

# Public Document Pack



**North  
Northamptonshire  
Council**

**Meeting:** EAP Climate Change Environment & Growth

**Date:** Wednesday 21st July, 2021

**Time:** 9.30 am


**Venue:** Remote Meeting via Zoom (this meeting is not the subject of public meeting requirements)

The meeting will be available for the public to view live at the 'Democratic Services North Northants' YouTube channel -

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To members of the EAP Climate Change Environment & Growth

Councillors Councillor Harriet Pentland (Chair), Tim Allebone, Bone, Dell, Lee, O'Hara and Prentice

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<p>Adele Wylie, Monitoring Officer North Northamptonshire Council</p>  <p><b>Proper Officer</b> <b>13<sup>th</sup> July 2021</b></p>			

This agenda has been published by Democratic Services.

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## **Meetings:**

This meeting will be held using the Zoom platform.

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Where a matter arises at a meeting which **relates to** other Registerable Interests, you must declare the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but must not take part in any vote on the matter unless you have been granted a dispensation.

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## **Executive Advisory Panel: Climate Change, Environment & Growth**

23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021 – 09:30am – Remote Meeting Via Zoom

### MINUTES

Attendees: Councillor Harriet Pentland (Chair), Councillor Tim Allebone, Councillor Jennie Bone, Councillor Dez Dell, Councillor Anne Lee, Councillor Zoe McGhee, Councillor Elliot Prentice, George Candler, Councillor Emily Fedorowycz, Rob Harbour, Graeme Kane, Emma Robinson, Iain Smith, Raj Sohal, Jonathan Waterworth

#### **1. Apologies for non-attendance**

- Apologies for non-attendance were received from Councillor Jan O'Hara.

#### **2. Members' Declarations of Interests**

- None received.

#### **3. Notification of requests to address the meeting**

- The Executive Advisory Panel (EAP) received a request from Councillor Emily Fedorowycz to address the meeting.
- In her address, Councillor Fedorowycz highlighted that:
  - It would be important for North Northamptonshire Council to consider its climate change strategy and action plan, and how the Executive would translate this plan into action.
  - This strategy would need to be well-researched and put into place as soon as possible.
  - Environmental priorities of the Executive should include banning the use of Glyphosate - a harmful pesticide which costs the authority around £80k per year, as well as a crackdown on unnecessary plant/tree removals.

ACTION: The Chair thanked Councillor Fedorowycz for her contribution to the meeting and assured her that the EAP would consider her suggestions when formulating its work plan.

#### **4. Approval of the Terms of Reference**

- The Chair invited George Candler (Executive Director, Place and Economy) to introduce the report, who highlighted that:
  - The EAP had been established as a body for inclusive decision-making and to provide guidance to the Executive on matters of climate change and the environment, in North Northamptonshire.
  - The rhythm of meetings should precede Executive meetings - monthly.
  - The EAP would allow for cross-party involvement and provide the opportunity to consult with the Executive on forthcoming matters, to reflect on advice – although, the EAP would have no formal decision-making power.
  - Meetings would be informal in nature, to stimulate healthy debate.
  - The EAP would not be subject to the full Local Government Act.
  - Within the terms of reference, potential areas of concern were listed, for the consideration of the EAP. Nevertheless, its remit would not be exclusive to these areas and the EAP could determine its own work plan.
- One Councillor acknowledged that when the EAP's action plan had been formulated, this work had benefitted from the strong subject knowledge of its officers. Therefore, the Councillor questioned whether these same officers would continue to work with the EAP, to assist on climate change and environmental matters? Rob Harbour (Assistant Director of Growth and Regeneration) explained that these officers, who had previously worked with the EAP in formulating an action plan, had now left the employment of the authority. Therefore, it would be imperative for the authority to consider how these lost resources would be replaced, by recruiting new staff to drive the EAP's agenda forward.
- The Chair supported the continuation of virtual meetings, held via Zoom, for the EAP. She posited that by continuing to hold meetings virtually, this could serve as a way for the EAP to reduce its own carbon footprint, by not encouraging members to physically travel to meetings in-person. Nevertheless, the Chair acknowledged that, if necessary, future meetings could be attended in-person, to ensure greater productivity.

ACTION: The EAP agreed to amend the terms of reference, to allow the Chair to have discretion over whether future meetings would be held virtually or in-person.

#### **5. Overview of Place and Economy**

- The Chair invited George Candler to introduce the report, who highlighted that:
  - The four key functional areas across Place and Economy included: 1) Highways and Waste, 2) Growth and Regeneration, 3) Assets and Environment, 4) Regulatory Services.
  - The net budget for Place and Economy was £55.7M (19% of the overall Council budget).

- Strategic priorities to focus on included: *“enabling sustainable growth, enhancing the environment, connecting our communities and transforming the way we work.”*
- It would be crucial that work on matters concerning climate change, environment and growth would be led and driven by elected members, working in partnership with other key stakeholders.

ACTION: The EAP noted the report.

## **6. Key areas of focus of four service areas across Place and Economy**

- George Candler invited the four Assistant Directors in attendance to introduce information on each of their respective services; the first of which was Graeme Kane (Assistant Director of Highways and Waste), who highlighted that:

Highways and Waste managed a range of services, including:

- Highways maintenance
- Home to school transport
- Strategic transport planning
- Street-lighting
- Active travel
- Highways development management
- Recycling and waste collection
- Street cleaning
- Bulky waste collections
- Enviro-crime
- Disposal and household waste and recycling centres
- Closed landfills

Some Highways services would be hosted and delivered by West Northamptonshire Council across North Northamptonshire.

In turn, services such as disposal and household waste and recycling centres and closed landfills would be hosted by North Northamptonshire Council and delivered across the West also.

These services would eventually be disaggregated for each authority to deliver independently.

