental impact.

RESOLVED:-

That the Executive:

- a) Agreed an amended membership to the Strategic Board as set out in section 4.17 of the report
- b) Noted the activities being undertaken to support the visitor economy

Reason for Decision - to ensure appropriate representation on the Destination Nene Valley Board following the creation of North Northamptonshire Council and new Executive roles

93 Food Safety and Food and Feed Standards Service Plan 2021-23

Cllr David Brackenbury, Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration introduced a report that sought approval of the Food Safety and Food and Feed Standards Service Plans for 2021-23 and made recommendations in respect of future changes to the plans to be delegated to the Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration in consultation with the Director of Place and Economy.

Cllr Brackenbury noted that the plans before members were the inaugural versions for North Northamptonshire Council, each former sovereign authority previously having had their own.

It was heard that although the COVID-19 pandemic had caused a backlog in food safety inspections, plans were in place to address this situation and there were no issues anticipated in catching up with these inspections

Cllr Lawman noted that the plans constituted a vital piece of work in regard to public protection. He stated that one of outcomes of food safety inspections was premises being awarded a food hygiene rating. He requested that the Council lobby the Government to ensure that food business premises were required to display their ratings publicly, as was currently the case in Wales.

RESOLVED:-

(KEY DECISION)

That the Executive:

- a) Approved the Food Safety and Food and Feed Standards Service Plans 2021-23;
- b) Delegated authority to the Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration in consultation with the Director of Place and Economy to approve future changes to the plans.

Reason for Decision:

- To accord with legislation as detailed in paragraph 2.1
- To allow changes to the plan to be agreed without Executive approval

94 **Bus Service Improvement Plan**

The Chair welcomed Cllr Dorothy Maxwell to the meeting to address the committee. Cllr Maxwell welcomed the report and referenced current poor connectivity between rural areas and important locations such as hospitals, retail centres and transport links. Cllr Maxwell considered that improvements to the current offer would be beneficial for North Northamptonshire's more isolated residents.

Cllr Graham Lawman, Executive Member for Highways, Travel and Assets thanked Cllr Maxwell for her contribution. It was heard that the Executive had previously committed to the production of a Bus Service Improvement Plan that had been approved under delegated powers. Focus could now turn to forming an Enhanced Partnership with bus operators, with discussions already having taken place with a view to support existing bus routes and re-opening former routes, alongside the provision of new reliable services and customer information.

The meeting heard that formation of an Enhanced Partnership would allow the Council to bid for funding as part of the Government's Bus Back Better strategy. It was considered that the financial outlay required was modest compared to the potential social return.

Members positively reflected on the proposals noting that rural connectivity and isolation was a pressing issue for large areas of North Northamptonshire.

RESOLVED:-

(KEY DECISION)

That the Executive:

- a) Endorsed the Bus Service Improvement Plan in **Appendix A**;
- b) Noted the additional £154,450 capacity funding received from Government; and
- c) Agreed that the proposal for restoring a subsidised bus service budget outlined in the Bus Service Improvement Plan should be included as part of the consultation on the Council's budget proposals for 2022-23 and beyond.

Reason for Decisions:

- To improve bus services for North Northamptonshire communities, enable more communities to have a bus service and minimise the risk of any communities losing their bus service;
- To facilitate climate and environmental benefits through increasing bus use and the operation of more low emission buses;
- To contribute to the implementation of the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan (the Local Transport Plan);
- To enable the Council to access the funding being made available by Government to support the National Bus Strategy.

95 Northamptonshire Youth Justice Plan

The Chair invited both Cllr Leanne Buckingham and Cllr Dorothy Maxwell to address the committee in relation to this item. Cllr Buckingham welcomed the report but cautioned that funding provided by Government grants was not always guaranteed from year to year and that work needed to be undertaken in good time to ensure the service continued to be deliverable. Cllr Maxwell referred to the lack of funding available for tutoring and IT equipment for young offenders and queried the location of young people based outside the county.

The Chair thanked Cllrs Leanne Buckingham and Dorothy Maxwell for their contributions.

Cllr Scott Edwards, Executive Member for Children, Families, Education and Skills introduced the report which detailed the Council's statutory duty to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan which provided specified information about the local provision of youth justice services. The Executive was requested to recommend to Council that the plan be adopted.

