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Democratic Services
The Corby Cube,
George Street,
Corby,
Northants,
NN17 1QG



**North
Northamptonshire
Council**

Meeting: Council
Date: Thursday 26th January 2023
Time: 6:00 pm
Venue: Council Chamber, The Cube, George Street, Corby NN17 1QG

The meeting will be available for the public to view live at our Democratic Services' YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/DemocraticServicesNorthNorthantsCouncil>

Council Membership:


Councillor Larry Henson (Chair), Councillor Barbara Jenney (Vice-Chair), Councillor Jean Addison, Councillor Tim Allebone, Councillor Valerie Anslow, Councillor Ross Armour, Councillor Charlie Best, Councillor Paul Bell, Councillor Matt Binley, Councillor Jennie Bone, Councillor David Brackenbury, Councillor Wendy Brackenbury, Councillor Cedwien Brown, Councillor Scott Brown, Councillor Leanne Buckingham, Councillor Lyn Buckingham, Councillor Lloyd Bunday, Councillor Jon-Paul Carr, Councillor Robin Carter, Councillor William Colquhoun, Councillor John Currall, Councillor Alison Dalziel, Councillor Mark Dearing, Councillor Dez Dell, Councillor Scott Edwards, Councillor Jonathan Ekins, Councillor Emily Fedorowycz, Councillor Martin Griffiths, Councillor Jim Hakewill, Councillor Clive Hallam, Councillor Ken Harrington, Councillor Helen Harrison, Councillor Kirk Harrison, Councillor Helen Howell, Councillor David Howes, Councillor Philip Irwin, Councillor Bert Jackson, Councillor Ian Jelley, Councillor Matt Keane, Councillor King Lawal, Councillor Graham Lawman, Councillor Lora Lawman, Councillor Anne Lee, Councillor Richard Levell, Councillor Paul Marks, Councillor Dorothy Maxwell, Councillor Peter McEwan, Councillor John McGhee, Councillor Zoe McGhee, Councillor Andy Mercer, Councillor Gill Mercer, Councillor Macaulay Nichol, Councillor Steven North, Councillor Jan O'Hara, Councillor Dr Anup Pandey, Councillor Tom Partridge-Underwood, Councillor Mark Pengelly, Councillor Harriet Pentland, Councillor Roger Powell, Councillor Elliot Keith Prentice, Councillor Simon Rielly, Councillor Russell Roberts, Councillor Mark Rowley, Councillor Geoff Shacklock, Councillor David Sims, Councillor Jason Smithers, Councillor Chris Smith-Haynes, Councillor Joseph John Smyth, Councillor Mike Tebbutt, Councillor Sarah Tubbs, Councillor Michael Tye, Councillor Malcolm Ward, Councillor Malcolm Waters, Councillor Kevin Watt, Councillor Andrew Weatherill and Councillor Lee Wilkes.

Members of The Council are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed on the agenda.

Agenda		
Item	Subject	Page no.
01	Apologies To receive any apologies for absence.	

02	Minutes of the meeting held on 24th November 2022 The minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 24 th November 2022 to be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.	7 - 14
03	Declarations of Interest Members to declare any interest as appropriate in respect of items to be considered at the meeting.	
04	Chair's Announcements To receive any announcements from the Chair.	
05	Leader's Announcements To receive any announcements from the Leader of the Council.	
06	Public Participation (i) Public Statements (ii) Public Questions	
07	Executive Presentations To receive any presentations from the Executive.	
Items requiring a decision		
08	Audit & Governance Committee Annual Report 2021/22 For Council to note the Audit and Governance Committee Annual Report for 2022.	15 – 4
09	Meeting Procedure Rules & Constitutional Amendments To seek Council approval for amendments to the Constitution in respect of meeting procedure and budget procedure rules.	41 – 78
10	Draft Municipal Timetable 2023/24 To seek Council approval for the Municipal Timetable 2023/2024.	79 – 100
11	Members' Allowances To seek Council preference on the application of the annual increase of Members' Allowances, linked to the NJC Pay Award for staff 2022/23.	101 – 108

12	<p>Winter 2022/23 Temporary Heating</p> <p>For Council to note the introduction of an NNC Standard Operating Procedure for the payment of a goodwill gesture to tenants of the Council, as a result of the breakdown of primary heating systems this winter (2022/23).</p>	109 - 114
13	<p>Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2021/22</p> <p>To note the Annual Report of the Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board for 2021-22.</p>	115 – 146
14	<p>Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2021/22</p> <p>To receive and note Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership’s Annual Report 2021-22.</p>	147 – 178
15	<p>Motions on Notice</p> <p>To consider motions received in accordance with Meeting Procedure Rule 17 as follows: -</p> <p><u>Motion 1</u></p> <p>To be proposed by Cllr Leanne Buckingham and seconded by Cllr Lyn Buckingham: -</p> <p><i>“The definition of consultation as defined by the Consultation Institute is:</i></p> <p><i>The dynamic process of dialogue between individuals or groups, based upon a genuine exchange of views and, with the objective of influencing decisions, policies, or programmes of action.</i></p> <p><i>This council has engaged in several consultations in its short existence, as you would expect, given that there are so many elements of public life that need to be brought together for the betterment of the people if serves.</i></p> <p><i>With so many consultations going live there has been some confusion from both members of this chamber and members of the public. North Northants council believes in being a listening council, and as such we should only provide the best quality consultation.</i></p> <p><i>This motion asks for a consultation panel to be created, this will be a cross-party group that is able to quality assure all consultations are of the highest quality and have passed a “reasonable person test”. To ensure that this panel does not stall activity It should meet monthly and digitally. The panel will give advice on stakeholders that should have been engaged in the process and advise methods that should be utilised.”</i></p>	

16	Councillor Questions To receive questions from members.	
Urgent Items		
	To consider any items of business of which notice has been given to the Proper Officer and the Chair considers to be urgent, pursuant to the Local Government Act 1972.	
17	Close of Meeting	
	<p>Adele Wylie, Monitoring Officer North Northamptonshire Council</p>  <p>Proper Officer Wednesday 18th January 2023</p>	

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Public Participation

The Council has approved procedures for you to present petitions or request to address meetings of the Council

ITEM	NARRATIVE	DEADLINE									
Members of the Public Questions	Questions may be submitted by members of the Public to meetings of the committee. The question must be in writing and submitted 2 clear working days prior to the meeting. No debate on questions or answers. A period of 15 minutes (Chair's Discretion) is allocated for Public Questions.	5:00 pm on Monday 23 rd January 2023									
Members of the Public Agenda Statements	Members of the Public may make statements at meetings in relation to reports on the agenda. A request to address the committee must be received 2 clear working days prior to the meeting. The member of the Public has a maximum of 3 minutes to address the committee. A written copy of the statement must be submitted by the deadline indicated.	5:00 pm on Monday 23 rd January 2023									
Other Members Questions	Written questions of up to 50 words maximum permitted. To be received at least 2 clear working days prior to the meeting. Chair's discretion on supplementary question. A period of 30 minutes (Chair's Discretion) is allocated for Other Members Questions.	5:00 pm on Monday 23 rd January 2023.									
Members of the Public Petitions	<p>Anyone who lives, works or studies in North Northamptonshire may submit a petition to the Council. Depending on the size of your petition it will be responded to as follows: -</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="327 1720 1093 2087"> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Signatory Threshold</th> <th>Description</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Petition which triggers a debate</td> <td>1,500 +</td> <td>Any petition with 1,500 or more signatures will trigger a debate at a Full Authority meeting.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Petition which calls an officer to account</td> <td>750 – 1,499</td> <td>Any petition with 750 – 1,499 signatures will summon a senior officer of the Authority to give evidence at a public</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Category	Signatory Threshold	Description	Petition which triggers a debate	1,500 +	Any petition with 1,500 or more signatures will trigger a debate at a Full Authority meeting.	Petition which calls an officer to account	750 – 1,499	Any petition with 750 – 1,499 signatures will summon a senior officer of the Authority to give evidence at a public	
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Petition which calls an officer to account	750 – 1,499	Any petition with 750 – 1,499 signatures will summon a senior officer of the Authority to give evidence at a public									

			Authority meeting.		
	Standard Petition	5 – 749	Any petition with 5 – 749 signatures will be referred to a senior officer of the Authority to provide a response.		

These procedures are included within the Council's Constitution. Please contact democraticservices@northnorthants.gov.uk for more information.

Members' Declarations of Interest

Members are reminded of their duty to ensure they abide by the approved Member Code of Conduct whilst undertaking their role as a Councillor. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **relates to** a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, you must declare the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless granted a dispensation.

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.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **relates to** your own financial interest (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest) or **relates to** a financial interest of a relative, friend or close associate, you must disclose the interest and not vote on the matter unless granted a dispensation. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting.

Members are reminded that they should continue to adhere to the Council's approved rules and protocols during the conduct of meetings. These are contained in the Council's approved Constitution.

If Members have any queries as to whether a Declaration of Interest should be made please contact the Monitoring Officer at – monitoringofficer@northnorthants.gov.uk

Press & Media Enquiries

Any press or media enquiries should be directed through Council's Communications Team to communications@northnorthants.gov.uk

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Webcasting

Meetings of the Council will be filmed by the Council for live and/or subsequent broadcast on the Council's website. The whole of the meeting will be filmed, except where there are

confidential or exempt items. A copy will be retained in accordance with the Council's data retention policy.

If you make a representation to the meeting, unless you have specifically asked not to appear on the webcast, you are taking positive action to confirm that you consent to being filmed. You have been made aware of the broadcast and entering the Council Chamber you are consenting to be filmed by North Northamptonshire Council and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting.

If you do not wish to have your image captured you should sit in the public gallery area that overlooks the Chamber.

The Council is obliged by law to allow members of the public to take photographs, film, audio-record, blog or tweet the proceedings at public meetings. The Council will only seek to prevent this should it be undertaken in a disruptive or otherwise inappropriate manner.

The Council intends to webcast all of its public meetings held at the Corby Cube, but if it is unable to do so, for the avoidance of doubt, the meeting will continue as scheduled and decisions and minutes made available on the Council's website in the normal manner.

If you have any queries regarding webcasting or the recording of meetings by the public, please contact democraticservices@northnorthants.gov.uk



Full Council

North Northamptonshire Council

Thursday 24th November 2022

At 2:00 pm in the Council Chamber, The Cube, George Street, Corby.

Present: -

Members:

Councillors Larry Henson (Chair), Jean Addison, Tim Allebone, Valerie Anslow, Ross Armour, Paul Bell, Charlie Best, Matt Binley, David Brackenbury, Wendy Brackenbury, Scott Brown, Leanne Buckingham, Lyn Buckingham, Lloyd Bunday, Jon-Paul Carr, Robin Carter, William Colquhoun, John Currall, Alison Dalziel, Dez Dell, Scott Edwards, Jonathan Ekins, Martin Griffiths, Jim Hakewill, Clive Hallam, Ken Harrington, Helen Harrison, Kirk Harrison, Helen Howell, David Howes, Bert Jackson, Ian Jelley, Barbara Jenney, David Jenney, Matt Keane, King Lawal, Graham Lawman, Lora Lawman, Paul Marks, Dorothy Maxwell, Peter McEwan, John McGhee, Zoe McGhee, Andy Mercer, Gill Mercer, Macaulay Nichol, Anup Pandey, Tom Partridge-Underwood, Mark Pengelly, Harriet Pentland, Roger Powell, Elliot Prentice, Russell Roberts, Geoff Shacklock, Jason Smithers, Chris Smith-Haynes, Mike Tebbutt, Sarah Tubbs, Michael Tye, Malcolm Ward, Andrew Weatherill, Lee Wilkes.

Officers in Attendance:

Rob Bridge (Chief Executive), Adele Wylie (Director of Customer and Governance/Monitoring Officer), Paul Goult (Interim Democratic Services Manager) and Ben Smith (Democratic and Electoral Services Manager).

Prior to commencing the formal business of the meeting, the Chair invited attendees to observe two minute's silence in memory of Councillor Kevin Thurland (NNC) who had recently passed away. Councillors John McGhee, Jason Smithers and Jim Hakewill made speeches of condolence.

166. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Rowley, E Fedorowycz, M Dearing, C Brown, A Lee, S North, D Sims, J Smyth, R Levell, J O'Hara, J Bone, S Rielly, P Irwin.

167. Minutes of the meeting held on 29th September 2022

The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 29th September 2022 had been circulated.

It was noted that Councillor B Jackson's name was omitted from the list of attendees at the meeting on 29th September 2022. This was noted and corrected.

Under paragraph 161. Councillor Learning and Development Policy, Councillor Carr requested a correction, in that both he and Councillor D Brackenbury had confirmed that joint training with town and parish councils had already been agreed; the minutes indicated that they “supported consideration of this.” This was noted and corrected.

Councillor Larry Henson MOVED the minutes of the meeting held on 29th September 2022 be agreed. Councillor Jim Hakewill SECONDED the motion.

RESOLVED that: -

The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 29th September 2022 (as amended) be agreed.

168. Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were registered.

169. Chair’s Announcements

Councillor Henson (Chair) drew Council’s attention to a concert being held by Kettering Symphony Orchestra on Saturday 26th November 2022. Tickets were still available and councillors encouraged to support the event.

170. Leader’s Announcements

There were no Leader’s Announcements on this occasion.

171. Public Participation

There were no public statements, questions or petitions on this occasion.

172. Executive Presentations

Councillor Matt Binley (Executive Member) provided a statement in relation to a motion passed by Full Council at its meeting on 29th September 2022, regarding arrangements made by the Council for the provision of temporary heating to housing tenants. It was noted that a full report on this matter would be tabled at Full Council on 26th January 2023.

173. Youth Justice Plan 2022/2023

The Youth Justice Plan covered performance for the period 2021/22 and provided service budgets, operational and strategic developments, partnership working, service structure and the Service Improvement Plan for 2022/23.

In accordance with statutory requirements, the Plan had been considered and approved by the Northamptonshire Youth Offending Service Management Board in August 2022.

The recommendation was MOVED by Councillor Scott Edwards and SECONDED by Councillor Ken Harrington.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The Youth Justice Plan be approved.

174. Appointment of Independent Person (Audit and Governance Committee)

The recommendation before Council sought ratification of the appointment of Mr Michael Whitworth as Independent Person on the Council’s Audit and Governance Committee. The

Chair of the Committee and the Chief Finance Officer had interviewed short listed candidates, following an external recruitment exercise.

The recommendation was **MOVED** by Councillor Andrew Weatherill and **SECONDED** by Councillor Kirk Harrison.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The appointment of Mr Michael Whitworth as an Independent Person on the Audit and Governance Committee be ratified, for a term of 4-years from 24th November 2022 to 30th November 2026.

175. Northamptonshire Children's Trust Annual Report

Council were being requested to note the Trust's Annual Report.

The Annual Review process and subsequent Annual Report provided a procedure through which the Council could review the Service Delivery Contract and Northamptonshire Children's Trust performance in delivering its functions.

It also provided an opportunity to make changes to the Service Delivery Contract after the expected Ofsted inspection allowing any changes to be considered in the context of the outcome of this inspection and any recommendations from Ofsted. It also gave all elected members an insight into the work of Northamptonshire Children's Trust and support the discharge of their Corporate Parenting duties.

The recommendations were **MOVED** by Councillor Scott Edwards and **SECONDED** by Councillor Dorothy Maxwell.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The content of the Annual Report, completed by Northamptonshire Children's Trust in line with the service delivery contract requirements, be noted;
- (ii) The proposal to further discuss and agree any amendments to the Service Delivery Contract following the Ofsted Inspection of the Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) following publication of the Ofsted findings on 25th November 2022, be noted; and
- (iii) That the gaps in sources of assurance as debated at the Audit and Governance Committee on 5th September 2022 be noted and that the Committee was seeking actions from the NCT to review their control processes and assurance framework and report back to the Committee.

176. Council Tax Base 2023/2024

The purpose of the report before Council was to set the Council Tax Base for 2023/24 as required by statute.

A Council Tax Base calculation for the whole of North Northamptonshire Council's (NNC) area for the year 2023/24 had been undertaken with data as at the relevant date, i.e. 1st October 2021 to 30th September 2022.

The calculation had taken account of the number of new properties likely to be completed and banded for Council Tax purposes during the period October 2022 to March 2024 and the anticipated level of occupation. In addition, the predicted discounts and premiums, including those within the NNC Local Council Tax Support Scheme, have been applied as these have an impact on the Tax Base figure.

The resulting calculation equated to a Band D equivalent Tax Base of 116,019 properties before applying the expected collection rate. The Tax Base was reduced by a percentage which, in the Council's opinion, represented the likely level of collection. This collection rate had been assumed to be 98.5%, based on current collection levels which was unchanged from the previous year.

The recommendations were **MOVED** by Councillor Lloyd Bunday and **SECONDED** by Councillor David Jenney.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) In accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulation 1992 (as amended) approve the amount calculated as the Band D equivalent Council Tax Base for the North Northamptonshire area 2023/24 shall be 114,279 as detailed in the report and appendices. This was an increase of 1,232 over the 2022/2023 Tax Base, a 1.1% increase; and
- (ii) That a Council Tax Collection rate assumption of 98.5% for 2023/2024 be noted.

177. Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2023/2024

From April 2013 each Local Authority had been required to determine a Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTSS), which replaced the national Council Tax Benefit Scheme.

The Scheme applied to working age claimants only as the government prescribed the scheme for pensioner claimants.

Local discretion related to the maximum level of support available to working age claimants, and therefore the minimum percentage of the Council Tax bill they were expected to meet. There was also local discretion in relation to eligibility criteria.

Due to the formation of the new Unitary Authority from 1st April 2021 a single LCTSS was consulted on and implemented for North Northamptonshire from 2021/22, this included a review of the four separate sovereign District and Borough LCTS Schemes and resulted in a scheme where all working age claimants were required to pay a minimum of 25% towards their Council Tax liability.

The LCTSS was reviewed for 2022/23 and it was decided when Full Council met on 1st December 2021, that the scheme for 2022/23 would remain unchanged from 2021/22 (minimum 25% payment), with the exception of changes to be made for the annual uprating of allowances and premiums and statutory base legislation changes which were required to be made to the Scheme.

The recommendation was **MOVED** by Councillor Lloyd Bunday and **SECONDED** by Councillor Lee Wilkes.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The information set out in the report be noted and approved the proposed 2023/2024 Local Council Tax Support Scheme which maintained the current 2022/2023 scheme of minimum 25% payment, allowing for the changes required to reflect the annual uprating of allowances and premiums and any statutory base legislation changes which were required to be made to the scheme.

(Councillor Shacklock joined the meeting at this point.)

178. Children's Social Care Case Management System

The report before Council was seeking approval to proceed with the replacement of the Case Management System for Children's Social Care across Northamptonshire, which will be operated by Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT) through a contribution by North Northamptonshire Council (NNC).

During 2019 the previous Northamptonshire County Council awarded a contract with OLM Eclipse for the provision of Children's and Adult Social Care Case Management System and associated finance modules. Implementation commenced with Adult Social Care, which went live ahead of the vesting day of the new Councils.

Between the contract being awarded in 2019 and the planned implementation of the new system, Children's Social Care Services in Northamptonshire were transferred into an independent organisation, Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT), following a direction from the Secretary of State for Education. Northamptonshire County Council was also disbanded and replaced by the two new Unitary Councils.

The relationship between the Councils and NCT was governed by a set of contractual agreements. Under the terms of these agreements, NCT was responsible for the delivery of children's social care. However, the Councils retained responsibility for the provision of a database (case management system) that allowed NCT to deliver services. This was one of the key contractual dependencies on the Councils in the contractual agreements.

Post-vesting day, the OLM Eclipse implementation programme was transferred to joint responsibility between the Councils and NCT. The Eclipse Implementation programme team undertook an implementation readiness review and identified concerns with the application of the system to Children's Social Care. Whilst the supplier OLM worked with the Councils to rectify these the timescales for fixes implied that the solution would be implemented in the last 12 months of the OLM contract.

A previous capital bid for funding of the procurement and implementation costs associated with a Children's Social Care Case Management System was submitted to Strategic Capital Board in June 2022.

However, following the NNC Capital Board and further due diligence this was now being confirmed as a revenue bid for a decision on finance of the programme of work, as it was deemed that an asset would not be created and cannot therefore, be funded from capital resources.

On the 10th November 2022 the Executive agreed to proceed with the replacement of the Case Management System for the Children's Social Care across Northamptonshire and delegated authority to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Families, Education and Skills, in liaison with the Executive Director for Children's Services, to take any further decisions and actions required to implement the Case Management System and award contracts in relation to this.

The recommendation was **MOVED** by Councillor Scott Edwards and **SECONDED** by Councillor Paul Marks.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) Authority be delegated to the Executive Member for Finance and Transformation, in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and Performance, to access

and utilise revenue reserves to fund the Case Management System for Children's Social Care.

179. Capital Programme Update 2022/2023

The purpose of the report before Council was to request approval for borrowing and virements for capital schemes which were in excess of £0.5m. This was in accordance with the Council's Constitution, where new borrowing and virements in excess of £0.5m on capital schemes must be approved by Council.

Approval of the funding would allow the schemes to move forward to procurement and delivery. The Executive considered these items at its meeting on 15th September 2022 and 10th November 2022 respectively and recommended that Full Council grant approval for the funding requests as outlined in the report.

The recommendation was **MOVED** by Councillor Lloyd Bunday and **SECONDED** by Councillor Graham Lawman.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The changes to the capital programme be approved:
 - (a) Cannock Road Housing Development – total virement of £0.643m made up of the most recent virement request of £0.454m in addition to a previous approved transfer of £0.189m. The virement is funded from existing capital budget within the HRA capital programme;
 - (b) Street lighting LED upgrade project, increase of £6.170m to the capital programme; £3.033m in 2022/23, £2.157m in 2023/24 and £0.980m in 2024/25, to be funded from borrowing; and
 - (c) Children's Residential Home provision – increase of £0.762m to the capital programme to be funded from borrowing.

180. Full Council Meeting Start Time

Council was requested to consider the appropriate start time for full Council meetings. The choice of a start time for full Council meetings was a matter of local choice. It was acknowledged that whatever start time was chosen there may be apologies submitted for each meeting due to a range of circumstances and factors.

The appendices attached to the report provided some data associated with attendance and participation at full Council meetings.

The Democracy and Standards Committee at its meeting of 10th October 2022 considered this report. Following discussion the Committee agreed to recommend to full Council a start time for ordinary meetings of 5:00 pm.

The recommendation was **MOVED** by Councillor Lora Lawman and **SECONDED** by Councillor Tim Allebone.

Councillor Paul Bell **MOVED** that the recommendation before Council be amended to read normally a 6:00 pm start for ordinary meetings. This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Matt Keane.

The meeting debated the merits of moving the start time to 6:00 pm, acknowledging the difficulties that those employed full-time incurred in attending daytime meetings. It was also suggested that there would be greater public attendance and participation for evening meetings.

It was also acknowledged that travel-time for some members was a factor to be considered, particularly if travelling during peak periods. Concerns were also presented regarding travelling distance late in the evening should the meeting exceed 3-hours, particularly during Winter months.

Following debate, the amendment was put to a vote.

RESOLVED that: -

The start time of ordinary Full Council meetings would normally commence at 6:00 pm.

Following concluding remarks from Councillor Lawman, Council moved to the vote on the substantive motion.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The normal start time of future meetings, with the exception of the Budget meeting and Special (Extraordinary) meetings, be 6:00 pm.

181. Northamptonshire Safeguarding Adults Annual Report 2021/2022

The report before Council, presented the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Adult Board (NSAB) Annual Report 2021/22. The report outlined the Board's and statutory partners achievements during the year. The report had been reviewed and approved by the NSAB's Strategic Board on 6th October 2022.

The recommendations were MOVED by Councillor Helen Harrison and SECONDED by Councillor Geoff Shacklock.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The NSAB Annual Report 2021-2022 as approved by the NSAB Strategic Board on 6th October 2022 (Appendix A) be noted; and
- (ii) The contribution that North Northamptonshire Council has made in supporting NSAB's achievements in keeping adults safe from harm be acknowledged.

182. Motions on Notice

Motion 1

Council had received the following motion –

“This council resolves to scrutinise the current options for residents to choose a green burial in North Northamptonshire. Further, to develop a Green Burial Ground policy to enable appropriate guidance to be given to interested operators with potential areas identified.”

The motion was MOVED by Councillor Jim Hakewill and SECONDED by Councillor Charlie Best.

Council noted that there were a few existing sites in the local area, although few in North Northamptonshire, that catered for Green Burials, and Councillor Hakewill suggested that there was likely to be increasing interest and demand for sites in the future.

Councillor Hakewill was proposing that the Council, through its scrutiny process, seek to investigate in consultation with partners and the wider public whether any extension of existing facilities and creation of new facilities should be considered by the Council.

(Councillor M Tye left the meeting at this point.)

A proposed amendment to the substantive motion was rejected on the advice of the Monitoring Officer.

Prior to completion of debate on the motion, a Motion Without Notice was MOVED by Councillor Jason Smithers and SECONDED by Councillor Helen Howell, to extend the guillotine to allow for the completion of determination of Motion 1.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The guillotine be extended to allow for the debate and determination of Motion 1 to be completed to be followed immediately by the close of the meeting.

(A recorded vote on the Motion Without Notice was taken. Those voting for the motion – Councillors Wilkes, Binley, D Brackenbury, W Brackenbury, Weatherill, Bunday, Carter, Currall, Howes, Jackson, K Harrison, H Harrison, D Jenney, Ekins, Edwards, Hallam, B Jenney, Howell, G Lawman, L Lawman, Marks, G Mercer, Nichol, Allebone, Pandey, Partridge-Underwood, Pentland, Roberts, Shacklock, Smithers, Henson.

