

# Public Document Pack




**North  
Northamptonshire  
Council**

**Meeting:** Executive  
**Date:** Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021  
**Time:** 10:00 am  
**Venue:** Council Chamber, Swanspool House, Doddington Road, Wellingborough, NN8 1BP

To members of the Executive

Councillors Jason Smithers (Chair), Helen Howell (Vice-Chair), David Brackenbury, Lloyd Bunday, Scott Edwards, Helen Harrison, David Howes, Graham Lawman, Andy Mercer and Harriet Pentland

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**Committee Officer:** David Pope

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ITEM	NARRATIVE	DEADLINE
Members of the Public Agenda Statements	Members of the Public who live or work in the North Northamptonshire council area may make statements in relation to reports on the public part of this agenda. A request to address the Executive must be received 2 clear working days prior to the meeting at <a href="mailto:democraticservices@northnorthants.gov.uk">democraticservices@northnorthants.gov.uk</a> . Each Member of the Public has a maximum of 3 minutes to address the committee.	5:00 pm Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> December 2021

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## **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 30<sup>th</sup> 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 30<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 30<sup>th</sup> 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 8<sup>th</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 22<sup>nd</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 and 31<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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) TreescapE 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 passport 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 current 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 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021 to 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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.

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Chair

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Date

The meeting closed at 11.50 am

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## EXECUTIVE 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Local Economic Recovery and Growth</b>
<b>Report Author</b>	George Candler, Executive Director for Place and Economy
<b>Executive Member</b>	Cllr David Brackenbury, Executive Member for Growth & Regeneration

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

### List of Appendices

#### **Appendix A – List of successful Community Renewal Fund projects**

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

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- 1.1 This report outlines some of the main activities that the council is currently undertaking to support economic recovery and growth. It includes details of successful funding bids through the UK Government's Community Renewal Fund and Welcome Back Fund, progress with activities funded via the Additional Restrictions Grant, opportunities to bid for further funding through the Levelling Up Fund and ahead to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Furthermore, the report provides an update on the Construction Skills 2 project. Executive is also asked to agree plans to produce an Economic Prospectus for the area.

#### **2. Executive Summary**

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- 2.1 As with all areas of the country, the economy in North Northamptonshire has been severely impacted by the Covid pandemic.
- 2.2 This report provides an update on the range of support measures being delivered by Council, including:

- Community Renewal Fund – over £2.8m secured to deliver nine projects
- Welcome Back Fund - an additional £312k secured to support the town centres through immediate actions
- Additional Restrictions Grant – payment of grants and new schemes targeted at Hospitality and Tourism sector, business support, and to support economic recovery through innovation
- Levelling-Up Fund – opportunity to bid for funding for major infrastructure projects
- Proposals to develop an Economic Prospectus for the area

### **3. Recommendations**

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3.1 It is recommended that the Executive:

- a) Endorse the activities being undertaken to support economic recovery and business growth across North Northamptonshire
- b) Approve receipt of Community Renewal Funding to the value set out in paragraph 4.7
- c) Agree that the council enters into grant funding agreements with the lead bodies for the Community Renewal Fund projects listed in paragraph 4.9
- d) Agree that Additional Restrictions Grant continues to be focused on the four priorities and associated schemes set out in paragraph 4.13 including making amendments to eligibility criteria and running further funding rounds to maximise impact in consultation with the Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration and the Assistant Director for Growth and Regeneration
- e) Support the work to develop a pipeline of projects which could form the basis for future bids to the Levelling Up Fund or similar programmes
- f) Agree that work commences on the preparation of a new Economic Prospectus for the area

3.2 Reason for Recommendations:

- To endorse current activities, agree to progress agreements and other activities relating to the Community Renewal Fund, ensure continued support through the Additional Restrictions Grant, and support plans to produce a new Economic Prospectus for the area

### **4. Report Background**

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4.1 North Northamptonshire has more than 16,875 businesses, 86.9% are micro-businesses (fewer than 10 employees)<sup>1</sup>. The impact of the Covid pandemic has been felt across the economy, with some sectors more severely impacted. At the start of 2021, 27.4% of businesses in North Northamptonshire had temporarily closed or paused trading.<sup>2</sup> At the peak of the pandemic, 55,000 people were furloughed in North Northamptonshire, with Accommodation, Manufacturing and Transport the sectors which were most affected.

4.2 Whilst job postings remain high, the current claimant count is 4.3% (9,135 people) compared with a national figure of 5.0%.

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<sup>1</sup> NOMIS Labour Market Profile

<sup>2</sup> Office for National Statistics, Business Impact of Coronavirus Survey

- 4.3 NNC recently commissioned SEMLEP to undertake a boosted sample of local businesses for their bi-annual Business Survey. The aim was to create better insights for the new area of North Northamptonshire. Initial results highlight the following findings:
- Lack of skilled labour is the second greatest constraint to business growth after the Covid pandemic
  - Most businesses have not set a target to become net zero by 2030
  - The central location of the area is its greatest asset by local businesses
- 4.4 A wide range of initiatives are being delivered via NNC to support local economic recovery, with targeted support being focussed on the sectors of the economy which have been worst hit. These are detailed below:

#### Community Renewal Fund

- 4.5 The UK COMMUNITY RENEWAL FUND (CRF) was launched by the Government in March 2021 and comprises £220 million additional funding to help places across the UK prepare for the introduction of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) in 2022. This new Fund aims to support people and communities most in need across the UK to pilot programmes and new approaches and will invest in skills, community and place, local business, and supporting people into employment.
- 4.6 The council issued a call for projects and evaluated all submissions. A shortlist was produced, endorsed by Executive and submitted to Government in June.
- 4.7 Government announced last month that nine projects have successfully secured funding in North Northamptonshire, with a total value of £2,852,726<sup>3</sup>. The successful projects deliver against all the key themes, and include support for skills (training in construction, rail and land and water management), direct support for business through grant programmes and innovation vouchers, and community-focused activities (see **Appendix A** for more details). All projects must be delivered by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022.
- 4.8 NNC was successful with two of its own projects – the Construction Skills programme and the Greenway and River Ise Feasibility Study.
- 4.9 The Green Recovery and Innovation Programme led by the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) and the Parish Asset Mapping project led by The Northamptonshire Community Association of Local Councils (N-CALC) also cover the West Northamptonshire Council area but are part of the North Northamptonshire CRF package.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-community-renewal-fund-successful-bids>

Project Ref	Project Name	Management fee	Project
CRF993300	Construction Skills Programme	£1,765	£88,268
CRF428855	Green Recovery and Innovation programme	£14,789	£492,978
CRF37787	Greenway and River Ise, Green Infrastructure Feasibility Study	£2,400	£120,000
CRF344254	In2work	£22,080	£736,000
CRF193659	Knowledge Exchange for Better Business (KE4BB)	£9,975	£332,514
CRF467666	North Northamptonshire to Net Zero (NN2NZ)	£16,024	£534,133
CRF817170	Parish Asset Mapping - Northamptonshire Devolution Project	£8,203	£273,422
CRF587150	Sustainable Food Network North Northamptonshire	£2,125	£106,250
CRF301403	The Skill Mill	£1,800	£90,000
		<b>£79,161</b>	<b>£2,773,565</b>
	<b>OVERALL LEAD AUTHORITY AWARD: £2,852,726</b>		

## Welcome Back Fund

- 4.10 The WELCOME BACK FUND (WBF) is a Government initiative that started in March 2021. The WBF succeeds the Return to the High Street Safely Fund (RHSS) which was managed by the former sovereign borough and district councils to keep shoppers safe during the pandemic. It is designed to welcome and encourage people back to the 'high street' and to support local retailers.
- 4.11 Earlier this year NNC submitted a Grant Action Plan to the Government. This secured an additional £312,000 for the area which, when combined with previously unspent RHSS funds, means that there is £447,000 available for WBF activities. The funding must be spent by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.
- 4.12 The range of activities being undertaken align with the Action Plan and are as follows:
1. **Data Recording Equipment** – Some 20 sensors will be deployed at key gateways to Kettering, Wellingborough and Rushden town centres. These will enable the council to capture data on movements by different modes, including by foot. This data will help the council to understand and evaluate the success of measures being implemented to support the town centres by monitoring changes in flows in real-time on a '24/7' basis. The insights provided by this data will have benefits longer-term for plan-making, regeneration, event planning, transport modelling and other activities. The sensors will be leased for two years, with an option to purchase. It is intended that similar technology will also be deployed in Corby as part of the Smart and Connected Corby project. This will be funded through the Town Deal.
  2. **Whole App Provider** – Work has started to develop a North Northants 'App' that can be used to provide in-person shopping, travel and other information. The App will showcase all the 12 towns<sup>4</sup>, local businesses and retailers. The App will also help to promote local events with a key aim to bring people back to the local 'high street' and attract visitors from outside the area.

<sup>4</sup> Burton Latimer, Corby, Desborough, Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough, Kettering, Oundle, Raunds, Rothwell, Rushden, Thrapston and Wellingborough



3. **Business Retail Support** - A local company Building Business has been appointed to provide comprehensive support for local retail business. This includes workshops, online courses and face-to-face support. Work is underway with the 12 towns and NNC marketing team to promote the scheme to local retailers.
4. **Marketing Strategies and Designs** – The NNC marketing team has developed a wide array of marketing, posters, campaigns, media and on-line initiatives. This will carry the WBF and other local branding, including NNC, from now until March 2022. The NNC team have also created a 'Toolkit' for the town councils to use covering social media, logos and branding. Leaflets and information have also been distributed to the councils. A major emphasis is the Christmas period, and a small video has been produced for social media, as well as radio, street and bus shelter adverts to promote the 'Hi Street' campaign.