In response to Cllrs Buckingham and Maxwell, Cllr Edwards stated that he would look into the grants position to ensure that the service remained adequately funded. Cllr Edwards assured Cllr Maxwell he would provide an answer as to the location of young people located outside the county

RESOLVED:-

That the Executive endorsed the Youth Justice Plan and recommended it for approval to Council.

96 Procurement of Catering Services at Corby East Midlands International Pool

Cllr Helen Howell, Executive Member for Sport, Leisure, Culture and Tourism introduced a report that sought Executive agreement to identify a suitably qualified and experienced catering provider to operate the concession facility at Corby East Midlands International Pool. The report also sought delegation of authority from the Executive to the Executive Member for Sport, Leisure, Culture and Tourism in liaison with the Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing to take any further decisions and/or actions required to conclude this procurement.

It was heard that the current catering service at the Corby East Midlands International Pool was operated in-house and was forecast to make a loss, mainly due to forced closure as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The aspiration was that the service be delivered by a third-party at no cost to the Council, with any income received being a bonus. The Council would retain ownership of all equipment and furniture in situ, with the concessionaire to invest in any additional equipment needed to provide a full service.

RESOLVED:-

That the Executive:

- a) Approved the procurement of catering provision at Corby East Midlands International Pool (CEMIP).
- b) Delegated authority to the Executive Member for Sport, Leisure, Culture and Tourism, in consultation with the Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing, to take any further decisions and/or actions required in connection with the procurement and award of the contract.

Reasons for Decision –

- The recommended course of action will be the most cost-effective way of running the provision of the café and catering facilities within CEMIP
- Customers within the facility will be able to access a catering service that meets their needs with increased opening hours and choice.
- Maintaining a café and catering service in this facility adds to the offer available for the community and supports events including children's parties, swim galas and diving competitions.

97 Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme

The Chair welcomed Cllr Valerie Anslow to address the meeting. Cllr Anslow stated that it was good to see Government funding secured to purchase ten properties across the main towns in North Northamptonshire for use by rough sleepers but queried whether there would be extra consideration given to Wellingborough given the lack of facilities for the homeless in the town. In addition, Cllr Anslow referenced the Homeless Forum and queried when this might be convened. The Chair thanked Cllr Anslow for her contribution.

Cllr Andy Mercer, Executive Member for Housing and Communities introduced the report which sought Executive's approval to allocate £580,250 from the Homelessness Prevention capital budget to the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme for the purchase, repair and furnishing of ten one-bed properties to provide accommodation with floating support for rough sleepers. The report also sought delegated authority to the Executive Member for Housing and Communities, in liaison with the Executive Director of Adults, Communities and Wellbeing to take any further decisions and/or actions required to deliver this capital project.

RESOLVED:-

(KEY DECISION)

That the Executive:

- a) Approved the allocation of £580,250 from the Homelessness Prevention capital budget to the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme; and
- b) Delegated authority to the Executive Member for Housing and Communities, in liaison with the Executive Director of Adults, Communities and Wellbeing to take any further decisions and/or actions required to deliver this capital project.

98 Mobile Home Fees and Assessment Policy

Cllr David Brackenbury, Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration introduced a report that sought Executive approval for the introduction of an application fee for both a mobile homes licence and for a site owner to be assessed under a Fit and Proper Person Assessment and to be included on a Register of the same.

Cllr Brackenbury noted that the Council was required to adopt a policy in relation to fees associated with the licensing of mobile home sites, including the new requirement for a Fit and Proper Person Assessment in order to comply with its statutory duties under the Mobile Homes Act 2013 and The Mobile Homes (Requirement for Manager of Site to be Fit and Proper Person) (England) Regulations 2020.

It was heard that the Council's Licensing and Appeals Committee would be requested to adopt the proposed Mobile Homes Fees and Assessment Policy at its meeting on 22nd November 2021.

RESOLVED:-

(KEY DECISION)

That the Executive approved the charging of an application fee for both a mobile homes licence and for a site owner to be assessed under a Fit and Proper Person Assessment and be included on a Register.