Those voting against the motion – Councillors Best, S Brown, Lyn Buckingham, Leanne Buckingham, Carr, Colquhoun, Dalziel, Jelley, Dell, Keane, Hakewill, Addison, Maxwell, McEwan, J McGhee, Z McGhee, Pengelly, Smith-Haynes, Tubbs, Anslow, Armour.

Abstentions – Councillors Bell, Watt, A Mercer, Powell, Ward).

Councillor Hakewill concluded the debate on the substantive motion.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The motion be agreed.

183. Close of Meeting

Meeting closed at 5:02 pm.

Full Council 26th January 2023

Report Title	Audit and Governance Committee Annual Report 2022
Report Author	Adele Wylie – Director of Customer & Governance / Monitoring Officer adele.wylie@northnorthants.gov.uk

Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972	

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Audit and Governance Committee Annual Report 2022

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To provide an overview of the work completed by the Audit and Governance Committee, which covers the 18-month period, from the commencement of North Northamptonshire Council on 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2022.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Annual Report highlights the work of the Audit and Governance Committee during 2021/22 and to September 2022, which is contained in **Appendix A**.

3. Recommendation

3.1 That Full Council: -

- (i) note the Audit and Governance Committee Annual Report 2022, as attached as **Appendix A** to this report.

3.2 Reason for Recommendations

- (i) To ensure that all Members are informed of the work of the Audit and Governance Committee and to comply with the Committee's Terms of

Reference. It is also considered good practice for the Audit and Governance Committee to provide an Annual Report.

4. Report Background

- 4.1 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) sets out the role of Audit Committees in their Practical Guidance for Local Authorities 2018. This states that “the purpose of the Audit Committee is to provide to those charged with governance independent assurance on the adequacy of the risk management framework, the internal control environment and the integrity of the financial reporting and annual governance processes.”
- 4.2 The Accounts & Audit (England) Regulations impose a responsibility on a local authority “for ensuring that the financial management of the body is adequate and effective and that the body has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of that body’s functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.”
- 4.3 The Audit and Governance Committee’s Terms of Reference state: “The Audit and Governance Committee will carry out an annual self-assessment, including a review of these terms of reference, to evaluate its own performance and determine any action required to improve its effectiveness.” The key findings of the assessment are reflected upon in the Annual Report.
- 4.4 The Annual Report reflects upon the work of the Committee against its core functions during the 18-month period from 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2022.
- 4.5 The Annual Report was considered by the Audit and Governance Committee at its meeting held on 28 November 2022 and recommended that the Annual Report be submitted to Full Council, as per the Committee’s Terms of Reference.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1 This report shows the work carried out by the Audit and Governance Committee and ensures that all members are provided with information in relation to the work of the Audit and Governance Committee. The recommended approach is in line with the Committee’s Terms of Reference and best practice guidance.

6. Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Resources and Financial

- 6.1.1 None specific to this report.

6.2 Legal & Governance

- 6.2.1 None specific to this report.

6.3 Relevant Policies and Plans

- 6.3.1 Not applicable.

6.4 Risk

6.4.1 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendation. The purpose of the Audit and Governance Committee is to provide independent assurance as to the Council's governance, risk management framework and associated control environment.

6.5 Consultation

6.5.1 The Annual Report has been reported to the Audit and Governance Committee prior to being presented to Full Council.

6.6 Consideration by Scrutiny

6.6.1 Not required on this occasion.

6.7 Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel

6.7.1 Not applicable.

6.8 Equality Implications

6.8.1 None.

6.9 Climate Impact

6.9.1 None specific to this report.

6.10 Community Impact

6.10.1 None specific to this report.

6.11 Crime and Disorder Impact

6.11.1 None specific to this report.

7. Background Papers

7.1 Council Constitution Part 4.5 – Audit and Governance Committee.

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Audit and Governance Committee Annual Report 2022



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Chairman's Statement

Cllr Andrew Weatherill,
Chair of Audit and Governance
Committee



I am pleased to present the Audit and Governance Committee Annual Report for 2022, which covers the 18-month period from the start of North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) on 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2022.

Committee Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference of the Committee are wide ranging and are set out in the North Northamptonshire Council Constitution. The principal areas of focus of the Committee include:

- Audit Activity – including approving the Internal Audit Charter & Strategy and annual plan. Considering summary Internal Audit Reports and the Annual Report of the Head of Internal Audit and reviewing Internal Audit's effectiveness. Considering External Audit's letters and reports;
- Regulatory Framework – including overseeing the production of the Council's Annual Governance Statement and recommending its adoption and monitoring the development and operation of risk management and corporate governance throughout the Council;
- Accounts – reviewing the annual statement of accounts, considering whether accounting policies have been followed and considering the External Auditor's report to those charged with governance;
- Risk Management – including considering the effectiveness of the Council's risk management arrangements and reviewing the Council's Strategic Risk Register;
- Performance – the Committee carrying out a self-assessment to evaluate its performance and determining any action required to improve its effectiveness.

Challenges in the Period

Typically, in working to its Terms of Reference, the work of the Audit and Governance Committee would follow a predictable pattern of activity, with key outputs required by known target dates. Planning and coordination between the Committee, Officers and the External & Internal Auditors aims to ensure that target dates are met. However, this initial

period was particularly challenging, as the Committee was presented with a peculiar set of circumstances, including the following:

- The responsibility for the clearance of six sets of accounts and the clearance of the associated external audits for the four predecessor Districts and Boroughs fell to this Committee, being the year ended 31 March 2020 for East Northants District Council and Corby Borough Council and the year ended 31 March 2021 for all four Districts and Boroughs
- Significant control weaknesses in the Financial Control Environments of two of the Districts and Boroughs were revealed by the work of Internal Audit and whilst this was encouraging that it was identified, it resulted in challenges for the Finance Team in the accounts preparation and impacted the extent of the additional work rightly undertaken by the external auditors
- Agreeing and undertaking an effective risk driven Internal Audit Programme for a new organisation which is in the process of developing and embedding its own control environment
- There was some continuity of Finance and Internal Audit staff from the Districts and Boroughs, however there many changes and new additions to teams that have had to be recruited, inducted, and embedded in the new Council

Committee Performance

The Committee has worked well in my opinion, particularly given the quantity of the significant amounts of technical financial information that have been required to be reviewed, often at short notice, to enable efficient clearance of predecessor Council accounts and audits and review of internal audit reports with key findings.

The Committee has a proficient level of skills, knowledge, and experience, which has contributed to its effectiveness. This includes experience of Senior Councillor Leadership roles, Council Scrutiny roles and members with professional backgrounds in External and Internal Audit, Risk Management and Accountancy.

Officer Support

I am pleased with the way Officers rose to the challenges in the initial period and supported the Committee. This is in Finance, Internal Audit and Democratic Services in particular, being the services which have the greatest involvement with the Committee.

What has also been encouraging is that where weaknesses have been identified from Internal Audit activity, Senior Officers and Managers have attended the Committee and taken questions about the background to the issues identified and the plans to resolve them and responded in an open and collaborative way. Any recommendations are followed up to ensure completion.

The Audit and Governance Committee

Our role

The Audit and Governance Committee is made up of ten Councillors and has positions for three Independent Persons. It acts as an advisory committee to the Council and the Executive on audit and governance issues. There are also six Substitute Councillors who can attend on behalf of Full Members, if required.

The functions that are discharged by the Committee are not Executive functions and cannot be discharged by the Executive. The purpose of the Committee is to provide independent assurance as to the Council's governance, risk management framework and associated control environment. This is important to ensure that the Council understands where things may go wrong and has controls in place to make sure that it mitigates against them. It should also provide independent scrutiny of the Council's financial and non-financial performance and oversee the Council's financial reporting process. To help maintain its independence, the Committee has the right to meet privately with the External Auditor and the Chief Internal Auditor, as considered necessary.

Members and attendance

Full Members of the Audit and Governance Committee 2021/22



Councillor
Andrew
Weatherill
(Chair)



Councillor
Kirk Harrison
(Vice Chair)



Councillor
Jean Addison
(since Nov 2021)



Councillor
Matthew Binley



Councillor
Ian Jelley



Councillor
Anne Lee
(since Nov 2021)



Councillor
Richard Levell



Councillor
Peter McEwan
(until Nov 2021)



Councillor
Zoe McGhee
(until Nov 2021)



Councillor
Mark Pengelly



Councillor
Russell Roberts



Councillor
Kevin Watt

Substitute Members



Councillor
Jean Addison
(until Nov 2021)



Councillor
Valerie Anslow



Councillor
Annabel
de Capell Brooke
(until Jan 2022)



Councillor
John Currall



Councillor
Bert Jackson



Councillor
Matt Keane



Councillor
Paul Marks



Councillor
Peter McEwan
(since Nov 2021)



Councillor
Lee Wilkes

Members and attendance

Full Members of the Audit and Governance Committee 2022/23 to date



Councillor
Andrew
Weatherill
(Chair)



Councillor
Kirk Harrison
(Vice Chair)



Councillor
Jean Addison



Councillor
Ian Jelley



Councillor
Anne Lee



Councillor
Richard Levell



Councillor
Paul Marks



Councillor
Mark Pengelly



Councillor
Elliot Prentice
(since Sept 2022)



Councillor
Russell Roberts

Substitute Members



Councillor
Valerie Anslow



Councillor
John Currall



Councillor
Bert Jackson



Councillor
Peter McEwan



Councillor
John McGhee
(since Sept 2022)



Councillor
Lee Wilkes

During the 18-month period (12 July 2021 – 5 September 2022), the Committee met nine times.

The membership of the Committee and meeting attendance during the period is detailed in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Committee attendance – Full Members

Full Member	Attendance	% of meetings attended (July 2021 - Sept 2022)
Councillor Andrew Weatherill (Chair)	9 meetings out of 9	100%
Councillor Kirk Harrison (Vice Chair)	7 meetings out of 9	77.8%
Councillor Jean Addison (since November 2021)	5 meetings out of 6	83.3%
Councillor Matthew Binley	6 meetings out of 6	100%
Councillor Ian Jelley	5 meetings out of 9	55.6%
Councillor Anne Lee (since November 2021)	3 meetings out of 6	50%
Councillor Richard Levell	9 meetings out of 9	100%
Councillor Peter McEwan (until November 2021)	1 meeting out of 3	33.3%
Councillor Zoe McGhee (until November 2021)	0 meetings out of 3	0%
Councillor Mark Pengelly	6 meetings out of 9	66.7%
Councillor Elliot Prentice (since September 2022)	0 meetings out of 0	-
Councillor Russell Roberts	7 meetings out of 9	77.8%
Councillor Kevin Watt	4 meetings out of 6	66.7%

If Full Members are unable to attend, they can ask Substitute Members to attend on their behalf.

Table 2: Committee attendance – Substitute Members

Substitute Member	Attendance
Councillor Jean Addison (until November 2021)	0 meetings
Councillor Valerie Anslow	3 meetings
Councillor Annabel de Capell Brooke (until January 2022)	0 meetings
Councillor John Currall	0 meetings
Councillor Bert Jackson	3 meetings
Councillor Matt Keane	0 meetings
Councillor Paul Marks	5 meetings
Councillor Peter McEwan (since November 2021)	0 meetings
Councillor John McGhee (since June 2022)	1 meeting
Councillor Lee Wilkes	0 meetings

In support of constitutional requirements for the Audit and Governance Committee, three independent persons should be appointed to the Committee. In July 2021, the Committee

also considered the findings of the Redmond Review and noted the reference to independent members to the Committee. During 2021/22, advertising to recruit to these positions was undertaken on two separate occasions. This has now resulted in interviews taking place and one suitable candidate has been offered a position, subject to ratification by Full Council in November 2022.

Training

Members receive training prior to serving on the Audit and Governance Committee.

During the period, Committee members received additional training in a number of areas, to further strengthen their effectiveness in exercising the Committee functions. The training is summarised as follows in Table 3, and is ongoing:

Table 3: Training Topics

Date	Training Topic
27 September 2021	Statement of Accounts
31 January 2022	Statement of Accounts (Process/Primary Statements/ Management Letter of Representation
14 March 2022	Going Concern
5 May 2022	Accounting Policies
20 June 2022	Annual Governance Statement and Value for Money

Forthcoming training sessions are also scheduled for the Committee members for Cyber Security Training and Safeguarding.

Functions of the Committee

Finance

Finance reporting

During the period, the Committee received and reviewed a number of financial accounts for the legacy councils, as summarised in Table 4.

Table 4: Financial accounts received by the Audit & Governance Committee (12 July 2021 – 5 September 2022)

Date of meeting	Council	Accounts year
12 July 2021	<p>Corby - Closure of the external audit financial Statements</p> <p>Corby East Northamptonshire Kettering Wellingborough Northamptonshire County Council</p> <p>Status update on the scheduling of external audits for the legacy financial statements</p>	<p>2018/19</p> <p>2019/20 and 2020/21 2019/20 and 2020/21 2020/21 2020/21 2019/20 and 2020/21</p>
27 September 2021	<p>Kettering Audit Results Report</p> <p>Kettering Wellingborough Outturn and Draft Statement of Accounts</p>	<p>2020/21</p> <p>2020/21</p>
8 November 2021	<p>Wellingborough Audit Results Report</p> <p>Wellingborough Draft Statement of Accounts</p> <p>Corby Audit Plan</p> <p>Corby Draft Statement of Accounts</p>	<p>2020/21</p> <p>2020/21</p> <p>2019/20</p> <p>2019/20</p>

Date of meeting	Council	Accounts year
	East Northamptonshire Audit Plan	2019/20
	East Northamptonshire Draft Statement of Accounts	2019/20
31 January 2022	Corby Audit Results Report	2019/20
	Corby Draft Statement of Accounts	2019/20
	East Northamptonshire Audit Results Report	2019/20
	East Northamptonshire Draft Statement of Accounts	2019/20
5 May 2022	Corby Update on outstanding issues relating to Statement of Accounts	2019/20
	East Northamptonshire Update on outstanding issues relating to Statement of Accounts	2019/20
20 June 2022	Corby and East Northamptonshire Verbal update for Statement of Accounts	2019/20
1 August 2022	Corby Statement of Accounts	2019/20
5 September 2022	East Northamptonshire Audit Results Report	2020/21
	East Northamptonshire Draft Statement of Accounts	2020/21

In reviewing these accounts, the Committee considered how assurances were given that appropriate accounting policies had been followed and whether there were any concerns

arising from the financial statements, or from the external audit, that needed to be brought to the attention of the Council.

External Audit reports

During the period, the Committee received and reviewed the external auditor's reports on the legacy councils' accounts and noted their findings.

Counter Fraud

The Committee receives updates on counter fraud activity within the progress reports from Internal Audit – both pro-active and reactive work. The Council has a zero tolerance to fraud and the Committee oversees the review of key counter fraud and governance policies that support and embed this culture.

Governance and Risk

Risk management

During the period, the Committee reviewed and discussed regular reports on risk management activity, as summarised in Table 5. The Committee has encouraged the embedding of a risk management culture across the organisation and the ongoing development and maturity of the risk management framework over time.

During the year, the approach to risk management was further developed and embedded with the introduction and maintenance of directorate level risk registers – to support and inform the strategic risk management framework. In the 2022/23 year to date, the risk register format has been further developed.

Table 5: Risk reporting to Audit and Governance Committee during the period

Date of meeting	Nature of report
12 July 2021	Strategic Risk Register – first review
8 November 2021	Strategic Risk Register Update
14 March 2022	Strategic Risk Register Update
20 June 2022	Strategic Risk Register Update – with revised format welcomed by Committee, including sources of assurance, inherent and residual risk scores

Governance

At the November 2021 meeting, the Committee received and approved the Code of Corporate Governance. The framework for which was linked to guidance issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and supported by the seven Principles for the Conduct of Individuals in Public Life. The Committee discussed key elements of the Code in detail and requested some amendments to reflect sources of assurance and the role of internal audit.

Reports have been considered by the Committee in relation to key updates on governance in local government and this included a report on the Redmond Review which was received by the Committee in July 2021. This gave rise to discussion over the key findings and implications for membership of the Committee, financial reporting and external audit regulation.

In considering the Annual Governance Statements (AGS) of the legacy councils, received in 2021/22, the Committee ensured that the report reflected any key issues which had been identified. The Committee referred, in this consideration, to the External Auditors' report for those charged with governance.

Internal and External Audit

Internal Audit

The Committee received and noted the annual internal audit reports and opinions for the legacy councils at the meeting in July 2021. At the September 2021 meeting, the Committee also received a report on the monitoring of open audit actions inherited from the legacy authorities. This provided assurance over how these actions were being followed up and the work that the internal audit team were delivering to ensure that the actions were suitably evidenced and had been applied across North Northamptonshire Council, not just the legacy council's element.

The Committee reviewed and approved the Internal Audit Charter and Strategy in July 2021 and June 2022, in line with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

The Committee was actively involved in reviewing and agreeing the internal audit plan coverage for 2021/22 and 2022/23, which was considered to provide appropriate assurance and focus for the Council. Given that 2021/22 was the first year of the Council's operation, the audit coverage remained under active review throughout the year and sought to support the review of legacy issues and implementation of new ways of working.

The internal audit plans are risk based and have been updated throughout 2021/22 and in 2022/23, to date, to reflect the changing risk and assurance environment, with amendments being suitably approved.

During 2021/22, the internal audit service was provided under a shared service arrangement which ceased on 31st March 2022. The Audit and Governance Committee sought assurances during 2021/22 on the delivery of the audit plan and the resourcing available and were suitably assured that the coverage would be sufficient to inform an annual Internal Audit Opinion. At the conclusion of the 2021/22 financial year, the Committee was satisfied with the delivery of the internal audit work, both in coverage and quality, and noted the annual audit opinion and report.

The Committee seeks updates on resourcing and recruitment within the internal audit service, to ensure any risks to impact on the delivery of the internal audit plan are known and managed. Assurances and updates have been sought by the Committee, during 2022/23 to date, that the recruitment to the new audit service is progressing appropriately and the team is suitably resourced.

The Committee received an update from the Chief Internal Auditor at every meeting, which provided an overview of progress against planned assignments and summaries of the findings of finalised audit reports. The reports also include updates on implementation of recommendations arising from audit reports.

Where any audit reports have given an opinion of less than 'Satisfactory' Assurance, the findings have been discussed at the subsequent committee meeting and senior management from the service area have been in attendance. These have proven useful discussions to explore the reason for the gaps in controls and to give the committee assurances over actions being taken.

At the meeting on 5th September 2022, the Committee welcomed representatives from the Children's Trust to present a paper on their risks and sources of assurance. The Committee had sought further assurances over the management of risks that had been delegated to the Trust and an understanding of their risk management approach, in light of the Corporate Parenting role and duties. This provided a useful session and an opportunity to engage with the Trust and the Director for Children's Services on how assurances over the risks, including those of a safeguarding nature, can be obtained for this Committee.

External Audit

At the November 2021 meeting, the Committee received a report on the future provision of external audit and endorsed to opt into the national sector-led arrangements and nominated Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA), to appoint the external auditor on its behalf.

Following the transition to the unitary council, and delays in audits inherited from the legacy authorities, the reports received from external audit during 2021/22 were primarily in relation to the legacy district and borough councils.

The external auditors appointed to deliver the audit of North Northamptonshire Council's accounts have also been regular attendees at the committee meetings and have presented reports on their planning for the 2021/22 audit.

The Committee's Effectiveness

Assessment

In November 2022 the Committee completed a self-assessment survey, where our performance was reviewed against a CIPFA best practice framework and provided an opportunity to reflect upon the Committee's terms of reference and evaluation of its performance.

The self-assessment was completed by four members of the Committee and the results are summarised as follows:

Good practice questions		Yes	Partly	No
Audit committee purpose and governance				
1	Does the authority have a dedicated audit committee?	4		
2	Does the audit committee report directly to full council? (applicable to local government only)	4		
3	Do the terms of reference clearly set out the purpose of the committee in accordance with CIPFA's Position Statement?	4		
4	Is the role and purpose of the audit committee understood and accepted across the authority?	2	2	
5	Does the audit committee provide support to the authority in meeting the requirements of good governance?	2	2	
6	Are the arrangements to hold the committee to account for its performance operating satisfactorily?	1	1	1
Functions of the committee				
7	Do the committee's terms of reference explicitly address all the core areas identified in CIPFA's Position Statement?			
	• good governance	4		
	• assurance framework, including partnerships and collaboration arrangements	4		
	• internal audit	4		
	• external audit	4		
	• financial reporting	4		
	• risk management	4		
	• value for money or best value	4		

Good practice questions		Yes	Partly	No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> counter fraud and corruption 	4		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> supporting the ethical framework 	3	1	
8	Is an annual evaluation undertaken to assess whether the committee is fulfilling its terms of reference and that adequate consideration has been given to all core areas?	3	1	
9	Has the audit committee considered the wider areas identified in CIPFA's Position Statement and whether it would be appropriate for the committee to undertake them?	1	1	1
10	Where coverage of core areas has been found to be limited, are plans in place to address this?	2	1	1
11	Has the committee maintained its advisory role by not taking on any decision-making powers that are not in line with its core purpose?	4		

Membership and support

12	<p>Has an effective audit committee structure and composition of the committee been selected?</p> <p>This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> separation from the executive an appropriate mix of knowledge and skills among the membership a size of committee that is not unwieldy consideration has been given to the inclusion of at least one independent member (where it is not already a mandatory requirement) 	3	1	
13	Have independent members appointed to the committee been recruited in an open and transparent way and approved by the full council or the PCC and chief constable as appropriate for the organisation?	2	1	1
14	Does the chair of the committee have appropriate knowledge and skills?	3	1	
15	Are arrangements in place to support the committee with briefings and training?	4		
16	Has the membership of the committee been assessed against the core knowledge and skills framework and found to be satisfactory?	2	1	
17	Does the committee have good working relations with key people and organisations, including external audit, internal audit and the CFO?	4		
18	Is adequate secretariat and administrative support to the committee provided?	4		

Good practice questions		Yes	Partly	No
Effectiveness of the committee				
	Has the committee obtained feedback on its performance from those interacting with the committee or relying on its work?	1		2
20	Are meetings effective with a good level of discussion and engagement from all the members?	3	1	
21	Does the committee engage with a wide range of leaders and managers, including discussion of audit findings, risks and action plans with the responsible officers?	3		1
22	Does the committee make recommendations for the improvement of governance, risk and control and are these acted on?	2	1	1
23	Has the committee evaluated whether and how it is adding value to the organisation?	2	1	1
24	Does the committee have an action plan to improve any areas of weakness?	2	2	
25	Does the committee publish an annual report to account for its performance and explain its work?	3	1	

As such, our self-assessment provided a good level of assurance over the delivery of the Committee's core role and functions. It also identified some actions for us, namely, to seek and review feedback on the Committee's performance as part of ongoing evaluations of effectiveness and to ensure ongoing training for the Committee on relevant risks and themes. The recent appointment of an independent member of the Committee also supports compliance with the guidance.

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee will be reflecting on this further to inform an action plan which can be monitored on an ongoing basis and reviewed as part of the next effectiveness assessment.

Audit and Governance Committee

Terms of Reference – Appendix A

- To approve the Council's Internal Audit Charter setting out the Internal Audit Strategy and Terms of Reference.
- To approve, but not direct, Internal Audit's annual plan of work and monitor unscheduled work that could potentially divert audit resources away from a plan, and monitor performance against those plans, ensuring that there is no inappropriate scope or resource limitations.
- To consider the Annual Report and opinion of the Head of Audit and a summary of internal audit activity and the level of assurance it can give over the Council's corporate governance arrangements
- To consider summary internal audit reports and the main issues arising and seek assurance that action has been taken where necessary.
- To consider reports dealing with the management and performance of the Internal Audit function.
- To consider reports from Internal Audit on agreed recommendations not implemented within reasonable timescales.
- To consider the External Auditor's Annual Inspection Letter, relevant reports and the reports of those charged with governance.
- To consider specific reports as agreed with the External Auditor to ensure agreed action is taken within reasonable timescales.
- To comment on the scope and depth of the external audit work and to ensure it gives value for money.
- To liaise with the Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd over the appointment of the Council's external auditor.
- To consider the reports of inspection agencies relevant to the Council.
- To suggest work for Internal and External Audit.
- To undertake an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of Internal Audit.

Regulatory Framework

- To review any issue referred to it by the Chief Executive or Corporate Director or any Committee of the Council.
- To monitor the effective development and operation of risk management and corporate governance throughout the Council.
- To monitor council policies on “raising concerns at work” and anti-fraud and anti-corruption policies including the Council’s complaints process.
- To oversee the production of the Council’s Statement of Internal Control/Governance Statement and recommend its adoption.
- To consider the arrangements for corporate governance and to agree necessary actions to ensure compliance with best practice.
- To consider the Council’s compliance with its own and published standards and controls.

Accounts

- To review the annual statement of accounts.
- Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the Council.
- To consider the External Auditor’s report to those charged with the governance, issues arising from the audit of the accounts.

Risk Management

- To consider the effectiveness of the Council’s risk management arrangements.
- To review regular reports from the Corporate Risk Management to gain assurance that the Council is monitoring and managing its risks effectively.
- To be satisfied that the Council’s assurance statements, including the Annual Governance Statement properly reflect the risk environment and any actions required to improve it.
- To review and approve the Council’s Strategic Risk Register annually.
- To report to the Executive any matter where the Committee feels that there is significant new risk that is not mitigated.

Performance

- The Audit and Governance Committee will carry out an annual self-assessment, including a review of these terms of reference, to evaluate its own performance and determine any action required to improve its effectiveness. The outcomes will be reported to Full Council.

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North
Northamptonshire
Council

Full Council 26th January 2023

Report Title	Meeting Procedure Rules & Budget Council Procedure Rules
Report Author	Adele Wylie (Director of Customer and Governance/ Monitoring Officer) <u>Adele.wylie@northnorthants.gov.uk</u>

Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972	N/A

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Copy of revised Meeting Procedure Rules

Appendix B – Copy of revised Budget Council Procedure Rules

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. For Council to consider revisions to the current Meeting Procedure Rules. Both the Constitutional Working Group (CWG) and the Democracy and Standards Committee considered this report. The Committee at its meeting held on 9th January 2023 agreed to recommend the revised rules to Council for ratification.