5. **Town Councils** – a significant element of WBF is being devolved to the 12 town councils to enable them to develop and deliver activities, including local town centre events, working with NNC who will provide communications and marketing support as outlined above. This will also help provide additional capacity. Examples of the types of events and activities being organised with the town councils include:

- Festive fayre and an Ice Rink in Kettering
- Christmas lights switch-on events in Burton Latimer
- Live Christmas music in Desborough, Higham Ferrers and Irthlingborough
- Events with Santa in Corby, Rushden, Rothwell and Raunds

#### Additional Restrictions Grant programme

- 4.13 Following the announcement earlier in the year of further conditional top-up ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS GRANT (ARG) funding, NNC was allocated a provisional amount of £2,987,165. This was subject to the distribution of 100% of the previous ARG allocation by 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021. As this target was met,

Executive on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2021 approved the following priorities for the distribution of this top-up funding:

- Distribution of final committed grants for legacy and NNC Discretionary Grants
- A new sector Hardship Support grant for the Hospitality and Tourism Industry (HoTi)
- A new Recovery and Innovation Grant (RIIno)
- Local Business Support

4.14 As with the WBF, all the ARG top-up funding must be spent by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

4.15 The final distribution of **legacy and NNC Discretionary grants** has now been completed and post-payment assurance reporting is underway.

4.16 Following a review of businesses who continue to be most impacted, a **new Discretionary Hospitality and Tourism (HoTi) grant**<sup>5</sup> was launched in September. The type of businesses eligible include:

- Events and Entertainment
- Travel and Tourism
- Accommodation

4.17 The HoTi grant is intended, notwithstanding any future restrictions necessary in response to the pandemic, to be the final 'hardship' based grant targeted at the remaining sectors most impacted by Covid-19. Payments are therefore expected to be lower for this grant compared to earlier grants when wider restrictions were in place.

4.18 The grant is a one-off amount starting at £3,000 and is open to businesses with and without a business premises. To date 151 businesses have been issued with grants totalling £655,391. Applications for the HoTi grant closed on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021. A review of the grant programme is currently being carried out to ascertain whether further funding can be distributed and the eligibility criteria. This will be dependent on the remaining financial envelope available and the restrictions in place at that time. Any amendments to the eligibility criteria will be publicised through the council's communications channels.

4.19 The **Recovery and Innovation Grant**<sup>6</sup> (RIIno) was launched in October. The aim of the grant is to:

- Support local independent businesses who have been significantly impacted financially by Covid-19 restrictions
- Support plans which enable businesses to build back stronger
- Give a boost to measures which support the move to 'Net-Zero'
- Facilitate diversification and innovation to improve resilience
- Protect, and create, local jobs

4.20 The RIIno grant is open to all businesses with five employees or more. This is a one-off grant starting from £10,000 and can support both revenue and capital initiatives.

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<sup>5</sup> [Discretionary hospitality and tourism grant | North Northamptonshire Council \(northnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/news/discretionary-hospitality-and-tourism-grant)

<sup>6</sup> [Discretionary recovery and innovation grant | North Northamptonshire Council \(northnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/news/discretionary-recovery-and-innovation-grant)

- 4.21 Applications for the first wave closed on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021. Whilst to date the grant has targeted businesses with five employees or more to maximise job retention, a possible reduction to three employees or more will be considered. A similar approach was taken with the previous NNC Local Hardship Fund. This was reduced, from ten employees or more to five employees or more, once larger employers had been prioritised. As with the HoTI grant, any changes in criteria will be communicated thoroughly with additional publicity.
- 4.22 ARG top-up funding has also been directed at providing **additional direct business support** via the 'Recovery Through Enterprise' initiative. This initiative consists of signposting support through University of Northampton and the Business and Jobs Hub at Rushden Lakes, which is delivered directly by the NNC Economic Development team. Staff are available to support people with their job search, including support with CV writing and interview skills.
- 4.23 Arrangements have recently been finalised with the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) to deliver more in depth and ongoing one-to-one support for up to 30 local businesses. This support will be complemented with the opportunity to secure a small grant up to a value of £3,000 for specialist support or equipment. Details of this support, and all the other ARG top-up related activities and support available for local business, can be found on the councils' Recovery Through Enterprise site. [www.recoverythroughenterprise.co.uk](http://www.recoverythroughenterprise.co.uk)

#### Levelling-Up Fund

- 4.24 The LEVELLING-UP FUND is a Government fund announced in 2020. It is a Capital fund of £4bn available across England which is designed to support economic prosperity and net zero ambitions by investing in infrastructure projects. The three key themes of this fund are:
1. Transport investment
  2. Regeneration and Town Centre Investment
  3. Cultural Investments
- 4.25 North Northamptonshire can bid three times with bids of up to £20m each. Each bid, which must be submitted via the council, can be a single project or a package of related projects (themed or geographically focussed). Projects must be delivered by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. An additional transport project can also be submitted – up to £50m to be delivered by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.
- 4.26 Government launched a first round earlier in the year. This invited bids for projects which could be delivered quickly with works starting this financial year. Bids had to be submitted by June. As there were no projects of sufficient scale and readiness the council chose not to submit a bid in this round.
- 4.27 A further announcement is expected soon from Government which will set out the timeframe for future bidding rounds and further detailed guidance. This is a key opportunity for the area. It is essential that work is progressed to ensure that the council can respond to the next call for projects.
- 4.28 A Project Plan has been developed and work has commenced to start to pull together a list of potential projects so that NNC is in a strong position to respond to future funding round announcements.

- Briefing of Executive Member for Growth & Regeneration and agreement to key milestones
- Wider engagement with public, businesses and key stakeholders to ensure inclusive process (from December 2021)
- Early dialogue with local Members and MPs (from December)
- Identification of initial short-listed projects/packages and potential suitability for Round 1, including fit with Corporate Plan (from December)
- Targeted support to develop business cases prioritising Round 1 (February to March 2022)
- Decision on submission to next round (dependent on Government announcement)

4.29 NNC has created an on-line survey to help identify potential projects. This gives businesses, organisations and other stakeholders the opportunity to identify potential projects which will support the Levelling-up agenda and helps to ensure an inclusive process. The type of information requested through the survey includes the lead responsible body, state of readiness, funding required and impact and outcomes. The purpose of gathering these details is to understand the potential impact of the project, how well developed it is, how it fits with the Government's criteria, the amount of funding requested including any 'match' already identified, and potential delivery timescales. The council will also be assessing projects where it could be the lead body which could be the subject of a bid either alone or as part of a wider package.

4.30 The next stage will then be to prioritise projects and identify where additional work is required to strengthen business cases. Prioritisation will be informed by guidance from Government. Deliverability is likely to be a key factor given the timescales for project completion. It is anticipated that decisions will need to be taken in the new year on a likely bid to the next round.

### Construction Skills Programme

4.31 The initial Construction Skills programme in Northamptonshire started in 2019. This was a major success and led to the award of further funding from the Construction Industry Training Board to enable a second programme to be delivered in 2020/21. The aim of the programme is to deliver a programme of construction-related training courses, designed to make learners Employment and Site Ready. Following the creation of the two new councils, North Northamptonshire has taken the lead role. Training delivered includes a blend of online and face-to-face training, covering a range of areas, including first aid, manual handling, fire warden training, health and safety and resulting in participants achieving their Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card – essential for a career in construction. This addressed acute local skills need.

4.32 The restrictions introduced because of the Covid-19 pandemic had a major impact on the programme especially during the early months due to difficulties of arranging face-to-face training and visits to live construction sites. Despite this over the course of the programme, 65 local people received training and were Employment and Site Ready. These learners were all supported in Job

Search sessions, and to date, 19 have secured full time employment in the construction sector.



- 4.33 As outlined in this report, the council has now successfully secured further funding through the Community Renewal Fund to continue delivery of this programme into 2022 and focused on North Northamptonshire.

## 5. Issues and Choices

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- 5.1 It is an important time for the economy as it recovers from the pandemic and there are several initiatives which the council are delivering to support a recovery. Lack of support for these important initiatives would have an adverse impact on local businesses resulting in the loss of jobs.
- 5.2 The impact of Covid-19 has meant that the council has had to prioritise short-term actions through some of the initiatives outlined in this report. This has ensured that the area has been able to, and continues to, benefit from the funding available from Government to support some of the businesses which have been worst impacted by the pandemic. These activities build on the work of the sovereign authorities and are being delivered under the Recovery through Enterprise banner.



- 5.3 It is now important to start to shift the emphasis away from these short-term activities and look to the medium and longer term. This work is already starting with the activities outlined above to identify potential projects which could come forward through the Levelling Up Fund. It is also proposed that work starts on two other activities which are to develop an 'Economic Prospectus' and look ahead to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) which is due to be launched next year.
- 5.4 It is proposed that wider engagement work starts in January to develop an 'Economic Prospectus' for the area. The prospectus would help to target where the council should focus its activities to support economic growth. A central theme will be working collaboratively with other organisations to avoid overlap, address gaps in provision, and provide clarity. However, primarily it would be an outward facing document making the case for further investment to support the Levelling Up agenda and help deliver economic potential. This includes the role that North Northamptonshire can play in delivering the wider ambitions for the Cambridge-Oxford Arc and Central Area Growth Corridor. A key theme for the prospectus will be to create synergy with the concept of a 'Green Arc' between Cambridge and Oxford and a key unique-selling-point for the area, and

underlining the councils' commitment to supporting clean growth, reducing emissions and developing the green environment.

- 5.5 With the SPF to be launched next year, it is important that early work starts with potential delivery organisations to identify project ideas which could then be quickly developed into applications. This will include ongoing discussions with the successful CRF projects as it is envisaged that this funding stream would explore innovative ideas which could be taken forward via the SPF. It is also proposed that ideas would be invited from a wider audience including those organisations that were unsuccessful through the CRF route both through direct dialogue and on-line channels. This would not replace any more formal process which would need to be introduced once guidance is issued from Government.

## **6. Next Steps**

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6.1 This report sets out a range of projects and the next steps on each:

- Community Renewal Fund – signing of funding agreements and commencement of project delivery
- Welcome Back Fund – delivery will continue, with increased activity around Christmas
- Additional Restrictions Grant – decisions will be made on grant applications received to date and further rounds of funding will be considered
- Levelling Up Fund – development of a shortlist of projects through wide consultation and engagement
- Construction Skills programme – the funding secured through the Community Renewal Fund will enable this programme to commence delivery early in the new year
- Development of an Economic Prospectus for North Northamptonshire

## **7. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **7.1 Resources and Financial**

#### Community Renewal Funding

7.1.1 As outlined £2,852,726 of funding has been secured for this area. Half the allocation will be paid to the council on signing of a Grant Funding Agreement with Government, the remainder on completion of projects. Projects will then submit a quarterly monitoring and claim form and all evidence of defrayal. They will be paid, in arrears, on confirmation of eligible spend. This is important as the council is accountable for the funding and will only be able to claim what is eligible.