Reasons for Decision

- The approval of this recommendation under a regulatory framework, will allow authorised Officers to manage the licensing process and allow the Council to fulfil its statutory duties under the Mobile Homes Act 2013 and The Mobile Homes (Requirement for Manager of Site to be Fit and Proper Person) (England) Regulations 2020.
- It is intended that the Licensing and Appeals Committee adopt the proposed Mobile Homes Fees and Assessment Policy, as set out at **Appendix A**.

99 North Northamptonshire Waste & Recycling Policy & Street Cleansing Policies

Cllr Graham Lawman, Executive Member for Highways, Travel and Assets introduced a report that sought Executive approval to adopt the North Northamptonshire Waste and Recycling Policy and the North Northamptonshire Street Cleansing Policy.

Cllr Lawman noted the visible and important nature of the services concerned and noted that the revised policies contained minor revisions and amendments to those agreed by the former North Northamptonshire Shadow Authority and clarified the services available to residents.

RESOLVED:-

(KEY DECISION)

That the Executive:

- a) Approved the Household Waste and Recycling Policy;
- b) Approve the Street Cleansing Policy; and
- c) Agreed to expand the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) collections to cover the whole of the Council's area (Corby, Kettering & Wellingborough) on a phased basis, subject to the identification of the necessary budget.

Reasons for Decisions:

- To ensure North Northamptonshire has an agreed set of waste and recycling policies and street cleansing policies to ensure clarity for residents on the service standards to be delivered:
- To enable enforcement action to be taken where appropriate:
- Allow a review of services where harmonisation is not currently possible and provide future recommendations on the delivery of these services

100 Modern Slavery Statement 2021-22

Cllr Andy Mercer, Executive Member for Housing and Communities presented a report that sought Executive approval of the Modern Slavery Statement as a position statement for North Northamptonshire Council.

The meeting noted that adoption of such a statement demonstrated the Council's commitment to the principles contained in the legislation of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

RESOLVED:-

(KEY DECISION)

That the Executive approved the statement on Modern Slavery as a position statement for North Northamptonshire Council.

Reasons for Decision: To promote the abolition of modern slavery, commercial organisations are required to publish an annual statement setting out the steps they take to prevent modern slavery in their business and their supply chains. This is a requirement under section 54 (Transparency in Supply Chains) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. It is considered good practice for organisations which are not required to publish such a statement to do so in any event to demonstrate their commitment to the principles contained in the legislation.

101 Council Housing Policy Update

The Chair invited Cllr Lyn Buckingham to address the meeting in relation to this item. Cllr Buckingham considered that the policies before members could unfairly impact existing secure tenants and could also have an impact on disabled tenants, questioning whether an Equality Impact Assessment had previously been brought to committees involved in the policy production.

Cllr Andy Mercer, Executive Member for Housing and Communities thanked Cllr Buckingham for her comments before presenting a report that sought approval for the Tenancy Agreement and Aids and Adaptations Policy. Following legal advice, it was heard that the Tenancy Policy that also formed part of the report needed to be approved by Full Council and not the Executive.

Cllr Mercer proposed that the Executive recommend to Full Council that it be the body to adopt the Tenancy Policy and recommended that Executive adopted the Tenancy Agreement and Aids and Adaptation policy while removing the delegation request in relation to the Tenancy Policy.

RESOLVED:-

(KEY DECISION)

That the Executive:

- a) Approved the Tenancy Agreement and Aids and Adaptation Policy for adoption;
- b) Recommended that the Tenancy Policy be approved by Full Council following relevant legal advice;
- c) Delegated authority to the Executive Member for Housing and Communities, in liaison with the Executive Director, Adults, Communities and Wellbeing or their delegate, to take any further decisions and/or actions required to implement Tenancy Agreement and Aids and Adaptation Policy.

Reasons for Decision:

- Comply with legislation that requires all social housing providers to have a Tenancy Policy.
- Offer one consistent Tenancy Agreement for the Council as a landlord.
- Provide one tenancy offer to all successful applicants within the North Northamptonshire Council area.
- Continue harmonising our suite of Council Housing policies for Tenancy Management, Housing Management and Property Management

102 Extension of Public Spaces Protection Order, Corby Town Centre

Cllr Andy Mercer, Executive Member for Housing and Communities introduced a report that sought approval to commence consultation on the extension of the Public Spaces Protection Order until November 2024 to cover Corby town centre. The report also sought approval for authority to be delegated from the Executive to the Executive Member for Housing and Communities, in liaison with the Executive Director, Adults, Community and Wellbeing to determine whether to extend the order, vary the order or allow the order to lapse, taking account of all consultation responses and to take any further decisions and/or actions required to deliver this extension.