2. Executive Summary

2.1. Following discussion by the Constitutional Working Group (CWG) and the Democracy and Standards Committee, it is being recommended that certain amendments be made to the Meeting Procedure Rules and the Budget Council Procedure Rules. On consideration of the current Rules, it was noted that there was the need to clarify certain aspects of procedure and to incorporate certain “learning points” since Vesting Day and the operation of both Full Council meetings and those of committees.

3. Recommendations

- (a) That the revised Meeting Procedure Rules (as detailed in Appendix A) be approved, with Part A 1.1 effective immediately with other amendments effective from the close of the meeting; and
- (b) That the revised Budget Council Procedure Rules (as detailed in Appendix B) be approved effective from the close of the meeting.

3.1. *Reason for Recommendations – Following review of the operation of the Meeting Procedure Rules and Budget Council Procedure Rules since Vesting Day it is suggested that some amendments are made to improve the efficient and effective decision making of the Council's governance structure.*

3.2. *Alternative Options Considered – there are some discrepancies that require determination and areas which require clarification to ensure the smooth running of Full Council and committees. Failure to address these issues may result in disjointed meetings and overuse of Chair's discretion.*

4. Report Background

- 4.1. Under the Democracy and Standards Committee's terms of reference, there is a requirement to review the Council's Constitution and decision-making governance. The Meeting Procedure Rules are a key element of the Constitution, detailing how Full Council and committees operate. The Rules include statutory provisions, statutory guidance and best practise.
- 4.2. The Council has now been in operation for 18 months. It is therefore being recommended that the Rules be reviewed and amended in light of experience since Vesting Day.
- 4.3. The recommended draft Meeting Procedure Rules (Appendix A) provide an opportunity to clarify certain procedures and address issues that have arisen since Vesting Day, whilst ensuring that public participation, councillors rights and the decision-making process of the Council are protected.
- 4.4. Within Part 3.2 of the Constitution, there are separate rules which apply to Budget Council (held in February each year). The Committee has considered revisions to these rules; a copy of the revised rules is attached at Appendix B.
- 4.5. The proposed amended Rules have been the subject of discussion and debate at meetings of the Constitutional Working Group and the Democracy and Standards Committee and are being recommended to the Committee for consideration.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1. Appendix A contains the proposed amended Meeting Procedure Rules. Whilst the current Rules have provided a basis for the conduct of meetings over the previous 18 months there have been issues that have arisen which require attention or consideration.

5.2. Items of debate are highlighted in Appendix A. Areas that have particularly been the focus of debate by CWG and the Committee include: -

- Rule 1 enables the Council to agree its Municipal Timetable at any Full Council meeting not just at Annual Council;
- Rule 1.3 The decision for ordinary meetings of Full Council to commence at 6:00 pm has been incorporated;
- Rule 2.3 (xiii) narrative expanded;
- Rule 3 around the running order of the agenda for Full Council meetings, and clarification of the item titled Executive Presentations;
- Rule 5.5 confirms that any extraordinary meeting called to remove the Leader of the Council excludes the public from participation;
- Rule 10 clarifies that a Guillotine motion without notice can be moved whilst another agenda item is under discussion;
- Rule 15.10, 16.8, 17.8 & 18.5 - confirms that public statements, public questions, councillor motions and councillor questions exclude reference to proposed or actual planning or licensing applications, but may relate to planning or licensing policy;
- Rule 17.2 in relation to councillor questions the deadline for receipt of questions is proposed to be 6 clear working days prior to the full council meeting (this standardises the deadline with that of Motions With Notice);
- Rule 18.6 clarifying issues during any pre-election period;
- Rule 19.3 clarifying the procedure to be followed and the outcome of "Closure Motions";
- Rule 19.8 clarifies the procedure for debating reports containing recommendations;
- Rule 19.11 to 19.19 – clarifies the procedure for consideration of amendments;
- Rule 19.16 reformatted paragraph;
- Rule 19.23 to 19.32 – includes a new section detailing Points of Order and Personal Explanations;
- Rule 36 confirms procedures relating to Executive Advisory Panels;
- Rule 38 Issues surrounding the disclosure of confidential/exempt matters.
- Rule 38.2 confirms the process for declassifying reports/resolutions;
- Rule 44 confirms the use of a NNC designated email address is required to communicate notices under the Procedure Rules.

Checks on cross-referencing and paragraph numbering have also been undertaken.

6. Next Steps

6.1. Council are being requested to approve the amended Meeting Procedure Rules and Budget Council Procedure Rules.

6.2. Given that Part A 1.1 relates to the Municipal Timetable, the adoption of which for 2023/24 is listed elsewhere on the agenda of Council, it is proposed

if agreed, that amendment is effective immediately. Any other amendments to be effective from the close of the Council meeting.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources and Financial

7.1.1. None specific to this report.

7.2. Legal and Governance

7.2.1. The Rules include statutory provisions, statutory guidance and best practise.

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

7.3.1. The Constitution includes the Meeting Procedure Rules covering Full Council, committees and sub-committees which has the rules covering Budget Full Council included as an appendix.

7.4. Risk

7.4.1. The proposed amendments are intended to clarify procedures for the conduct of Council meetings for councillors, officers and the public. Issues that have arisen and identified during the previous 18 months are addressed in the proposed amended Rules.

7.5. Consultation

7.5.1. The Constitutional Working Group (CWG) considered this matter at its meetings on 22nd August 2022, 17th October 2022 & 12 December 2022. The proposed revisions are recommended by the CWG. The Democracy and Standards Committee considered this item at its meetings on 7th November 2022 and 9th January 2023. The Committee is also recommending approval.

7.6. Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel

7.6.1. Not applicable to this report.

7.7. Consideration by Scrutiny

7.7.1. Not applicable to this report.

7.8. Equality Implications

7.8.1. None impacting on the nine protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010.

7.9. Climate Impact

7.9.1. Not applicable to this report.

7.10. Community Impact

7.10.1. The public's right to attend full Council meetings for public agenda items are enshrined in statute. The Public Participation rules are included in the Council's Constitution.

7.11. Crime and Disorder Impact

7.11.1. Not applicable to this report.

8. Background Papers

8.1. NNC Council Constitution.

8.2. Constitutional Working Group Discussion Papers 22/08/22, 17/10/22 & 12/12/22.

8.3. Democracy and Standards Committee Agendas 07/11/22 & 09/01/23.

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Meeting Procedure Rules

The Council is required by law to have procedural rules that govern proceedings at decision making meetings.

For the purposes of these Procedural Rules a sub-committee does not include a task & finish group, working group or advisory group. Such groups may adopt all or some of the Procedure Rules but there is no statutory requirement to do so.

These Procedure Rules set out how meetings of the Council, committees and sub-committees will be conducted. The Procedure Rules also set out the Public Participation opportunities, except where specific committees or sub-committees have their own approved Public Participation Policy e.g., the Planning Authority committees.

Part A - Council Meetings

1. Council Meetings

- 1.1 The Council will approve a schedule of meetings for each Municipal Year. The schedule will be agreed at a meeting of the full Council.
- 1.2 The Proper Officer of the Council has a statutory responsibility for the summons and arrangements of Council meetings.
- 1.3 Full Council meetings will usually commence at 6:00 pm, on a Thursday, at a place to be agreed by the Proper Officer in consultation with the Chair.
- 1.4 The meeting to determine the Council's Budget for the forthcoming year (to be held by the end of February) will normally commence at 10:00 am.
- 1.5 The Proper Officer or the Council can agree to hold an unscheduled meeting subject to the "Extraordinary Meetings" provisions in this Constitution.

2. Annual Meeting of the full Council (Annual Council)

Timing

- 2.1 The Annual Meeting of the Council must be held by the end of May. The meeting marks the commencement of a new Municipal Year.
- 2.2 In a year when there are ordinary elections for councillors, the Annual Meeting shall take place within 21 calendar days from the retirement of the outgoing councillors.

Business to be undertaken at the Annual Meeting

- 2.3 The Annual Meeting shall –
 - (i) Elect the Chair of the Council who shall then preside;
 - (ii) Appoint the Vice Chair of the Council;

- (iii) Receive any apologies for absence from councillors;
 - (iv) Receive any declarations of interest from councillors;
 - (v) Approve the minutes of the previous meeting;
 - (vi) Receive any announcements from the Chair of the Council;
 - (vii) Elect the Leader of the Council in any year in which the Leader's term of office expires (for a four-year term, or if the office of Leader becomes vacant, the term of office of the Leader shall, subject to earlier removal, end on the day of the Annual Meeting following the ordinary election of councillors;
 - (viii) Receive an address from the Leader of the Council (*custom and practise would be for the leader of any recognised group to be given the courtesy of a brief response following the Leader's address*);
 - (ix) Note the appointments to the role of Deputy Leader and to the Executive;
 - (x) Note the appointments of Leader and Deputy Leader of any recognised political groups (2 members or more);
 - (xi) Appoint membership to the Council's committees and internal bodies as required under the approved Constitution, applying political balance rules for the designation of seats as required by statute or local choice;
 - (xii) Approve a schedule of meetings for the new Municipal Year, if this has not previously been approved by Council;
 - (xiii) Delegate to the Monitoring Officer the power to appoint councillors (including substitutes) to committees and internal bodies of the Council in accordance with the wishes of the respective group leaders, except where appointments to those bodies is exercisable only by the Leader of the Council or the Executive. Such appointments to be communicated to all councillors;
 - (xix) Appoint Council representatives where required, whose appointment is not in the gift of the Leader of the Council, the Executive or another approved body;
 - (xx) Any business which requires full Council determination that cannot await the next ordinary meeting of full Council, if agreed by the Proper Officer in consultation with the Chair of the Council;
 - (xxi) Any business which requires full Council determination that cannot await the next ordinary meeting of full Council as submitted by the designated Monitoring Officer or the Chief Finance Officer.
- 2.4 There will not normally be public participation at the Annual Council meeting unless under Procedure Rule 2.3 (xx) or 2.3 (xxi) above an item(s) that requires Council determination is submitted, in which case normal public participation procedures for that item(s) only would apply.

3. Ordinary Meetings of the full Council

3.1 Ordinary meetings of the Council shall take place in accordance with a programme determined by full Council.

Ordinary meetings shall –

- (i) Elect a person to preside if both the Chair and Vice Chair of the Council are absent;
- (ii) Receive any apologies for absence from councillors;
- (iii) Receive any declarations of interest from councillors;
- (iv) Approve the minutes of the previous meeting(s);
- (v) Receive any announcements from the Chair of the Council;
- (vi) Receive any announcements or presentations from the Leader of the Council. Provide for the Leader of the Council, or an Executive Member, to put forward a presentation (10 minutes) relating to their respective portfolios and upon which councillors will be able to ask questions and receive responses (10 minutes). A total of 20 minutes in total is applicable to this agenda item;
- (vii) Provide for up to 15 minutes in total, to receive any statements from members of the public who are residents of, or working in, North Northamptonshire and which must relate to a report or motion for determination by full Council as published in the public agenda of that meeting (see Procedure Rule 15);
- (viii) Provide for up to 15 minutes in total, including the provision of responses, to receive any questions from members of the public who are residents of or working in, North Northamptonshire relating to matters of which North Northamptonshire Council has direct responsibility or influence (see Procedure Rule 16);
- (ix) To receive any petitions as defined in the approved Council Petition Scheme (see Appendix 2, Part 2);
- (x) Deal with any business adjourned from a previous full Council meeting;
- (xi) To receive reports for determination as appropriate;
- (xii) To consider motions given by notice and published on the summons;
- (xiii) Provide up to 30 minutes in total, including the provision of responses, to receive any questions from councillors relating to matters of which the Council has direct responsibility or influence (see Procedure Rule 17);
- (xiv) Consider any other business specified on the summons to the meeting;
- (xv) To receive urgent reports, motions or presentations subject to the urgency provisions in these Meeting Procedure Rules.

4. Budget Meeting of the full Council

4.1 Annually there is a requirement for full Council to meet to set the level of Council Tax and agree budgets for the Council for the subsequent financial year. This meeting needs to be held by the end of February each year.

4.2 Budget meetings shall –

- (i) Elect a person to preside if both the Chair and Vice Chair of the Council are absent;
- (ii) Receive any apologies for absence from councillors;
- (iii) Receive any declarations of interest from councillors;
- (iv) Approve the minutes of the previous meeting;
- (v) Receive any announcements from the Chair of the Council;
- (vi) Provide for up to 15 minutes in total, to receive any statements from members of the public who are residents of, or working in, North Northamptonshire and must relate to a public report for determination by Council as published in the agenda of that meeting;

4.3 The conduct of the remainder of the meeting will follow the Budget Council Meeting Procedure Rules as detailed in Appendix A;

4.4 To receive urgent reports, motions or presentations subject to the urgency provisions in these Meeting Procedure Rules.

5. Extraordinary Meetings of the full Council

5.1 Extraordinary meetings are defined as meetings of the full Council which were not indicated on the approved calendar of meetings schedule. These are normally called as an item of business requires determination of the full Council prior to the next scheduled ordinary meeting as there is a legal obligation or business critical need for the full Council to determine a matter.

Calling Extraordinary Meetings

5.2 The Proper Officer may call, and those listed below may direct the Proper Officer to call, an extraordinary meeting of full Council in addition to an ordinary meeting –

- (i) The officer designated as the Monitoring Officer (or in their absence their appointed deputy);
- (ii) The officer designated as the Chief Finance Officer (or in their absence their appointed deputy);
- (iii) The full Council by resolution;
- (iv) The Chair on receipt of a signed requisition from 8 councillors which details the need for an extraordinary meeting to be called, quoting the legal or business critical need for such a meeting.

5.3 Prior to the summons for an extraordinary meeting to be issued, the Proper Officer shall consult the Chair, the Leader of the Council, the Head of Paid Service, the Monitoring Officer and the Chief Finance Officer.

Motion to remove the Leader of the Council

5.4 A motion to remove the Leader of the Council from office may only be –

- (i) Made at an extraordinary meeting of the full Council convened specifically for that purpose not less than 15 working days from the submission of the motion to the Proper Officer;
- (ii) Submitted in the form of a requisition signed by not less than one third of the total number of councillors (currently 26 councillors) of the Council; and
- (iii) Considered on one occasion by the Council in any six-month period.
- (iv) Where the full Council passes a resolution to remove the Leader of the Council, a new Leader is to be elected at the meeting at which the Leader is removed from office.

5.5 Where the item of business relates to the removal of the Leader of the Council, public participation rules would be suspended for the duration of that meeting.

Items of business at Extraordinary Meetings

5.6 Only business specified in the summons may be transacted at an extraordinary meeting of the full Council.

5.7 Extraordinary meetings shall –

- (i) Elect a person to preside if both the Chair and Vice Chair of the Council are absent;
- (ii) Receive any apologies for absence from councillors;
- (iii) Receive any declarations of interest from councillors;
- (iv) Consider the item for determination as detailed on the summons of the meeting.

6. Chair and Vice Chair of North Northamptonshire Council

6.1 The Chair of the Council, or in their absence the Vice Chair, will preside at meetings of the full Council.

6.2 Where both the Chair and Vice Chair are absent, the meeting will appoint another councillor, other than a member of the Executive, to chair the meeting, who will have the same powers and duties as the Chair.

6.3 The Chair is responsible for, and must conduct themselves in accordance with the following –

- (i) Upholding and promoting the purposes of the Council's approved Constitution and interpreting it with appropriate advice when necessary;
- (ii) Presiding over meetings of the full Council to ensure that business is carried out efficiently, effectively and fairly between the different political groups whilst preserving the rights of individual councillors and the interests of members of the public;

- (iii) Ensuring that at full Council meetings, matters of concern to local communities can be debated through the appropriate councillors;
- (iv) Ensuring that councillors who are not on the Executive or do not hold the chair of a standing committee are able to hold those office holders to account;
- (v) Promoting public involvement in the Council's affairs and acting as a contact between members of the public, local organisations and the Council;
- (vi) Being the "First Citizen" of North Northamptonshire Council and to participate in civic functions on behalf of the Council; and
- (vii) Undertaking such other roles as may be placed upon the office from time to time by the Council.
- (viii) On any matter concerning the conduct of full Council meetings where the Chair's adjudication is required, subject to seeking appropriate advice, the decision of the Chair shall be final.

7. Quorum

- 7.1 The quorum of meetings of the full Council shall be one quarter of the total membership.
- 7.2 During any meeting, if the Chair counts the number of councillors present and declares there is not a quorum present, then the meeting will adjourn immediately. Remaining business will be considered at a time and date agreed by the Proper Officer, in consultation with the Chair. If the Proper Officer does not agree a date, the remaining business will be considered at the next ordinary meeting.

8. What the full Council can decide

- 8.1 Full Council will decide such matters as required by law and those matters set out in Part 3 of the Council's approved Constitution.

9. Order of Business

- 9.1 The business of the meeting will normally be dealt with in the order set out in the summons of the meeting.
- 9.2 If there is a request to vary the order of business made to the Chair, the Chair after seeking advice from the Proper Officer, will consider varying the order of business for the purpose of the efficiency of the meeting.

10. Guillotine

- 10.1 If the business of a Council meeting has not been concluded three hours after its commencement, the Chair will draw the attention of the meeting to the time and to the guillotine rule. Council meetings would normally be expected to be

completed within three hours; however it is recognised that in exceptional circumstances an extension to the meeting may be required.

- 10.2 The Chair shall seek a mover and a seconder and subsequently take a vote without discussion and by show of hands only as to whether to continue the meeting.
- 10.3 If the vote is not carried, then items remaining to be determined by full Council will be adjourned to a later meeting or if urgent will be subject to the urgency provisions within this Constitution.
- 10.4 If the vote is carried, the Chair will determine the new guillotine time. If that new time is reached and a further extension of time is required, the Council meeting may vote again to extend.
- 10.5 Subject to Procedure Rule 14 a Motion Without Notice to extend the guillotine may be made whilst another amendment duly moved and seconded is under debate. Any vote on the guillotine motion shall be taken as a separate vote.

11. Urgent Business

- 11.1 Business will normally be stipulated in the summons of a meeting. The Chair may allow business which requires full Council determination and which is not specified in the summons, following consultation with the Proper Officer. The Chair will ensure that the matter of urgency cannot be dealt with under Procedure Rule 24 below.
- 11.2 Where the Chair determines that by reason of special circumstances an item of business is urgent, it may be considered by the meeting with the reason(s) for urgency specified in the minutes of the meeting.

12. Confirmation of Minutes

- 12.1 Minutes of the last Council meeting shall usually be confirmed at the next meeting of the Council.
- 12.2 Only matters relating to the accuracy of the minutes can be raised. Approval of the minutes requires a Mover and a Secunder and voted upon. Once approved the Chair shall sign the minutes.

13. Matters for decision by the Council

- 13.1 All matters for decision by the Council shall be included with the agenda, other than items of urgency under Procedure Rule 11 above.
- 13.2 Any recommendation, motion, or proposed decision to be made by Council must first be moved by a councillor and seconded by another councillor prior to any vote on the item being taken. In seconding a recommendation, motion or proposed decision, where a debate on the item is permissible the seconder may reserve their right to speak until later in the debate.

14. Motions (Procedural) which may be Moved Without Notice

14.1 The following motions may be moved at a Council meeting without notice –

- (i) Appointment of a Chair of the meeting at which the motion is made;
- (ii) Motions relating to the accuracy of the minutes of the Council, committee or sub-committee;
- (iii) That an item of business specified in the summons should have precedence;
- (iv) Reference of an item to Council, the Executive, a committee or sub-committee;
- (v) Appointment of or appointment to committees or sub-committees occasioned by an item mentioned in the summons of the meeting;
- (vi) Notification by the Leader of the Council of appointments to the Executive;
- (vii) Receipt of records of Executive Decisions;
- (viii) Adoption of recommendations of the Executive, a committee or a sub-committee and any consequent resolutions;
- (ix) That leave is given to withdraw a motion;
- (x) That leave is given to alter a motion by the mover of that motion;
- (xi) Receipt of reports of officers and any consequent resolutions;
- (xii) Extending the time limit for speeches;
- (xiii) Amendments to reports of which notification has been included within the summons of the meeting but where the reports were circulated at a later date than the summons;
- (xiv) That the Council proceed to the next business;
- (xv) That the question be now put;
- (xvi.) That the Council do now adjourn;
- (xvi) Authorising the sealing of documents;
- (xvii) Suspending a Meeting Procedure Rule, in accordance with Procedure Rule 42;
- (xviii) Motion under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) to exclude the press and public;
- (xix) That a councillor named under Meeting Procedure Rule 19.30 (viii) or (ix) should not be heard further or should leave the meeting; and

- (xx) Giving consent of the Council where these Meeting Procedure Rules require consent of the Council.

15. Public Participation at Council Meetings (Public Statements)

- 15.1 A public participation time will apply to Council meetings, as detailed below.
- 15.2 Members of the public may also submit questions in accordance with the process set out in Procedure Rule 16 below.
- 15.3 Members of the public may make statements at meetings of the full Council, the Executive or a committee. Those bodies appointed by full Council undertaking duties or responsibilities as the Planning Authority or the Licensing Authority may draw-up their own Public Participation Policy, subject to approval by full Council. The normal procedure for statements is as stated below.
- 15.4 Subject to the requirements of these procedure rules, a member of the public who lives and/or works in the North Northamptonshire Council area, may submit a written statement to the Leader of the Council, an Executive Member, the Chair of a standing committee or the Chair of the Council.
- 15.5 A person wishing to make a statement under this procedure shall submit the statement to the named contact in Democratic Services as detailed on the summons of the meeting in writing to Democratic Services, The Cube, George Street, Corby NN17 1QG or by email to - democraticservices@northnorthants.gov.uk by 5:00 pm at least two clear working days before the day of the meeting of the Council at which it is to be raised. The person's name, address and telephone and/or email details must be included.
- 15.6 A statement put under this procedure must relate to a report or motion on the public part of the agenda where the Council are being requested to determine a matter. A statement will not be accepted under these rules where it relates to a standing agenda item e.g., acceptance of minutes, declarations of interest or where it relates to a Motion Without Notice.
- 15.7 Statements shall be printed in order of receipt and circulated to councillors prior to the commencement of the meeting. No discussion shall be allowed on statements.
- 15.8 The person making the statement shall normally attend the meeting to read out their statement. When calling the member of the public to read out their statement, if the Chair notes the member of the public is not present, the statement will be noted as read and the Chair will proceed with the business of the meeting.
- 15.9 If statements are unsuitable in form, defamatory, frivolous, offensive, vexatious, unlawful or are otherwise improper and relate to a matter which the Council would be likely to consider in the absence of the press and public, the Chair in consultation with the Monitoring Officer shall have the right to rule the

statement out of order. The Chair shall also have the right to rule statements out of order where necessary in order to avoid repetition.

15.10 Statements relating to matters under consideration by North Northamptonshire Council in its role as Planning Authority or Licensing Authority (relates to proposed or registered applications yet to be determined) shall not be permitted. The member of the public will be directed to the appropriate procedure relating to representations on those matters. Statements relating to general planning or licensing policy would be permitted;

15.11 The time limit for making a statement shall be three minutes for any person.

15.12 The total time limit for public statements shall be 15 minutes but it is otherwise a matter for discretion of the Chair who, in exercising their discretion, will have regard to the business to be transacted at the meeting and the objective of ensuring that the meeting is managed efficiently.

16. Public Participation at full Council Meetings (Public Questions)

16.1 Subject to the requirements of this procedure, a member of the public who lives and/or works in the area of North Northamptonshire Council, may submit a written question to the Leader of the Council, an Executive Member, the Chair of a standing committee or the Chair of the Council.

16.2 A member of the public wishing to ask a question under this procedure shall submit their question to the named contact in Democratic Services as detailed on the summons of the meeting in writing to Democratic Services, The Cube, George Street, Corby NN17 1QG or by email to - democraticservices@northnorthants.gov.uk by 5:00 pm at least two clear working days before the day of the meeting of the Council at which it is to be raised. The member of the public's name, address and telephone and/or email details must be included.

16.3 A question shall be directed to the Leader of the Council, an Executive Member, a Chair of a standing committee or the Chair of the Council. The question must relate to a matter which North Northamptonshire Council has powers, duties or responsibilities for under law or local choice.

16.4 Questions shall be framed as to elicit information rather than make a statement and shall be limited to 50 words.

16.5 Questions shall be printed in order of receipt and circulated to councillors prior to the commencement of the Council meeting. The Chair shall have discretion to change the order of questions to allow a broader variety of matters to be considered by the meeting concerned. A copy of the response will be provided to the member of the public prior to the commencement of the meeting.

16.6 A member of the public may submit no more than one question at a meeting;

16.7 No discussion or debate shall be allowed on public questions or answers. The person asking the question shall not be required to read out their question, nor

shall the person responding be required to read out their response if their response has been circulated to councillors. Supplementary questions and answers shall be read out.