Key priorities for Highways and Waste in 2021/22 would include:

- Bus strategy (to go to the Executive on 22nd June)
- Strategy to tackle litter
- Highways procurement
- Future recycling services: Government Environment Bill
- Active travel and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs)

- The next Assistant Director to introduce their service to the EAP was Rob Harbour (Assistant Director of Growth and Regeneration), who highlighted that:

Growth and Regeneration managed a range of services, including:

- Planning management
- Planning enforcement
- Planning policy
- Minerals and waste planning
- Street naming and numbering
- Growth and investment
- Regeneration
- Economic development
- Digital infrastructure
- Climate change
- Flood risk management

Key priorities for Growth and Regeneration in 2021/22 would include:

- Economic recovery framework
- Integrated growth strategy
- North Northants strategic plan
- Climate change strategy and action plan
- Central area growth deal
- Community renewal and levelling up funds
- Digital infrastructure

- The next Assistant Director to introduce their service was Jonathan Waterworth (Assistant Director of Assets and Environment), who highlighted that:

Assets and Environment managed a range of services, including:

- Facilities management
- Property estates management
- Energy management
- Capital projects (property)
- Fleet vehicles
- Grounds maintenance
- Parks and open spaces
- Country parks
- Car parks
- On-street parking
- Archives

Key priorities for the Assets and Environment in 2021/22 would include:

- Asset review and strategy
  - Accommodation strategy
  - Grounds maintenance and country parks
  - Car parking strategy
  - Fleet strategy, including electric vehicle charging
  - Investment strategy
- The next Assistant Director to introduce their service was Iain Smith (Assistant Director of Regulatory Services), who highlighted that:

Regulatory Services managed a range of services, including:

- Trading standards
- Emergency planning (hosted by NNC)
- Travellers United (hosted by NNC)
- Environmental health
- Licensing
- Bereavement services
- Building control
- Local land charges
- Business continuity planning

Key priorities for Regulatory Services in 2021/22 would include:

- Hire vehicle licensing policy
  - Emergency planning disaggregation
  - Regulatory services business support offer
  - Traveller unit review or policy and operation
  - Business continuity strategy and action plan
  - COVID response and recovery
- One Councillor expressed concern that climate change had been added to an already busy Growth and Regeneration portfolio with insufficient resources, as officers within this service had left employment of the authority. The Councillor stated that the climate change action plan and strategy could not be implemented without the proper funding and appropriate resources.
  - Regarding Graeme Kane's remarks concerning waste contracts, one Councillor suggested that it would be a great challenge for the authority to end its contracts around the same time, with Wellingborough's waste contract due to be the first to expire in March 2022. The Councillor also posited that central government should support local government with stricter legislation regarding fly tipping and other enviro-crime.

ACTION: The EAP noted the report.

## **7. Forward Plan**

- The Chair invited George Candler to introduce the report, who highlighted that the agenda items for the forthcoming meeting in July would include -
  - Strategy for litter (Highways and Waste)
  - Bus strategy action plan (Highways and Waste)
  - Climate change action plan - progress of activity (Growth and Regeneration)
  - Feedback from EAP (Place and Economy)
  - Delivery of updated forward plan
- The Chair again acknowledged Councillor Fedorowycz's earlier comments regarding the need to evaluate the use of Glyphosate in the county by NNC services; as neighbouring authorities, such as Cambridge, had already begun to phase out the commercial use of such pesticides. She concluded that it would be valuable for the EAP to explore advising the Executive on this matter.

ACTION: The EAP noted the report.

## **8. Next meeting date**

- The next meeting of the Climate Change, Environment and Growth Executive Advisory Panel would be held virtually, via Zoom, on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> July at 09:30am.



## NATIONAL BUS STRATEGY

### TIMESCALES BRIEFING NOTE

Following the commitment by the Executive on 22 June 2021 to the establishing of an Enhanced Partnership, under the Bus Service Act 2017, this note outlines the timescales for the preparation of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and Enhanced Partnership Plan/Scheme (EP) and their submission to Executive for final approval.

The Government requires that the BSIP is prepared by the end of October 2021, and the EP is made by the end of April 2022. To give maximum scope to meet this challenging timescale, it is proposed that the relevant reports are brought to the Executive on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2021 and 28<sup>th</sup> April 2022, which will require the reports to be exempt from call-in.

While the Government has laid down the requirements of what it expects to see in the BSIP, there are no laid down requirements for its consultation and approval. However, to allow time for preparation of the final plan and Executive report, work will need to be completed by mid-September to meet the end of October deadline. The BSIP will then be subject to an annual update.

The EP requires two rounds of 28-day operator consultation, with an intervening 28-day stakeholder consultation. To allow time for redrafting at appropriate stages, work on the EP Plan and Scheme will need to progressed to allow publication of the initial notice by the end of October 2021 to meet the April 2022 deadline.

It is proposed that there is an initial public consultation between 10 July and 8 August regarding issues, problems, ideas to be addressed in the BSIP and Enhanced Partnership. Timescales will not permit a further round of consultation before the BSIP has to go to the Executive. However, any comments from the Stakeholder consultation on the EP can be incorporated in the 2022 update of the BSIP.

10 July – 8 August	<b>Initial public/stakeholder consultation</b> on BSIP and EP. Discussions with operators in parallel.
24 August	<b>Scrutiny Commission</b> (Draft report 5 Aug, Final Report 12 Aug) – Outline approach being taken, themes emerging from consultation and operator discussions, opportunity to influence BSIP and work ahead.
22 September	<b>EAP</b> (Draft report 3 Sep, Final Report 10 Sep) – emerging BSIP
26 October	<b>Scrutiny Commission</b> (Draft report 7 Oct, Final Report 14 Oct) – update on BSIP, ; emerging work on EP and chance to influence before Formal Notice
28 October	<b>Executive</b> (Draft report 30 Sep, Final Report 19 Oct) – agree BSIP, also update on progress of preparing EP.
15 November – 11 December	<b>Operator Objection Period</b> on Formal Notice of EP (Statutory process)
3 – 30 January	<b>Public/stakeholder Consultation</b> on EP (Statutory process)
25 January	<b>Scrutiny Commission</b> (Draft report 6 Jan, Final Report 13 Jan) – update on EP and opportunity to input alongside stakeholder consultation
21 February – 20 March	<b>Operator Objection Period</b> on Notice to Make EP (Statutory process)
16 March	<b>EAP</b> (Draft report 25 Feb, Final Report 4 Mar) – emerging EP
28 April	<b>Executive</b> (Draft report 31 Mar, Final Report 19 Apr) – agree EPEP.