7.1.2 NNC will also receive a management fee. This is extra funding from Government and recognises the significant additional work involved to programme manage the Fund as the accountable lead body, including preparing funding agreements, monitoring progress, checking spend and authorising payments, reporting etc.. This is a standard rate of 2% or 3% of the

project value, depending on the complexity of the project. The award to NNC totals £79,161 and will be made in two payments with the second payment on completion in June 2022.

- 7.1.3 In addition, £60,000 Capacity Funding has been paid to NNC. This is because the area includes three 'Priority Places'. The additional funding provided by Government will enable the council to dedicate resource to create a programme management function, which can both manage and support the CRF and help to prepare for the new UK SPF. It will also help to avoid diluting and undermining the council's capacity to deliver existing projects and to facilitate, and/or initiate, action on new projects, either as a project lead, or by supporting individual projects as a delivery partner.

### Welcome Back Fund

- 7.1.4 Table 1 below outlines how the WBF grant available to the council has been allocated across different themes.

Table 1: WBF Allocation by Theme

Theme	Allocation
Data recording	£130,000
App provision	£40,000
Business Retail Support	£75,000
Marketing activities	£30,000
Town Council – delivery of events and activities	£185,000
Contingency	£17,000
Total	£477,000

### Additional Restrictions Grant Top-Up Funding

- 7.1.5 As outlined in the report, the council has been paid an ARG top-up grant of £2,987,165. The latest position is illustrated in Table 2 below.

Table 2: ARG Top-Up Position<sup>7</sup>

Priority	Spend
Legacy and NNC Discretionary Grants	£51,511
Hospitality and Tourism (HoTi) Grant	£655,391
Recovery and Innovation (RIIno) Grant	£83,650
Additional Direct Business Support	£13,782
Total	£804,334
Allocation remaining	£2,182,831

<sup>7</sup> Position at 02/12/21

**7.2 Legal and Governance**

- 7.2.1 The council is accountable for significant sums of money through the programmes and grants outlined in this report. It is therefore important that appropriate mechanisms are put in place. These include formal funding agreements with grant recipients which outline their responsibilities. The agreements will set out the approved allocation, the purpose of the grant and the financial period to which it relates.
- 7.2.2 All relevant capital schemes also go through the internal governance structures including the Place & Economy Capital Board and Strategic Capital Board

**7.3 Relevant Policies and Plans**

- 7.3.1 The programmes of activity set out in this report support several aims of the Corporate Plan, including **Better, Brighter Futures** through investment in skills projects, **Safe and Thriving Communities** through our support of local businesses and community projects, and **Green, Sustainable Environment** through business support and other initiatives which support the net-zero agenda.

**7.4 Risk**

Risk	Impact / Mitigation	RAG
If NNC does not secure funding opportunities, the support that it is able to offer businesses will be much reduced	(I)-Not able to deliver programmes of support (M)-Continuing to identify funding opportunities and develop robust bids, building on the success already	
That NNC does not have the capacity to programme manage the funding programmes	(I)-Funding would not be secured (M)-Strong and experienced team in place with systems already established to ensure successful delivery, capacity funding and management fee secured	
That NNC is not able to deliver the projects that it secured funding for	(I)-Funding secured, and benefits would be lost (M)-Bids set out strong processes which were endorsed by Government appraisal and where required additional resources will be secured to enable delivery	
That NNC is not able to spend the funding it has been awarded	(I)-Funding would be returned to Government (M)-Flexibility between funding priorities and key themes as enabled within grant terms. Prioritisation of internal capacity to focus on related activities in the short-term.	

**7.5 Consultation**

- 7.5.1 The council engages with a wide range of partners to develop these initiatives and support programmes. These include the Department for Work and



Pensions, University of Northampton, SEMLEP, the Federation of Small Businesses, the Northamptonshire Chamber of Commerce and other local business networks. For example, the Community Renewal Fund included a wide-ranging Invitation to Apply for Grant funding that was open to all eligible organisations and the Recovery Through Enterprise initiative is delivering support with several of the partners listed above.

## **7.6 Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel**

7.6.1 An update on the Community Renewal Fund was reported to the Climate Change, Environment and Growth Executive Advisory Panel on 17 November 2021. The Panel welcomed the successful outcome and supported the strong emphasis on climate change and the environment.

## **7.7 Consideration by Scrutiny**

7.7.1 This report has not been considered by Scrutiny but the wider input into the economy could be an area scrutiny may wish to consider in the future.

## **7.8 Equality Implications**

7.8.1 This report sets out a wide range of projects designed to support various sections of our community. An Equalities Screening Form has been completed.

## **7.9 Climate Impact**

7.9.1 The council has adopted a framework and action plan (March 2021) and has declared a Climate and Environment Emergency (July 2021) as first steps in its strategic journey on climate change mitigation. As part of this declaration, a commitment was made to develop a Climate Change Action Plan, setting out the earliest date that the council and the area can be carbon neutral, and establishing targets to meet that date.

7.9.2 Progress has been made and reported into the Climate, Growth and Environment Executive Advisory Panel in August 2021. Further reports linked to elements of the Action Plan have and will continue to be reported into the Advisory Panel.

7.9.3 The council also delivered a high-profile Climate Conference on 16<sup>th</sup> November. This included sessions on Renewable energy and sustainable transport and contributions from local businesses on their path to Net Zero.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> [Climate | North Northamptonshire Council \(northnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk)



7.9.4 The climate change agenda will continue to be a major consideration. This is reflected in the decisions that Government made on projects it supported via the CRF including some pioneering activities in this area. The council has also made a positive statement on climate change mitigation by including it as a key criterion for Recovery and Innovation (RIno) fund applications. Furthermore, it is anticipated that this will be a central theme of the new Economic Prospectus and potential projects which emerge for consideration via the Levelling-Up Fund and Shared Prosperity Fund.

#### 7.10 Community Impact

7.10.1 The support offered through the projects in this report contribute to outcomes which add social, community and economic value, including education, skills, employment or health and wellbeing opportunities. More a significant element of the WBF allocation has been set-aside for local community activities to be delivered via the 12 town councils working with NNC. Other activities also outlined in this report, such as through the CRF, will also have a positive impact on local communities in the area.

#### 7.11 Crime and Disorder impact

7.11.1 The projects set out in this report will support the local economy and will not adversely impact on crime and disorder.

### 8. Background Papers

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UK Community Renewal Fund – North Northamptonshire Submission,  
Executive report, 22 June 2021  
Additional Restrictions Grant Top-Up Funding,  
Executive report, 26 August 2021

## APPENDIX A

### LIST OF SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY RENEWAL PROJECTS

Proposal Name	Short description
CRF03: Greenway and River Ise: Green Infrastructure Feasibility Study (North Northamptonshire Council)	The two feasibility studies will identify Green Infrastructure connections linking Wellingborough to Rushden and Corby (via Kettering) - all growth towns. This will facilitate the development of green corridors, and wider network, for active travel, enhance travel to work choices and educational opportunities, and increase tourism and leisure trips
CRF05: Training in land and water management for ex-offenders (The Skills Mill)	The Skill Mill provides employment opportunities in water and land-based management. Training and support are delivered to ex-offenders, actively reducing reoffending whilst increasing engagement, participation, employability and educational levels of the young people to increase their life chances. Participants undertake accredited training and achieve a nationally recognised qualification
CRF10: NN2NZ (Electric Corby)	North Northamptonshire 2 Net Zero – a programme of projects designed to provide feasibility studies into net zero and local energy projects and a framework to assess them, pilot an e-mobility hub, create a project website and deliver a showcase event
CRF11: Sustainable Food Network North Northants (Made in Northamptonshire)	This project will undertake two pilot projects: (1) Rural Food Chain Research (2) piloting two waste food apps and a sustainability audit. This project focuses on a key sector for the local economy
CRF16: In2Work (Hillsbridge Services)	Delivery of training for rail sector / HS2, including Level 1&2 for 240 people
CRF18: The Knowledge Exchange for Better Business (University of Northampton)	Providing 30 Knowledge exchange vouchers (£7.5k), 15 funded graduate interns, 1:1 academic support, 50 development grants (£2.5k), membership of chamber / FSB
CRF19: Parish Asset Mapping, Local Devolution (Northants CALC)	Providing capacity funding to town/parish councils to map assets, services, functions and facilities to support bids for community funding and local devolution
CRF20: Green Recovery and Innovation Programme (SEMLEP Growth Hub)	Delivering a package of business support designed to support 100 SMEs with 1:1 & green recovery events, up to 60 grants of £10k
CRF21: Construction Skills Programme (North Northamptonshire Council)	Delivery of construction training to 50 people. Building on previous delivery, this programme will have a particular focus on sustainable construction

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## EXECUTIVE 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Procurement of Shared Parts and Materials Suppliers for Housing Stock</b>
<b>Report Author</b>	David Watts, Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing
<b>Executive Member</b>	Councillor Andy Mercer, Executive Member for Housing and Communities

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

### List of Appendices

None

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

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- 1.1. To seek approval from the Executive for the procurement of the supply of parts and materials for the Corby and Kettering Housing Property Services.
- 1.2. To seek delegation of authority from the Executive to the Executive Member for Housing and Communities in consultation with the Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing, to take any further decisions and/or actions required to appoint a framework provider and enter into contract with suppliers.

#### **2. Executive Summary**

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- 2.1 North Northamptonshire Council owns and manages 8,280 council homes, across the former Corby and Kettering areas. The Council is responsible for the repairs and maintenance of these properties via its in-house direct labour organisations. To do this the Council need to be able to purchase large

quantities of stock on a regular basis to fulfil its landlord repairs and maintenance obligations.

- 2.2 At present the Corby area has a contract with a supplier of general building parts and materials which is due to expire in January 2022 and another which expires 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023. Kettering area has six contracts in place, five of which are due to expire in January 2022, and one which has been extended until January 2023. In addition, the Kettering area has one contract which has expired and one which now needs to be procured.
- 2.3 There are benefits to the Council of merging its parts and materials supplier contracts, such as greater buying power and a standardised approach to the purchasing process.
- 2.4 Prior to vesting day Kettering Borough Council entered several short-term supplier contracts, to provide the opportunity for North Northamptonshire Council to deliver a joined-up approach to suppliers post vesting day. It is now proposed to enter into a medium to long term contractual arrangement (4 years in a 2+1+1 format) with multiple material and parts suppliers.
- 2.5 The use of a Framework Provider would provide compliant, robust, and resilient contracts. It is intended that the Council enter into contracts which cover both Kettering and Corby for the supply of parts and materials for heating and plumbing, electrical, general building, decorating, kitchens, windows and doors and flooring.