It was heard that PSPOs were valid for a period of three years and were intended to deal with a range of nuisance behaviours that affected the community's quality.

Cllr Helen Harrison stated that it would be interesting to view the consultation response and to analyse the impact the existing order had seen to better gauge the level of protection and improvement to Anti-Social Behaviour in the affected area.

RESOLVED:-

(KEY DECISION)

That the Executive:

- a) Approved the commencement of consultation on the extension of the Public Spaces Protection Order currently in place for Corby for a further three years on the current terms; and
- b) Delegated authority to the Executive Member for Housing and Communities, in liaison with the Executive Director, Adults, Community & Wellbeing to:
 - i) determine whether to extend the order, vary the order or allow the order to lapse, taking account of all consultation responses;
 - ii) take any further decisions and/or actions required to deliver this extension.

Reason for Decision:

- To give authorised officers the ability to continue to use enforcement powers under the PSPO to respond to alcohol related anti-social behaviour and begging within Corby town centre
- In addition, it will support with the wider aims of the Safer Corby team to work in partnership with other agencies to tackle issues which affect the quality of life of residents and visitors to the area

103 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Report 2020-21

The Chair, Cllr Jason Smithers introduced a report from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) detailing complaints that had been received relating to the former sovereign authorities of Corby Borough Council, East Northamptonshire District Council, Kettering Borough Council, Northamptonshire County Council and the Borough Council of Wellingborough between 1st April 2020 and 31st March 2021. Complaints reaching the LGSCO were the final stage of the complaint process following the exhaustion of a council's own complaints procedure.

The Chair noted that the number of cases for the former borough and district councils were very low and figures for complaints relating to the former County Council were not divided between North and West, although the authority had fewer cases upheld by the Ombudsman compared with similar authorities. In the majority of cases, the sovereign authorities had been able to resolve matters fairly and recompense complainants where appropriate.

The Chair concluded by stating that the annual Ombudsman report for 2021/22 would detail unresolved complaints made against North Northamptonshire Council and would provide the opportunity to understand how the Council had made a difference to quality of life and outcomes for its residents.

RESOLVED:-

That the Executive noted the content and recommendations of the Ombudsman's reports.

104 Treescape Funding

Cllr Graham Lawman, Executive Member for Highways, Travel and Assets introduced a report that sought Executive approval to accept grant funding of £237,504.10 offered through the Local Authority Treescape Fund to plant 1,040 trees in North Northamptonshire. Acceptance of the funding would allow the schemes to move forward to procurement and delivery.

The meeting heard that a number of sites for planting had been identified and further grant funding of approximately £60,000 would be received annually to fund ongoing maintenance of the trees to provide them with the best opportunity to reach maturity.

Members welcomed the news and thanked officers for their efforts in securing the grant funding.

RESOLVED: -

That the Executive:

- a) Accept the grant monies offered by the Forestry Commission for the proposed tree planting scheme; and
- b) Approve the capital budget of £237,504.10 funded by external grant monies, per the separate capital budget report.

Reason for Decisions:

- The proposed scheme will enhance the Council's green space through planting of trees.
- The scheme supports the Council's ambition for climate change mitigation.
- The recommended course of action is the most cost-effective, being funded externally.

105 Ending of East Northamptonshire Area Housing Options Contract - Bringing the Service In-house

The Chair, Cllr Jason Smithers invited Cllr Mark Pengelly to address the meeting. Cllr Pengelly stated that the Labour group welcomed the move to bring Housing Options covering the East Northamptonshire area in-house to provide a joined-up service across the whole Council area. Cllr Pengelly thanked officers for looking after staff operating the current service and allowing them to transfer to the Council under TUPE regulations.