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## EXECUTIVE 5 AUGUST 2021

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Oxford to Cambridge Arc – Environmental Principles</b>
<b>Report Authors</b>	Sue Bateman <a href="mailto:sue.bateman@northnorthants.gov.uk">sue.bateman@northnorthants.gov.uk</a>
<b>Lead Member</b>	Councillor Steven North – Portfolio holder for Growth and Regeneration
<b>Consultees</b>	Report has been shared and agreed by the Assistant Director – Growth and Regeneration

<b>Key Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Forward Plan Reference (if yes to Key Decision)</b>	
<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 paragraph number for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1974</b>	

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### List of Appendices

#### **Appendix A – Shared regional principles for protecting, restoring and enhancing the environment in the Oxford – Cambridge Arc**

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

- 1.1. To seek endorsement of the shared environmental principles for the Oxford to Cambridge Arc.

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

- 2.1 In 2020 the Arc Environment Working Group agreed to produce a set of Arc-wide Environment Principles. The recommended principles are attached as Appendix A. They are the result of a collaborative piece of work led by a range of partners and stakeholders.

- 2.2 The document was endorsed by the Arc Leadership Group Plenary on 9 March 2021. It is hoped by having developed consensus and support for these principles, including direct engagement with Government, that these will be used to support emerging environmental policies within the emerging Arc Spatial Framework. The intention is to seek endorsement of the principles from all councils and Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs) across the Arc.

### **3. Recommendations**

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- 3.1 It is recommended that the Executive:

- a) Endorses the shared environmental principles set out in Appendix A; and
- b) Supports the development of an Arc Environment Strategy which will provide further guidance on how the principles can be delivered.

- 3.2 *Reason for Recommendations –*

The principles are not formal policy but rather a shared statement of ambition for the Arc. They are intended to:

- support the environment policies emerging from the Arc Spatial Framework
- allow use of the Arc as a place for DEFRA to test and apply its 25-year plan and funding through pilots and projects
- support Local Planning Authorities with a frame of reference to further develop the principles through Local and Strategic Plans at a local and sub-regional level

### **4. Report Background**

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- 4.1 Arc-wide Environment Principles have been prepared by the OxCam Arc Environment Working Group and are attached as Appendix A. They are the result of a collaborative piece of work led by a range of partners and stakeholders from the group including:

- Environmental Non-Government Organisations (who drafted the first document)
- Local Nature Partnerships
- Local Government environment and planning policy representatives (responses were received from c. 20 local authorities, with representation from across the Arc)
- DEFRA
- Natural England
- Environment Agency
- MHCLG (planning policy lead)
- University representative from the Universities' Environment Group
- A LEP representative
- Anglian Water
- An Energy Hub representative

- 4.2 The document was endorsed by the Arc Leadership Group Plenary on 9 March 2021. It is hoped that by having developed consensus and support for

these principles, including direct engagement with Government, that these will be used to support emerging environmental policies within the emerging Arc Spatial Framework.

- 4.3 The Spatial Framework for the Arc is being developed by Government following a commitment in the 2020 budget. A policy paper on the Spatial Framework was published in February 2021 and the high-level implications for North Northamptonshire were reported to the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee on 2 March 2021. It is anticipated that consultation will take place on a vision over the summer of 2021 with a draft framework being consulted on in 2022. The Spatial Framework is intended to have the status of national planning and transport policy, providing a strategic framework for local planning.
- 4.4 The environmental principles were considered by the Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel on 29 June 2021. The panel recommended that the Executive endorse the shared environmental principles and support the development of an Arc Environment Strategy.

## **5. Issues and Choices**

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- 5.1 The shared regional principles for protecting, restoring and enhancing the environment in the Oxford – Cambridge Arc are set out in Appendix A. There are five overarching principles:
- To work towards a target of net zero carbon at an Arc level by 2040;
  - To protect, restore, enhance and create new nature areas and natural capital assets, including nationally and locally designated wildlife sites and priority habitats and links between them through the implementation of the spatial planning mitigation hierarchy of avoid, mitigate, compensate and gain;
  - To be an exemplar for environmentally sustainable development, in line with the ambitions set out in the government's 25-year plan. This will incorporate a systems-based and integrated assessment and implementation approach. We will aim to go beyond the minimum legislated requirements for development;
  - To ensure that existing and new communities see real benefits from living in the Arc;
  - To use natural resources wisely.
- 5.2 Each theme has several sub-principles which describe further the outcomes aspired to. Some of the sub-principles will evolve further as knowledge and understanding develops.
- 5.3 Having been endorsed by the Plenary, the Arc Environment Principles are being shared amongst a wider audience including the development community to gain support and buy-in. It is intended that each partner organisation will now proceed to take these through local decision-making processes to provide even more support for the shared principles.
- 5.4 The next piece of work for the Arc Environment Working Group is to develop an Environment Strategy which will set out a comprehensive plan for how the

principles will be delivered in the Arc. It is likely that the strategy will take 12-18 months to complete.

- 5.5 The work of the Arc Environment Working Group has been to put forward a set of principles that are ambitious and aspirational for the Arc. The aim is to have a 'Green Arc' as an internationally significant exemplar for the very best of sustainable living and working. It sets targets above what is intended to be mandated by Government through the Environment Bill. The Environment Strategy will set out the practical ways to deliver this aspiration including 'doubling nature', a 20% biodiversity net gain and identifying innovative solutions to energy and water shortages and stimulating the green economy.
- 5.6 Given the ambitious and challenging nature of the principles they will require the collective effort of all partners in the Arc if they are to be delivered. They seek to address some of the biggest challenges of our time including achieving net zero carbon, climate resilience, biodiversity net gain, environmental net gain and ensuring renewable natural capital remains available for future generations. These ambitions will not come without significant challenges. There will be practical delivery challenges particularly to ensure development remains viable in all areas across the Arc. It is however considered important to endorse these principles so that they can seek to influence the development of the Spatial Framework for the Arc. This will show the council's strong commitment to the environment. It will also provide the opportunity for real environmental improvements for the local area as a benefit of delivering growth.
- 5.7 The Spatial Framework will have a significant influence on the development of local plans within the council's area, notably the North Northamptonshire Strategic Plan. National planning policy status means it will sit alongside the National Planning Policy Framework and guide plan production and decision making. In the interim the environmental principles can help to guide and influence the direction of the North Northamptonshire Strategic Plan as it is prepared, together with other planning policy documents.
- 5.8 Officers and members already sit on a number of Arc Boards and Working Groups and it is considered important that they continue to engage with these groups to influence the Spatial Framework for the benefit of residents, businesses and the environment in North Northamptonshire. Endorsement of the Environmental Principles will show a clear commitment to the environment, but engagement on the practical delivery of these ambitions alongside ensuring the resources exist to implement these will be critical.
- 5.9 North Northamptonshire is well placed to be an exemplar of sustainable living and working. The North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy already includes a vision to be '*a showpiece for modern green living and well managed sustainable development: a resilient area where local choices have increased the ability to adapt to the impacts of climate change and to global economic changes.*' There are considerable opportunities to engage with the desire to double nature and increase biodiversity gain through projects including within the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and the Rockingham Forest. It is hoped that the Arc will become a place where funding will become available to test and develop projects to deliver these environmental benefits and North Northamptonshire will be well placed to take advantage of these opportunities.