### **3. Recommendations**

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- 3.1 It is recommended that the Executive delegates authority to the Executive Member for Housing and Communities in consultation with the Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing, to procure, negotiate, award, and enter into a contract to provide shared parts and materials to Council owned housing properties, by means of a Framework Agreement.
- 3.2 By approving this recommendation, Council officers will be able to: -
  - Closely align with local government reform and transformation outcomes, through the use of shared suppliers within the two Housing Property Services teams.
  - Procure the new contracts in the most efficient and timely manner to ensure a fully compliant procurement process is in place for the supply of parts and materials.
  - Provide better value for money to the council.
  - Ensure tenants benefit from a standard parts and materials service across North Northamptonshire.

## **4. Report Background**

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- 4.1 The Council purchases thousands of building related parts and materials annually that are required to repair and maintain the Council's housing stock of 8,280 homes. This ranges from replacement boilers and new kitchens/bathrooms to a new tap or door handle.
- 4.2 The parts required are used to maintain tenanted homes and empty homes (voids) prior to re-letting to applicants via Keyways, the Council's choice-based lettings housing allocation scheme. Works identified can be either planned or responsive, meaning both revenue and capital budgets are used to purchase the necessary parts and materials.
- 4.3 Previous arrangements at Corby involved a contract with one main supplier for all items other than electrical. These items are either delivered to site or collected direct from the supplier, as there is no Stores facility at the Corby Depot. Kettering has a Stores facility on site which holds over 1,000 products and is stocked direct from suppliers, who deliver parts and materials direct to the Depot.
- 4.4 There is currently a project underway to consider the options for a shared in-house stores function. This will form part of a separate report in due course. The procurement of suppliers is essential to the delivery of a Stores service and will also allow for a joined up back-office ordering and payment function.
- 4.5 Exploration was commenced prior to vesting day, to understand the most suitable procurement route to deliver a joint parts and materials purchasing process and this forms the basis of the issues and choices to be considered by Executive.
- 4.6 At present, the Council has several legacy supplier contracts for parts and materials that are due to expire in January 2022. These are currently being extended for a short period to enable the conclusion of this procurement process. In addition, one parts and materials supplier contract expired prior to vesting day and the Council continues to operate under the arrangements previously procured by the legacy contract. A second parts and materials supplier contract existed for one of the sovereign Councils but not the other. Therefore, there is a need to put in place a contract that will address these legacy issues.

## **5. Issues and Choices**

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- 5.1 Following the creation of North Northamptonshire Council, multiple supplier contracts for building and maintenance parts and materials are required to enable the Council to deliver a safe and legal landlord repairs service. This is to enable the Council to purchase specialist items from suppliers specialising in certain areas e.g. electrical wholesalers providing electrical parts.
- 5.2 The following options have been considered for procurement of a new contractor:

- a) **Open tender** - Open tendering is a transparent procurement process which is open to the whole market and allows equal opportunity for competing suppliers. It enables the Council to identify the supplier offering a mixture of the highest quality and most competitive price, resulting in the most economically advantageous tender. It is a fully compliant route to market and often provides the most competitive results. The disadvantages of this process (as they relate to this project) are the timescales to run a procurement in this way, which could take upwards of six (6) months to award a contract.
  - b) **Framework (using mini competition and/or compliant direct award options)** - A framework process typically reduces the procurement timeframe, as the pre-evaluation of multiple suppliers has already been undertaken, allowing the Council to approach a smaller pool of suppliers and in some cases, award a contract directly to a supplier (based on the terms of the framework). Frameworks can provide a shorter timeframe to awarding a compliant contract. The disadvantages to using a framework are that they can provide restrictions to new suppliers who may offer a reduction in prices or service. Use of a compliant framework could mean that the procurement process could be concluded in a shorter period. Estimates provided by the framework providers suggest within 3 months.
  - c) **Award without Competition (Negotiated Procedure without Prior Publication)** - Making an award to a supplier without any form of competition contravenes the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (The legislation which implements the Public Sector Procurement Directive and governs public sector procurement above the UK Regulations Threshold) and the principals of good and ethical procurement (namely non-discrimination, equal treatment, transparency, and proportionality) and therefore hasn't been explored as an option.
- 5.3 The fastest option available for the Council to procure new suppliers is to go through the framework route. Five reputable Framework Providers, whose legal notices are in order, and processes meet the requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, were approached in September 2021 (Efficiency East Midlands; Procurement for Housing, Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation, Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation and Crown Commercial Service) to enquire about appropriate frameworks. All five providers responded.
- 5.4 The Council is currently in the process of appointing one of the Framework Providers. As part of this process the Council will consider how the framework will meet the Council's requirements, this being: the support provided by the Provider both during the call-off and throughout the length of the contract, timescales involved during the procurement process, regular finance and performance reports and ongoing diligence checks the Providers carry out on the Suppliers.
- 5.5 One of the criteria the Council are adopting to select a Framework Provider is the use of national suppliers who have branches local to Kettering and Corby.



It is key that the Council achieve both value for money, along with a resilient supply chain. Suppliers need to be based locally for the efficient delivery and/or collection of parts and materials and be able to provide a wide range of stock that meets the Council's repair requests. Suppliers also need to be able to source the products within tight timescales.

## **6. Implications (including financial implications)**

### **6.1 Resources and Financial**

6.1.1 Anticipated annual spend for both Corby and Kettering are as follows, this includes an uplift of 5% for anticipated price rises next year:

	<b>Corby</b>	<b>Kettering</b>	<b>Total</b>
Building materials	£1,050,000	£315,000	<b>£1,365,000</b>
Heating and Plumbing	£178,500	£525,000	<b>£703,500</b>
Electrical	£168,000	£225,000	<b>£393,000</b>
Decorating	£42,000	£31,500	<b>£73,500</b>
Kitchens	£63,000	£42,000	<b>£105,000</b>
Windows and doors	£136,500	£21,000	<b>£157,500</b>
Flooring	£26,250	£26,250	<b>£52,500</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,664,250</b>	<b>£1,185,750</b>	<b>£2,850,000</b>

6.1.2 The proposed approach to procuring parts and materials supply contracts for the seven areas listed above does not tie the Council into a guaranteed spend per year arrangement with each successful supplier. Instead, it seeks to ensure the Council can quickly purchase parts and materials at a procured price based on anticipated spend.

6.1.3 The Council has a ring-fenced Housing Revenue account within which budgets are identified for the purchase of parts and materials. This includes both revenue and capital budgets. The anticipated spends outlined above fit within the existing and previous year's budget allocations for this purpose.

6.1.4 The 2021/22 total budgets for spend on parts and materials within the two HRA Neighbourhood Accounts are as follows:

#### 6.1.4.1

<b>Corby</b>	
Total value of HRA material revenue budgets for 2021/22	£984,640
Total value of HRA material capital budgets for 2021/22	£564,249*
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,548,889</b>

#### 6.1.4.2

<b>Kettering</b>	
Total value of HRA material revenue budgets for 2021/22	£422,800
Total value of HRA material capital budgets for 2021/22	£650,000*
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,072,800</b>

\*Capital budgets are not split into cost centres, therefore only approximately half of these budgets are available for parts and materials spend. The other half covers capitalised salaries. The total figure is therefore based on half of the total budget available.

- 6.1.5 Whilst the total estimated value of the budgets for parts and materials listed above is less than the proposed values shown in 6.1.1, this is due to the 5% uplift that has been applied to the anticipated spend on parts and materials for next year. It is expected that the budgets would increase proportionately to accommodate such rises.
- 6.1.6 A joint purchasing approach will benefit the price per unit of items purchased from suppliers. Framework Providers procure unit prices for parts and materials on behalf of several member organisations. As a result, members benefit from this collective buying power through access to more competitive prices. For example, with a previous contract, the Kettering team saved on average 33% of their overall spend during a 12-month period by accessing the Framework price for the parts in comparison to the non-Framework price. Therefore, it is expected that we can purchase more products for less expenditure.

## 6.2 Legal

- 6.2.1 The procurement process will involve awarding and entering into a framework agreement, in line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and Public Contract Regulations 2015 (PCR2015).
- 6.2.2 Under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, the Council has the power to undertake any activity a normal person could undertake, for the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area. The Council is satisfied it has the enabling power(s) to procure and award a contract for services having followed a robust procurement exercise.
- 6.2.3 The Council has an obligation as a best value authority under section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 to "make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness".
- 6.2.4 Internal governance arrangements will be undertaken to ensure that the Council meets its legal obligations.

## 6.3 Risk

- 6.3.1 There is a risk of delay to the procurement conclusion if any further decisions need to be referred to the Executive and not delegated as proposed.
- 6.3.2 There are seven contracts expiring in January 2022, and a further two that have either expired or aren't in place. The Council faces significant risk by operating outside of procurement legislation, and therefore a speedy resolution to this matter is being sought.

6.3.3 If the Council does not enter into new contracts, then there is a risk to being able to deliver statutory repairs obligation to tenants.

#### **6.4 Consultation**

6.4.1 There has been no consultation undertaken outside of the Council.

#### **6.5 Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel**

6.5.1 This paper has been considered by the EAP on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2021 and they were supportive of it.

#### **6.6 Consideration by Scrutiny**

6.6.1 The procurement process and/or any part of the requirement may be selected for consideration by Scrutiny.

#### **6.7 Climate Impact**

6.7.1 The framework providers include national suppliers who have local branches within North Northamptonshire, thus reducing travel distances from suppliers to the Council's depots within Corby and Kettering. In addition, a standardised approach to the use of suppliers by the Property Services team will result in more bulk orders and therefore a reduction in deliveries and collections. The review of the stores function that is currently underway will seek to maximise opportunities to streamline ordering and delivery processes, with the aim of reducing the Council's carbon footprint.