- 16.8 A question will be ruled out of order and rejected by the Chair, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, where it –
- (i) Does not relate to a matter for which North Northamptonshire Council has a power, duty or responsibility;
 - (ii) Is defamatory, frivolous, offensive, vexatious, unlawful or otherwise improper;
 - (iii) Requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information;
 - (iv) Names or identifies individual service users, members of staff or members of staff of partner agencies;
 - (v) Relates to matters under consideration by North Northamptonshire Council in its role as Planning Authority or Licensing Authority (relates to proposed or registered applications yet to be determined). Questions relating to general planning or licensing policy would be permitted;
 - (vi) Is considered to be inappropriate for the particular meeting.
 - (vii) The same or similar question has been asked at a previous Council meeting in the preceding six months.
- 16.9 Following the answer to each question, the member of the public may through the Chair ask a supplementary question which relates to the initial answer. A reply to the supplementary question may not be given if the question is not related to the initial answer, is unduly lengthy or is deemed inappropriate. Where required a written response to the supplementary question may be sent to the member of the public within 5 clear working days following the meeting.
- 16.10 The time allowed for public questions will be a maximum of fifteen minutes but is otherwise a matter for the discretion of the Chair who in exercising their discretion will have regard to the business to be transacted at the meeting and the objective of ensuring the business of the meeting is managed efficiently.
- 16.11 The member of the public asking the question shall normally attend the meeting to read out their question (optional). When calling the member of the public to read out their question, if the Chair notes the member of the public is not present, the question will be noted as read and the Chair will proceed with the business of the meeting.
- 16.12 Subject to Procedure Rule 16.5 questions will be asked in the order of receipt and answered without discussion or debate. In responding the councillor answering the question will use their reasonable endeavours to address the matters raised in the question. The councillor to whom the question is addressed may –

- (i) Reply directly;
- (ii) Reply by reference to a document in the public domain (e.g., Council report, meeting minutes);
- (iii) Reply by a written answer to the questioner within five clear working days of the meeting where the question has been put.

17. Councillor Questions at full Council meetings

- 17.1 Subject to the requirements of this procedure, a councillor of North Northamptonshire Council, may submit a written question to the Leader of the Council, an Executive Member, the Chair of a standing committee or the Chair of the Council.
- 17.2 A councillor wishing to ask a question under this procedure shall submit their question to the named contact in Democratic Services as detailed on the summons of the meeting in writing to Democratic Services, The Cube, George Street, Corby NN17 1QG or by email to - democraticservices@northnorthants.gov.uk by 5:00 pm at least six clear working days before the day of the meeting of the Council at which it is to be raised.
- 17.3 A question shall be directed to the Leader of the Council, an Executive Member, a Chair of a standing committee or the Chair of the Council. The question must relate to a matter which North Northamptonshire Council has powers, duties or responsibilities for under law or local choice.
- 17.4 Questions shall be framed as to elicit information rather than make a statement and shall be limited to 50 words.
- 17.5 Questions shall be printed in order of receipt and circulated to councillors prior to the commencement of the Council meeting. The Chair shall have discretion to change the order of questions to allow a broader variety of matters to be considered by the meeting concerned.
- 17.6 A councillor may submit no more than three questions at a meeting; however, the Chair reserves the right to ensure other councillors have the opportunity to table their questions, in which case the Chair may prioritise the questions received in order to provide greater participation.
- 17.7 No discussion or debate shall be allowed on councillor questions or answers. The councillor asking the question shall not be required to read out their question, nor shall the councillor responding be required to read out their response. Supplementary questions and answers shall be read out. A copy of all questions and responses will be circulated to all councillors and made publicly available via the Council's website following the meeting at which they were put.
- 17.8 A question will be ruled out of order and rejected by the Chair, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, where it –

- (i) Does not relate to a matter for which North Northamptonshire Council has a power, duty or responsibility;
- (ii) Is defamatory, frivolous, offensive, vexatious, unlawful or otherwise improper;
- (iii) Requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information;
- (iv) Names or identifies individual service users, members of staff or members of staff of partner agencies;
- (v) Relates to matters under consideration by North Northamptonshire Council in its role as Planning Authority or Licensing Authority (relates to proposed or registered applications yet to be determined). Questions relating to general planning or licensing policy would be permitted;
- (vi) Is considered to be inappropriate for the particular meeting.
- (vii) The same or similar question has been asked at a previous Council meeting in the preceding six months.
- (viii) The question exceeds the 50-word limit (see Procedure Rule 17.4).

17.9 If a submitted question is rejected, the councillor submitting the question will be informed in writing the criteria used for rejection of their question.

17.10 Following the answer to each question, the councillor may through the Chair ask a supplementary question which relates to the initial answer.

17.11 A reply to the supplementary question may not be given if the question is not related to the initial answer, is unduly lengthy or is deemed inappropriate. Where required a written response to the supplementary question may be sent to the councillor within 5 clear working days following the meeting.

17.12 The time allowed for councillor questions will be a maximum of thirty minutes but is otherwise a matter for the discretion of the Chair who in exercising their discretion will have regard to the business to be transacted at the meeting and the objective of ensuring the business of the meeting is managed efficiently.

17.13 The councillor asking the question shall normally attend the meeting to read out (optional) their question. When calling the councillor to read out their question, if the Chair notes the councillor is not present, the question will be noted as read and the Chair will proceed with the business of the meeting.

17.14 Subject to Procedure Rule 17.5 questions will be asked in the order of receipt and answered without discussion or debate. In responding the councillor answering the question will use their reasonable endeavours to address the matters raised in the question. The councillor to whom the question is addressed may –

- (i) Reply directly;

- (ii) Reply by reference to a document in the public domain (e.g., Council report, meeting minutes);
- (iii) Reply by a written answer to the questioner within five clear working days of the meeting where the question has been put.

18. Notices of Motion submitted by councillors

Procedure

- 18.1 Notice of every motion (other than a motion which under Procedure Rule 19.30 may be moved Without Notice) shall be given in writing or by email to Democratic Services by 5:00 pm at least six clear working days before the day of the Council meeting.

Scope

- 18.2 Motions must be about matters for which North Northamptonshire has direct responsibility or influence.
- 18.3 The Chair, following consultation with the Monitoring Officer, is authorised to reject any motion that appears to the Chair or the Monitoring Officer to be defamatory, frivolous, offensive, vexatious, unlawful or otherwise improper.
- 18.4 A motion will not be accepted if it is substantially the same as a motion which has been put or relates to a decision to be made elsewhere on the meeting's agenda and could be addressed at the meeting through an amendment being proposed, or if the same or similar motion has been considered by the Council in the preceding six months.
- 18.5 Motions which relate to matters under consideration by North Northamptonshire Council in its role as Planning Authority or Licensing Authority (relates to proposed or registered applications yet to be determined) will not be permitted. Motions relating to general planning or licensing policy would be permitted;
- 18.6 During a pre-election period the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chair, will ensure that the appropriate guidance be adhered to in consideration of the subject matter of any motion, recognising the unique political sensitivities during a pre-election period.

Motions to be set out in summons

- 18.7 The summons for every ordinary meeting of full Council will set out all motions of which notice has been duly given, unless the councillor giving the notice has intimated in writing or email, when giving it, that they propose to move it at a later meeting or has since withdrawn it. The motions will be listed in the summons according to whether they relate to Executive or non-Executive functions but otherwise in the order in which they have been received.

Withdrawal of Motion which is before Council

- 18.8 Where a notice of motion is before the Council having been formally moved and seconded and the mover wishes to subsequently to withdraw it, they with the

consent of the seconder may do so, with the consent of the Chair of the meeting.

Motions not moved

18.9 If a motion set out in the summons is not moved either by the councillor who gave notice of it or by some other councillor on their behalf it shall, unless postponed by consent of the Council, be treated as withdrawn and shall not be moved without fresh notice.

Motions increasing expenditure or reducing revenue of Council

18.10 Any notice of motion which would have the effect of materially increasing the expenditure or reducing the revenue of the Council, otherwise than in the form of a proposal that the matter be referred to the Executive for consideration and report, shall not be deemed to have been duly given for the purposes of these Meeting Procedure Rules.

Motions reviewing or rescinding Executive decisions taken under delegated powers

18.11 Any notice of motion which would have the effect of reviewing or rescinding a decision of the Executive taken under delegated powers, otherwise than in the form of a proposal that the matter be referred to the Executive for consideration and report, shall not be deemed to have been duly given for the purposes of these Meeting Procedure Rules.

Deferment of a Notice of Motion

18.12 Where a notice of motion has been moved and seconded, and referred for advice, the consideration of the motion may be deferred where the mover and seconder signify to the Chair their agreement, and the Chair signifies agreement on behalf of the Council. The motion would then come to a subsequent meeting of the Council for report and decision.

19. Rules of Debate

Budget Council Meetings

19.1 Specific Procedure Rules apply to Budget Council meetings. These are attached as Appendix 1 to these Procedure Rules.

Motions and Amendments

19.2 No motion or amendment shall be discussed by councillors unless it has been moved and seconded.

19.3 There shall be no public participation on Motions Without Notice and officers will not normally participate unless, through the Chair, an officer has been requested to provide specific legal, financial or procedural information or a statutory officer needs to provide advice or guidance to the meeting.

19.4 Where required by the Chair, motions or amendments shall be put in writing and handed to the Chair before they are discussed or put to the meeting. This

requirement does not apply to motions Moved Without Notice under Procedure Rule 19.30.

- 19.5 At meetings other than those of full Council, the Chair of that meeting may at their discretion allow a motion or amendment to be put which is not in writing, provided that the Chair has concluded that the wording of the motion or amendment is understood by all members of the body concerned.

Secunder's Speech

- 19.6 When seconding a motion or amendment a councillor may advise the Chair that they will reserve their right to speak until a later period in the debate.

Only one councillor to speak at a time

- 19.7 When speaking at a Council meeting a councillor shall if possible stand and address the Chair. Whilst a councillor is speaking the other councillors will remain seated, unless rising, if possible, on a Point of Order or in Personal Explanation.

Content and length of speeches

- 19.8 A councillor will confine their speech to the question under discussion, a Personal Explanation or a Point of Order.
- 19.9 Except as indicated below, in the case of speeches made by councillors when the Council is agreeing a budget (Budget Council), or where the Council, committee or sub-committee otherwise agrees, the speech of the mover of the motion shall not exceed five minutes and all other speeches shall not exceed three minutes.
- 19.10 In advance of the meeting at which the Council is due to agree a budget, the Council's recognised political groups may agree a protocol which makes provision for a limited number of speeches to be made on behalf of each recognised political group, and which exceed the three-minute limitation contained in these Procedure Rules.
- 19.11 The Chair will have discretion as to how such a protocol will be implemented at the meeting and, where no agreement can be reached between the recognised political groups, whether and (if so) how any extension of the three-minute limitation might be permitted to operate.

When a Councillor may speak again

- 19.12 At a Council meeting a councillor who has spoken on any motion shall not speak again whilst it is the subject of debate, except –
- (i) To speak once on an amendment moved by another councillor;
 - (ii) If the motion has been amended since last they spoke, to move a further amendment;

- (iii) If their first speech was on an amendment moved by another councillor, to speak on the main issue (the substantive motion) whether or not the amendment on which they spoke was carried;
- (iv) In exercise of a right of reply given by Procedure Rule 19.33 – 19.42;
- (v) On a Point of Order referring to the specific Procedure Rule;
- (vi) By way of Personal Explanation; or
- (vii) To move one of the motions specified in Procedure Rule 19.30 when the procedure in those paragraphs shall be followed.

19.13 At a Council meeting a councillor who has spoken on any motion shall not speak again whilst it is the subject of debate, except –

- (i) At committees or sub-committee meetings councillors may, at the discretion of the Chair, speak more than once.

Amendments

19.14 An amendment must be relevant to the motion and shall be either –

- (i) To leave out words;
- (ii) To leave out words and add others; or
- (iii) To insert and/or add words.

Any such amendment shall not have the effect of negating the motion before Council.

19.15 The Chair, following consultation with the Monitoring Officer, is authorised to reject any amendment that appears to the Chair or the Monitoring Officer to be irrelevant, defamatory, frivolous, offensive, vexatious, unlawful or otherwise improper. A motion will not be accepted if it is substantially the same as a motion which has already been submitted to the same meeting of the Council.

Notice of Amendments

19.16 Amendments to reports of which notification has been included within the summons of the meeting may be moved without notice. The mover of any amendment may be required to provide a written copy of said amendment to the Chair prior to any debate on the amendment.

Number of Amendments

19.17 Only one amendment may be moved and discussed at a time. No further amendment shall be moved until the amendment under discussion has been disposed of, although the Chair may allow two or more amendments to be discussed (but not voted on) together if this would facilitate the proper conduct of the business before the meeting.

Debate of reports containing recommendations

- 19.18 Where non-Executive reports are presented to Council which have been submitted by one of the Council's statutory officers and contain recommendations for deliberation and determination by the meeting these will normally be presented by the statutory officer or their deputy, then the recommendations subsequently moved and seconded by councillors.
- 19.19 Where reports are presented to Council which contain recommendations for deliberation and determination by the meeting which have been referred through to Council by the Executive these will normally be presented by the Leader of the Council or an Executive Member, then the recommendations subsequently moved and seconded by councillors.
- 19.20 Where reports are presented to Council which contain recommendations for deliberation and determination by the meeting and relate to items listed in the approved Council Budget and Policy Framework, these will normally be presented by the Leader of the Council or an Executive Member, then the recommendations subsequently moved and seconded by councillors.

Report Recommendations and Amendments

- 19.21 No report shall be discussed or amended by councillors until it has been moved and seconded.
- 19.22 The mover of a report's recommendations may address Council for a maximum of five minutes. A seconder may address Council for up to three minutes or reserve their right to speak until later in the debate.
- 19.23 Where required by the Chair, amendments to recommendations shall be put in writing and presented to the Chair prior to being moved and seconded. The Chair and the Monitoring Officer will consider the proposed amendment prior to it being moved and seconded to ensure it is compliant with Procedure Rule 19.4.
- 19.24 A mover of an amendment may speak for a maximum of three minutes. A seconder may address Council for up to three minutes or reserve their right to speak until later in the debate.

Status of Amendments

- 19.25 If an amendment is lost, another amendment may be moved on the original recommendations. If an amendment is carried, the recommendations as amended shall take the place of the original recommendations and shall become the substantive wording upon which any further amendment may be moved.

Alterations to Motions

- 19.26 A councillor may alter a motion or amendment of which they have given notice and may also, with the consent of the seconder, alter a motion or amendment which they have moved. In both cases, the consent of Council (or the committee or sub-committee) is required. There should be no discussion on whether consent should or should not be given.

Withdrawal of Motion

19.27 The mover may withdraw a motion or amendment provided the seconder agree. Once the mover has asked for permission to withdraw, there should be no further discussion.

Summation of Motion/Amendment

19.28 The mover of the motion shall have the right to reply at the close of the debate on the motion immediately before it is put to the vote (3 minutes).

19.29 If an amendment is moved, the mover of the original motion shall have a right to speak on the amendment. The mover of the amendment shall have a right to reply at the close of the debate on the amendment immediately before it is put to the vote (3 minutes).

Motions which may be moved during debate

19.30 When a motion is under debate no other motion shall be moved except the following –

- (i) To amend the motion (subject to Procedure Rule 19.14);
- (ii) To adjourn the meeting;
- (iii) To adjourn the debate;
- (iv) To proceed to the next business;
- (v) To suspend Procedure Rules;
- (vi) To refer a matter to the Council, the Executive, a committee or sub-committee for consideration or reconsideration;
- (vii) That the question be now put;
- (viii) That a councillor be not further heard;
- (ix) By the Chair under Procedure Rule 14.1 (xix) that a councillor do leave the meeting;
- (x) A motion under s.100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) to exclude the press and public;
- (xi) To extend the guillotine (see Procedure Rule 10).

Closure Motions

19.31 A councillor may move, without comment, at the conclusion of a speech of another councillor –

- (i) “That the Council proceed to the next business;”
- (ii) “That the question be now put;”
- (iii) “That the debate be now adjourned;”

(iv) “That the Council do now adjourn.”

19.32 When one of these motions has been seconded the Chair shall proceed without debate as follows –

- (i) On a motion to proceed to next business – unless in the Chair’s opinion the matter before the meeting has been insufficiently discussed, they shall first give the mover of the original motion/amendment the right to reply, and then put to the vote the motion to proceed to next business.
- (ii) On a motion that the question be now put – unless in the Chair’s opinion the matter before the meeting has been insufficiently discussed, they shall put to the vote the motion/amendment that the question be now put, if it is passed, give the mover of the original motion/amendment the right of reply before putting the motion to the vote.
- (iii) On a motion to adjourn the debate or the meeting – unless in the Chair’s opinion the matter before the meeting has been insufficiently discussed on that occasion, they shall put the adjournment motion to the vote without giving the mover of the original motion/amendment the right to reply on that occasion.
 - (a) If the debate or meeting is adjourned for a short period to facilitate a comfort break etc, the debate or meeting shall readjourn at the specified time and continue with the debate or meeting as normal;
 - (b) If the debate is adjourned and it is agreed to continue at a subsequent meeting, then it shall be included on the summons of said meeting and debate shall begin again with the mover and seconder;
 - (c) If the full meeting is adjourned to another working day, then the business of the reconvened meeting shall commence from the point of business on the original summons from which time the original meeting was adjourned.

Points of Order and Personal Explanations

19.33 A councillor shall if possible stand (or where necessary instead raise their hand) on a point of order or in personal explanation and shall be entitled to be heard immediately. Whilst the councillor is speaking the other councillors will remain seated.

19.34 A point of order shall relate only to an alleged breach of the Procedure Rules or statutory provision and the councillor shall specify the Procedure Rule or statutory provision and the way in which they consider it to have been breached.

19.35 A councillor may request to address Council as a matter of Personal Explanation, regardless of whether they have already addressed Council on the agenda item under discussion, where another councillor speaking on the agenda item has “named” the councillor in their contribution and the “named councillor” feels that the other councillor has misquoted, distorted or misrepresented the “named councillors” contribution.

- 19.36 In moving the Personal Explanation, a councillor must not use the opportunity to contribute further to the debate or introduce new information or opinion, they must adhere to addressing the perceived misrepresentation, misquote or distortion only.
- 19.37 The Chair will determine whether the “named councillors” riposte is valid; if valid the councillor who made the comment will be requested to withdraw or correct their remarks without further comment.
- 19.38 If a councillor continually is proven to be misrepresenting, misquoting or distorting the contribution of fellow councillors at a meeting, or a councillor is misusing the rules around Personal Explanation they may be subject to a motion to “not be heard further” for the duration of that meeting.
- 19.39 This Rule does not apply to other or previous meetings of the Council, remarks made at meetings of other bodies, or remarks made outside of the Council e.g., on social media.
- 19.40 The request for Personal Explanation must be made prior to the closure of the particular agenda item at which it was made.
- 19.41 The request for Personal Explanation cannot be requested by proxy.
- 19.42 The ruling of the Chair of the meeting on a Point of Order or on the admissibility of a Personal Explanation shall not be open for discussion and shall be final. The Chair of the meeting shall consult on any question of interpretation with the Monitoring Officer or their designated nominee prior to making a ruling.

Respect for the Chair

- 19.43 At the Council meeting whenever the Chair rises during a debate a councillor then standing shall sit down and the Council shall be silent.
- 19.44 In committee or sub-committee meetings, whenever the Chair rises from their seat, the councillors should remain in their seats and the committee or sub-committee shall be silent.

20. Rescission of Earlier Resolution

- 20.1 Subject to Procedure Rule 18 at a meeting of the Council, no motion or amendment shall be moved to rescind any resolution of the Council which has passed within the preceding six-months or which is to the same effect as one which has been rejected within that period.
- 20.2 Such a motion may be moved if –
- (i) It is recommended by the Executive or a committee; or
 - (ii) Notice of such motion has been given under Procedure Rule 18 and signed by at least one-third of the total number of councillors (26 councillors) who include councillors from more than one recognised political group.

21. Voting

- 21.1 Each councillor has one vote.
- 21.2 Voting will normally be by a show of hands or where practical and the means are available to those present by suitable electronic means.
- 21.3 When a councillor asks for a recorded vote to be taken and 10% of the overall number of councillors present, stand in their places to support the request, the vote will be recorded to show whether each councillor voted for or against the proposal or abstained. If necessary, a councillor may raise their hand instead of standing in order to indicate their support for a request for a recorded vote.
- 21.4 A recorded vote will not be taken if the vote has already commenced.
- 21.5 A councillor may require after a vote is completed that the minutes of the meeting record how they voted or abstained. The request to be made immediately after the vote is taken.
- 21.6 A councillor may immediately after the item of business is voted upon request that a lost motion or amendment be recorded in the minutes.
- 21.7 Where there are equal votes cast on a motion or amendment the Chair or the person presiding will have, and should exercise, a second or casting vote.

22. Offices and Appointments

- 22.1 Voting to elect or appoint the Chair and Vice Chair of the Council, or councillors to any office or position where more than one person is nominated shall be a show of hands or where practical and the means are available to those present by suitable electronic means.
- 22.2 If on a vote no person receives more than half of the votes cast, the name of the person with the least number of votes will be withdrawn. Further votes will be held until one person receives a clear majority.
- 22.3 The Chair, or person presiding, will have, and should exercise, a second or casting vote where the votes are equal.

23. Election of Chair of Committees and Sub-Committees

- 23.1 The Chair of every committee excluding the Executive will be elected at the Annual Council Meeting where possible.
- 23.2 The Vice Chair of every committee will be appointed at the Annual Council Meeting where possible.
- 23.3 The councillor elected to each office must be a full member of the relevant committee.
- 23.4 The Chair (and if required the Vice Chair) of a sub-committee established by a committee will be appointed by the parent committee or the parent committee may defer those appointments to the sub-committee itself.

- 23.5 Where a vacancy occurs in an office on a committee or sub-committee during the Municipal Year, the relevant body will elect/appoint at its next ordinary meeting.
- 23.6 Unless Council decides otherwise, the election/appointment will be conducted by a show of hands and may relate to a number of offices; Rule 21 will apply.
- 23.7 Where a Chair and Vice-Chair are both absent from a meeting of a relevant body, a Chair will be appointed from those members of the body present, provided the meeting is quorate and subject to any restrictions on the eligibility of Executive Members for appointment.

24. Urgent Business – Non-Executive Matters

- 24.1 An item of urgent business which has to be decided before the next meeting of full Council and which does not fall within the Executive's functions and responsibility can be determined by the Head of Paid Service subject to the procedure set out below.
- 24.2 Where any matter is urgent and cannot await the next scheduled meeting, the Head of Paid Service may take the necessary action, provided that they have first consulted the relevant Chair (or Vice Chair if the Chair is unavailable).
- 24.3 A copy of the consultation document shall be sent to the Leader of the Council, the appropriate Executive Member, the Chair of the Scrutiny Commission, the leaders of any recognised political groups and the councillors for the ward(s) concerned if the matter particularly affects one or more electoral areas.
- 24.4 Any such approval shall be in writing; consideration being given after consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer (or in their absence their respective appointed deputies).
- 24.5 The Monitoring Officer shall forthwith supply a copy of any approval requiring a report to a committee or sub-committee which has been given by them to the Head of Paid Service and the Chief Finance Officer.
- 24.6 A report of any action under this Meeting Procedure Rule shall be made available by electronic means to all councillors.

Part B – Committee and Sub-Committee Meetings

25. Programme of Meetings

- 25.1 Meetings of committees and standing sub-committees will be set out in the Schedule of Meetings approved by full Council under Procedure Rule 1.1. Alterations to the date, time and/or venue for meetings, as well as the inclusion of additional meetings, shall be matters for the Proper Officer to determine subject to consultation with the relevant Chair and subject to any provisions within the Constitution.
- 25.2 When it is necessary to alter the date, time and/or venue of a meeting, or to arrange an extraordinary meeting, the Proper Officer will seek to consult the

Chair (or Vice Chair) of the relevant committee or sub-committee before any action is taken by the Proper Officer, explaining why action needs to be taken and/or the need for an extraordinary meeting, and why the business to be determined cannot wait for the next scheduled meeting of that particular committee or sub-committee.

26. Quorum at Committees and Sub-Committees

26.1 No item of business will be transacted at a meeting of a committee or sub-committee unless the meeting is quorate in line with the agreed quorum for the respective committee or sub-committee as detailed within the Constitution. Where no quorum is specified the quorum shall be a minimum of three councillors.

27. Minutes of Committees and Sub-Committees

27.1 The minutes of a committee or sub-committee must be confirmed at its next scheduled meeting.

27.2 Only matters relating to the accuracy of the minutes can be raised. Where the accuracy is questioned the meeting will consider any amendment to the draft minutes.

27.3 Where no issues of accuracy are raised, or after any challenge on the accuracy of the minutes addressed, following a mover and seconder for acceptance of the minutes a vote shall be taken. If agreed the Chair shall sign the minutes.

27.4 The minutes of any sub-committee must be submitted to the next suitable meeting of the parent committee by the sub-committee Chair. The Chair of the parent committee will allow reasonable time for members of the parent committee the opportunity to ask questions or comment upon the minutes of the sub-committee. Questions or comment relating to exempt or confidential matters will need to be taken following exclusion of the press or public.

27.5 A parent committee cannot question the accuracy of a sub-committee minute. Any challenge to a sub-committee minute needs to be addressed at the next suitable meeting of the sub-committee.

28. Motions Moved without Notice at Committees and Sub-Committees

28.1 Procedure Rule 19.30 lists those motions and amendments which can be moved without notice.

29. Rules of Debate at Committees and Sub-Committees

29.1 Procedure Rule 19 sets out the rules of debate.

30. Voting at Committees and Sub-Committees

30.1 Voting at committee and sub-committee meetings will be by show of hands.

30.2 A recorded vote will be required where any three councillors request that one takes place after a proposition is put by the Chair but before the vote is taken,

such a vote to be recorded in the minutes as to whether each councillor present gave their vote for or against the proposition or abstained from voting.

- 30.3 Where a recorded vote is not undertaken, a councillor may require, immediately after a vote is completed, that the minutes of the meeting record how they voted or abstained.
- 30.4 A councillor may request that a lost motion or amendment be recorded in the minutes by requesting this immediately after the vote is taken.
- 30.5 Where there are equal votes cast for a motion or amendment, the person presiding at the meeting will have, and should exercise, a second or casting vote.