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

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### **6.1 Resources and Financial**

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

### **6.2 Legal**

6.2.1 There are no legal implications arising from the proposals.

### **6.3 Risk**

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

### **6.4 Consultation**

6.4.1 Preparation of the environmental principles included collaboration with a range of partners and stakeholders.

### **6.5 Consideration by Scrutiny**

6.5.1 None.

### **6.6 Climate Impact**

6.6.1 The principles are specifically seeking to address achieving net zero carbon and climate resilience.

### **6.7 Community Impact**

6.7.1 The principles are seeking to ensure that existing and new communities see real benefits from living in the Arc including through maximising the health and wellbeing benefits of nature.

## **7. Background Papers**

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7.1 [Planning for sustainable growth in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc: An introduction to the Oxford-Cambridge Arc Spatial Framework](#), HM Government, February 2021

7.2 [A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment](#), HM Government, 2018

7.3 [North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy](#) 2011-2031, adopted July 2016

7.4 [North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee Report of 2 March 2021](#) regarding the Policy Paper on the Spatial Framework (Report Item 7, paragraphs 3.6 – 3.27)

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# Shared regional principles for protecting, restoring and enhancing the environment in the **Oxford-Cambridge Arc**





# Foreword

The days when we could take our environment for granted are long gone. We must now seek out every opportunity we can to protect and enhance what we have left and ensure that we do everything we can to ensure that the Oxford-Cambridge Arc is a place where we can all work and live truly sustainably.

Both the Arc Leadership Group’s OxCam Arc Economic Prospectus and the Government’s publication, planning for sustainable growth: introduction to the Arc Spatial Framework has given top billing jointly to the economy and the environment. It is now our job to ensure that the environment is at the centre of everything we do and every decision we take.

The work of the OxCam Arc Environment Working Group has been focused on putting forward this set of principles that will allow us to be outstandingly ambitious and aspirational for the OxCam Arc. If we can get this right then the world will look to our ‘Green Arc’ as an internationally significant exemplar for the very best in sustainable living and working, for practical ways to doubling nature, and innovative solutions to energy and water shortages as well as stimulating a green economy.

These principles will form the basis for the creation of an OxCam- wide Environmental Strategy that will embrace everything from green spaces, to housing standards, to sustainable transport, energy generation and transmission and water management and conservation.

It is vital, as we and government move forward with the OxCam Arc, that we take the people already living here with us. We can do this by committing to greener transport, by doubling the number of trees and acreage of accessible managed green spaces, by protecting our chalk streams and supporting local green energy production to name but a few.

If we are to double economic growth along the OxCam Arc then as a minimum we must be doubling nature and ensuring that the Arc leads the way in the zero carbon living and working of the future.

**Councillor Bridget Smith,**  
Leader South Cambridgeshire District Council,  
Chair Arc Environment Working Group

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Left  
Paragliding off the  
Dunstable Downs Chiltern  
Hills in Bedfordshire



## In March 2019, Government and local partners set out their ambition for the Arc in a joint declaration<sup>1</sup>:

“We want better places to live, which are beautiful and inspiring, to benefit the Arc’s residents today as well as tomorrow. The Government has already set out its intention for the Arc to embody England’s 25 Year Environment Plan, which we will work together to deliver, including through planning for local natural capital. We want new developments to use intelligent and sensitive design to create or enhance habitats and improve habitat connectivity, in situ and in the surrounding area. We also want to improve access to the environment for existing and new communities in order to improve health and wellbeing.”

“Conserving and enhancing the natural environment is at the heart of Government’s ambitions for the Arc. The 25 Year Environment Plan also sets out our comprehensive approach to improving landscapes and habitats, and

the aspiration to move to a policy of net environmental gain. We expect the policy for the wider Oxford-Cambridge corridor to embody this approach.”

An Environment Working Group (EWG) has been established to take forward the environmental pillar outlined within the joint declaration. The EWG will work with partners in the Arc, including those responsible for the other pillars, to ensure that the protection and enhancement of the environment is at the heart of decision-making and any actions are based on a clear and agreed evidence base.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/799993/OxCam\\_Arc\\_Ambition.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/799993/OxCam_Arc_Ambition.pdf)

**Above**  
Sunrise at Willen Lake in Milton Keynes.

**Right**  
Elmsbrook eco-town - Bicester.

**In October 2020 an economic prospectus for the Arc was published jointly by local authorities and the Local Enterprise Partnerships within the Arc. It outlines the following vision:**

“By 2050, the Arc will be a world leading place for high-value growth, innovation and productivity. A global hub where ideas and companies are generated and thrive, home to exemplary models of 21st century development, with a high-quality environment and outstanding quality of life, and with a strong economic focus that drives inclusive clean growth.”

**The environmental principles supporting this vision are set out in this document. They are ambitious and will require the collective effort of all partners in the Arc if they are to be delivered.**







**The regional principles have been written and agreed by the Arc's local partners and stakeholders. They are informed by Government policy. They are a clear statement of regional intent that will help to clarify the commitment to adopting an approach that results in environmentally sustainable economic growth. This includes the protection, restoration and enhancement of the environment (air, water, land, soil, biodiversity), net biodiversity and net environmental gain, net zero carbon, the sustainable use of resources.**

**Above**  
Cotswolds Hills Countryside  
in the area of outstanding  
natural beauty.

**Right**  
Autumn view of the river  
Nene Valley, near Castor  
village, Cambridgeshire.

The principles align with the government's 25 Year Environment Plan<sup>2</sup> and the commitment in the joint declaration to embody the 25 year plans goals and ambitions.