#### **6.8 Community Impact**

6.8.1 The Council's tenants will benefit from a standard parts and materials service across North Northamptonshire, whilst we will be able to continue to both maintain and improve our Housing stock.

### **7. Background Papers**

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7.1 None.

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## EXECUTIVE 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Procurement of Catering Services at Kettering Library and Alfred East Gallery (GLaM project)</b>
<b>Report Author</b>	David Watts – Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing
<b>Executive Member</b>	Councillor Helen Howell, Executive Member for Sport, Leisure, Culture and Tourism

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

### 1. Purpose of Report

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- 1.1. This report requests that the Executive consider the procurement of the catering services at Kettering Library and Alfred East Gallery as part of the ‘GLaM’ development (hereafter referred to as “GLaM” as a project title. The future brand for the site is yet to be determined).
- 1.2. It also seeks 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 to conclude this procurement.

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 The ‘GLaM’ project aims to revitalise and extend the Alfred East Art Gallery and Library to become a cultural anchor which provides a blend of cultural amenity, space, and teaching facilities.

- 2.2 The construction includes a two-storey extension to the rear and between the library and Alfred East Gallery which are adjacent to better the Museum to unify the facilities. The project will create a flexible events space to increase cultural/visitor activity and develop a programme of events to strengthen community links. The building will include a new atrium space, two new events spaces, enhanced access, and the public gardens at the rear, a new BIP centre and a new café with external terrace.
- 2.3 In September 2021, as part of the business plan development, the Council commissioned an options appraisal via Turpin Smale, an external catering consultant with a specialism in operations and procurement of operators for cultural/heritage visitor destinations. Turpin Smale assessed the site alongside local/national market conditions and evaluated whether an inhouse/lease or concession model would be the best option for the council. The report recommends a concession model operated by a local supplier.
- 2.4 The café needs to be managed by a dedicated catering manager/business, to enable it to develop, deliver the services required in the facility, and to ensure it is profitable. Therefore, the team propose to run a compliant procurement exercise, to identify a suitable concession supplier to manage the catering provision within the facility and seek approval of this from the Executive.

### **3. Recommendations**

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- 3.1 It is recommended that the Executive delegates authority to the Executive Member for Sport, Leisure, Culture and Tourism in consultation with the Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing to procure, negotiate, award, and enter into a contract to provide catering services at GLaM
- 3.2 Reason for Recommendations:
- The recommended course of action will be the most cost-effective way of providing a café within 'GLaM' as set out in the Turpin Smale report.
  - Customers within the facility will receive a catering service that meets their needs.
  - Option to provide event catering to complement the new commercial spaces within the buildings and create a 'destination venue' would be fulfilled.
  - Maintaining a café and catering service in this facility adds to the offer available for the community and supports events including those run by the Library, Gallery and Museum as well as new income derived from commercial hires.
  - A Local operator with passion and drive for the site and the local community achieves the original aspirations for the project.

- According to Turpin Smale, most visitor attraction cafes are now let out on a concession basis which allows the venue to have a reasonable level of control over issues such as opening times, selling prices, management appointment, name and publicity and other operational items. This works well where the café is an integral part of the venue with many shared services such as utilities, toilets, and the like.

#### **4. Report Background**

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- 4.1 There has never been a catering provision within the existing buildings on the 'GLaM' site, which are Kettering Library, the Alfred East Gallery, and the Manor House Museum.
- 4.2 The total capital project cost for the GLaM (Gallery, Library and Museum project) project is £4,060,100, with SEMLEP providing £3m and the rest being match funded by the Council. GLaM represents an exciting project for the local community and is a fundamental element of the Town Centre Delivery Strategic plan and wider cultural-led regeneration plans for Kettering. The construction includes a two-storey extension which connects the library and Alfred East Gallery which will sit adjacent to the Museum and seeks to unify the facilities. The project will create a flexible work/exhibition space to allow greater engagement with educational institutions, increase cultural/visitor activity and develop a programme of events to strengthen community links. The building will include a new atrium, events space, café and enhance the existing learning and education spaces. It also includes the creation of a dedicated BIPC centre (Business and Intellectual Property Centre) to support SMEs in the local area.
- 4.3 As part of the original funding bid to SEMLEP, inclusion of a new café facility played a key role in securing funding, and SEMLEP outputs include delivery of an additional 120sqm in commercial space.
- 4.4 The project is moving at pace; the Government have set ambitious timescales for delivery with a key funding requirement for completion of construction work by Spring 2022. The re-opening programme is currently in development with plans to open summer 2022 with a main launch event in September 2022.
- 4.5 In September 2021, as part of the business plan development, the Council commissioned, by obtaining three quotations, an options appraisal via Turpin Smale, an external catering consultant with a specialism in operations, development and setting up of new sites, and procurement of operators for cultural/heritage visitor destinations. Turpin Smale assessed the site alongside local/national market conditions and evaluated whether an inhouse/lease or concession model would be the best option for the council. Their report recommends a concession model operated by a local supplier.
- 4.6 The concession is usually a percentage of sales with minimums and a stepped increase of percentages linked to sales. A sales-based concession contract links and rewards the success of the venture to both venue and caterer.

- 4.7 The kitchen infrastructure is being provided as part of the capital programme, so in line with a concession model, no significant investment is required for the operator. A catering consultant was used to review specifications and layouts during the design stages to mitigate any issues once a supplier is secured.

## **5. Issues and Choices**

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- 5.1 The kitchen capacity is limited due to the buildings listed status and the inability to secure significant extract under planning. It will operate as a 'reheat' kitchen only, offering salads, sandwiches, paninis, tea, coffee, and cake. This limitation restricts the type of operators that might be interested in the unit.
- 5.2 Turpin Smale evaluated an in-house model, but due to the lack of available specialist resource internally, and council 'on costs' in particular labour costs associated with pensions and wage commitments which exceed a standard café operator, it was deemed that service delivery would not be sustainable.
- 5.3 Turpin Smale also evaluated a leased model but due to the café being so connected to the rest of the site and services, with shared facilities/ access it was deemed that this would not be suitable.
- 5.4 The services run from the site to be able to focus on the delivery of services for the hundreds of thousands of visitors to the site each year for the Library, Gallery, BIPC and Museum to ensure that all our customers' needs are met.
- 5.5 An experienced catering provider would be able to give the support to the cafe and have the level of expertise needed to manage the service.
- 5.6 The procurement will follow a compliant procurement process, run in line with the requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, the Concession Contracts Regulations 2016 and the Councils internal rules, processes, and procedures.
- 5.7 This will be a Concession Contract. The Council will entrust the provision and management of the catering service to a concessionaire who can exploit the services they provide on behalf of the Council to achieve an income. Where this is the case, the Council will require the concessionaire to provide the service that the customers within the facility require and may provide an income to the facility and Council.
- 5.8 As businesses continue to recover from the impact on Covid it is anticipated that there will be some interest now in this procurement process and as such the process should be started as soon as possible. It is anticipated the process could take up to nine months. Operators will be keen to open over the more lucrative summer months and take best advantage of the external terrace.
- 5.9 The advice from Turpin Smale is to seek to secure a local operator who is passionate about serving the local community. Passion, in terms of standards of service and food quality, is what good catering is about and cafes respond



well to personality, humour and quirkiness with key words being informal, relaxed, inexpensive, and good quality.

## **6. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **6.1 Resources and Financial**

- 6.1.1 The Catering arrangement will be a Concession contract, so its value is determined by the value of the service to the Concessionaire (i.e., what the contract is worth), rather than how much the Council will pay for the service.
- 6.1.2 The anticipated contract turnover for the term of this contract (three years with the option to extend for a further 2 years) has been calculated as £690,000 based on the modelling provided by Turpin Smale using previous and projected footfall to the site. Pre-covid footfall was confirmed as 207,000 visitors per year. The figures from Turpin Smale included in this report noting the addition of new café, two new event spaces, a brand new BIP Centre and adult learning facilities projects 275,000 visitors per year once opened. This will be the concession turnover and not what the Council should expect to receive as income from the supplier.
- 6.1.3 The Council will retain ownership of equipment and furniture within the café and kitchen, but the concessionaire will invest in any new equipment required to deliver the service, a full inventory of Council assets will be taken before any contract is awarded. Any portable equipment which breaks during the term will be repaired or replaced by the concessionaire in agreement with Facility management.

### **6.2 Legal**

- 6.2.1 The procurement process will involve awarding and entering into a framework agreement, in line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and Public Contract Regulations 2015 (PCR2015).
- 6.2.2 Under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, the Council has the power to undertake any activity a normal person could undertake, for the benefit of the authority, its area, or persons resident or present in its area. The Council is satisfied it has the enabling power(s) to procure and award a contract for services which follow a robust procurement exercise.
- 6.2.3 The Council has an obligation as a best value authority under section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 to "make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness".
- 6.2.4 Internal governance arrangements will be undertaken to ensure that the Council meets its legal obligations.

### **6.3 Risk**

- 6.3.1 There is a risk of delay of the conclusion of the procurement if any further decisions need to be referred to the Executive and not delegated as proposed due to the lead in times for securing an operator in advance of the building re-opening in Summer 2022.
- 6.3.2 If a decision is made not to procure the service, then this will impact SEMLEP outputs as well as having a financial impact on the Council due to not operating the service to its full potential and not providing the level of services that customers will expect upon re-opening.

### **6.4 Consultation**

- 6.4.1 Advice has been delivered by Turpin Smale as set out in this report.
- 6.4.2 Key stakeholders such as the Friends of the Gallery and Museum and of the Library as well as the Cultural Consortium, the Town Council and local commercial businesses have received tours of the site and information on the proposed future use of the site.

### **6.5 Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel**

- 6.5.1 At its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2021, the Service Delivery, Performance and Customers Executive Advisory Panel considered this report and supported the recommendations contained within it

### **6.6 Consideration by Scrutiny**

- 6.6.1 Scrutiny have not considered this matter.

### **6.7 Climate Impact**

- 6.7.1 The specification asks that the concessionaire sources local and sustainable food sources and undertakes appropriate recycling opportunities.
- 6.7.2 The Concessionaire will work with facility management to ensure that energy efficiency is a priority and that working practices are managed to ensure that this is achieved.
- 6.7.3 The provider will work with facility management to consider future energy efficiency opportunities and look to develop and implement where possible.