31. Mover of a motion at full Council under Procedure Rule 18 – Attendance at the Executive, Committees or Sub-Committees

- 31.1 Where a motion has been referred under Procedure Rule 18 from the full Council to the Executive, a committee or sub-committee for consideration and report, the mover of the motion has the right to attend the meeting and explain the motion.
- 31.2 The mover of the motion will be advised of the date and time of the meeting at which the matter is to be considered and they will be sent a copy of the relevant papers.

32. Requests by Members for items of business to be included on agendas of a committee or sub-committee

- 32.1 This Procedure Rule sets out details of the process by which a councillor can ask for an item of business to be included on the agenda of a committee or sub-committee.
- 32.2 This Rule does not apply to special/extraordinary meetings of the Executive, committees or sub-committees.
- 32.3 A councillor may, by notice to the Proper Officer no later than ten clear working days before the appropriate meeting, request that an item of business be included on the agenda of a committee or sub-committee.
- 32.4 A councillor may not give notice of more than one item of business for any one meeting, except where reference is made and meets the obligations under Procedure Rule 32.7. The notice shall state the nature of the business and shall include the signature of the councillor. A notice may be submitted electronically and bear an electronic signature, provided the notice has been originated by that councillor.
- 32.5 This procedure shall not apply where the item of business, if agreed, would have the effect of rescinding or amending any resolution passed by a committee or sub-committee of the Council within the preceding six months.

32.6 Items arising from such notices shall appear on the agenda after the ordinary public or private agenda items accordingly.

32.7 This procedure will apply to councillors exercising their rights under section 9FC of the Local Government Act 2000 and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 9.4 to have an item, within the remit of a particular body, included on the agenda and discussed at the next ordinary meeting of that body. The restrictions in Procedure Rule 32.4 above on the number of items shall not apply to items submitted under this paragraph.

33. Committee and Sub-Committee – Urgent Items of Business

33.1 Normally business will only be transacted at meetings of committees and sub-committees which appear in the agenda and which have been available for public inspection at least five clear working days before the meeting or, where the meeting is convened at short notice, from the time the meeting is convened.

33.2 The Chair of the committee or sub-committee may agree to deal with an item of business at the meeting if the matter is urgent given the circumstances requiring a decision. The Chair's ruling and the reasons for urgency will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

34. Attendance of Councillors at Committee and Sub-committees of which they are not members

34.1 Notwithstanding their rights as a member of the public, a councillor may attend any meeting of a committee or sub-committee to which they have not been appointed, for the purposes of performing their duty as a councillor, including where exempt, private or confidential business is to be discussed.

34.2 A councillor will be given, when they arrive at the meeting, a copy of the agenda and relevant papers, subject to any restrictions imposed under the Access to Information Procedure Rules.

34.3 The councillor has no right to vote but may speak with the consent of the Chair of the meeting.

35. Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Sub-Committees

35.1 In applying these Rules to committees and sub-committees established to undertake the Council's scrutiny responsibilities, regard shall be had to the Overview and Scrutiny Rules which are contained in Part 7 of this Constitution.

36. Executive Advisory Panels (EAP)

36.1 The Executive may establish an Executive Advisory Panel. Details relating to these Panels can be found in Part 5.2 of this Constitution.

36.2 Meetings of the Panels are not covered by the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) but will seek to operate utilising the requirements under said Act.

36.3 The Panel will seek to operate under normal meeting procedure rules and conventions.

- 36.4 Meetings of the Panel are open to public attendance unless exempt or confidential information is to be discussed. Broadcast by virtual means will be accepted as “open to public attendance.”

Part C – General Provisions

37. Records of Attendance

- 37.1 The Proper Officer will keep a record of councillors attending any meeting of the Council, the Executive, a committee or sub-committee.
- 37.2 For the purposes of the “six-month rule,” attendance will be at such meetings where the councillor is named on the summons of that meeting.
- 37.3 Attendance at a meeting using virtual technology where the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) is in force, will not constitute attendance for the purposes of the “six-month” rule and the councillor not present will not have voting rights.

38. Disclosure of confidential/exempt matters

- 38.1 No councillor shall disclose to any person the whole or any part of the contents of any agenda, report or other document which is marked “confidential” or “not for publication” unless and until the document has been made available to the public or press by or on behalf of the Council, the Executive, a committee or sub-committee as permitted following declassification (see 38.2 below) or as directed by Court Order or statute.
- 38.2 A decision on the declassification of documents will be made by the Proper Officer, following consultation with the Monitoring Officer (or their designated deputy) and the chair of the relevant body at which the material was originally presented.
- 38.3 No councillor shall disclose to any person other than another NNC councillor any matter arising during the proceedings of the Council, the Executive, a committee or a sub-committee and which comes to their knowledge by virtue of their office as a councillor where such disclosure would prejudice the interest of the Council or would be contrary to law.

39. Disorderly conduct by Councillors

- 39.1 If at a meeting any councillor, in the opinion of the person presiding, misconducts themselves in any way, the person presiding, or any other councillor may move “That the councillor be not further heard.” The motion, if seconded, shall be put and determined without discussion.
- 39.2 If the councillor continues the misconduct after a motion under Procedure Rule 19.30 (ix) has been carried, the person presiding may either move “That the councillor do leave the meeting” in which case the motion shall be put and determined without seconding or discussion or adjourn the meeting.

39.3 In the event of general disturbance by councillors at any meeting which, in the opinion of the person presiding, renders the due and proper dispatch of business impossible, the person presiding will have the power to adjourn the meeting.

40. Disturbance by Members of the Public

40.1 If a member of the public interrupts the proceedings at any meeting the person presiding shall issue a warning to them. If they continue, the person presiding shall order their removal from the meeting. In cases of general disturbance in any part of the meeting room open to the general public, the person presiding shall order that part to be cleared.

41. Variation and Revocation of Procedure Rules

41.1 Any motion to vary or revoke these Rules shall, when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

42. Suspension of Procedure Rules

42.1 Subject to Rule 19.30 (v) any of the preceding Procedure Rules may be suspended in respect of any business at a meeting of the Council, a committee or sub-committee where its suspension is moved and agreed except where this would be in contravention of statute.

42.2 A motion to suspend Procedure Rules shall not be moved without notice (that is under Procedure Rule 19.30 (v)) unless there shall be present at least one-third of the membership of the Council (26 councillors), or that committee or that sub-committee, respectively.

43. Interpretation of Procedure Rules

43.1 The ruling of the person presiding as to the construction or application of any of these Procedure Rules, or as to any proceedings of the Council, committee or sub-committee shall not be challenged at the meeting.

43.2 The person presiding, prior to enacting Procedure Rule 39 shall consult on any question of interpretation with the Monitoring Officer, or in their absence their designated nominee.

44. Submission of Notices by Councillors – Electronic Means

44.1 A councillor may communicate, by electronic means using their Council email address, any notice under any of the Council's Procedure Rules to initiate any process or procedure provided it is clear that that councillor has originated the notice.

Appendix 1 Budget Council Meeting Procedure Rules

Preamble

Each year before the end of February the Council will meet to determine the budget for the subsequent financial year. The financial year runs from 1st April to 31st March. Any decisions made by the Council at the Budget Council meeting in February become effective from the following 1st April unless there are specific reasons for an earlier or later implementation date.

The agenda for Budget Council usually includes at least three distinct reports –

Draft Budget (inc. Council Tax Resolution)

This covers the revenue expenditure forecasts and income required for the forthcoming financial year. This also includes the recommended level of Council Tax income required to be levied by North Northamptonshire Council, which together with precepts levied by other bodies e.g. town/parish councils; the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner, forms the total Council Tax billed to households. The report will also set out the financial position for the ringfenced Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

NNC owns a number of residential properties (houses, flats etc) across the area and provides “social housing.” Budget Council sets the rent for these properties each year. The HRA is a “ring fenced” budget therefore income from housing rents can only be spent on the provision of council housing and only certain costs can be recorded within the HRA as set out within guidance.

Capital Programme

The Council undertakes a number of capital projects each year. Budget Council sets the amount of money allocated to capital projects for the following financial year. Some capital projects may stagger more than one financial year.

In addition to the three main reports (see above), other finance-related reports may be scheduled for the meeting. If there were other business critical decisions to be made these can also be determined by Budget Council although normally they would be scheduled for the next ordinary Council meeting.

Pre- Budget Council Meeting

The Council will receive recommendations from the Executive included in the budget reports. These recommendations would have been drafted by the Executive and circulated for both public and internal (e.g. scrutiny) consultation.

The Executive would have considered consultation responses prior to agreeing its final recommendations. These recommendations would form the basis of the reports to Budget Full Council.

All political group leaders (or their nominee) who wish to provide proposed amendments to the budget reports on behalf of their groups shall submit these at least 3 clear working days before the Budget Council meeting in writing (inc. by email) to the Proper Officer. This will enable senior leadership and particularly the Chief Finance Officer to have advanced notice and review the proposed amendments prior to the Budget Council meeting.

A Group/members amendments will be taken en bloc on each report.

Groups/members must be mindful that any amendment(s) must result in a balanced budget and therefore how the amendment(s) would be funded must be clear. Groups/members are encouraged to consult with the Chief Finance Officer and their staff at the earliest opportunity to ensure that any amendments a Group/member is proposing, if approved by Council, will result in the setting of a balanced and lawful budget. Any such discussions regarding potential amendments between a Group/member and officers shall be treated as confidential until issue of the relevant papers to all members.

The Proper Officer will share copies of the amendment(s) either in the Chamber and/or on screen to ensure that members are able to view them and make an informed decision.

At the Meeting

(to be repeated for each of the three main reports [shown in bold below]. Ordinary Meeting Procedure Rules apply for any other reports scheduled).

Report Order for the Agenda

- **Draft Budget (inc. Council Tax Resolution)**
 - **Housing Revenue Account (HRA)**
 - **Capital Programme**
 - Other finance related reports
 - Urgency Reports (as per Meeting Procedure Rules)
1. At the beginning of the meeting, the Chair shall remind councillors that there are certain rules of procedure that apply only to the debate on budget reports. Otherwise the meeting will be run according to the usual rules of procedure set out in the Meeting Procedure Rules.
 2. At the beginning of the debate on the report, the Chair shall invite the Leader of the Council or an Executive Member to MOVE (up to 25 minutes) the report. The Chair shall then invite a member to SECOND (up to 5 minutes) the report.
 3. The Chair shall invite a member on behalf of the largest minority group to MOVE any amendment(s) en bloc (up to 10 minutes).
 4. The Chair shall invite a member on behalf of the largest minority group to SECOND any amendment(s) en bloc (up to 5 minutes).
 5. The amendment(s) will be debated (3 minutes per speaker). The MOVER and/or SECONDER of the substantive motion may be called to speak during

the debate. The MOVER of the amendments shall have a right to reply (3 minutes) before a vote is taken on the amendment(s) only. If carried, the amendments will be incorporated into the substantive motion.

6. The Chair shall invite a member on behalf of the second largest minority group to MOVE any amendment(s) en bloc (up to 10 minutes).
7. The Chair shall invite a member on behalf of the second largest minority group to SECOND any amendment(s) en bloc (up to 5 minutes).
8. The amendment(s) will be debated (3 minutes per speaker). The MOVER and/or SECONDER of the substantive motion may be called to speak during the debate. The MOVER of the amendments shall have a right to reply (3 minutes) before a vote is taken on the amendments only. If carried, the amendment(s) will be incorporated into the substantive motion.
9. If any other amendment(s) (with a MOVER and SECONDER indicated) have been received in writing by the deadline the Chair shall call these to be MOVED (5 minutes) and SECONDED (3 minutes). A councillor may only MOVE or SECOND one set of amendments on any one report item.
10. Voting on amendments will normally be en bloc, however the MOVER and SECONDER of the substantive motion are able to approve an amendment or amendments for inclusion in the substantive motion, with the general consent of Council.
11. Voting on amendments will normally be en bloc, however with the general consent of Council, an amendment(s) can be voted on individually with the remainder en bloc.
12. At the conclusion of the debates and votes on all amendments have been exhausted the Chair shall advise the meeting that the substantive motion - the ruling groups budget (as amended) – will be debated. All members may contribute to the debate (for up to 3 minutes each) except the MOVER or SECONDER of the original motion (unless the SECONDER has reserved their right to speak). No further amendments are allowed at this stage by any of the members of the Council.
13. After the debate on the substantive motion, the MOVER of the substantive motion has a right of reply (up to 5 minutes). The debate is then concluded.
14. A vote will then be taken on the report's recommendations. The Council Tax Resolution report must by statute be a "recorded vote."

General

Matters of interpretation of this procedure will be at the Chair's discretion, following consultation with the Monitoring Officer (or their designated representative).

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Full Council 26th January 2023

Report Title	Draft Municipal Timetable 2023/2024
Report Author	Adele Wylie – Executive Director of Customer & Governance / Monitoring Officer Adele.wylie@northnorthants.gov.uk

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Municipal Timetable 2023/2024

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. For Full Council to approve the draft Municipal Timetable 2023/24.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. Full Council is required to approve a calendar of meetings prior to the commencement of each new municipal year. Attached as Appendix A is a copy of the draft timetable for 2023/24.
- 2.2. The draft timetable references the formal meetings of the Council, Executive, committees, Executive Advisory Panels, and other standing bodies.
- 2.3. The draft timetable was recently considered by Full Council (31st March 2022) as part of the consultation process.
- 2.4. It is being presented to Full Council to provide approval. This is required subject to Part 3.2 Meeting Procedure Rules Part A - 1(1.1) of the Council's Constitution (as amended). The purpose of tabling this report is to provide information to members, officers, and the public of the schedule of meeting dates and allow for arrangements to be made for the booking of venues etc.

3. Recommendations

3.1. It is recommended: -

- (a) Council approves the Municipal Timetable 2023/2024, subject to the outcome of the current review of Scrutiny and the review of Planning;
- (b) Delegate to the Proper Officer (the Monitoring Officer) responsibility for incorporating into the Municipal Timetable meeting for scrutiny and planning following the outcome of the respective reviews.

3.2. *(Reason for Recommendations – to allow Annual Council to approve the 2023/24 schedule of meetings as required under the Council’s Constitution.)*

4. Report Background

- 4.1. The Council is required to agree and publish a timetable of meetings for the subsequent Municipal Year for North Northamptonshire. This assists members, officers and the public in knowing when particular meetings are to be held during the following 12-months. The Municipal Year runs from Annual Council to Annual Council.
- 4.2. The timetable should include reference to the formal meetings of the Council and any other standing bodies. It is recognised that some meetings are ad hoc in nature e.g., Employment Committee, Licensing Sub-committee and would be called as and when required.
- 4.3. In the event of lack of business meetings may be cancelled or postponed. It is obviously difficult to fully predict the business needs of the Council 12-months ahead, so where there is a pressing business case scheduled meetings may be cancelled, rearranged, or additional meetings convened subject to normal statutory provisions being applied.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1. Members will note that in the timetable Full Council meetings are scheduled for 6:00 pm start time, with the Budget Full Council commencing at 10:00 am. Any Extraordinary meetings of Full Council would normally convene at 7:00 pm.
- 5.2. Members will be aware that currently there is a review of Scrutiny. The current proposal out for consultation suggests three scrutiny committees. The outcome of the consultation exercise will be reported into the Democracy and Standards Committee, with a final recommendation to Full Council in March 2023. In order to progress the consideration of the Municipal Timetable, it is being proposed that Tuesday evenings are allocated to scrutiny, with the final dates being allocated after Full Council have considered the outcome of the review.
- 5.3. The proposed dates of Executive Advisory Panels are indicated in Appendix A and allow for the increase of Panels from five to six. It also allows for each Panel

to meet bi-monthly whilst ensuring that there is no more than one Panel meeting scheduled per week.

- 5.4. Members will be aware that the report commissioned by the Council into the Planning Service and undertaken by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS), was discussed by the Executive at their meeting on 22nd December 2022. The PAS report was a wide-ranging review of the Council's Planning Service. Included within this were recommendations regarding the governance structure for the Council's planning committees and suggestions regarding potential amendment. The PAS recommendations are being considered by Members through an implementation board, however the board is not decision-making and potential recommendations in relation to constitutional matters will be taken through the appropriate decision-making channel including Full Council.
- 5.5. Meetings of the Constitutional Working Group (CWG), Democracy and Standards Committee and Full Council have been aligned to ensure that matters requiring determination have a clear pathway from CWG through to Full Council.
- 5.6. Approval of the timetable by Council does not preclude extraordinary meetings being called if there is a business need to do so.
- 5.7. It should be noted that whilst Council will be requested to agree the timetable; until a summons and agenda are issued for a meeting the meeting is not lawfully called. Whilst a meeting may be scheduled in the agreed timetable, if there is a lack of business then a summons may not be issued; this is usually in consultation with the appropriate Chair.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. For Annual Council to approve the schedule of meetings.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources and Financial

None specific to this report.

7.2. Legal and Governance

The Constitution Part 3.2 requires Council determination of the Municipal Timetable of meetings.

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

None specific to this report.

7.4. **Risk**

- 7.4.1. Determination of the timetable will assist members, officers and the public, ensuring that proposed meeting times and dates are known well in advance. It will also allow for the early booking of appropriate venues.
- 7.4.2. Officers will be able to plan in advance when matters for Member determination need be tabled.

7.5. **Consultation**

- 7.5.1. The Timetable will incorporate the outcome of the current scrutiny review and the PAS review.

7.6. **Equality Implications**

None specific to this report.

7.7. **Climate Impact**

None specific to this report.

7.8. **Community Impact**

Formal meetings of the Council are governed by the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended). Meetings of Executive Advisory Panels, whilst not governed by the 1972 Act try to adhere to the Act's general provisions. All formal meetings and Panel meetings are accessible to the public to attend either onsite and/or via YouTube.

7.9. **Crime and Disorder Impact**

- 7.9.1. None specific to this report.

8. **Background Papers**

- 8.1. Council Constitution.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
2023	22 May	23 May	24 May	25 May	26 May
53		CLT	9:00 Member Transformation Board		
		<i>No additional meetings</i>		<i>No additional meetings</i>	<i>N.B. Earliest date for dispatch of agendas.</i>
		7:00 Scrutiny Commission	7:00 Planning Wellingborough	6:00 Annual Council	
	29 May	30 May	31 May	1 June	2 June
1	BANK HOLIDAY	CLT			
		<i>No additional meetings</i>			
	5 June	6 June	7 June	8 June	9 June
2		CLT		10:00 Executive	10:00 Active Communities EAP
		<i>No additional meetings</i>		<i>No additional meetings</i>	
		7:00 Democracy & Standards	7:00 Planning Corby		

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	12 June	13 June	14 June	15 June	16 June
3		CLT	10:00 Sustainable Communities EAP		
	2:00 Audit & Governance Committee	<i>No additional meetings</i>	2:00 pm Shared Services Joint Committee (North)		
	7:00 Strategic Planning Committee	Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Thrapston		
	19 June	20 June	21 June	22 June	23 June
4		CLT			10:00 Connected Communities EAP
		2:00 Health & Wellbeing Board		1:00 pm PFC Commissioner Panel TBC	
		Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Kettering	6:00 Full Council	
	26 June	27 June	28 June	29 June	30 June
5		CLT	9:00 Member Transformation Board		
		<i>No additional meetings</i>			
		Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Wellingborough		

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	3 July	4 July	5 July	6 July	7 July
6		CLT	10:00 Prosperous Communities EAP		
LGA Conference 4-6 July 2023 Bournemouth		<i>No additional meetings</i>	2:00 Children's Trust Joint Committee (West)		
	7:00 pm Licensing & Appeals Committee	Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Corby		
	10 July	11 July	12 July	13 July	14 July
7		CLT		10:00 Executive	
		<i>No additional meetings</i>	2:00 pm Shared Services Joint Committee (West)	<i>No additional meetings</i>	
	7:00 Strategic Planning Committee	Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Thrapston	5:00 Future Communities EAP	
	17 July	18 July	19 July	20 July	21 July
8		CLT	10:00 Planning Communities EAP		
		<i>No additional meetings</i>			
		Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Kettering		

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
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	24 July	25 July	26 July	27 July	28 July
9		CLT	9:00 Member Transformation Board		
		<i>No additional meetings</i>			
		Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Wellingborough		
	31 July	1 August	2 August	3 August	4 August
10	9:30 Constitutional Working Group	CLT			10:00 Active Communities EAP
		<i>No additional meetings</i>			
		Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Corby		
	7 August	8 August	9 August	10 August	11 August
11		CLT	10:00 Sustainable Communities EAP		
		<i>No additional meetings</i>			
	7:00 Strategic Planning Committee	Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Thrapston		

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	14 August	15 August	16 August	17 August	18 August
12		CLT		10:00 Executive	10:00 Connected Communities EAP
	2:00 Audit & Governance Committee	<i>No additional meetings</i>	2:00 pm Shared Services Joint Committee (North)	<i>No additional meetings</i>	
	7:00 Democracy & Standards	Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Kettering		
	21 August	22 August	23 August	24 August	25 August
13		CLT			
		<i>No additional meetings</i>			
		Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Wellingborough		
	28 August	29 August	30 August	31 August	1 September
14		CLT	9:00 Member Transformation Board		
	BANK HOLIDAY	<i>No additional meetings</i>		<i>No additional meetings</i>	
		Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Corby	6:00 Full Council	

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	4 September	5 September	6 September	7 September	8 September
15		CLT			
		<i>No additional meetings</i>	2:00 Children's Trust Joint Committee (North)	1:00 pm PFC Commissioner Panel TBC	
	7:00 Strategic Planning Committee	Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Thrapston	5:00 Future Communities EAP	
	11 September	12 September	13 September	14 September	15 September
16		CLT	10:00 Planning Communities EAP	10:00 Executive	
		<i>No additional meetings</i>		<i>No additional meetings</i>	
		Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Kettering		
	18 September	19 September	20 September	21 September	22 September
17		CLT	10:00 Prosperous Communities EAP		
		<i>No additional meetings</i>	2:00 pm Shared Services Joint Committee (North)		
		Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Wellingborough		

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	25 September	26 September	27 September	28 September	29 September
18		CLT	9:00 Member Transformation Board		
<i>Labour Party Conference 23-27 September 2023 Liverpool</i>	2:00 Audit & Governance Committee	2:00 Health & Wellbeing Board			
		Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Corby		
	2 October	3 October	4 October	5 October	6 October
19		CLT			10:00 Active Communities EAP
<i>Conservative Party Conference 1-4 October 2023 Manchester</i>		<i>No additional meetings</i>			
	7:00 Strategic Planning Committee	Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Thrapston		
	9 October	10 October	11 October	12 October	13 October
20		CLT	10:00 Sustainable Communities EAP	10:00 Executive	
		<i>No additional meetings</i>		<i>No additional meetings</i>	
		Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Kettering		

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	16 October	17 October	18 October	19 October	20 October
21		CLT			10:00 Connected Communities EAP
		<i>No additional meetings</i>			
		Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Wellingborough		
	23 October	24 October	25 October	26 October	27 October
22		CLT	9:00 Member Transformation Board		
		<i>No additional meetings</i>	2:00 pm Shared Services Joint Committee (North)	<i>No additional meetings</i>	
		Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Corby	6:00 Full Council	
	30 October	31 October	1 November	2 November	3 November
23	9:30 Constitutional Working Group	CLT			
		<i>No additional meetings</i>			
	7:00 Strategic Planning Committee	Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Thrapston	5:00 Future Communities EAP	

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	6 November	7 November	8 November	9 November	10 November
24	9:30 – 12:30 Budget Scrutiny Phase 1 – Children’s	CLT	10:00 Prosperous Communities EAP		
		<i>No additional meetings</i>	2:00 Children’s Trust Joint Committee (West)		
		Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Kettering		
	13 November	14 November	15 November	16 November	17 November
25	9:30 – 12:30 Budget Scrutiny Phase 1 – Adults / Public Health	CLT	10:00 Planning Communities EAP	10:00 Executive	
		9:30 – 12:30 Budget Scrutiny Phase 1 – Place & Economy		<i>No additional meetings</i>	
	7:00 Licensing & Appeals Committee	Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Wellingborough		
	20 November	21 November	22 November	23 November	24 November
26	9:30 – 12:30 Budget Scrutiny Phase 1 – Enabling Services	CLT			
		<i>No additional meetings</i>			
	7:00 Democracy & Standards	Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Corby		

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	27 November	28 November	29 November	30 November	1 December
27		CLT	9:00 Member Transformation Board		10:00 Active Communities EAP
	2:00 Audit & Governance Committee	<i>No additional meetings</i>	2:00 pm Shared Services Joint Committee (West)		
	7:00 Strategic Planning Committee	Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Thrapston		
	4 December	5 December	6 December	7 December	8 December
28		CLT	10:00 Sustainable Communities EAP		
		2:00 Health & Wellbeing Board		<i>No additional meetings</i>	
		Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Kettering	6:00 Full Council	
	11 December	12 December	13 December	14 December	15 December
29		CLT			10:00 Connected Communities EAP
		<i>No additional meetings</i> 1:00 pm PFC Commissioner Panel			
		Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Wellingborough		

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
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	18 December	19 December	20 December	21 December	22 December
30		CLT		10:00 Executive	<i>No meetings</i>
		<i>No additional meetings</i>		<i>No additional meetings</i>	<i>No meetings</i>
		Scrutiny <i>N.B. Not Finance.</i>			<i>No meetings</i>
	25 December	26 December	27 December	28 December	29 December
31	BANK HOLIDAY	BANK HOLIDAY	<i>No meetings</i>	<i>No meetings</i>	<i>No meetings</i>
			<i>No meetings</i>	<i>No meetings</i>	<i>No meetings</i>
			<i>No meetings</i>	<i>No meetings</i>	<i>No meetings</i>
2024	1 January	2 January	3 January	4 January	5 January
32	BANK HOLIDAY	CLT			
		<i>No meetings</i>			