Cllr Andy Mercer, Executive Member for Housing and Communities then presented the report which sought endorsement for the East Northamptonshire area Housing Options service delivery to be included in the current in-house service delivered by the Council in line with the other three localities in North Northamptonshire. Cllr Mercer noted that by bringing the service in-house it would allow the Council to direct resources where they were needed most and would assist in avoiding issues where specific areas were short of staffing capacity.

RESOLVED:-

That the Executive:

- a) Confirm that the Council should discharge its obligations in respect of homelessness and housing advice in the East Northamptonshire locality area in-house with effect from 1st April 2022; and
- b) Delegate authority to the Executive Member for Housing and Communities, in consultation with the Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing, to take the steps necessary to implement the in-house provision of the East Northants area housing options service.

Reason for Decisions: To enable the implementation of a single operating model for Housing Options Services across North Northamptonshire, in order to align with local

government reform and transformation, to streamline service provision, and to introduce more efficient and harmonised arrangements. This should lead to an improved service focussed on the needs of the Council.

106 Corby Town Investment Plan - Programme of Projects

The Chair invited Cllr Leanne Buckingham to address the meeting. Cllr Buckingham welcomed the provision for the Sixth Form Centre at Chisholm House but queried whether the process to bring this to fruition could be sped up.

The Chair thanked Cllr Buckingham for attending and stated that any opportunity arising to speed up the delivery of projects would be considered.

Cllr David Brackenbury, Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration then presented a report that sought approval for the early release of 5% (£995,000 approx.) of the Town Fund award to the Capital Programme in order to fund the design work, feasibility studies and business case development (including accurate financial projections) for four projects detailed within Corby's Town Investment Plan.

Cllr Brackenbury congratulated and thanked all those involved in the work that had resulted in the award of £19.9m of grant funding through the Government's Town Fund.

RESOLVED:-

(KEY DECISION)

That the Executive:

- a) Approved the early release of 5% (£995,000 approx.) of the Town Fund award to the Capital Programme in order to fund the design work, feasibility studies and business case development (including accurate financial projections for each project, mainly the Link Road and the Multi-use Building)

Reasons for Decisions:-

- This funding will support and inform the development of business cases to the standard set by government in order to allow progression to the next stage of the process.
- Should any of these projects prove to be unviable through the business case development, this 5% is not subject to clawback.

107 Procurement of a Single Revenue & Benefits ICT System for North Northamptonshire

The Chair, Cllr Jason Smithers invited Cllr Mark Pengelly to address the meeting. Cllr Pengelly welcome the procurement of a new ICT system for the Revenues and Benefits depart, although he noted that the report contained little in the way of risks associated with a new system. Cllr Pengelly stated that often with new IT systems there are teething issues and called for extensive testing prior to the system being made live.

Cllr Lloyd Bunday, Executive Member for Finance and Transformation then introduced the report that sought the approval of Executive to commence a procurement process for a single Revenue and Benefits ICT system for the Council. Cllr Bunday noted that such a system was critical to the income of the Council, operating thousands of monthly transactions as well as being the mechanism to provide support to businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. Current operations had four legacy systems in place, a new, reliable system that was fit for purpose would also reduce the chance of human error.

RESOLVED:-

(KEY DECISION)

That the Executive:

- a) Approved the commencement of the procurement process to purchase and implement a single Revenue and Benefits ICT System for North Northamptonshire.
- b) Delegated authority to the Executive Member for Finance and Transformation, in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance, to take any further decisions and/or actions required to conclude the procurement and implementation of the new system.

Reason for Decisions – The Council will gain productivity efficiencies from a single system for Revenues and Benefits by enabling single source reporting and support for billing. It will remove current issues of sovereign council system incompatibility and will assist the Council to provide a unified platform to provide information for residents and businesses. Interactions with the Council will be simplified and require less internal resource.

108 Proposal to Establish a Poverty Truth Commission for North Northamptonshire

Cllr Helen Harrison, Executive Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing presented a report requesting that the Executive consider establishing a Poverty Truth Commission for North Northamptonshire as well as seeking delegation of authority from the Executive to the Executive Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing in liaison with the Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing, to take any further decisions and/or actions required to conclude this grant process and deliver the programme.