### **6.8 Community Impact**

- 6.8.1 An Equality Screening Assessment has been undertaken and included as part of the report and presentation to PGG.

- 6.8.2 There are opportunities of positive impacts on the local community from this procurement including the local economy through employment and supply chains and social and environmental through encouraging more visitors to the GLaM facility.
- 6.8.3 In addition to the SEMLEP commercial space output noted, new jobs creation is also a key output. Eight new jobs are required to be created by March 2024 of which 2.5 roles have currently been secured.
- 6.8.4 A café concession would create opportunities for employment of local people and will contribute to the SEMLEP objectives.
- 6.8.5 The cafe offers a town centre, accessible meeting space for the community which includes enhanced access and certified changing place.
- 6.8.6 Local business can benefit from providing services to the café
- 6.8.7 Hundreds of thousands of visitors and service users, and all members of the public have somewhere to meet within the facility and can be catered for.

## **7. Background Papers**

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- 7.1 Turpin Smale Report

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## EXECUTIVE 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021

<b>Report Title</b>	Euro Hotel: Temporary Accommodation Proposal
<b>Report Author</b>	David Watts, Executive Director, Adults, Communities and Wellbeing
<b>Executive Member</b>	Councillor Andy Mercer, Executive Member for Housing and Communities

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

### List of Appendices

None

### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To report an Executive decision that was made under the urgent measures process as permitted under the Council's Executive Procedure Rule 17. The decision taken by the Chief Executive approved the Council working with the Housing Network to bring the empty Euro Hotel in Wellingborough back into use to provide temporary accommodation for single homeless households.

### 2. Summary of Report

- 2.1 There is a demand for temporary accommodation from single homeless households in North Northamptonshire that exceeds current supply. This includes a requirement for emergency accommodation provision for those experiencing rough sleeping as well as those individuals to whom the Council owes a statutory temporary accommodation duty.

2.2 The result of this is twofold:

- A cohort of single homeless people is placed in unsuitable temporary accommodation outside of the North Northamptonshire boundary away from their support networks and in some cases, in breach of the Council's Temporary Accommodation Policy and potentially sstatutory requirements related to the suitability of accommodation.
- The Council's ability to reduce rough sleeping and bring rough sleepers off the streets quickly and adhere to the 'Everyone In' commitment is compromised.

2.3 The proposal to bring the Euro Hotel back into use to provide 17 rooms of emergency accommodation will significantly improve the Council's ability to address the current risks and challenges outlined in section 2.2.

2.4 The Council will follow a compliant procurement process to enable a block booking arrangement with the property owners, The Housing Network, for the entire facility until the end of March 2022. After this time, an alternative funding stream, namely the Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) Funding (Round 5) for 2022 - 2025, will be explored to try to secure the longer-term financial feasibility of the scheme which it is hoped can continue to operate as a supported housing facility for single homeless households into 2022 to 2023 and beyond.

2.5 The challenges of successfully operating a 17-bed homeless facility which would accommodate 17 vulnerable homeless individuals with a mix of complex support needs is recognised. There is a requirement for sufficient staffing and security measures to ensure that such a project is robustly managed to minimise the impact on service users, the local community and the Council's reputation, particularly having regard to the history of the building detailed in section 4.2.

2.6 Assuming the facility opens on 20<sup>th</sup> December and operates under this proposed arrangement for 15 weeks, the additional revenue budget required for the period is **£28,785**. A business case to seek access to COMF (Covid Outbreak Management Fund) for the security costs is being drafted. Should a request for COMF funding be unsuccessful, funding of £28,785 will be met via the Council's Homelessness Revenue budget although Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities will also be approached to enquire as to whether additional projected RSI (Round 4) underspend can be redirected to the scheme. Even if this is approved it will only cover around half of the budget required.

2.7 An urgent decision was required in order to enable the Housing Network to commence the refurbishment of the building so that the emergency accommodation will be available to support single homeless individuals from 20<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and throughout the remainder of the winter.

### **3. Recommendations**

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3.1 To note the decision taken on behalf of the Executive, made under special urgency powers, to:

- (a) Approve the proposal to work with The Housing Network to bring the former Euro Hotel back into use as emergency accommodation.
- (b) Delegate authority to the Executive Member for Housing and Communities, in liaison with the Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing, to procure, negotiate, award and enter into a contract with the property owners to block book rooms to provide Temporary Accommodation to the Council for Rough Sleepers and those at risk of homelessness

### 3.2 Reason for Recommendations:

The use of urgency powers was necessary in order to enable The Housing Network to refurbish the property to make it available as emergency accommodation for single homeless households by 20th December in order for the Council to discharge the requirement to provide emergency accommodation provision for those experiencing rough sleeping as well as those individuals to whom the Council owes a statutory temporary accommodation duty

## 4. Report Background

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### The Euro Hotel

- 4.1 The Euro Hotel, located at 90-92 Midland Road, Wellingborough, is a four-storey property owned by The Housing Network who are a third-party provider of nightly-charged temporary accommodation. Adjacent to the property are residential / commercial units comprising of flats, houses and a mid-size warehouse which is part of an Auctioneers business. The hotel was previously used as temporary bed and breakfast accommodation by the sovereign councils of North Northamptonshire for many years prior to The Housing Network's ownership.
- 4.2 The property has been vacant and boarded up for almost two years after closing towards the end of 2019 following various complaints pertaining to the anti-social behaviour of the residents. Jonathan, a rough sleeper from North Northamptonshire, tragically passed away in the property and the Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) that followed, SAR019, attracted media attention. The recommendations and learning from the SAR are still being implemented to date. Since being out of use, the property has been broken into on a number of occasions, items have been stolen from the property, there has been significant damage and unauthorised persons found within the property.
- 4.3 The hotel currently comprises 19 bedrooms of which six are en-suite, in addition to 4 bathrooms, 1 toilet, 2 kitchens and a dining room, laundry area and reception area. It is proposed that the property be brought back into use following refurbishment and remodelling to provide 17 rooms (of which six are en-suite) of temporary accommodation for single homeless households. The remodelling and reduction in the number of bedrooms would allow for adequate communal bathroom and kitchen facilities in addition to space to conduct support assessments with the residents. The Housing Network would be responsible for all the capital costs associated with the refurbishment, remodelling and building compliance.

- 4.4 Subject to a compliant procurement procedure, it is proposed that the Council procure the rooms within the building in their entirety from The Housing Network who would retain the repair, maintenance, and management responsibility for the building.

#### **Demand for Temporary Accommodation**

- 4.5 There is a significant demand for temporary accommodation for single homeless households in North Northamptonshire both those vulnerable individuals to whom the Council owes a statutory interim accommodation duty, and rough sleepers who require emergency accommodation through the exercising of discretionary accommodation powers. This need is particularly acute in the Wellingborough locality and particularly acute for single person households who made up 72% of all new homeless approaches to the Council during October 2021 (230 individuals). Proposed occupants of the facility would be a mix of rough sleepers placed using discretionary powers, and other vulnerable single people to whom the Council owes statutory temporary accommodation duties.
- 4.6 After a spike in rough sleeping during August and September, reduced through focused work from the Council's Rough Sleeping team, figure 1 shows that there were 10 individuals sleeping rough on a single night at the end of October. There were 26 individuals who were known to have slept rough during that month. The annual rough sleeper estimate took place across North Northamptonshire on the evening of 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021 and an independently verified snapshot of 12 rough sleepers was reported to the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC), the official statistical return for North Northamptonshire as the number of individuals evidenced to be bedded down on that evening. The Council, through a Rough Sleeping Reduction Action Plan required by DLUHC, has committed to a snapshot target of nine rough sleepers by the end of March 2022.
- 4.7 With winter fast approaching, there is a pressing need to bring more rough sleepers off the streets to protect their health and wellbeing. The single biggest barrier to reducing rough sleeping at present is the lack of immediate-access emergency accommodation options within North Northamptonshire. Whilst the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP) proposal will go some way to increasing provision in the medium term if that bid is successful, an additional and more immediate response is required to increase the supply of single person temporary accommodation in the short-term in order that our Rough Sleeping teams are able to bring more people off the streets



**Figure 1: Number of individuals rough sleeping in North Northamptonshire, April-October 2021**

Month, 2021	Snapshot rough sleeping single night figure	<i>Of which: new to rough sleeping that month</i>	Monthly figure: no. people slept rough over the course of the month	<i>Of which: new to rough sleeping that month</i>
April	12	2	28	11
May	15	5	27	5
June	18	8	28	10
July	15	6	30	16
August	28	16	38	25
September	25	15	42	25
October	10	3	26	7

Source: data provided to DLUHC as part of Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) monitoring arrangements

- 4.8 In addition to the demand for immediate access accommodation from the Council’s rough sleeping cohort, there is also an increased demand for temporary accommodation from single person households with vulnerabilities to whom the Council owes a statutory interim accommodation duty. Based on temporary accommodation snapshot data for those owed statutory interim accommodation duties, in the week commencing 18th October 2021, there were 49 households placed in bed and breakfast/hotel accommodation by the Council of which 38 households had been placed by the Wellingborough locality team. The majority of these bed and breakfast/hotel placements (46 in number) are single person households.
- 4.9 There is also a need for the Council to reduce the number of ‘out of area’ temporary accommodation placements, that is those households who are temporarily accommodated outside of North Northamptonshire. Accommodating homeless households outside of North Northamptonshire brings risks related to the statutory requirement to ensure that interim accommodation placements are suitable for homeless households (sections S206(1) and 210 of the Housing Act 1996, and the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) Order 2012 (S.I (Statutory Instrument). 2012/2601) apply). Section 9.4 of the Council’s Temporary Accommodation Policy (provided as a background paper to this report) applies.
- 4.10 Across all types of temporary accommodation, in the week commencing 18<sup>th</sup> October, there were 40 out of area placements of which 14 were single person households. Of these out of area placements, 26 households (9 single person households) relate to the Wellingborough locality demonstrating a particular need to increase temporary accommodation supply in that area in order that

homeless households can be accommodated and supported in more suitable temporary accommodation in their 'home area'.