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	8 January	9 January	10 January	11 January	12 January
33		CLT			9:30 – 12:30 Budget Scrutiny Phase 2 – Public Health
	2:00 – 5:00 Budget Scrutiny Phase 2 - Enabling	<i>No additional meetings</i>	2:00 Children’s Trust Joint Committee (North)	2:00 – 5:00 Budget Scrutiny Phase 2 - Adult	
		Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Corby	5:00 Future Communities EAP	
	15 January	16 January	17 January	18 January	19 January
34	9:30 Constitutional Working Group	CLT	10:00 Planning Communities EAP	10:00 Executive	9:30 – 12:30 Budget Scrutiny Phase 2 – Place & Economy
	2:00 – 5:00 Budget Scrutiny Phase 2 – Children’s	<i>No additional meetings</i>	2:00 Shared Services Joint Committee (North)	<i>No additional meetings</i>	
	7:00 Strategic Planning Committee	Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Thrapston		
	22 January	23 January	24 January	25 January	26 January
35		CLT	10:00 Prosperous Communities EAP		
		<i>No additional meetings</i>			
		6:30 – 2024/25 Budget Scrutiny – Concluding Session	7:00 Planning Kettering		

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	29 January	30 January	31 January	1 February	2 February
36		CLT	9:00 Member Transformation Board		10:00 Active Communities EAP
		<i>No additional meetings</i>			
		Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Wellingborough		
	5 February	6 February	7 February	8 February	9 February
37		CLT	10:00 Sustainable Communities EAP	10:00 Executive (Budget)	
		<i>No additional meetings</i> 1:00 pm PFC Commissioner Panel TBC		<i>No additional meetings</i>	
	7:00 Democracy & Standards	Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Corby		
	12 February	13 February	14 February	15 February	16 February
38		CLT		10:00 Executive	10:00 Connected Communities EAP
	2:00 Audit & Governance Committee	<i>No additional meetings</i>		<i>No additional meetings</i>	
	7:00 Strategic Planning Committee	Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Thrapston		

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	19 February	20 February	21 February	22 February	23 February
39		CLT		10:00 Full Council (Budget)	
		<i>No additional meetings</i> 1:00 pm PFC Commissioner Panel TBC	2:00 pm Shared Services Joint Committee (West)	<i>No additional meetings</i>	
		Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Kettering	<i>No additional meetings</i>	
	26 February	27 February	28 February	29 February	1 March
40		CLT	9:00 Member Transformation Board		
		<i>No additional meetings</i>			
		Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Wellingborough	5:00 Future Communities EAP	
	4 March	5 March	6 March	7 March	8 March
41		CLT	10:00 Prosperous Communities EAP		
		<i>No additional meetings</i>	2:00 Children's Trust Joint Committee (West)	<i>No additional meetings</i>	
	7:00 Licensing & Appeals Committee	Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Corby	6:00 Full Council	

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	11 March	12 March	13 March	14 March	15 March
42		CLT	10:00 Planning Communities EAP	10:00 Executive	
		<i>No additional meetings</i>		<i>No additional meetings</i>	
	7:00 Strategic Planning Committee	Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Thrapston		
	18 March	19 March	20 March	21 March	22 March
43		CLT			
		<i>No additional meetings</i>			
		Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Kettering		
	25 March	26 March	27 March	28 March	29 March
44	9:30 Constitutional Working Group	CLT	9:00 Member Transformation Board		BANK HOLIDAY
		<i>No additional meetings</i>	2:00 pm Shared Services Joint Committee (North)		
		Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Wellingborough		

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	1 April	2 April	3 April	4 April	5 April
45	BANK HOLIDAY	CLT			10:00 Active Communities EAP
		<i>No additional meetings</i>			
		Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Corby		
	8 April	9 April	10 April	11 April	12 April
46		CLT	10:00 Sustainable Communities EAP		
		<i>No additional meetings</i>			
	7:00 Strategic Planning Committee	Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Thrapston		
	15 April	16 April	17 April	18 April	19 April
47		CLT		10:00 Executive	10:00 Connected Communities EAP
	2:00 Audit & Governance Committee	<i>No additional meetings</i>		<i>No additional meetings</i> 1:00 pm PFC Commissioner Panel TBC	
	7:00 Democracy & Standards	Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Kettering		

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	22 April	23 April	24 April	25 April	26 April
48		CLT	9:00 Member Transformation Board		
		<i>No additional meetings</i>		<i>No additional meetings</i>	
		Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Wellingborough	6:00 Full Council	
	29 April	30 April	1 May	2 May	3 May
49		CLT			
		<i>No additional meetings</i>	2:00 Children's Trust Joint Committee (North)		
		Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Corby	5:00 Future Communities EAP	
	6 May	7 May	8 May	9 May	10 May
50		CLT	10:00 Prosperous Communities EAP		
	BANK HOLIDAY	<i>No additional meetings</i>			
		Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Thrapston		

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	13 May	14 May	15 May	16 May	17 May
51		CLT	10:00 Planning Communities EAP	10:00 Executive	
		<i>No additional meetings</i>	2:00 pm Shared Services Joint Committee (West)	1:00 pm PFC Commissioner Panel TBC	<i>No additional meetings</i>
		Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Kettering		
	20 May	21 May	22 May	23 May	24 May
52		CLT			
		<i>No additional meetings</i>		<i>No additional meetings</i>	<i>N.B. Earliest date for dispatch of agendas.</i>
	7:00 Strategic Planning Committee	Scrutiny	7:00 Planning Wellingborough	6:00 Annual Council	
	27 May	28 May	29 May	30 May	31 May
53	BANK HOLIDAY	CLT	9:00 Member Transformation Board		
		<i>No additional meetings</i>			



Full Council 26th January 2023

Report Title	Members' Allowances – Annual Increase
Report Author	Adele Wylie (Executive Director of Customer and Governance / Monitoring Officer) Adele.wylie@northnorthants.gov.uk

Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972	

List of Appendices

Appendix – Allowance Increase Options

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. Full Council are requested to confirm their preference on the application of the annual increase of Members' Allowances, linked to the NJC Pay Award for staff 2022/23.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The Council has an approved Member Scheme of Allowances, based on recommendations received from an Independent Remuneration Panel. In order to ensure there is an appropriate annual uplift of allowances, the Scheme includes reference to the annual NJC Staff Pay Award. Where the NJC Award allows for an increase of staff pay e.g. 2% increase, a corresponding 2% increase would be applied to Member Allowances. In 2021/2022 the Pay Award was 1.75% and Member Allowances were therefore increased by 1.75%.
- 2.2. For 2022/2023 the NJC Staff Pay Award is not a percentage increase, but application of a lump sum of £1,925 across all NJC pay points. Full time employees will therefore receive a £1,925 uplift on their current salary, this will

be prorated for part time employees. Unfortunately, this is not easily transposed into an uplift for Member Allowances. As a consequence, it is necessary for Council to give instruction to officers on its application for this year.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. That Council agree an option detailed in 5.1 of the report.
- 3.2. *(Reason for Recommendations – to enable officers to action Council’s decision in relation to the uplift of the Members Allowance Scheme for 2022/2023).*
- 3.3. *(Alternative Options Considered – Options detailed in 5.1 of this report).*

4. Report Background

- 4.1. Legislation requires the Council to have regard to recommendations of an Independent Panel in agreeing allowances paid to Councillors.
- 4.2. The Shadow Authority (at the Shadow Authority meeting of 25th February 2021) received recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel “IRP” and agreed a Members Allowance Scheme which would operate from 1st April 2021. It was agreed that the IRP would review the Scheme after 12 months.
- 4.3. On 23rd June 2022, Council received a further report from the IRP, which had considered the operation of the Scheme over the preceding 12-month period, considered changes made by the authority to its governance structure since Vesting Day and responses to an all-member consultation. The Panel recommended some changes to the Scheme which were agreed by Council. The allowances included a 1.75% increase which had been agreed as the NJC pay award to officers in 2021/22. This is the Scheme that is now in operation.
- 4.4. The Member Allowances Scheme (at paragraph 13.1) states “The amounts paid under the scheme shall be increased on 1st April each year. The criterion used for the annual updating of members allowances should be the NJC pay award to officers.” Many local authorities use this method.
- 4.5. The Members Allowance Scheme sets out Basic Allowance, Special Responsibility Allowances and Civic Allowances. Therefore, paragraph 13.1 of the Scheme applies to all allowances which are set out in the Scheme and not just the Basic Allowance.
- 4.6. Where local authorities recognise national agreements, pay is determined by a negotiating body; the National Joint Council (NJC) for local government services. The NJC is made up of representatives from trade unions and the employers. Most years, the NJC will seek to agree a pay award to increase local government pay.

- 4.7. In 2021/22, the pay award was agreed at 1.75% and this would have been automatically added to members allowances had a review not been ongoing (as noted above, it was added into allowances agreed by Council in June 2022). In the financial year 2022/23 the NJC did not agree to a percentage increase and instead they added £1,925 to each pay spine within the NJC Scheme.
- 4.8. The impact of this is not that each employee received an increase of £1,925 to their salary. Part time employees received this amount prorated for the hours that they were contracted to work.
- 4.9. At the lowest end of the pay scales, the increase amounted to a 10.50% increase. At the top end of the NJC pay scale, it represented a 4.04% increase. The Council also has scales higher than the NJC pay scale and the percentage increase for these employees is lower still. The percentage increase therefore differs from staff member to staff member dependent on their respective position on the pay scale.
- 4.10. The methodology on which the uplift to the Council's Members Allowance Scheme is based is the assumption of a percentage increase (as has been the case for many years), which can easily be transposed from the staff pay scales to the Members Allowance Scheme.
- 4.11. As the £1,925 was added to pay scales, prorated as appropriate and percentage increases differ throughout the authority, it is not clear how the authority would apply the pay award to the Members Allowance Scheme. The key issues are that members allowances are not linked to a pay scale to understand the percentage increase applicable, and they are not contracted to a certain number of hours. Therefore, the pay award for 2022/23 cannot be automatically applied to the Scheme for 2022/23.
- 4.12. In addition, the lump sum of £1,925 would be applied to all allowances within the Member Allowance Scheme which would represent a significant percentage increase to some of the smaller allowances which would likely skew the Schemes Special Responsibility Allowance hierarchy in its entirety.
- 4.13. Within the agreed 2022/2023 Pay Award was a separate increase for allowances. This has been utilised by some authorities (and the Local Government Association) as an appropriate percentage increase. Whilst this is an available option, it could not be applied automatically as the Pay Award stated that it related specifically to matters relating to standby duty allowance (social workers), laboratory technician certification etc.
- 4.14. As the application of the pay award to the Member Allowance Scheme is not clear, there is no authority for it to be automatically applied and therefore it must be determined by Council.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1. There are a number of potential options available to Council in relation to this matter. These include –

Option One- Uplift the Basic Allowance only by £1,925 from 1st April 2022

The current Basic Allowance is £14,000. Application of a £1,925 uplift would be an increase of 9.72% on the current Scheme. The total budgetary impact of this option in 2022/2023 would be an increase in the Scheme of **£150,150** (exc. NI contribution).

Option Two- Uplift of both the Basic Allowance by £1,925 from 1st April 2022 and uplift of any Special Responsibility Allowance by the same amount.

There are currently 28 positions in receipt of an additional allowance (including two in receipt of a “civic allowance” the Chair and the Vice Chair of NNC). If translated into a percentage uplift on the award of £1,925 per 28 positions would vary from 6.66% to 47.29%.

The total budgetary impact of this option would be –

Increase of Basic Allowance cost - £150,150
Increase of SRA & Civic cost (28 positions) - £53,900
Total - £204,050 (exc. NI contribution).

Option Three- Uplift all allowances by 4.04%

Within the agreed 2022/2023 Pay Award was a separate increase for allowances contained within the 2021 NJC pay agreement (dated 28.02.22). This related specifically to matters relating to standby duty allowance (social workers), laboratory technician certification etc.

Whilst this is not an exact match, given the anomaly created by this year’s pay award, Council may wish to consider utilising this percentage figure for this year.

An increase of 4.04% on the Basic Allowance would see that allowance rise from £14,000 to £14,566. The total Basic Allowance spend would increase by **£44,148** (exc. NI contribution).

An increase of 4.04% on SRA & civic allowances would see the overall budget requirement for SRA & civic rise from £301,868 to £314,063 an increase of **£12,195** (exc. NI contribution).

If increased the total impact on the allowance budget would see an increase of **£56,343** (exc. NI contribution).

Option Four- Waive the increase for 2022/23.

The Scheme would not be amended for 2022/23, with the intention it would reapply for 2023/24. Members may wish to consider whether to agree to link the allowance increase for future years to “allowances” increases contained in the LGA Pay Award in future years rather than salary increase.

- 5.3 There are alternative options for uplifting allowances in lines with the median wage as set out in the Pay Policy Statement and would amount to a 7.44% increase or an uplift based upon the average impact on staff which amounts to a 7.13% increase.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. Full Council are requested to consider the options detailed within the report and instruct officers accordingly.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1. Details of the potential cost of increasing the allowances are detailed in 5.1 of the report and range from an estimated increase of £56k to £204k. In the 2022/2023 Budget an increase of 3% in Allowances was anticipated.

- 7.1.2. Alternative option financial information is as follows;

- 7.1.3. The Pay Policy Statement states that the median wage of the Council is £25,868 amounting to a 7.44% increase. If a 7.44% increase was applied to the current Scheme (Basic/SRA/Civic) the additional cost (exc. NI) would be **£103,704**.

- 7.1.4 An uplift of allowances by 7.13% which is the average uplift for staff resulting from the pay award would see an additional cost of **£99,383** (exc. NI contribution).

7.2. Legal and Governance

- 7.2.1. The review by the Panel earlier this year was undertaken within the regulations laid down by statute. Full Council were required to consider the outcome of the review process and give appropriate consideration of the recommendations made. Full Council had final responsibility for determination of the Scheme.

- 7.2.2. The approved Scheme, in keeping with many other local authority schemes, did not make allowance for a Pay Award of this nature and are based on the usual NJC percentage award or similar mechanism.

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

- 7.3.1. The current Members Allowance Scheme was approved by Council on 23rd June 2022. The Scheme was developed in line with statute and statutory guidance.

7.4. Risk

- 7.4.1. There will be a need for the Panel to consider the current scenario when next it meets, in case of reoccurrence in future years. Failure to address this and have

a robust mechanism in place may lead to delay in implementation of any agreed uplift of allowances.

7.5. Consultation

7.5.1. The issue of how to interpret the 2022/23 pay award in relation to the approved Members' Allowance Scheme could be referred to the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) for consideration. There would be a need to reconstitute the IRP which would require a further Full Council determination. This process is likely to take some time and would result in deferment of a decision on this matter until later in the Municipal Year. If convened, the IRP recommendation would still be forwarded to Full Council for determination.

7.6. Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel

Not applicable.

7.7. Consideration by Scrutiny

Not applicable.

7.8. Equality Implications

None in relation to the nine protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

7.9. Climate Impact

Not applicable.

7.10. Community Impact

Not applicable.

7.11. Crime and Disorder Impact

Not applicable.

8. Background Papers

8.1. Members Allowance Scheme – Shadow Authority 25.02.21

8.2. Members Allowance Scheme – NNC Full Council 23.06.22

8.3. NNC Constitution

Appendix A

Position attracting an allowance	Current Allowance	Option 5.1.a Basic Only	Option 5.1.b Basic & SRA	Option 5.1.c 4.04%
Leader of the Council	28890	28890	30815	30057
Deputy Leader of the Council	21570	21570	23495	22441
Leader of the Labour Group	10175	10175	12100	10586
Deputy Leader of the Labour Group	4070	4070	5995	4234
Leader of the Green Alliance	4070	4070	5995	4234
Executive Member	15590	15590	17515	16220
Executive Member	15590	15590	17515	16220
Executive Member	15590	15590	17515	16220
Executive Member	15590	15590	17515	16220
Executive Member	15590	15590	17515	16220
Executive Member	15590	15590	17515	16220
Executive Member	15590	15590	17515	16220
Executive Member	15590	15590	17515	16220
Executive Member	15590	15590	17515	16220
Chair Scrutiny Commission	13736	13736	15661	14291
Chair Finance & Resources Scrutiny	13736	13736	15661	14291
Chair Strategic Planning	7631	7631	9556	7939
Chair Area Planning Corby	5090	5090	7015	5296
Chair Area Planning Kettering	5090	5090	7015	5296
Chair Area Planning Thrapston	5090	5090	7015	5296
Chair Area Planning Wellingborough	5090	5090	7015	5296
Chair Licensing	10175	10175	12100	10586
Chair Audit & Governance	7631	7631	9556	7939
Chair Democracy & Standards	7631	7631	9556	7939
Chair Employment	4070	4070	5995	4234
Chair Police Panel	4070	4070	5995	4234
Chair Health & Wellbeing Board	4070	4070	5995	4234
Chair of NNC	10175	10175	12100	10586
Vice Chair of NNC	5088	5088	7013	5294
Total SRA & Civic	301868	301868	355768	314063
Total Basic Allowance	1092000	1242150	1242150	1136148
Total cost of Scheme over a full year excluding NI contribution	1393868	1544018	1597918	1450211
<i>N.B. Actual £ increase over current Scheme (exc. NI)</i>		150,150	204,050	56,343
<i>N.B. % increase over current Scheme</i>		9.72%	12.77%	4.04%
<i>N.B. Basic Allowance (x78)</i>	14000	15925	15925	14566
	Current Cost	Forecast Cost 5.1.a	Forecast Cost 5.1.b	Forecast Cost 5.1.e

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Full Council 26th January 2023

Report Title	Winter 2022/23 temporary heating for tenants
Report Author	David Watts, Executive Director for Adults, Partnerships and Housing

Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)? –	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972	

List of Appendices

None

Standard Operating Procedure

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To advise the Council of the introduction of an NNC Standard Operating Procedure for the payment of a goodwill gesture to tenants of the Council, when temporary heaters are left in their property, as a result of a breakdown of their primary heating system this winter (2022/23).

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. It is recognised that during the winter period (the Council has defined this as 1st November to 30th April based upon Met Office 1991-2020 minimum average temperatures data), there is a greater impact upon our tenants if their central heating boiler should break down and isn't repairable for a period of time.
- 2.2. Previously North Northamptonshire Council did not have a procedure for goodwill payments when a central heating boiler breaks down and isn't repairable for a period of time. Instead, the legacy Council policy was followed

where this exists. For example, in the Corby area this amounted to the issuing of two electric heaters and a payment of £2.00 per day (payable from the day after the engineer's initial visit if they were unable to repair the boiler to the date the boiler was then operational or replaced). The New NNC SOP was implemented from 1st December 2022.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. It is recommended that the Council notes the implementation of the Standard Operating Procedure for the payment of a goodwill gesture to tenants of the Council, when temporary heaters are left in their property, as a result of a breakdown of their primary heating system this winter (2022/23).

4. Report Background

- 4.1. At the Full Council meeting of 29th September 2022, Councillor Lyn Buckingham moved the following motion: *“North Northamptonshire Council to review the energy efficiency of any temporary heating given to families to help in those conditions where tenants have a boiler failure and face a long wait for repairs or replacement, as the current temporary heating (usually fan heaters) could cost up to 84p per hour to run per heater, over a month this could add £100s per month compared to average heating costs; the motion also asks if heating in these circumstances could be subsidised by the Council in properties where there are children under 5, the elderly and the disabled, who are disproportionately affected by the need and ability to keep warm.”*
- 4.2. The following amendment was then added to the motion: *“and that a report be brought back to the next Council meeting or the meeting after that.”*
- 4.3. This report seeks to provide a response to this motion.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1. In response to the motion for the Council to subsidise the cost of temporary heaters *“in properties where there are children under 5, the elderly and the disabled, who are disproportionately affected by the need and ability to keep warm”* a number of options were considered:
- 5.1.1. **Continue to Operate under the legacy Council arrangements.** This would result in no changes being made to existing procedures, with the arrangements that were in place in the two former stock holding legacy Council's continuing. This option was not considered any further as it would not result in a consistent approach to all tenants of NNC being established.
- 5.1.2. **Establish a standard operating procedure to subsidise the temporary heating costs for tenants where there are children under 5, the elderly and the disabled in affected households.** This would

result in the creation of an NNC approach to the support offered to tenants of the Council when their primary heating, usually a central heating boiler, fails and temporary heaters are provided. However, it would be limited to tenants whose household contains certain groups of people only.

5.1.3. **Establish a standard operating procedure to subsidise the temporary heating costs for all tenants in affected households.** This would result in the creation of an NNC approach to the support offered to tenants of the Council when their primary heating, usually a central heating boiler, fails and temporary heaters are provided. It would be available to all tenants of the Council for whom temporary heaters were provided. It was agreed that a universally accessible service to all tenants of NNC should be the option pursued, rather than limit eligibility to properties where there are children under 5, the elderly and the disabled. All households are impacted by the current energy prices therefore, it was deemed important to provide a universal service to all tenants of NNC this winter. In addition, if household qualifying criteria are added to the eligibility of these payments, it would increase the administrative burden on staff, which could require additional resources.

5.2. The Central Heating Boiler Breakdown Gesture of Goodwill Standard Operating Procedure for winter 2022/23 will operate as follows:

5.2.1. In the event of this situation occurring between 1st December 2022 and 30th April 2023, that a payment of £6.00 per day be made, together with the tenant keeping the two new, or PAT tested, heaters issued. The £6 per day equates to two- and three-quarter running hours per heater per day (five and a half hours per day in total), based on current average electricity prices. This represents a trebling of the previous payments made by the legacy Councils.

5.2.2. The payment would commence from the day after the engineer's initial visit, where it is proven the fault is the responsibility of the Council (the cause is not due to tenant misuse, smart meter installation etc.) and will run up to 14 days from this date, or to the date that an operational boiler is once more provided in the property, whichever is the sooner. Should the tenant decline or delay an appointment for the Council to repair or replace the boiler, then the Council will consider ending the goodwill gesture period at this date. It is expected that the boiler would be either repaired or replaced within this 14-day period. Should the tenant find that the Council has not repaired or replaced the boiler within 14 days then any further gesture would be looked at on a case-by-case basis via the Council's complaints process.

5.2.3. The Council appointed engineer will apologise for the inconvenience caused by the boiler breakdown if they are unable to repair the boiler at the first visit. The engineer will then issue the tenant with a card which advises of the next step to be undertaken to repair or replace the boiler. Information on how to claim the goodwill gesture is included on the card. Once the boiler is operational tenants will need to write (email or

letter) to the Housing Property Services team to claim their goodwill gesture. In order to raise a payment on the Council's financial system the tenant will also need to provide their bank details. Tenants are required to claim their gesture of goodwill payment by submitting their claim in writing and fully complete the required form(s) within 28 days of their boiler breakdown being resolved. Tenants are able to claim the gesture of goodwill payment regardless of whether or not they accept the Council's offer of temporary electric heaters.

- 5.3. In response to the motion request for the Council to *“review the energy efficiency of any temporary heating given to families to help in those conditions where tenants have a boiler failure”* this has been given due consideration. Unfortunately, despite extensive research into this matter it has not been possible to obtain an energy efficiency rating for the temporary fan heaters that are provided to tenants by either the Council or the contractor working on behalf of the Council. Consideration has been given to purchasing alternative types of temporary heaters, however it is recognised that any temporary heaters will not be as energy efficient as the central heating boiler it is temporarily replacing. By implementing a goodwill payment gesture that is available to all tenants of the Council should the need arise and ensuring that an efficient boiler repairs and replacement service is in place, the impact of running temporary heaters for tenants will be lessened.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. The Central Heating Boiler Breakdown Gesture of Goodwill Standard Operating Procedure was commenced for winter 2022/23 from 01/12/22.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1. Estimated costs have been based on last winter's figures for temporary heaters provided in the former Kettering area (Corby data was not available due to the contractor not recording this). There were 96 instances of this nature in Kettering. Pro rata for Corby stock it is estimated that this would equal 121 instances. Therefore, a combined approximate total of 217 instances of where temporary electric heaters would need to be left could be expected for the Council this winter. 217 instances multiplied by 14 days (maximum period the gesture of goodwill covers), multiplied by £6, provides an estimated maximum cost to the Council of £18,228 this winter. It should be noted that 14 days is the maximum that the Council could be expected to pay the gesture of goodwill for. It is expected that most breakdowns will be resolved in a shorter timeframe than this. The HRA would fund these costs through the revenue budgets dedicated to heating repairs.
- 7.1.2. In addition, there is the cost of heaters. 217 instances multiplied by two heaters per instance equals 434 multiplied by £6.72 (current purchase price) equals £2,916.48. However, it should be recognised that the Council currently purchases heaters and gifts them to tenants, so this would not be seen as an

additional cost. Whilst consideration has been given to collecting the heaters back in from tenants once they have finished with them, it was deemed uneconomical to do this due to the requirement to complete a Portable Appliance Test (PAT) on each heater prior to reissuing them.

7.2. Legal and Governance

7.2.1. None

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

7.3.1. By introducing the Central Heating Boiler Breakdown Gesture of Goodwill Standard Operating Procedure for winter 2022/23 we are supporting the Council's Corporate Plan to create safe and thriving places to live, work and visit as well as creating green, sustainable environment, connected communities and modern public services.

7.4. Risk

7.4.1. The financial risk to the Council has been outlined in section 7.1. An additional risk of supply chain failures in obtaining temporary heaters is also noted, however, this is deemed a low risk. Furthermore, the Central Heating Boiler Breakdown Gesture of Goodwill Standard Operating Procedure for winter 2022/23 will only operate until 30th April 2023. It will be reviewed and if necessary amended prior to winter 2023/24 meaning the Council can assess the financial impact of this new approach.

7.5. Consultation

7.5.1. The Central Heating Boiler Breakdown Gesture of Goodwill Standard Operating Procedure for winter 2022/23 was discussed with the Tenants' Advisory Panel who were supportive of it being introduced.

7.6. Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel

7.6.1. This item has not been considered by an Executive Advisory Panel.

7.7. Consideration by Scrutiny

7.7.1. The decision has not been considered by scrutiny as it is proposed to cover the additional costs within the existing HRA revenue budget for heating and does not require any increase to the overall budget.