Cllr Harrison stated that 37,400 households in North Northamptonshire were impacted by some form of income deprivation with 11,500 households in fuel poverty. In addition, the most deprived areas fell within the top 20% of the most deprived areas nationally. Evidence from the Poverty Truth Network demonstrated the benefits in creating a Poverty Truth Commission that would assist in understanding how poverty affected the day to day lives of residents.

If approved, the proposal would grant funding to Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire of £14,426 to create the Poverty Truth Commission, with funding covered from the existing Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise grant budget for 2021/22.

It was considered that this would be an important piece of work to allow the Council to better understand the lives of people living in poverty as well as informing other key priorities for the Council such as Levelling Up and addressing health inequalities.

Members welcomed the proposal, especially in light of the current financial climate with rising utility prices and increasing inflation.

RESOLVED:-

That the Executive:

- a) Establish a Poverty Truth Commission to be facilitated by Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire;
- b) Award grant funding to Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire of £14,426 for the purpose of facilitating the creation and management of a poverty truth commission;
- c) Delegate authority to the Executive Member for Adults, Health & Wellbeing, in consultation with the Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing, to take any further decisions and / or actions required in relation to the award of the grant funding.

109 Rental Agreements at Chester House

Councillor Helen Howell, Executive Member for Sport, Leisure, Culture and Tourism presented a report concerning the letting of an area of space within one of the retail units on the Chester House Estate. An alternative offer was made to all unsuccessful applicants that submitted expressions of interest for retail units at the attraction that they could let an area of the visitor centre as an alternative. An elected Council member had expressed an interest under these terms, and as such the decision was before the Executive to ensure openness, transparency and accountability.

Cllr Graham Lawman abstained on voting in relation to this item as a result of the personal interest declared under Agenda Item 4.

RESOLVED:-

That the Executive:

- a) Approved the letting of a portion of space within one of the retail units at Chester House Estate on the terms agreed within paragraph 5 of the report.
- b) Noted that the recommended decision affects an elected member and in line with Guidance attached at **Appendix A**, the Executive as the relevant decision-making body have considered the matter.

Reasons for Decisions:

- In order to maximise income and move towards Chester House Estate becoming self-funding a business plan was agreed at a previous Executive meeting.
- As part of the business plan there are a number of retail units that were offered to the open market and have attracted a number of local businesses to the site and enhances the heritage attraction offer.
- There was significant interest in the retail units and this exceeded the volume of retail units available for letting.
- There are some units that are run by the attraction itself and it was identified by the officers running the attraction that it would be possible to make some space available within those units to unsuccessful applicants for the main retail units.

110 Capital Programme Update 2021-22

The Chair invited Cllr Leanne Buckingham to speak in relation to this item. Cllr Buckingham stated her disappointment that the report did not contain mention on street lighting, an issue that was frequently raised to members by members of the public in relation to the perceived impact in regard to crime and feelings of safety among residents.

The Chair thanked Cllr Buckingham for her attendance before Cllr Lloyd Bunday, Executive Member for Finance and Transformation introduced the report that requested approval for capital schemes that had come forward for inclusion in the Council's Capital Programme. Approval of the funding would allow the schemes to move forward to procurement and delivery.

Eight schemes were highlighted as per the report and recommendation below.

Cllr Graham Lawman, responding to Cllr Buckingham's comments noted that a project was underway to identify which of the streetlights across North Northamptonshire were the responsibility of the Council.

RESOLVED:-

(KEY DECISION)

That the Executive approved the following changes to the capital programme:

- a) Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme (RSAP):
 - i. to increase the overall capital programme by £0.580m recognising the £0.580m RSAP grant allocation, with the remainder of the programme funded through £0.580m match funding;
 - ii. To recommend to Council the virement of the required match funding of £0.580m from the Housing and Homelessness Prevention approved programme to the RSAP;
- b) Devolved Formula Capital Grant Funding 2021/22 – to increase the fund by £281k to reflect additional funding allocated by the Department for Education;

- c) Disabled Facilities Grant Programme 2021/22 – to increase the fund by £311k following confirmation of grant funding allocation.
- d) Oundle Cycle Way – to include the sum of £125k funded by Oundle Town Council;
- e) Treescapes Transformation – to include the sum of £238k funded by a grant from the Forestry Commission;
- f) Corby Town Fund – to include £0.975m for preliminary design and development costs, funded by early release of funding awarded from the Levelling Up Fund;
- g) Isham Bypass - to include in the capital programme funding of £1.859m to develop an outline business case, funded by the Department for Transport Major Road Network Capital Grant.
- h) Improving Access for Disabled People – to vire £50k from an underspend on the roof renewals budget to progress urgent cases on the current waiting list.
- i) Recommended that Council approve the virement of £0.580m from the housing and homelessness programme to the RSAP.