We will also take account of other appropriate government strategies, plans and guidance. Our aim is for the principles to inform and become an integral part of developing plans and statements in relation to the Arc, local plans, local council activities and the plans and activities of activities and delivery programs for all bodies operating in the Arc. It is also our ambition to see universities, private sector developers and third sector organisations adopt these principles.

**The principles address how we will tackle some of the biggest challenges of our time:** achieving net zero carbon, climate resilience, biodiversity net gain, environmental net gain, doubling the area of land actively managed for nature, restoring, protecting and enhancing the natural environment and ensuring renewable natural capital (resources derived from living things that if properly managed can be replenished) remains available for future generations.

## The principles



<sup>2</sup>A Green Future: Our 25  
Year Plan to Improve the  
Environmentfile/799993/  
OxCam\_Arc\_Ambition.pdf



# The Arc partners will seek to:

1.

**Work towards a target of net zero carbon at an Arc level by 2040.**

This will include:

- a. Ensuring all **decisions about development and new infrastructure support this goal.**
- b. Working with Government to **enhance building regulations and planning policy to actively reduce the carbon footprint of, and energy consumption in, new buildings.**
- c. Pursuing a **major programme of transformation** in existing settlements and infrastructure to reduce energy intensity and carbon emissions.
- d. Construction, operational and transport activities.

2.

**Protect, restore, enhance and create new nature areas and natural capital assets, including nationally and locally designated wildlife sites and priority habitats, and links between them. We will implement the spatial planning mitigation hierarchy of avoid, minimise, remediate, compensate and gain. This will include:**

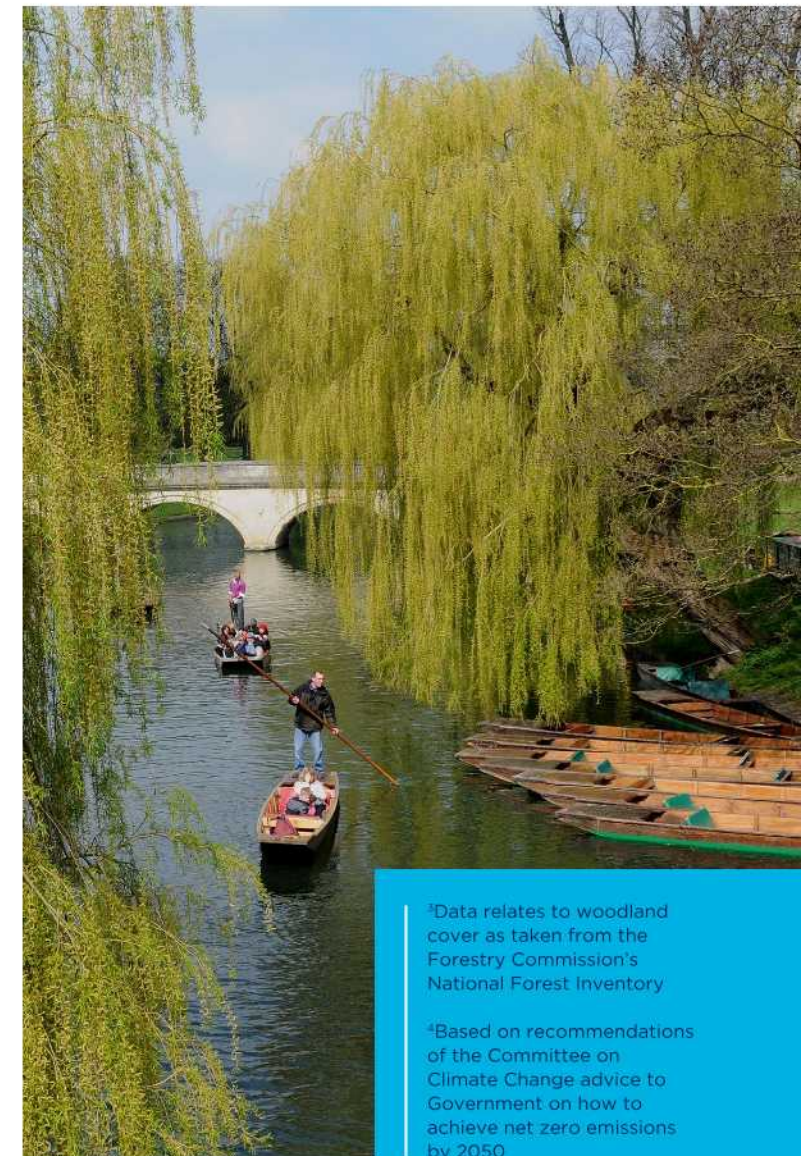
- a. Doubling the area of land managed primarily for nature in the Arc (**'Doubling Nature'**). To contribute to Government's commitment to protecting 30% of land for nature conservation by 2030. We will seek to maximise public, private and third sector funding opportunities **to protect, restore and enhance the natural environment** and maintain existing, and increase investment in, natural capital assets, working with partners including major landowners and our important agriculture sector across the Arc.



**Above**  
Heron Valley, Rushmere  
Country Park, Leighton  
Buzzard.

**Right**  
Punting on the River  
Nene, Peterborough.

- b. Coordinating work on local nature recovery strategies and the Arc's contribution to **the Nature Recovery Network for England** by creating more, bigger, better-connected places, in the required condition, for nature including landscape scale interventions.
- c. Delivering **biodiversity net gain for Town & Country Planning Act developments of 20%**. This is above the 10% Government mandated minimum to reflect the Arc's world leading environmental ambitions.
- d. Delivering **biodiversity net gain for all developments of 20% with a minimum requirement of 10%** including Nationally Significant Infrastructure and projects brought forward outside of the Town & Country Planning Act. This is to reflect the Arc's world leading environmental ambitions.
- e. **Working with Government to develop a suitable net environment gain metric that** incorporates biodiversity net gain and, once available, to set an ambitious target to reflect the Arc's world leading environmental ambitions.
- f. Establishing **human and nature mobility corridors** across the Arc – using existing or new transport corridors for maximum environmental benefit/gain.
- g. **Increasing tree and woodland cover across the Arc from 7.4%<sup>3</sup> to 19%<sup>4</sup>.** This is in recognition of the ability of trees and woodlands to deliver a wide range of environmental, health, social and economic benefits. We will ensure the right trees are planted in the right places.
- h. Protecting and enhancing protected landscapes. Enhancing landscape character areas, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the wider countryside.