- 4.11 More detailed financial analysis undertaken on 18 November 2021 showed that 10 single person / childless couple households were temporarily accommodated outside of North Northamptonshire in nightly paid temporary accommodation at an average gross cost per night of £38.80 per night, or a total cost of £388 per night / £2716 per week. Households were accommodated in Northampton, Peterborough and Bedford. The income recouped from these placements (allowing for a 10% rent arrears loss) equates to £99.83 per night, or £699 per week resulting in a net cost to the council, from the General Fund homelessness revenue budget of **£2017 per week** or **£201.70 per week per person** for these out of area placements alone.

## Proposal

- 4.12 The preferred option is to repurpose the building as a temporary single homeless facility which would enable the Council to further reduce rough sleeping and reduce the risk of legal challenge / reputational damage from out of area temporary accommodation placements.
- 4.13 Having regard to the history pertaining to the Euro Hotel, the need for a robustly managed service that is suitable for the vulnerable residents and local community is recognised. The following conditions have been outlined to The Housing Network by the Council's housing officers as essential service requirements:
- Facility manager during office hours (Monday-Friday 9am-5.30pm)
  - Building security – restricted access arrangements and CCTV
  - Daily cleaning and maintenance of communal areas
- 4.14 It is recommended that a security officer is also present on site 24/7. This significantly increases the revenue budget required to mobilise the scheme and operate until the end March 2022 but is regarded as an essential feature to ensure that the facility operates safely and successfully in the initial months. Longer term assurance around the facility's future from April 2022, which it is hoped can be secured via RSI Funding Round 5 for the period April 2022 – March 2025, will enable security costs to be reduced through the provider owner recruiting an in-house team. This longer-term assurance would also enable the Council to renegotiate nightly charges and agree a more competitive rate.
- 4.15 The following additional actions are proposed to further mitigate the risks of antisocial behaviour and negative impact on neighbours / the local community:
- Liaison with Northamptonshire Police to ensure that routine patrols include the address
  - Regular inclusion of the address in rough sleeper street outreach sessions (including out of office hours) undertaken by Council employed Rough Sleeper Workers
  - Close liaison with The Housing Network in producing certain policies, procedures and occupation agreements to include, for example, a loitering policy.

- An identified single point of contact with the Council's Housing Options team to maintain oversight of current occupants and consider the suitability of new placements
  - Rebranding – it is proposed that the facility would not be called the Euro Hotel but would be renamed as a 'place' or 'project'.
- 4.16 It is proposed that the Council's team of Rough Sleeper Workers would work intensively to provide housing related support to all rough sleepers placed in the facility. It is envisaged that they would conduct support sessions and have a regular presence on site.
- 4.17 Colleagues in the Council's Environmental Health / Private Sector Housing team have visited the vacant building and provided feedback which will help to inform the schedule of works that The Housing Network will need to undertake to ensure the facility meets relevant health and safety regulations. Colleagues are also of the view that the building may also require a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) license.
- 4.18 The Council's Planning department has also been consulted and has advised that the property might require a change of use application if it is to operate as an HMO. Conversations between colleagues in Housing, Environmental Health / Private Sector Housing and Planning continue in this regard and The Housing Network are being kept informed of developments, (The Housing Network have already committed to making any such applications in this regard). Despite the need to resolve these ongoing conversations, so as not to delay the reopening of the hotel for the purpose of safeguarding vulnerable adults this winter, colleagues agreed that on the basis the hotel would operate in exactly the same way with and without the appropriate permissions, and risk is negligible in this regard, we should proceed with reopening and continue to address licensing and planning permission (if required) concurrently.
- 4.19 The Housing Network have estimated that it will take them three to four weeks to repair and remodel the building.
- 4.20 Finally, by approving the recommendations and securing a 'block booking' until end March 2022 via a compliant procurement process, temporary accommodation at the single homeless facility can be secured in the most efficient and timely manner, providing better value for money to the Council. It will also ensure that vulnerable residents benefit from a dedicated facility for the duration of their homelessness instead of multiple placements and or being placed out of area based on availability of other nightly paid temporary accommodation. As Housing Network are already an established provider of nightly-charged temporary accommodation to the Council, this work will feed into the wider procurement project relating to the Council's overall use and cost of nightly paid temporary accommodation and regularising this through a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) as set out in section 5.4.
- 4.21 The alternative option is to continue, in the short term, to secure nightly paid temporary accommodation on an ad hoc, spot purchased basis elsewhere to meet the demand from single homeless households.

## 5 Issues and Choices

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- 5.1 The preferred option of working with The Housing Network to operate a single homeless facility has several positive impacts.
- 5.2 Whilst the proposed scheme, at least until March 2022, is more expensive than existing temporary accommodation solutions for this cohort, it represents a significantly safer and more suitable supported housing scheme which has the potential to provide a much-needed resource in future years. It will also reduce the risk of legal challenge, reputational damage, and will safeguard vulnerable homeless individuals.
- 5.3 As discussed in section 4.14, the demand for this proposed single homeless facility will exist in the longer term and the Council will shortly commence a co-production process with Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in respect of a bid for 3-year RSI Funding (Round 5) from 2022-2025. It is proposed that the ongoing costs of operating this facility will be sought from the RSI Funding (Round 5) opportunity to ensure no additional pressure exists on the Council's Homelessness Revenue budgets for 2022-23.
- 5.4 In relation to procurement, currently nightly paid temporary accommodation (bed and breakfast/hotels and self-contained) is spot purchased from third party providers including The Housing Network. Meetings with the Council's procurement team are underway to explore whether there is a more suitable way of procuring temporary accommodation that enables the Housing Options Team to fulfil statutory interim accommodation duties whilst also satisfying the Council's procurement regulations. One option in the early stages of being explored is a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS). Due to the time critical need for this type of accommodation within North Northamptonshire, and the fact that this proposal simply seeks to replace spot-purchased nightly paid temporary accommodation already being utilised elsewhere within and outside of North Northamptonshire, it is proposed that discussions with Procurement colleagues run concurrently to the progression of this opportunity.
- 5.5 The proposal also represents an opportunity for wider savings across Adult Social Care and Health as the crisis presentations associated with this cohort of individuals experiencing Multiple Exclusion Homelessness (MEH) are disproportionately resource intensive.
- 5.6 As a provider of nightly paid temporary accommodation, The Housing Network work in partnership with many councils regionally and nationally including Coventry City Council, Leicester City Council and London Borough Council's including Southwark, Harrow and Barnet. As owners of the Euro Hotel, there is a risk that The Housing Network offer the proposal to another Local Authority who are experiencing temporary accommodation pressures which would mean an additional 17 single homeless people, at least temporarily, accommodated within the Wellingborough area.
- 5.7 The Housing Network have planning permission to convert the hotel into 9 x 2-bedroom self-contained units. The Housing Network have advised Council officers that, should the Council not wish to utilise the building as a single homeless facility, the conversion to 9 units will not take place for a further 18-24

months. The building will remain vacant during this period and would be likely to continue to attract antisocial behaviour as detailed in section 4.2.

- 5.8 A decision to not progress with the proposal, will lead to significant winter pressures in relation to rough sleeping and compromise the council's ability to prevent harm to individuals on the streets. Whilst a Severe Weather Emergency Protocol is in place to ensure that offers of emergency accommodation are made to all rough sleepers during severe weather, the offer of an unsupported out of area placement is less likely to be accepted and/or sustained. The risks associated with out of area placements has already been set out.
- 5.9 A decision not to progress with the proposal will also mean that the Council will lose £30,100 of repurposed RSI Funding (Round 4) for 2021 - 2022 which is earmarked for the scheme.

## 6 Next Steps

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- 6.1 It is proposed that the Council will assemble a project team of officers from the Housing, Communities, Planning, Environmental Health and Benefits teams to oversee the mobilisation phase and monitor the ongoing delivery of the project and its outcomes.

## 7 Implications (including financial implications)

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### 7.1 Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1 The Housing Network propose to provide the facility to the Council on a nightly rate per room. They require a 'block booking' commitment for a period of time to make the proposal financially viable and are aware that the Council can currently only consider a commitment until the end March 2022.
- 7.1.2 The proposal is for the Council to block book the 17 rooms until the end of the financial year and there is certainly a sufficient demand to guarantee full occupancy for this period. Assuming, based on a 3-4 week refurbishment programme, that the facility can be occupied from 20<sup>th</sup> December, the block booking commitment equates to 15 weeks until the end March 2022.
- 7.1.3 Inclusive of one full time staff member working office hours, CCTV and daily communal cleaning detailed in section 4.12, The Housing Network will charge £35 per room per night. There will be 17 rooms available equating to a gross cost of **£4,165 per week**.
- 7.1.4 The Council can recoup £12.19 per room per night via Housing Benefit (based on 100% of the January 2011 Local Housing Allowance rate). A small number of guests (estimated to be 1 at any one time) may have no recourse to public funds (NRPF) which means the Council is unable to recoup this income. Income from Housing Benefit is therefore calculated (based on 16 rooms, allowing a 10% income loss due to rent arrears and voids) at **£1,229 per week**.

- 7.1.5 The cost of a 24/7 security officer will be additional and during the initial period until March 2022, The Housing Network will source and manage this at a rate of £15.50 per hour which equates to a cost of **£2,604 per week**.
- 7.1.6 Approval has been obtained from Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to repurpose RSI Funding (Round 4) underspend to the value of **£30,100** towards the cost of accommodating rough sleepers in this facility, assumed to occupy 9 of the 17 rooms. Based on 9 rough sleepers occupying the facility for 15 weeks, this equates to a contribution of **£2,007 per week**.
- 7.1.7 If 9 rooms are modelled to be occupied by rough sleepers, the remaining 8 rooms would be occupied by statutory homeless individuals the cost of which is met by the General Fund Homelessness Revenue budget. Section 4.11 of this report shows that the current net cost to the Council of accommodating one person in temporary accommodation out of area is £201.70 per week. This equates to **£1,614 per week** for 8 individuals who could be moved 'in area' to occupy the remaining 8 rooms in this facility.