Reasons for Decisions:

- To increase the number of supported housing units available to rough sleepers and therefore reduce the number of individuals sleeping rough in North Northamptonshire.
- To pass on capital grants provided as part of annual allocations by government to schools.
- To allow final grant allocations to be recognised and utilised to support adaptations and other related spend through Disabled Facility Grants.
- To support increases to cycling provision as part of healthy living and the carbon neutral agenda.
- Increased tree canopy outside of woodlands supporting the carbon neutral agenda.
- To deliver essential highways infrastructure to support growth and development in North Northamptonshire.
- To deliver essential access for people with disabilities within their homes when providing facilities as accessible showers and stairlifts.

111 Budget Forecast 2021/22 as at Period 6

Councillor Lloyd Bunday, Executive Member for Finance and Transformation introduced a report of the Executive Director for Finance setting out the forecast outturn position for the Council based on the period 6 monitoring forecasts for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account.

It was noted that there was currently a forecast overspend against the budget of £26,000, a positive movement of £47,000 and budget variances were outlined to the meeting. Cllr Bunday identified a number of areas of risk, noting that Adult Social Care and Children's Services were volatile and budgetary conversations with the Children's

Trust would be forthcoming. In addition, employment and vacancies remained volatile while reorganisation continued. Employment situation and vacancies while working on reorg still volatile.

The Chair noted that each Executive Member had a strong grip on the financial position of their respective portfolios and this was vital to ensuring the Council remained financially sustainable.

RESOLVED:-

(KEY DECISION)

That the Executive:

- a) Noted the Council's forecast outturn position for 2021/22 and the associated risks and other considerations.
- b) Noted the assessment of the current deliverability of the 2021/22 saving proposals in Appendix A.
- c) Noted that in accordance with the Council's Constitution the Executive Director of Finance (S151 Officer), in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and Transformation, has approved funding of up to £16,263 to the operator of the Bus Service W8 between Wollaston, Bozeat and Wellingborough to cover the period from 8th November 2021 to 1st April 2022.
- d) Noted and approved the application of the Council's contingency budget in 2021/22 as set out in paragraph 5.5.
- e) Approved an increase in the gross revenue budget to reflect additional Household Support Fund grant received from Government. It is forecast that this figure will be £2.508m based on the allocation for the County, however, final confirmation is awaited from government on the individual allocations to North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council, see paragraph 5.65.
- f) Noted that an urgent decision was made to approve the funding of Free School Meal vouchers for the October half term at an approximate cost of £0.152m from the Household Support Fund.
- g) Approved the use of the Household Support Fund grant to meet the estimated cost of £0.305m for Free School Meal vouchers for the Christmas break and note that a separate report is on the agenda for this Committee proposing the use of the Household Support Fund.
- h) Noted that an urgent decision was made to increase the Council's minimum hourly wage rate for staff to the Real Living Wage of £9.50 per hour at an estimated cost of £0.8m to be funded from the Council's contingency budget in year and included within the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan from 2022/23.

Reason for Decisions – to note the forecast financial position for 2021/22 as at Period 6 and consider the impact on this year and future years budgets.

112 Urgent Items

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

113 Exclusion of the Press and Public

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

RESOLVED:-

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

- Item 35 - Approval to purchase six properties for Temporary Accommodation in Kettering
- Item 36 - Future provision of services provided by Wellingborough Norse
- Item 37 - Extension of current contract for the Processing and Treatment of Waste Wood

114 Approval to Purchase Six Properties for Temporary Accommodation in Kettering

Cllr Andy Mercer, Executive Member for Housing and Communities introduced a report that sought approval to purchase six properties in Kettering to be added to the Council's Temporary Accommodation portfolio.