<sup>3</sup>Data relates to woodland cover as taken from the Forestry Commission's National Forest Inventory

<sup>4</sup>Based on recommendations of the Committee on Climate Change advice to Government on how to achieve net zero emissions by 2050



## 3.

**Be an exemplar for environmentally sustainable development, in line with the ambitions set out in the government's 25 year plan. This will incorporate a systems-based and integrated assessment and implementation approach and will fully recognise the associated health and wellbeing benefits. We will aim to go beyond the minimum legislated requirements for development.** This will include:

- a. **All new settlements, urban extensions and infrastructure contributing to the achievement of delivering net biodiversity gain, net environmental gain, and net zero carbon** both in site and route selection and in the design of settlements and transport corridors. In addition, areas of tranquillity will be protected and measures taken to avoid light pollution and protect dark sky areas. Making cycling and walking more attractive ways to travel and investing in zero emission public transport of the future.

- b. **Understanding the impact of development on the natural environment**, including cumulative and indirect impacts (taking into account associated housing and other forms of development), so that these can be addressed in line with the mitigation hierarchy, and carrying out environmental and strategic assessments as appropriate for the type and scale of development programmes including options and proper community consultation.
- c. Understanding the Arc's environmental capacity to accommodate different levels of growth and development in different locations and **ensuring that planned growth and development remains well within environmental capacity limits.**
- d. Working with Government to **enhance the building regulations and the role of planning policy so that they align with sustainability principles, and actively reduce the carbon footprint, water and energy consumption** in new and existing buildings. We will encourage Arc local partners to exceed the minimum standards required by building regulations.
- e. Promoting the switch to renewable and other sustainable energy supplies, improving travel choices, and supporting changing working practices. This will enable **improvements to the design and development of sustainable communities and the protection and enhancement of the natural environment.**

Right  
People walking in open  
spaces.

## 4.

**Ensure that existing and new communities see real benefits from living in the Arc including through:**

- a. **Maximising the health and wellbeing benefits of nature** by providing sector-leading areas of accessible nature-rich greenspace in, and accessible to, new settlements, urban extensions and commercial zones and increasing and enhancing greenspace, and access to it, for existing settlements in the Arc.
- b. **Promoting and increasing equality of sustainable access to nature and its benefits** by investing in, increasing and enhancing nature-rich greenspace in the places and communities where it is most lacking. We will improve access to greenspace and nature, ensuring Natural England's Access to Natural Greenspace standards, and (once available) Green Infrastructure Standards, are maximised for existing housing and delivered for future developments.





## 5.

## Use natural resources wisely by:

- a. Working to address existing **water resource, water quality and flood management** issues and through an integrated approach across the water agenda ensure future issues and risks are managed, including in the context of climate change, with a focus on nature-based interventions.
- b. Ensuring that soil quality is properly protected and improved including within development, infrastructure and agricultural activities.
- c. Making **more efficient use and management of waste and resources**, working towards a circular economy with no net waste and promoting the use of sustainable building materials and construction guidelines.
- d. Working with local authorities to share best practice and coordinate action being taken on local **air quality management plans** including addressing emissions from agriculture and from installations regulated by the Environment Agency.
- e. Supporting the development of interventions that reduce the **impact of agriculture on the environment** and support productivity.
- f. Helping to build collaboration between farmers to generate catchment and landscape scale environmental improvement under the **Environmental Land Management Scheme**.
- g. Ensuring that the required mineral resources for the Arc are sourced in an environmentally sensitive manner and that mineral sites are restored in a coordinated manner to after-uses that benefit nature and people, as well as helping to provide ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration and water management.

**We will continue to work with the other Arc pillars to develop appropriate environmental principles for incorporation within these workstreams.**

**We will review and update the environmental principles in the light of developing policies, practices, evidence, experience, knowledge and governance arrangements.**





## Resourcing our ambitions

**To achieve delivery of these principles we will need to work collaboratively across the public, private and third sectors. Some resources are already in place and there are many more that we will need. As a starting point we will:**

- Build on the work of the Arc Local Natural Capital Plan and the associated work in the 5 counties to **make publicly available, agreed baseline maps for natural capital and ecosystem services across the Arc**. Resources will be required to maintain the data and make it accessible.
- Work with the statutory agencies and with local councils to ensure ready **access to the wide range of environmental data** currently collected by them.
- **Work with government to agree methodologies** for both net biodiversity gain and net environment gain for use within the Arc. We will establish a technical group(s) to assess net gain propositions on behalf of local planning authorities and provide planning committees with independent advice.
- **Support and promote a 5 yearly environmental census** across the Arc including promoting public engagement through citizen science approaches.
- Use **evidence on health, deprivation and ecosystem services demand** (e.g. for air quality improvement) to inform planning for greenspace, habitats and **natural capital assets**.
- Work with all those that fund nature improvement work across the Arc including the Defra Group, water companies, environmental Non-Governmental Organisations, local councils, catchment partnerships, housing and commercial property developers and infrastructure providers, together with those allocating Environment Land Management System funding, and private investors to **take a more efficient and effective systems based approach to natural capital and ecosystem systems based interventions**. We will seek to ensure that funding is used strategically and not in a piecemeal way.
- **Invest in projects that deliver natural capital and environmental benefits**, such as carbon sequestration, pollinator habitats, soil improvement, flood alleviation and water resource resilience, and establish Arc-wide and more local Natural Capital Investment Plans to inform and support the emerging Arc Spatial Framework.

## Monitoring

We will pursue our commitment as outlined within these principles and will work with government and local partners on the development of associated metrics and targets in line with the 25 Year Environment Plan, carbon reduction commitments and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

## Engagement

We will engage and consult with communities, residents and people working in the Arc, as well as businesses, other organisations and NGOs, on the vision and ambitions for sustainable environmental growth in the Arc.

This document is supported by the Arc Leadership Group, Arc Universities Environment Group, Arc Local Enterprise Partnerships, England's Economic Heartland, and has been drafted with input from the Arc Local Nature Partnerships whose members include representatives from environment NGOs, local councils, LEPs, developers, businesses, business representation bodies, the Environment Agency, Natural England, and the Forestry Commission and important contributions from central government departments, other environment NGOs and businesses.