7.8. Equality Implications

7.8.1. The three aims of the General Equality Duty under the Equalities Act 2010, which must be considered consider in the Council's decision-making processes, are:

(a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.

(b) Advance the equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those that do not share it.

(c) Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those that do not share it.

7.8.2. It is considered that this decision will have a positive impact on a group with a protected characteristic, particularly people who have a disability. The negative impact on disabled people which would be caused by selecting one of the previously discussed alternative options was a primary consideration in discounting those options.

7.9. Climate and Environment Impact

7.9.1. Whilst it is recognised that temporary electric heaters are not as energy efficient as a gas boiler, this is a temporary measure. Whilst the heaters are being used the tenant is not burning gas, therefore there could be an offsetting of carbon.

7.10. Community Impact

7.10.1. This procedure will support those most impacted by the cost of living.

7.11. Crime and Disorder Impact

7.11.1. None identified

8. Background Papers

8.1 None



Full Council 26th January 2023

Report Title	Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2021-22
Report Author	Ann Marie Dodds – Executive Director of Children’s Services

Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972	

List of Appendices

Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2021-22

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This is the Annual Report of the Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board for 2021-22. The report was considered by the Executive at their meeting held on 22nd December 2022 and recommendations approved.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The annual report is structured as follows:

- **Foreword.** From Cllrs Fiona Baker and Scott Edwards.
- **Executive Summary.** Summarising the report as a whole.
- **Governance and Statutory Context.** Sets out the legal underpinning of corporate parenting, and the structure and role of the Board, including in light of the creation of the Trust and creation of two unitary councils.

- **Board activity.** Summarises the activity of the Board during the reporting period, including meeting arrangements, service reports, and young people's participation.
- **NCT Improvement Plan and Priorities.** Sets out the Board's performance against the priorities set out in the Trust Improvement Plan, and the Board's future priorities. This section includes recommendations for council's attention.
- **Appendix.** Reproduces the four priorities as set out in the Trust's corporate parenting strategy 2021-25.

3. Recommendations

3.1. It is recommended that Council approves the implementation of four key priorities for the Corporate Parenting Board, specifically:

- a) Note the establishment of Corporate Parenting Operational Groups as set out in Section 3 (page 19) of the annual report.
- b) Notes that the Head of Paid Service will consider the inclusion of corporate parenting responsibilities being set out in every North Northamptonshire job description as set out in Section 3 (page 19) of the annual report.
- c) Notes that North Northamptonshire Council will further consider becoming a Fostering-Friendly employer, as set out in Section 3 (pp19-20) of the annual report and delegates authority to the Executive Member for Children, Families, Education & Skills in consultation with the Chief Executive to approve.
- d) Note that whilst not requiring a specific decision, the board's annual report also asks that due regard is paid to how NCT and both councils continue to contribute to the Local Offer for Care-Experienced Young People. The Offer sets out the services (statutory and additional) provided to young people leaving care as they transition to independence.

3.2 Reason for Recommendations:

- To promote and monitor the Trust's corporate parenting strategy.
- To encourage all members and employees to recognise their role as corporate parents.
- To promote in-house fostering sufficiency.

3.3 Alternative Options Considered:

3.3.1 The alternative option to the recommendations set out in the annual report, are: For the Corporate Parenting Board to continue operating in its current

form, Corporate Parenting Responsibilities not being included in NCT and NNC job descriptions, and that NCT and NNC do not become Fostering-Friendly Employers.

- 3.3.2 The above options would not promote the Trust's corporate parenting strategy, nor encourage more employees to become foster carers, nor encourage all members and employees to recognise their role as corporate parents.

4. Report Background

- 4.1. The report sets out the role, structure and activity of the Corporate Parenting Board, including proposed priorities.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1. The Council is asked to consider the recommendations set out in section 3. While there are financial and other implications to the recommendations, if they are not approved an opportunity will be missed to promote NCT's corporate parenting strategy, encourage greater fostering sufficiency, and ensure that all employees of the Trust and NNC are aware of their corporate parenting responsibilities.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. Strategic group on the 30th of November 2022 noted that both councils, in principle, are open to adopting approaches to become fostering friendly councils. WNC/NNC are to develop proposals and share with Corporate Parenting Board in discussion with NCT.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources, Financial and Transformation

- 7.1.1. There may be some financial and resource impact in terms of the recommendations set out in section 3. Becoming a fostering-friendly employer could for example include allowing paid leave to employees in order to help children settle into placement, or for carers to complete training. There could also be some resource impact in terms of amending job descriptions to feature corporate parenting responsibility. If there are financial implications of becoming a foster friendly employer, they will form the basis of a further report to Executive on the matter for consideration.

7.2. Legal and Governance

- 7.2.1 The annual report sets out the legal framework for local authorities' corporate parenting responsibilities. The recommendations of the report are intended to help the local authority meet its legal corporate parenting responsibilities.
- 7.2.2 The Board itself is not a statutory body. However, selected service reports are required to be seen by a suitable oversight body, and Board fulfils this function.

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

7.3.1 The proposals help the Council and NCT meet the following objectives and priorities:

7.3.2 Section 1.1 of NCT's Improvement Plan, as informed by Ofsted guidance, sets the following objective: "Development of the Corporate Parenting Board responsibilities in order for them to champion improvements."

7.3.3 Four priorities for children in care and care leavers are set out in the NCT Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021/25:

- a) Live Safe, Be Safe
- b) Fulfil Potential
- c) Develop Resilience
- d) Enjoy Good Health and Wellbeing

7.4. Risk

7.4.1 Risks associated with the recommendations of the report include:

- NCT lacks sufficient in-house foster places for children in care.
- NCT and Council employees who are foster carers do not receive adequate support from their employer in their fostering role.
- NCT and Council employees do not recognise their role as corporate parents.

7.4.2 Overall, these risks imply a deleterious impact on the outcomes for children in care.

7.5. Consultation

7.5.1 The report was submitted to and agreed by the Corporate Parenting Board on 29th September 2022. The Board includes the Trust CEO, Director of Children's Services for the Trust and two councils, and both Executive members for Children and Families.

7.5.2 The report was submitted to the NNC CLT for the 10th of January 2023.

7.5.3 The Council continues to work with partners including Northamptonshire Children's Trust to promote the objectives and outcomes within the report as needed.

7.6. Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel

7.6.1 This report has not been considered by an Executive Advisory Panel.

7.7. Consideration by Scrutiny

7.7.1 This report has not been considered by the Council's Scrutiny committees.

7.8. Equality Implications

7.8.1. The report considers the safety and wellbeing of Northamptonshire children in care and care leavers, including those living out of county.

7.9. Climate and Environment Impact

7.9.1 None specifically identified

7.10. Community Impact

7.10.1. The recommendations aim to improve outcomes for Northamptonshire children and young people in care and care leavers, including in the community.

7.11. Crime and Disorder Impact

7.11.1. None specifically identified.

8. Background Papers

8.1. Report to the Executive 22.12.22.

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Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2021 – 2022

“Children, Young People and Families at the heart of all we do - in every decision we make and every action we take”

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Foreword



Welcome to the Annual Report of the Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board, covering the financial year from April 2021 to March 2022.

We want the very best for our own children, and as corporate parents we must deliver the same level of care and support for children in care and those moving on to independence. This responsibility is expressed through the Board's Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers and reflects the seven Principles of Corporate Parenting set out in legislation.

Local elections in May 2021 brought an entirely new group of elected members to Board (aside from Cllr Baker), and an opportunity to reinvigorate its purpose and focus on the real-world outcomes and experiences of children and young people. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the former members of Board who worked so diligently to improve the outcomes for the children in and young people in our care.

The Board has made significant progress against the challenges set out by Ofsted after its monitoring visit in February 2021 and the Trust's Improvement Plan. We are particularly pleased that young people now have a greater influence in the Board's functioning, and we welcomed two care-experienced young people to the Board as permanent members in November 2021. Ofsted's monitoring visit in November 2021 recognised that "The Corporate Parenting Board has been strengthened recently and is showing some signs of impact in improving services and support for care leavers." More needs to be done, however, and the Board welcomes this challenge.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fiona Baker".

Fiona Baker, West Northamptonshire Council's Executive Member for Children, Families, Education and Skills and Chair of the Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Edwards".

Scott Edwards, Council's Executive Member for Children, Families, Education and Skills and Chair of the Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board.

Executive Summary

Good corporate parenting means actively promoting the outcomes that good parents want for their children. Local Authorities' corporate parenting responsibility is set out in legislation and has been emphasised in further statutory guidance and publications. The Care Leavers Charter and the seven Principles of Corporate Parenting (set out in the Children and Social Work Act 2017) express the foundations of our responsibilities. The Board's commitment is also set out in its Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers.

In April 2021, Northamptonshire County Council and the seven borough councils were replaced by West Northamptonshire Council and North Northamptonshire Council. Northamptonshire Children's Trust now delivers children's social care across the county on behalf of the two councils. The Board remains a single entity covering the whole county and meets six times per year. Each council has five elected members sitting on the Board, with Cllr Fiona Baker the only remaining member from before the May 2021 local elections.

Through the year, the Board has fulfilled statutory obligations to provide oversight and scrutiny of key annual service reports, including those of the Virtual School, Independent Reviewing Officers, health and fostering and adoption services.

Board scrutinises a specific corporate parenting performance scorecard at each meeting, which has prompted challenges to the Trust and its partners in key areas, particularly health assessments for children in care.

The Board also focusses on key thematic areas (planned or ad hoc, based on prior discussions), allowing the Board to challenge and oversee services which impact on children and young people. During the reporting period, topics included accommodation and placement sufficiency, mental health, independent visiting, and support for children at risk of entering care.

Young people's influence over the Board has increased, and it continues to liaise closely with the Children in Care and Care Leavers Councils. Care-experienced young people have attended the Board to share their experiences, and presentations have featured real experience case studies, demonstrating the real-world impact of NCT's and its partners' services. Two care-experienced young people have been welcomed as permanent members of the Board. Young people's successes, large and small, are celebrated, with young people receiving certificates and shopping vouchers in recognition of their accomplishments.

Substantial progress has been achieved in meeting the challenges to the Board set out by Ofsted and the NCT's Improvement Plan, and the Board looks forward to continuing its evolution.

1. Governance and Statutory Context

What is corporate parenting?

Local authorities and their partners are responsible for ensuring that care experienced children and young people are as safe and well cared for as any other child. This responsibility is called “corporate parenting” and applies equally to children who have entered the UK from overseas and are separated from their families. Corporate parenting duty rests not only with social workers and their managers, but also any other agency that provides services and support to children in care such as health services, housing departments, the police and schools. Corporate parents actively promote the same goals that any good parent wants for their child. Good parenting does not simply stop once a child turns 18, so corporate parents also have specific duties to those young people leaving care and making the journey to independence.

Legal background

The collective responsibility for local authorities was first laid out in the Children Act 1989 and the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000. The central role of the council as an effective corporate parent has been emphasised by government in the publications *Care Matters: Time for Change* (DCSF 2007), *Care Matters: Time to Deliver* (DCSF 2008), and consolidated in aspects of the Children and Young Persons Act (2008). Other legislation and statutory guidance that determine our duties include:

- Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010 Children and Adoption Act 2006
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 (as amended by the Adoption and Care Planning (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2014
- The Children’s Homes (England) Regulations 2015
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013
- Adoption and Care Planning (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2014
- The Care Planning and Fostering (Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) Regulations 2015
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2000

Principles of corporate parenting

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 provided a welcome distillation of corporate parenting responsibilities through seven principles of corporate parenting. Local authorities and their partners are required:

1. To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people;
2. To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;
3. To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;
4. To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners;
5. To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people;
6. For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
7. To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

The principles do not represent new duties as such but are designed to help local authorities and their partners fully comply with the existing duties. The Act did however introduce some new responsibilities relating to children in care and care leavers. These include a requirement to publish a 'Local Offer to Care Leavers,' setting out the services available to young people leaving care, extend the provision of personal adviser support to all care leavers up to the age of 25 and to provide education advice and guidance to young people formerly in care. The Act also introduces a number of requirements to ensure that court processes are focussed on long term plans for and specific needs of the child.

The Care Leavers Charter

The Care Leavers' Charter is a set of promises to care leavers, published by the Government in 2012. It is "Designed to raise expectation, aspiration and understanding of what care leavers need and what the government and local authorities should do to be good corporate parents." The Charter will "Remain constant through any changes in legislation, regulation and guidance."

We promise:

- To respect and honour your identity

- To listen to you
- To believe in you
- To inform you
- To be a lifelong champion
- To support you
- To find you a home

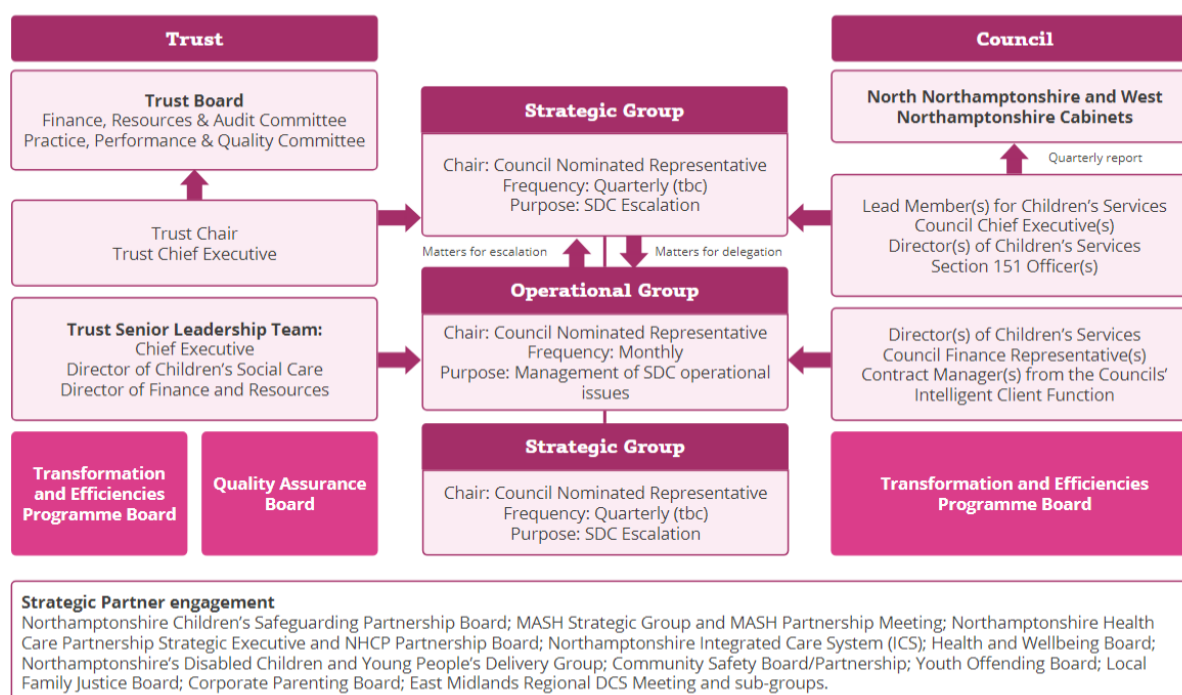
NCT has developed a separate set of promises to care leavers which have been adopted by the Board.

[NCT and the move to unitary authorities](#)

Government legislation passed in February 2020, determined that from April 2021 Northamptonshire County Council and the seven district and borough councils would be formally replaced by two new councils, North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council. The priority during this enormous undertaking was to ensure that vital services were safe and legal from day one. Some services which were delivered by different councils were brought together through the process (aggregated), whereas others which were delivered by the county council were split (disaggregated).

Northamptonshire Children's Trust was established on the 1st of November 2020 to deliver children's social care across the county. It is owned by West and North Northamptonshire councils but in order to achieve operational independence it has its own board of directors which sets strategic aims for the Trust, oversees its management and holds the executive team to account.

Northamptonshire Children's Trust governance arrangements



Decision was taken at the inception of NCT for there to be a single Corporate Parenting Board inclusive of both North and West Northamptonshire Councils. The Lead Members for each Council share the chairing of the Board with each chairing for a 6-month period.

The Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers

The Board's pledge to young people in care and care leavers was drawn up in conjunction with the Children in Care Council and is available to view on the Young Northants and the Trust's websites.

We will help you be physically and emotionally healthy

We will have achieved this when:

- You have the right support for your physical, mental and emotional wellbeing and you do not have to wait too long for it.
- The adults close to you understand your needs.
- You have a good understanding of your health needs and history, when you are in care and when you leave care.

We will make sure you are living in the right place

We will have achieved this when:

- You are living with people who understand you, care for you well and build a positive relationship with you.
- You have a safe and stable home life.
- Where you are living does not affect how well you are looked after.

We will make sure you have great relationships in your life

We will have achieved this when:

- You have regular contact with those who are important to you, as long as it's safe.
- You understand why you are in care and are involved with the plans that affect your life.
- We are warm and courteous towards you, do what we say we will, and respect your culture and identity.
- You have enough quality time with the adults (social worker, personal adviser, teacher, doctor, nurse) who are there to support you, at a time that is convenient to you.
- Changes of social worker or personal adviser are avoided wherever possible. Any changes are explained to you, and you are introduced to the new person properly.

We will make sure you get a good education

We will have achieved this when:

- You are achieving the best you can.
- You have a stable school where you feel safe.
- You feel part of your school community and are able to take part in clubs and activities.
- You have adults who understand your needs and put the right things in place to support them.

We will help you prepare for the future

We will have achieved this when:

- As you become independent, you have a suitable place to live which feels like a proper home.
- You are in education, employment or training, helping you reach your potential.
- You are helped to manage your money effectively and get the right benefits.
- You have access to leisure services and can get around easily.

We will involve you in developing our services and holding us to account

We will have achieved this when:

- We celebrate your successes.
- We actively seek and take account of your views, wishes and feelings to improve our services to you.

- You can access useful and accurate information about services available and the people who can support you.
- You feel able to share complaints compliments and comments about our services.
- There is a range of opportunities for you to get involved to with helping to improve all services to children and young people.

2. Board Activity, 2021-22

Membership and meeting arrangements

A single Corporate Parenting Board operates in the county, with representation from both councils. It meets every two months. During the reporting period, meetings exclusively took place via video link, although at the time of writing the Board is returning to in-person meetings.

The Board did not meet in May 2021 due to local elections taking place in Northamptonshire. After the elections, all councillors for both councils were provided with information setting out their role as corporate parents, the function of the board, and the Trust's vision and objectives.

Membership was made up of councillors new to the Board, aside from chairperson Cllr Fiona Baker, and the new group met for the first time in July 2021. Given the cross-council nature of the board, Cllr Scott Edwards and Cllr Baker agreed to share chairing duties.

Training and information sessions for elected members took place in July and December 2021, led by the Assistant Director for Corporate Parenting. These set out the corporate parenting function and gave a comprehensive overview of children's services from a child's perspective.

From May 2021 to March 2022, the elected membership of Board was as follows.

West Northamptonshire members:

Fiona Baker (Chair, Con), Louisa Fowler (Con), James Hill (Con), Stephen Hibbert (Con) Harry Barrett (Lab).

North Northamptonshire members:

Scott Edwards (Chair, Con), Lora Lawman (Con), Macauley Nichol (Con), Cedwien Brown (Con), Zoe McGhee (Lab).

Board is also attended by Trust officers and other representatives:

- Chief Executive Officer and Director of Children's Social Care for Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT).

- Assistant Director and Strategic Manager for Corporate Parenting, NCT.
- Head of Adoption, Fostering and Children's Homes, NCT.
- Strategic Manager, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service, NCT.
- Head of The Virtual School.
- Care-experienced young people.
- Vice Chair, Northamptonshire Foster Carers Association.
- Assistant Director, Housing and Communities
- Designated Nurse for Looked After Children, Northamptonshire Health Foundation Trust.
- Corporate Parenting Project Officer (providing administration and other support), NCT.

Other NCT officers and representatives of partner agencies also attend as required, on invitation.

Service annual reports

While Board is not a statutory body per se, legislation requires an appropriate oversight body to have sight of certain statutory annual reports. Northamptonshire's Board fulfils this function, providing scrutiny and oversight to NCT services. Where possible, reports for Board are summarised for presentation during the meeting, while full reports are also shared a week prior.

The following annual reports were scrutinised by Board during 2021-22. Note, however, that the annual reports themselves were for the year 2020-21.

Fostering Service Annual Report 2020-21: During the reporting period, the number of NCT fostering households rose from 219 to 228, with the number of connected persons households (where a child is cared for by someone with a pre-existing link to them) rising from 104 to 144.

Targeted recruitment and retention activity continued, via digital marketing platforms and events such as drop-in sessions, open evenings and National Carers Week. Retention surgeries focussed on early intervention to address any placement issues at the earliest stage.

Priorities for the service included reviewing the training offer, and the recruitment of further Resilience Carers, who are trained to care for children with particularly complex needs. The Board was assured that fostering awards events were being reinstated, having been curtailed by the pandemic. Members were encouraged to promote fostering recruitment efforts via their social media platforms.

Adoption Service Annual Report 2020-21: The service became operational as a Voluntary Adoption Agency in November 2020. Northamptonshire has always had above average performance in timely placement of children following Placement Orders but this year, there was a 14.5% growth in our

performance against the national average. 29 children were agreed to have a plan for adoption, a 51% decrease from the previous year, largely due to court delays. There was, however, a 32% increase in adoption orders, with 74 being made, which is exceptional performance.

The service saw an increase in people making initial enquiries but not proceeding to apply to become adopters. Analysis suggested this was due in part to fears around further lockdowns and turbulent financial circumstances for the country. Support for adopters was delivered through over 30 training courses, including those focussed on attachment, virtual catch-up sessions, an expert duty service, newsletters, support groups and more.

Priorities for the service included joining a Regional Adoption Agency (which has now taken place), further embedding Dyadic Developmental Practice knowledge within the teams, and increasing recruitment activity.

Board queried what action was being taken to address court delays regarding adoption and were assured that the service was working closely with the court to address timeliness.

Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2020-21: The Board approved its annual report for the year 2020-21.

Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) Annual Report 202-21. Board heard that IROs had an average caseload of 70, the top end of the national recommendation of 50 to 70. The switch to virtual meetings during lockdown brought advantages as well as drawbacks, so the service now uses a hybrid model, whereby children themselves drive whether their reviews take place virtually or face to face. A strong drive took place for IRO communications to be more child-focussed; IROs provided one-page profiles of themselves to children and addressed them directly through reports and letters. Children's participation in reviews increased from 88% to 92%.

The service continued to work closely with regional workshops and national bodies to share good practice, and with CAFCASS. 148 formal escalations were raised by the service with social care teams, in order to address drift in care planning and delays in resource allocation, which contributed to more effective plans of support and interventions for the children we are corporate parents for.

Looked After Children Health Annual Report 202-21. There were significant challenges meeting statutory timeframes for initial and review health assessments for children in care, for reasons including paediatrician sickness, large sibling groups being placed out of county and lockdown. Meeting the health of children placed out of county has proved an ongoing challenge. However, new administrative systems are alerting health colleagues to such placements at an earlier stage. Focus was also placed on improving the efficacy of Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires, profiling the

health needs of children in care (asthma and allergies being the most common issues), and working closely with sexual exploitation specialists to ensure this issue informs health actions plans where necessary. As of 31 March 2021, the Looked After Children Mental Health team were working with 286 children; 81 of these children were receiving direct therapeutic individually or attachment-based family work.

Board provided robust challenge to the health annual report, particularly regarding health assessment performance, which had been poor in Northamptonshire for some time. It was agreed a further report on this would be presented to Board to ensure impact of the agreed actions. The report also provided the opportunity for fostering teams to be made more aware of available health pathways.

Virtual School (VS) Annual Report 2020-21 Academic Year. After a comprehensive review, the VS remained a single service covering the whole county, although it is able to analyse and report data, split by local authority.

The VS has continued to provide training to education and social care professionals and carers, including courses around the impact of attachment issues on learning. Participation activities for children and young people also took place during school holidays, such as sport, music and drama programmes.

89% of the Virtual School's cohort of children and young people were enrolled in education settings with an Ofsted rating of Good or Outstanding. Completion levels for Personal Education Plans for school-age children remains very high, rising from 90% the previous year to 97%. The VS scrutinises the quality of education plans as well as their timeliness, and around two thirds of plans were rated Good.

Measures of academic outcomes and school attendance were both disrupted by the pandemic. Fixed term exclusions rose a little from 84 to 92, and there were no permanent exclusions within the cohort. The VS also supports pre-school and post-16 children, each cohort having a specific education plan format. Officers work closely with early years settings, and lead a Not in Education, Employment or Training prevention group for post-16s.

[Performance scorecard](#)

The Board reviews a performance scorecard at each meeting, providing an opportunity for dialogue, scrutiny and challenge between officers, partner agencies and elected members. Measures include

national metrics required by the DfE and relate closely to the Trust's Improvement plan. They are grouped under the following headings:

- General measures (such as population data, timeliness of statutory visits, admission and discharges from care, health assessment performance).
- Placements (proportion of children living out of county, placement stability measures).
- Adoption (timeliness of placements, number of orders granted).
- Care Leavers (young people living in suitable accommodation, employment and training measures, up to date pathway plans).
- Education (education plan timeliness and quality, exclusions).

During the year, discussions around the scorecard focussed heavily on health assessment performance, with a specific agenda item on this topic coming to Board in January. The following are examples of how the scorecard has been used throughout the year as a starting point for scrutiny of the Trust's and its partners' performance:

- Board challenged officers regarding adoption timeliness figures. In response, it was noted that there are well-understood narratives to explain outlying figures; in some cases, while the figures suggest delay, the children themselves had very positive outcomes. Ultimately, reaching the best outcome is preferable to meeting quantitative targets.
- The Foster Carers Association representative challenged NCT regarding dental check figures, highlighting that while carers do prioritise these, this is not reported accurately due to NCT data issues. Actions have been taken to improve this and a further report on progress is expected to the Board.
- Board challenged the Virtual School regarding the number of children missing education. This was usually due to delays between children being placed at a distance from their original home and being enrolled in a new school. In many cases, such children are receiving education via tuition or other means. The Virtual School has a dedicated officer overseeing the cohort of children who are not in education and were in the process of creating a new escalation strategy for these children.