Cllr Mercer noted that the Council had a statutory responsibility to house homeless people and temporary accommodation was utilised in relation to that, with current stocks being low resulting a small number of residents being housed outside North Northamptonshire. The opportunity to purchase the properties would increase the Council's temporary accommodation offer and would be funded from the Council's General Fund account.

RESOLVED:-

(KEY DECISION)

That the Executive:

- a) Approved the proposal to purchase six properties in Kettering which will be used to discharge the Council's duties and powers under part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.
- b) Delegated authority to the Executive Member for Housing and Communities, in liaison with the Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing, to take any further decisions and/or actions required to conclude this procurement and deliver this capital programme.

Reason for Decisions –

- There is an existing capital budget available which was allocated to enable purchases of properties which can be used for Temporary Accommodation
- There is a particular shortage of one bed properties available for Temporary Accommodation
- There is a need for Temporary Accommodation properties which are suitable for households who require ground floor accommodation
- If the opportunity is not taken to purchase the properties, the flats currently leased will no longer be available and more costly alternative forms of accommodation would need to be found for eligible households (e.g., nightly paid or bed and breakfast accommodation)
- The purchase of properties for this use means that the Council acquires an asset against which an ongoing income can be collected in the form of rental payments. This reduces pressure on the homelessness revenue budget which would otherwise have to cover the costs of other types of temporary accommodation.

115 **Future Provision of Services Provided by Wellingborough Norse**

The Chair invited Cllr Mark Pengelly to address the Executive in relation to this item. Cllr Pengelly welcomed the opportunity to bring the service back in-house and noted the benefits of the in-house service offered in the former Corby and Kettering areas.

The report was then introduced by Cllr Graham Lawman, Executive Member for Highways, Travel and Assets who noted that the current service was a joint venture between the former Borough Council of Wellingborough and NORSE, comprising waste collections, street scene and various other services. The current contract was due to cease at the end of March 2022 and it was proposed to exercise one of six options to bring the services in-house and join them with the existing service provision covering the Corby and Kettering areas.

RESOLVED:-

(KEY DECISION)

That the Executive:

- i) Agreed to transfer the services currently provided by WNorse back to NNC to directly manage and deliver these services from 1st April 2022;
- ii) Delegated authority to procure and sign the necessary contracts to implement an in-house model to the Executive Member for Highways,

Travel and Assets, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and the Executive Director for Place and Economy;

- iii) Agreed a project budget of £80k (revenue) to enable the project to be implemented within the required timeframes.

Reasons for Decisions:

- The option enables NNC to align the in-house services of Corby and Kettering with the services covering Wellingborough;
- The option will allow further transformation and integration with existing services within NNC;
- The current service level provided by WNorse is not in line with NNC's aspirations; greater control and management of performance can be achieved in-house;
- A project team is required to ensure a successful implementation; this requires external advice from those who have undertaken similar work in similarly short timeframes;
- Delegation for the implementation of the project is recommended to ensure the project can progress in line with the required timeframes; and,
- The option ensures key services, some of which are statutory, will be delivered from 1st April 2022.

116 Extension of Current Contract for the Processing and Treatment of Waste Wood

Cllr Graham Lawman, Executive Member for Highways, Travel and Assets introduced a report that sought approval from the Executive to extend the current contract for the processing and treatment of wood waste arising from the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs), beyond March 2022.

RESOLVED:-

(KEY DECISION)

That the Executive:

- a. Exercised the option to extend the existing agreement until 31st March 2024; and
- b. Delegated authority to the Executive Member for Highways, Travel & Assets, in consultation with the Executive Director for Place and Economy (Deputy Chief Executive), Executive Member for Finance and the Executive Director for Finance, to take decisions necessary to ensure continued service provision under the contract.

Reasons for Decisions:

- The option proposed aligns most closely with local government reform and transformation outcomes noting that the wood waste requiring treatment forms part of waste generated by the HWRC service which will run

contractually to end of March 2025 under a lead authority model with North Northamptonshire as lead;

- The recommended course of action is the most cost-effective;
- Extension of the wood waste contract allows for the accord with current legislation;
- Consistency with previous contractual extension decisions.

Chair

Date

The meeting closed at 11.50 am