**Figure 2: Weekly cost of block booking the Euro Hotel (costs apply to initial period until March 2022)**

<b>Income / expenditure item</b>	<b>Weekly cost for entire facility</b>
Nightly room charge (inclusive of 1 full time staff member, communal cleaning, and CCTV / secure access arrangements)	£4,165
Security officer 24/7 (via a contractor on an hourly rate)	£2,604
Projected income from Housing Benefit	-£1,229
RSI (Round 4) repurposed underspend contribution	-£2,007
Current net cost of accommodating 8 statutory homeless individuals who would be moved to this facility	-£1,614
<b>Shortfall / additional revenue funds required per week</b>	<b>£1,919 (or £112.88 per room per week)</b>

- 7.1.8 Assuming the facility opens on 20<sup>th</sup> December and operates under this proposed arrangement for 15 weeks, the additional revenue budget required for the period is **£28,785**.
- 7.1.9 A business case to seek access to COMF (Covid Outbreak Management Fund) for the security costs is being drafted on the basis that this would secure the financial viability of the project this winter and therefore enable the Council to continue to bring in rough sleepers thus reducing the risk to this community from Covid-19, in line with the Government's encouragement for Local Authorities to continue the 'Everyone In' campaign operated during the pandemic.
- 7.1.10 Should a request for COMF funding be unsuccessful, funding of £28,785 will need to be met via the Council's Homelessness Revenue budget although Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities will also be approached

to enquire as to whether additional projected RSI (Round 4) underspend can be redirected to the scheme. Even if this is approved it will only cover around half of the budget required.

7.1.11 North Northamptonshire Council has been awarded a Winter Uplift Homelessness Prevention Grant payment of £208,586 in addition to the Homelessness Prevention Grant for 2021-2022 of £994,797. Whilst the cost of temporary accommodation falls outside the scope of these grants, the uplift payment does reduce some pressure on the General Fund homelessness revenue budget.

## **7.2 Legal and Governance**

7.2.1 The Council's Executive Procedure Rule 17 provides that, where any matter is urgent and cannot wait until the next meeting of the Executive, the Head of Paid Service (i.e. the Chief Executive) may take the necessary action, provided that he first consults the Leader and reports the decision to the next public meeting of the Executive.

7.2.2. The Leader was consulted on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021 and indicated that he did not object to the Chief Executive making the decision in accordance with the urgency provisions to ensure that the Council did not miss out on opportunity to secure additional emergency accommodation for single homeless households for this winter.

7.2.3. The proposal will aid the Council to meeting its statutory duties to prevent and relieve homelessness as set out in Part 7 Housing Act 1996, as amended.

## **7.3 Relevant Policies and Plans**

7.3.1 The proposal meets the priorities of the Council's draft Corporate Plan relating to active, fulfilled lives and thriving places. Reducing rough sleeping contributes to the Council's vision by ensuring that North Northamptonshire is a safe and attractive area with a thriving economy. Rough sleeping, whilst fundamentally and most visibly a housing issue, is also closely interlinked with begging and street drinking, as well as other antisocial behaviour and crime which impacts on local businesses and the local economy.

7.3.2 The proposal will enable the Council's greater adherence to the adopted Temporary Accommodation Policy provided as a background paper to this report.

## **7.4 Risk**

7.4.1 A comprehensive rough sleeping pathway with an adequate supply of suitable accommodation solutions is imperative in reducing the risk of rough sleepers experiencing deteriorating health and death on the streets.

7.4.2 The risks of not taking action to swiftly increase the supply of temporary accommodation for single homeless people have been examined in sections 2.2, 4.9, 4.12 and 5.2.

## **7.5 Consultation**

7.5.1 The Leader was consulted and supportive of the recommended decision.

7.5.2 The Chairs of Scrutiny were consulted due to the matter being a Key Decision and did not object to the decision proposed to be taken by the Chief Executive under urgency powers.

7.5.3 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities specialist Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Advisors have provided their support to this proposal highlighting the requirement in North Northamptonshire for more emergency 'off the street' accommodation options prior to the onset of winter and noting the need as critical. A request to repurpose projected RSI Funding (Round 4) underspend was therefore approved and needs to be spent by end March 2022.

## **7.6 Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel**

7.6.1 None

## **7.7 Consideration by Scrutiny**

7.7.1 The Chairs of Scrutiny were consulted due to the matter being a Key Decision and did not object to the decision proposed to be taken by the Chief Executive under urgency powers.

## **7.8 Equality Implications**

7.8.1 None identified

## **7.9 Climate Impact**

7.9.1 The placement of single homeless households within the North Northamptonshire area will have a positive impact on carbon reduction due to more local journeys for needing to be undertaken.

## **7.10 Community Impact**

7.10.1 As well as providing suitable accommodation to safeguard vulnerable rough sleepers the proposal will have wider positive community impacts linked with a likely reduction in crime as explained in section 7.11.1.



## **7.11 Crime and Disorder Impact**

7.11.1 Rough sleeping, whilst fundamentally and most visibly a housing issue, is also closely interlinked with begging and street drinking, as well as other antisocial behaviour and crime which impacts on local businesses and the local economy. The proposal will have a positive impact on reducing this activity on the streets, enabling rough sleepers to be accommodated securely in a robustly managed scheme. The proposal also brings an empty building back into use thus reducing the risk of crime and antisocial behaviour associated with this.

## **8 Background Papers**

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8.1 The Council's Temporary Accommodation Policy

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## EXECUTIVE 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Capital Programme Update 2021/22</b>
<b>Report Authors</b>	Janice Gotts, Executive Director of Finance <a href="mailto:Janice.gotts@northnorthants.gov.uk">Janice.gotts@northnorthants.gov.uk</a>
<b>Executive Member</b>	Councillor Lloyd Bunday, Executive Member for Finance and Transformation

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

### 1. Purpose of Report

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- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to request approval for capital schemes that have come forward for inclusion in the Council's Capital Programme. Approval of the funding will allow the schemes to move forward to procurement and delivery.

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report contains details of schemes which have been submitted by officers to the Council's Strategic Capital Board as part of the Council's Capital Approval Process. Each scheme must complete a business case setting out the changes requested to the Capital Programme, including the purpose of the spend, the expected outcomes and the financial implications together with funding routes.

### 3. Recommendations

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- 3.1 It is recommended that Executive approve the following changes to the capital programme:

- a. Cyber security and disaster recovery – to increase the budget by £0.2m to support investment in improving cyber security and disaster recovery. The budget will be resourced from additional grant funding allocated by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).
- 3.2 Reason for Recommendations are set out in greater detail within section 5 of the report, but can be summarised as:
- To allow grant allocations to be recognised and utilised to support the review of the current IT infrastructure and related provision within North Northamptonshire Council, and in response to potential disruption relating to its core infrastructure because of natural disaster, power failure, infrastructure failure or cyber threat.

#### **4. Report Background**

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- 4.1 The Capital Programme is the Council's plan for investing in assets to efficiently deliver its statutory services, and to improve the local infrastructure of North Northamptonshire, with the benefits lasting over a number of years. The Council is required to set a balanced revenue budget and therefore must ensure that where borrowing is proposed to fund the cost of capital that the cost of servicing the debt is affordable within the Council's revenue budget.
- 4.2 Resources come from a number of sources including Government grants, capital receipts from surplus land and buildings, revenue contributions, other external contributions and borrowing. The Council captures its projected capital expenditure within the Capital Programme to monitor the same, help to control costs and ensure transparency. Given that the Capital Programme is approved by Executive, changes to it are also approved by Executive unless authority has been delegated in accordance with the Council's constitution.
- 4.3 This report provides an update to the Capital Programme adopted by the Council in February 2021 and requests that proposed changes are approved and reflected within the programme.

#### **5. Issues and Choices - Detail on Recommendations and Updates to the Capital Programme**

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- 5.1 **Cyber Security and Disaster Recovery – budget approval for £200k** - North Northamptonshire Council was awarded £200k in April 2021 from DLUHC in response to a review of the position of the Council's IT cyber and backup infrastructure. The grant is allocated to the council for implementing mitigations and recovery activities in response to disruption to its core IT infrastructure, whether due to natural disaster, power failure, infrastructure failure or cyber threat.

- 5.2 The review of resilience in cyber security and disaster recovery across the four legacy sovereign Council IT infrastructures identified a number of actions to be implemented to ensure that the Council could better protect its IT infrastructure from failure and recover more quickly if such a threat crystallises. The Council will use the grant to deliver the activities set out within the action plan.
- 5.3 The grant is a new and specific one-off allocation of capital funding which is time limited for use by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 in relation to IT infrastructure only. It cannot be used for any other purpose.

## **6. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **6.1 Resources and Financial**

- 6.1.1 The additional budget requirements are funded from external grants and other contributions. There is no requirement for the Council to undertake borrowing against the general fund to support these schemes. The detail of the funding arrangements is set out in the main body of the report.

### **6.2 Legal**

- 6.2.1 The council must utilise funding and deliver schemes in line with the restrictions and requirements as set out in the agreements linked to that funding and the requirements as set out in the Council's Constitution, in particular the budget setting and policy framework and the financial regulations.

### **6.3 Risk**

- 6.3.1 The deliverability of the 2021/22 Capital Programme is monitored by each accountable project manager and senior officer. There is further review throughout the financial year reported through the Executive.
- 6.3.2 If any overspends or emerging pressures are identified during the year, then mitigating actions will be sought and management interventions undertaken.
- 6.3.3 There is a risk that delays, and cost increases may arise as a result of COVID-19 restrictions and changes arising from EU Exit. Generally, this relates to the supply and price of materials with projects requiring increased lead in times. Whilst every attempt is made to cost these implications into the project, the risks remain.
- 6.3.4 There is a risk in relation to funding, particularly where it is from third parties, and appropriate agreements must be entered into to ensure that the funding is secured and spend is in accordance with any criteria stipulated by the funder.
- 6.3.5 Details of pressures, risks and mitigating actions implemented will be provided as part of the finance monitoring reports as the year progresses.

6.3.6 Where funding is from grant the Council must ensure that any spend is in accordance with the grant conditions, both the nature of the spend and the timing (where a deadline applies).

#### 6.4 **Consultation**

6.4.1 The 2021/22 Capital Strategy and Capital Programme were subject to consultation prior to approval by the North Northamptonshire Shadow Authority in February 2021.

6.4.2 Consultation on individual schemes is detailed as part of the scheme proposal.

#### 6.5 **Climate Impact**

6.5.1 The climate impact of each capital project is considered and managed within the relevant scheme.

#### 6.6 **Community Impact**

6.6.1 None specific to this report.

# Agenda Item 10

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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# Agenda Item 11

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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