**Below**  
Sunrise panorama at  
the Campbell park in  
Milton Keynes.

Published by the  
Environment Working Group,  
Oxford-Cambridge Arc  
Leadership Group: March 2021



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## EXECUTIVE ADVISORY PANEL: CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENT & GROWTH – 21<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2021

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Additional Restrictions Grant Top-Up Funding</b>
<b>Lead Member</b>	Councillor Steven North – Portfolio holder for Growth and Regeneration
<b>Consultees</b>	Organisations representing local businesses in North Northamptonshire

<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
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### List of Appendices

Appendix A – Summary of options for distribution of Additional Restrictions Top-Up Grant funding

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

- 1.1. The Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) aims to support businesses most severely impacted by coronavirus restrictions. The Government announced that further funding would be made available for Local Authorities, through a conditional ARG top-up. The purpose of this report is to outline the progress to date with the distribution of previous discretionary ARG funding, and set out the options for distribution of this top-up funding to support the local economic recovery framework.

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

- 2.1 Additional Restrictions Grants (ARG) have provided discretionary support to local businesses impacted by the pandemic. In May 2021, North Northamptonshire Council opened the Discretionary Restart Grant and the

Local Business Hardship Fund utilising remaining combined ARG funds. The scope of the grants was based on:

- Analysis of sectors most impacted by restrictions in the local economy at that time
- Feedback from business from earlier legacy discretionary grants
- Feedback from local business representatives

2.2 A provisional allocation of a conditional top-up of £2.9m is available subject to verified spend of all remaining ARG funding. The intention is for the Council to make a submission to Government on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2021 providing this verification. The final deadline for submitting verification is 30<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Focus is now directed on how this top up funding is best utilised to aid the survival and recovery of businesses most impacted by the pandemic. Funding must be distributed by Local Authorities by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. Four options for targeting the top-up funding are outlined in this report at Appendix A.

2.3 The plan is to launch proposals in September following consideration and endorsement from the Executive on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2021.

### **3. Recommendations**

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3.1 It is recommended that the Executive Advisory Panel:

- a) notes the approach taken to allocate previous discretionary ARG
- b) considers what, if any, comments it may wish to make to the Executive on the proposed four options outlined at Appendix A for ongoing business support utilising ARG top-up funding to support the local economic recovery.

### **4. Report Background**

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4.1 The four predecessor authorities had, between them, been provided with £9.34m of discretionary ARG monies. At the start of the financial year, North Northamptonshire Council had £3.869m of unspent ARG, of which about £750,000 was committed, but not yet spent.

4.2 It was agreed that the unspent monies would be used to:

- Honour existing commitments from discretionary grant regimes, that had existed up to the 31<sup>st</sup> March, that sovereign authorities had not been able to pay out in time, including some spend on the business advice and support service that East Northamptonshire Council (ENC) had set up at a Rushden Lakes venue and other activities related to the wider 'Recovery through Enterprise' initiative.
- Mirror the new 'Restart' scheme that had been created by government – as had happened with earlier grant schemes; making payments to those businesses who were not eligible for the mandatory scheme. With the extension of restrictions, an additional small top-up payment was also provided to beneficiaries of the Restart scheme.

- Help businesses with critical running costs who were aiming to re-commence business at scale via a new 'Hardship' fund, modelled on the schemes developed by Kettering Borough Council and ENC.

- 4.3 Both the Restart and Hardship schemes were launched by the Council in May. Following the announcement of further conditional top-up ARG funding, North Northamptonshire was allocated a provisional amount of £2.9million. The top-up would only be payable if 100% of the previous ARG allocations had been spent by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021.
- 4.4 The deadline to spend previous ARG funding was then extended to 30<sup>th</sup> July 2021 when it was announced that step four of the roadmap out of restrictions was being delayed by a period of up to four weeks. This extension gave businesses more time to submit necessary pre-payment evidence and for the Council to support as many applicants as possible.
- 4.5 Since May 2021 over 700 businesses have received funding under these two grant schemes across North Northamptonshire and the Council. The breakdown of spend by sector for the Restart and Hardship schemes is as follows:

<b>Discretionary Sector</b>	<b>Total Balance</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Accommodation	£10,955	0.7
Gym and Sports	£46,011	3.1
Hospitality	£407,523	27.7
Leisure	£538,984	36.7
Non Essential Retail	£244,296	16.6
Personal Care	£223,482	15.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,471,251</b>	
<b>Hardship Sector</b>		
Charity	£92,000	10.2
Hospitality, Leisure and Retail	£450,184	50.2
Manufacturing	£261,624	29.1
Creative and Cultural	£95,000	10.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>£898,808</b>	

Note: Please note this breakdown is for grants paid up to 6<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Some outstanding grants were payable after this date.

- 4.6 Once the Council is able to evidence full spend of previous ARG it will be eligible for top-up funding. Options for distribution of this top-up ARG have been developed and set out in Appendix A.

## **5. Issues and Choices**

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- 5.1 The guidance<sup>1</sup> for Local Authorities sets out criteria on which top-up ARG funding can be distributed. Funding should be allocated through business support grants or through wider business support measures. Local Authorities are encouraged to support businesses most severely impacted by restrictions. There are no restrictions on the number of grants a business can receive, outside of Covid-19 business grant subsidy allowance. Therefore, previous grant recipients will be able to apply again depending on the eligibility criteria agreed for further grant support.
- 5.2 During the application process for the discretionary Restart and Hardship schemes, it was evident that whilst some sectors are recovering there are others still severely impacted by restrictions such as travel, events and hospitality and their supply chains. Furthermore, there were a number of applications to the Hardship scheme seeking funding to innovate, expand and diversify. Whilst this was outside of the scope of the scheme at that time, it is being also evident that there is a demand for funding to facilitate recovery via diversification, investment and innovation in businesses across different sectors so that growth can be sustained. The options set out at Appendix A have been developed for those businesses who remain severely impacted and require continued funding to keep trading whilst restrictions are lifted. The options also support businesses who are looking to diversify and invest, and facilitate innovation, on the path to recovery and sustained growth.
- 5.3 Underpinning financial support, an increased focus on business support has been recommended. Restrictions on the use of ARG mean that the Council are unable to contract a third party to deliver wider business support if it did not have a contract in place by 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021. There is, however, scope to deliver additional business support through Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and Growth Hubs. This support would be designed to complement existing COVID-19 business support which will continue to be delivered via the Council's Business and Jobs Hub at Rushden Lakes under the Recovery through Enterprise banner. It is proposed that discussions take place with the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) Growth Hub to agree the form of this support, appropriate milestones and targets, reporting and payment schedule.
- 5.4 The top-up ARG fund is time-limited. All spend must be incurred by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. Any underspend will be recovered by Government. This means that the Council's plans to spend the top-up funding must be designed to be simple and attractive for businesses to access, as well as targeted. It must also be uninhibited by unnecessary bureaucracy, so it is straight forward to set-up, manage and administer. Proposals for the options outlined at Appendix A would follow this approach. This would include the preparation of guidance notes for applicants detailing eligibility criteria, grant agreements with bespoke conditions, co-ordinated use of social media and other communications, including the use of local business networks, to promote the opportunity to apply for funding, and replicating other systems and processes which have worked well for the Restart and Hardship schemes.

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<sup>1</sup> [Local Restrictions Support Grants \(LRSG\), Restart Grant, Additional Restrictions Grant \(ARG\): guidance for local authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-restrictions-support-grants-lrsg-restart-grant-additional-restrictions-grant-arg)

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

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### **Resources and Financial**

- 6.1 As outlined above, the total previous ARG fund allocated by Government to the four predecessor authorities totalled £9.34m. At the start of the financial year, the Council had £3.869m of unspent ARG which has been spent on the remaining legacy discretionary grants, the Discretionary Restart grant and the Local Business Hardship Fund. The top-up fund will provide an additional £2.9m.
- 6.2 The distribution of discretionary ARG funding requires significant resource input from the Council's Growth & Regeneration Service. Grants and support to local businesses through ARG funding, remain a key focus for the Service in 2021/22, in collaboration with the Council's Revenues and Benefits team. The Council's Finance Team were involved in the design of the previous Restart and Hardship schemes. This involvement will continue for the successor schemes outlined in Appendix A.

### **Legal**

- 6.3 The Council has a responsibility to ensure that applicants do not exceed the COVID-19 business grant subsidy allowance. This is undertaken through the application and pre-payment verification process. For businesses receiving funding through the discretionary Hardship scheme, a grant offer letter setting out the conditions of funding, including eligible expenditure, is signed by both the Council and the grant recipient prior to payment. This process would continue for the new grant schemes proposed in Appendix A.

### **Consultation**

- 6.4 The options presented reflect the feedback of continued discussions with local businesses and umbrella business organisations, and the ongoing analysis of those sectors more impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic within the local economy.

### **Consideration by the Executive Advisory Panel**

- 6.5 The Executive Advisory Panel is requested to consider the options presented; however, the Council will only spend the funding received by Government. This is not a Key Decision and is not subject to the 'call-in' process.

### **Climate Impact**

- 6.6 The submission of applications for funding does not adversely impact on climate change, with the Council promoting all reasonable steps to minimise environmental impact in its activities. Climate impact will be a consideration in all grant applications. Moreover, the proposal for a new Recovery and Innovation Grant will specifically encourage projects which help to mitigate any negative impacts on climate change and promote positive change and impact. The aim being to 'build back better, stronger and greener' in North Northamptonshire



## Community Impact

- 6.7 In developing options to utilise ARG funds from Government for consideration, the Council has prioritised the activities which have greatest potential to support and sustain a local economic recovery.

### Risks

Risk	Impact/Mitigation	RAG
Grant spend for invalid or incorrect expenditure	(I)-Financial risk to NNC (M) Pre-payment checks and post assurance verification	
NNC lacks capacity to manage continued ARG programme	(I)-Undermines ability to deliver programme and outputs and harms reputation (M)-Prioritisation of resource to manage programme, including additional dedicated resource funded through ARG. However, it is still inevitable that this could have an impact on other economic development related activities, at least in the short-term	
Total grant spend not achieved within timeframe	(I)-Funding recouped by Government. (M)-Flexibility between the four strands identified in Appendix A with no fixed allocations. Ongoing review of spend and take-up of support	

## 7. Background Papers

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N/A



## APPENDIX A: Summary of Options for delivery of top-up ARG to support businesses in North Northamptonshire

Options	Details
Distribution of final committed grants for legacy and NNC Discretionary Grants	Take up for both legacy and North Northamptonshire Council Discretionary Grants has been high. Funding from the 'top-up' will be set aside to <b>cover the cost of payments from previous schemes and support any remaining successful applicants</b> awaiting payments from previous schemes who have met these requirements and are entitled to a payment as set out in the grant criteria of the grant scheme to which they applied should costs exceed the previous ARG allocation. This will be clear when the Council submits its verification to Government which is targeted for 22 <sup>nd</sup> July.
A new Recovery and Innovation Grant	Building on the discretionary Hardship scheme for local businesses, <b>a new grant programme</b> will be introduced to focus on <b>facilitating recovery through diversification, innovation and growth</b> . Applicants will request funding towards the implementation of growth plans to support and sustain recovery. This will include encouraging diversification and growth projects which reduce emissions, or other harmful environmental impacts, and support a transition to net-zero. The minimum target grant value will start from £10,000, but with scope of fund smaller costs later in the programme and dependent on available budget.
A new sector Hardship Support grant	Following from the discretionary Restart scheme, this <b>'hardship' grant</b> will narrow its focus to <b>specific sectors who continue to be severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic</b> . These sectors include: events, hospitality and travel. This will be a one-off grant dependent on business size. Previous applicants will be able to apply for this grant if they continue to be severely impacted.
Local Business Support	This involves a focus on <b>maintaining existing activities and 'top-up' and targeted business support</b> . Activity would include continued support of the Council's Business and Jobs Hub at Rushden Lakes, maintaining existing Council capacity to deliver ARG (including the extension of related temporary/fixed term roles) and related recovery and support activity (including the existing Recovery through Enterprise website and social media programmes to promote the wider offer and provide 'signposting'), promoting the sectors impacted by the pandemic including local visitor attractions, and enhanced recovery support delivered through the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) Growth Hub.

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