Board thematic reports

At every meeting, the Board focusses on a particular topic of relevance to care-experienced children and young people, informed by the NCT's priorities and Improvement Plan. Young people, NCT officers and partner agencies are often invited to contribute. Items may also be added to future

agendas as a result of discussions held in Board. The following provides a summary of the topics discussed at Board during the year:

Children and young people's mental health: This was led by a Clinical Psychologist from the Looked After Children's Mental Health Team and a Named Nurse for Safeguarding and Looked After Children. They set out the impact of early life trauma and the mitigating effects of protective factors such as consistent, trusted adults. Children seeking asylum from overseas are particularly vulnerable to mental health issues, including the effects of profound trauma.

Local mental health provision includes the specialist mental health team, wellbeing cafes, and the Ask Normen website for signposting to services. Weekly, multi-agency ATLAS meetings scrutinise all emotional wellbeing and mental health referrals. Elected members were challenged to consider their role in improving children's emotional wellbeing and mental health. For example, members should adopt an attachment-aware approach to interacting with children and young people, and consider multi-agency, community-based approaches to help asylum-seeking children.

National Independent Visitors (IV) Campaign. A care-experienced young person and her Independent Visitor spoke to Board about their experiences. The IV role is required by statute and matches young people with an adult volunteer to provide friendship and mentoring. The function is extremely rewarding for young people, providing stability and a non-judgmental role model and friend. The Our Legal Right campaign sought to raise awareness of and recruitment to the role nationally, and the details were shared with members. Board acknowledged the value of Independent Visitors and challenged NCT to expand the service.

Where do our children live? (Sufficiency, housing, fostering and adoption). As well as the annual reports of the fostering and adoption services (see above) colleagues from the Trust's Commissioning and Strategy teams presented an item around accommodation sufficiency. A care-experienced young person attended the session and challenged the Board to focus on specific measures, rather than the generic term "outcomes."

Despite lockdown and increases in the number of children in care, placement stability measures remained above national averages; of children who had been in care 2.5 years or more, 68.5% were in the same placement for 2 or more years or placed for adoption. This compared to the England average of 68% and statistical neighbour average of 67%. Northamptonshire also had a higher proportion than the England average of young people aged 16 to 21 who were living in suitable accommodation.

Significant challenges to sufficiency included finding emergency or short-notice provision and finding the right accommodation for children with complex needs. The team was meeting these challenges

through a variety of measures and impact of these was monitored by the sufficiency steering group; actions taken include accessing public health funds for individual therapeutic interventions to support placements, opening new in-house residential provision and recruiting specialist carers for children with complex needs.

NCT also outlined plans for a new, aspirational joint-working protocol with housing services, geared to improving access to independent accommodation and preventing homelessness. A new accommodation and transitions panel was also being developed, which would develop robust multi-agency plans for individual young people, particularly those with specific vulnerabilities.

Education, Employment and Training opportunities for young people (Virtual School Post-16 provision, NEET prevention, Care-Experienced apprentice champions). The Virtual School set out to support young people post-16, such as specific education plans, addressing barriers to accessing education, employment and training, and working closely with colleges and other organisations. The proportion of young people in education, employment or training had steadily improved year on year.

Prospects, part of the Shaw Trust national charity, set out their work with young people who are at risk of becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). The service works closely with the Trust and Virtual school through a monthly focus group and their advisers work with young people on an individual basis. A Board councillor agreed to liaise with the service to explore possible venues for an extra drop-in venue in the county.

NCT's care-experienced Apprentice Champions spoke to Board about their experiences, as they took up their specialist roles focussed on housing and mental health. While they felt well supported, they challenged the Board to provide more employment and training opportunities to care-experienced young people, and to improve the recruitment process. They spoke movingly of children's social care as a "family business," and that young people themselves should be welcomed into this business.

Introduction to Mind of My Own. The Board was introduced to Mind of My Own, a suite of tools, including a mobile phone app, to help children share their views in a way that suits them, with an adult of their choice. It was initially rolled out in the children in care service but would extend to the rest of NCT. The Board will receive regular updates about how the app is being used and what young people are saying.

Health Assessment Performance. Health colleagues presented an in-depth analysis of challenges and remedial actions regarding Northamptonshire's health assessment performance. Extra funding had been secured to address a backlog of review assessments through the use of additional staff, with only limited success. NHS England were in the process of holding a national audit of health

assessments which included Northamptonshire, practice and processes were being refined to reduce delay. Undertaking timely assessment for children living out of county remained a challenge and NCT Chief Executive assured that cases could be referred to himself if required. It was noted that while the delivery model for review assessments should be analysed and adapted, the current model did provide valuable continuity for children, as they often had the same practitioner conducting their assessment year on year.

Wider support for children and families (Engaging with families, Pause Project, Family Solutions).

Colleagues from commissioning and safeguarding services explained the commissioned Family Group Conference process, which was instigated to help avoid the need for family court proceedings. The purpose of family group conferences (and the similar, in-house family network meetings) is to bring together members of the child's wider family to determine what support can be drawn from the network. This can mean tasks such as shopping or school transport, or a family member caring for the child if the parents cannot. In 70% of families which took part, the child remained living in the family network, compared to 50% for families who declined the process. Board queried how fathers are included in the process; officers responded that great efforts are made to include fathers, however, confidentiality issues can pose challenges to this.

A representative of the Pause Programme explained how the organisation supports mothers who have had multiple children taken into care. Practitioners with small caseloads work intensively with women on areas such as grief and trauma, domestic violence, sexual health and substance misuse, to prevent the cycle being perpetuated. Board agreed to share with their councils the value of the project, with a view to its continuation, and officers also agreed to share useful legal contacts with the programme.

Officers from NCT's Children and Families Support Services shared details of the Family Solutions programme, which has a remit to support children and young people at risk of coming into care. The service supports children aged 0 to 17 and can offer families a same-day response, with priority given to those at risk of homelessness or coming into care. Referrals usually come via legal gateway meetings but also from front-door duty and assessment teams. Joint visits take place with the child's primary worker. The officers shared a case study with Board, demonstrating how workers had helped a family to overcome significant issues and heal their relationships, with the young person's future prospects markedly improved.

Young People's Participation

Officers and elected members make every effort to include young people in the Board's functioning, whether by inviting them to attend in person or provide materials such as videos or artwork. Materials prepared for the Board are written in a young person-friendly format wherever possible. The Board liaises closely with the participation groups, the Children in Care Council, the Care Leavers' Council, and the Shooting Stars group for young people with special educational needs or disabilities.

Through the year, young people have contributed significantly to the Board, and in November 2021, the Board recruited two care-experienced young people as full, permanent members. As detailed above, the Board heard directly from young people at various meetings, including a young person talking about her experience of the Independent Visitor programme, and our Apprentice Champions sharing details of their work. Presentations for Board also included anonymised case studies, helping Board to appreciate the real-world impact of NCT's and its partners' services.

At the time of writing, the Board has been involved with the reintroduction of celebration and award events for children in care and care leavers, which were on hiatus due to the pandemic.

Celebrating young people's successes

Like any good parent, the Corporate Parenting Board celebrates the achievements of children. Every meeting includes a slot in which anonymised stories of children and young people's successes are shared, and all receive a certificate and shopping voucher in recognition. These achievements have included high-level accomplishments such as having written work published or securing first class degrees. But the Board also celebrates those ostensibly small steps, which cumulatively, add up to significant progress. This has included achievements as simple as being able to attend school regularly or engage with their social worker.

3. NCT's Improvement Plan: Progress and Priorities

Section 1.1 of NCT's Improvement Plan, as informed by Ofsted guidance, sets the following objective: "Development of the Corporate Parenting Board responsibilities in order for them to champion improvements."

Within this, the following specific objectives are laid out:

- Deliver CP training for CPB Members and wider council and partner colleagues.

- Strengthen CPB, e.g. through CPB member leads for specific areas, involvement in quality assurance and engagement with children in care and care leavers.
- Increase range of apprenticeships and education, employment and Training options within councils and the Trust.
- Implement a quality assurance process for Corporate Parenting Board to enable progress to be monitored.
- Increase care-experienced young people's membership on the board.

Detailed training for Board members (most of whom were new to the Board) took place in July and December 2021. A redrafted scorecard was introduced in July, allowing Board to monitor service performance in key areas. This scrutiny has helped to achieve council tax relief for care leavers, escalation of issues pertaining to health assessments for children in care and increased apprenticeship opportunities within the NCT.

Young people's participation in and influence upon Board has increased through the year, with young people themselves talking about their experiences, and two care-experienced young people being recruited as permanent members.

Whilst lots has been achieved to increase the education, employment and training opportunities within NCT, partner agencies and businesses, further work is planned. There is regular communication and joined up working between the Leaving Care Service and lead officer for apprenticeships enabling all apprenticeship opportunities, internships and vacancies to be shared with care leavers. Care leavers benefit from the guaranteed interview scheme in place and a number of care leavers have successfully applied for roles within West Northamptonshire. Continued reflection and learning are in place between the organisations with further consideration of the support required both by care leavers who begin employment with the Council and their immediate line managers to ensure that employment is sustained.

Further work is planned and to this end, an exciting event will take place in the near future, to engage partner agencies and businesses. The Board is also keen to ensure that its members play a greater role in engaging with young people directly. At the time of writing, some members have taken the opportunity to do this at the very successful celebration and awards event in July 2022. The Board looks forward to maintaining this progress, and to achieving the aims set out in its Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers.

Significant work has taken place outside of the Board to promote corporate parenting responsibilities within the Councils. Whilst each lead member diligently promotes the needs of looked after children and care leavers at every opportunity there has been specific engagement with

the Councils' senior leadership teams and all councillors. This has included attendance by 4 senior managers from NCT at a carousel event for councillors of West Northamptonshire where Councillors were provided with opportunity to hear about the work of NCT and ask questions pertinent to their individual roles and interests.

There is also increased dialogue with the leadership teams of each Council who are keen to promote opportunities for the education, employment and training for care leavers and to consider other ways to fulfil their role as corporate parents. These discussions have led to identification of 4 key areas which the Board is asked to endorse and promote and monitor progress. These are:

1. Development of Corporate Parenting Operational Groups

Delivery of each of our four priorities as identified in the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021/25 to be achieved through a series of live action plans which are driven within specific priority theme groups led by partners/officers and supported by elected member champions from the Board. Groups may be cross council in membership or specific to each council. Officers from NCT will operate in all groups with partners engaged as appropriate. These priority themes are then reported back to the Corporate Parenting Board in turn in a yearly cycle.

Priority themes as identified within the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021/25 (see appendix 1) are:

- i. Live Safe, Be Safe
 - ii. Fulfil Potential
 - iii. Develop Resilience
 - iv. Enjoy Good Health and Wellbeing
2. Commitment to corporate parenting responsibilities to be included in every job description with NCT and North and West Northamptonshire.

This will ensure that every employee is able to recognise their role as a corporate parent and consider what this means and how they can contribute to enable us to be the best corporate parents we can be to all children and young people in our care and who have been cared for by us.

3. NCT, North and West Northamptonshire Councils to consider becoming a Fostering Friendly employer

Currently less than 50% of all foster placements are achieved with NCT approved foster carers and over the next three years we have ambitious targets to increase this significantly. This requires recruitment of more foster carers. NCT and the Councils have large workforces offering a potential source of future foster carers.

The Fostering Network's Fostering Friendly employers' scheme helps employers to support and recognise the roles of their employees who foster and involves no direct costs. Members of the scheme agree to put in place a fostering friendly HR policy for all foster carers in their employment (regardless of their fostering service). This includes offering foster carers flexible working and paid time off for training and settling a new child into their home.

Fostering Friendly employers also help promote Foster Care Fortnight, to raise the profile of fostering and encourage people to consider becoming foster carers and offer children the care they need.

4. NCT and North and West Northamptonshire Councils' contributions to Local Offer for Care Experience Young Adults

This details information about the services that the Council and NCT offer that may assist care leavers in making a successful transition to independence. Positively both Councils offer Council Tax discount to care leavers, which is one area of contribution to the local offer.

Areas for consideration could be:

- Inclusion of care experience as a protected characteristic as recommended by Care Review.
- Guaranteed interview scheme for care experienced young adults
- Apprenticeships/internships/work experience for care experienced young adults
- Access to leisure facilities
- Funded travel to aid access to education/employment/training for cared for and care experienced young adults

Appendix 1: Four Priorities

Priority themes Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021/25



How we Achieve this in Practice	Key Success Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We will work with communities, businesses and partner agencies to recruit more foster placements to meet the needs of the looked after children cohort and increase placement choices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increase sufficiency of local placements to increase choice for children in care.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ If a child or young person has to move from where they are living, we will involve them in the decision making as much as possible and give them an information profile of the placement they are moving to. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increase in the number of children in foster placements who turn 18 and stay put in their placement.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ If possible, we will keep our children who are looked after with their brothers and sisters when they come into care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reduction in the number of children in care with 3+ placement moves.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Families and friends are always considered in the planning process and our children are placed with family and friends in instances where it is safe to do so. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reduction in the number of children returning to care within one year of previous period of care.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We will improve choice and quality of accommodation and support for older young people in care and care leavers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increase in the number of children in care in long-term placements (fostering).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We will offer support to care leavers moving to independence to maintain tenancies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Percentage of children in care during the year who were placed within 12m of the decision (adoption).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We will continue to develop clear service pathways for children at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) supported by a multi-agency process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reduction in number of missing episodes for looked after children and increase in number of independent return home interviews.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We will continue to ensure that all children and young people who go missing receive return interviews, a completed risk assessment and timely management of identified risks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reduction in number of looked after children who are first time entrants to criminal justice system.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We will further develop a multi-agency response to serious youth violence enabling early identification of young 	

Priority 2



Virtual School

SEND Strategy & Transformation Programme

Care Leavers Strategy

How we Achieve this in Practice	Key Success Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Educational needs or requirements of the child will be considered at the outset as part of any placement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ All looked after children will have an up to date PEP supported by a daily monitoring call to each school where a child attends to ensure attendance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We will support our children looked after with education, training and employment options to help them achieve the best they can. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Improvement in educational attainment of children in care.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Children looked after will be supported to make good progress in education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increase in percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (aged 17-21).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Children who are required to move schools will be allocated a new school place without delay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reduction in number of looked after children without a school place.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Our looked after children with additional needs will be supported to have appropriate provision so they can achieve their potential. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increase in number of care leavers undertaking apprenticeships within Northamptonshire Children's Trust and North and West Northamptonshire Councils.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ All children looked after will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ EHCP plans for children in care reviewed on an annual basis and quality assurance demonstrates plans are of good quality.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Young people leaving care will be encouraged and supported with accessing further and higher education, employment 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ and training opportunities, including apprenticeships. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We will increase apprenticeships and work experience and training opportunities across North and West Northamptonshire, partners and the private sector for care leavers. 	

Priority 3



Reunification Policy

Workforce Development Strategy

Joint Housing Protocol

Participation Strategy

How we Achieve this in Practice	Key Success Criteria
✓ We will help our children we look after to learn about who they are as well as the important events and people in their lives.	✓ Increase in children moving out of care and number of children returning home.
✓ We will ensure all necessary information and paperwork is obtained in a timely way such as passport, birth certificate and national insurance number.	✓ % of visits to looked after children in timescale.
✓ We will promote family time between children, young people and their families in a way that enables them to have positive relationships with the people who are important to them where it is safe to do so.	✓ Increase in % of permanent social workers in Corporate Parenting Service.
✓ We will support children looked after to reconnect with family members and other trusted adults in a safe way and learn about their family history.	✓ Increase number of children and young people engaging in Children in Care Council and participation events.
✓ We will work with children, young people and families to ensure that there is effective support in place to support and maintain a return home.	✓ Feedback from children and young people.
✓ We will continue to build positive relationships with our children and never give up on them.	
✓ We will ensure that children and young people have a variety of means to express any concerns that they may have and that these are acted on promptly.	
✓ We will aim to keep changes for our looked after children to a minimum.	
✓ We will make certain that we have a robust and active Children in Care Council who are able to influence and shape the delivery of services.	
✓ We will offer support to care leavers moving to independence to maintain tenancies.	

Priority 4



Integrated Care System

Clinical Commissioning Group Health of Looked After Children Strategy

How we Achieve this in Practice	Key Success Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Children who are looked after receive appropriate and dedicated services within agreed timescales including access to initial and review health assessments, dental appointments and emotional health and well-being services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Children and young people identify themselves as healthy and happy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We will give access to appropriate emotional and mental health support for looked after children when they need it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ % of CHILDREN IN CARE with Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) scores.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) scores. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ % of care leavers provided with their health passport.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We will support care leavers to achieve positive mental well-being and emotional resilience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reduction in % of care leavers who are street homeless and engaged in offending behaviour.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Looked after children who have complex health needs and disabilities will have access to integrated services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increased placement stability performance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We will make sure our children who are looked after can access their health records and history. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Number of children referred to MIAP at age of 16.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We will develop support offers to foster carers including access to Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We will help our children who are looked after to do the things that are important to them in terms of culture and religion. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Young people who require support into adulthood will enjoy a smooth transition between children's services and adult social care. 	

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Full Council 26th January 2023

Report Title	Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2021-22
Report Author	AnnMarie Dodds, Executive Director for Children’s Services

Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972	

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2021-22

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) Annual Report 2021-22, which outlines the partnerships achievements during the reporting period.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 North Northamptonshire Council is one of five strategic leads representing the multi-agency Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children’s Partnership (NSCP), which is a statutory requirement of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 guidance (see Section 8 Background Papers)
- 2.2 The Partnership is required to produce an annual report that provides an overview of the partnership’s achievements against the NSCP Business Plan.
- 2.3 The purpose of the partnership is to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Northamptonshire. This is done by coordinating the work of those

people and all organisations working in the county ensuring that what they do is effective.

- 2.4 The partnership is not an operational body. Its role is to ensure the coordination and effectiveness of the services provided to children, young people and their families by member organisations.
- 2.5 This report provides assurance to Members of the activities undertaken by the partnership and its agencies to safeguard children and young people across the county during the reporting period.
- 2.6 This Report was considered by the Executive at its meeting held on 12th January 2023. The Executive noted the report.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that: -
- (i) Council receives the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership's Annual Report 2021-22 (Appendix A) and note the findings.
- 3.2 Reason for Recommendations – To accord with legislation or the policy of the Council; Under the statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018', the five key strategic lead agencies are accountable for safeguarding children and young people, including the Local Authority, who in turn are required to publish an annual report (see Section 8 Background papers).
- 3.3 Alternative Options Considered – The report not to be considered by Council members, however this would not comply with the governance arrangements and expectations of the Partnership.

4. Report Background

- 4.1 Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) is a statutory multi-agency partnership led by five strategic leads in accordance with, and as stipulated within, 'Working Together 2018' statutory guidance.
- 4.2 The purpose of the partnership is to support and enable local agencies to work together in a system where:
- Excellent practice is the norm
 - Partner agencies hold one another to account effectively
 - There is early identification of "new" safeguarding issues
 - Learning is promoted and embedded
 - Information is shared effectively

- The public can feel confident that children are protected from harm

4.3 In addition, the Safeguarding Partnership's values are:

4.3.1 A child centred approach to safeguarding ensuring their voice is heard and understood;

4.3.2 Effective ways to identify and support children and families who would benefit from early help;

4.3.3 A culture of continuous review and learning; and

4.3.4 Constructive and mutual challenge between partners to keep children safe.

4.4 The five strategic lead partners are; North Northamptonshire Council, West Northamptonshire Council, Northamptonshire Children's Trust, Northamptonshire Police and Integrated Care Board.

4.5 All partners are expected to support and to deliver the highest standard of service. All partners share responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

4.6 The Annual Report has been developed with contributions from statutory partners and has been reviewed and approved by NSCP Strategic Lead representatives.

4.7 This is the first Annual Report to be received by North Northamptonshire Council and informs future developments to safeguard children and young people in the North Northamptonshire area.

5. Issues and Choices

5.1 The Annual Report includes quantitative and qualitative data, key messages and impact of activities that relate to the three priorities set out in the NSCP Business Plan:

- Taking positive action early enough to protect children.
- To support children, young people, and families at risk of exploitation; and
- To work effectively as a partnership and support our staff.

5.2 Plans for 2022/23, as set out on page 14 of the Annual Report (**Appendix A**), include:

- Continue to strengthen our responses to the health and wellbeing of our children and young people
- Development of new governance arrangements for the NSCP
- Creation of a Countywide Safeguarding Children structure
- Develop bespoke local virtual training

- Strengthening the response to Child Exploitation
- Consistency and promotion of good practice
- Review of Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub
- Public Neglect campaign

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 In accordance with the statutory guidance 'Working Together 2018', the Annual Report will be made available on the NSCP website.
- 6.2 The Annual Report for 2021/22 will be informing the NSCP Business Plan review scheduled for early 2023.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources, Financial and Transformation

- 7.1.1 The delivery and publication of the annual report does not sight any financial implications; however, it is for members to note the Partnership contributions which were committed for 2021/22 (see Table 1 below), which is set out within the NSCP Annual Report 2021-2022 (**Appendix A**) and which have supported the activities set out within the body of the Annual Report.

Table 1. Partnership Contributions 2021/22

Partner Income 2021/22 from Strategic Partner agencies	Annual Contribution to NSCP Budget
North Northants Council	£24,646
West Northants Council	£26,351
Police Funding	£43,000
Health Authority Contribution	£48,949

7.2 Legal and Governance

- 7.2.1 The Partnership of which North Northamptonshire is represented as one of five strategic leads is required by the government's statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018' to produce and publish an annual report.
- 7.2.2 The Partnership governance and structure is informed by the governance arrangements document which is published on the NSCP website (see section 8 Background Papers).

7.3 Relevant Policies and Plans

7.3.1 North Northamptonshire Corporate Plan identifies our vision to be '**A place where everyone has the best opportunities and quality of life**' and its key commitments are:

- (a) **Active, fulfilled lives:** We will help people live healthier, more active, independent and fulfilled lives.
- (b) **Better, brighter futures:** We will care for our young people, providing them with a high-quality education and opportunities to help them flourish.
- (c) **Safe and thriving places:** We will enable a thriving and successful economy that shapes great places to live, learn, work and visit.
- (d) **Green, sustainable environment:** We will take a lead on improving the green environment, making the area more sustainable for generations to come.
- (e) **Connected communities:** We will ensure our communities are connected with one another so they are able to shape their lives and the areas where they live.
- (f) **Modern public services:** We will provide efficient, effective and affordable services that make a real difference to all our local communities.

7.3.2 The NSCP directly supports and aligns to the Council's Corporate Plan with the following Mission Statement; *"For the children and young people of Northamptonshire to be as safe as they can be from harm, exploitation and neglect."* and the partnerships Key Priorities, which are set out below contribute to NNC's delivery of its commitments, notably Active, fulfilled lives; Better, brighter futures and Modern public services.

- Taking positive action early enough to protect children
- To support children, young people and families who are at risk of exploitation
- To work effectively as a partnership and support our staff
- Partners will take the guiding principles and convert them into practice for the above priorities. In particular, there will need to be a strong focus on:
 - Really understanding what is happening through the use of data and information and via direct insights from practitioners and children and young people
 - Being fully knowledgeable and briefed on the key safeguarding issues, both current and emerging, in particularly on exploitation of children and young people (including sexual, criminal exploitation and the changing gang culture in the County)
 - Considering safeguarding in the context of all influences on children and young people to gather information from the statutory partners and relevant other partners in such a way as to establish patterns and key points of change

- Looking at the effective use of resources across and between partners to seek opportunities for the unified deployment of resources (staff, money, capital resources)
- Looking outward to the public in order to be sensitive to local needs and to create an effective dialogue with communities

7.4 Risk

7.4.1 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report. The report sets out the achievements of Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership throughout 2021-22 and is a statutory requirement in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018' guidance.

7.5 Consultation

7.5.1 There is no statutory requirement to conduct public consultation in the writing of the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2021-22.

7.5.2 Statutory partners have been consulted with and provided contributions in the writing of this report.

7.5.3 The Annual Report received endorsement of the Strategic Leads on 5 October 2022 at the Strategic Leads Group.

7.6 Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel

7.6.1 Not applicable.

7.7 Consideration by Scrutiny

7.7.1 Not applicable.

7.8 Equality Implications

7.8.1 There are no equality implications arising from this report.

7.9 Climate and Environment Impact

7.9.1 There is no climate impact arising from the NSCP Annual Report 2021-22, however as a partnership we are committed to considering our impacts on the environment which are managed via the individual strategic lead partnership organisation via organisational policy and commitments.

7.9.2 The NSCP publish the Annual Report on the dedicated website rather than printing.

7.10 Community Impact

7.10.1 There is no known community impact arising from this report.

7.11 Crime and Disorder Impact

7.11.1 There are no implications in terms of crime and disorder impact from this report.

8. Background Papers

8.1 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 -
www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children-2

8.2 NSCP Governance Arrangements -
<http://ccl/sites/scs/ibo/Reports/NSCPgovernance.docx>

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Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP)



Annual Report April 2021 – March 2022



**North
Northamptonshire
Council**



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**



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1. Introduction

Demographics

Northamptonshire is located to the south of the East Midlands region, and is a county of mixed urban and rural areas, with populations focused around its larger towns, Northampton and Kettering.

As of 1 April 2021, Northamptonshire became two Unitary Authorities, known as North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire.

The population of Northamptonshire is in the region of 748,000 (approximately 44% in North Northamptonshire, 56% West Northamptonshire). Approximately 25% are Children and Young People.

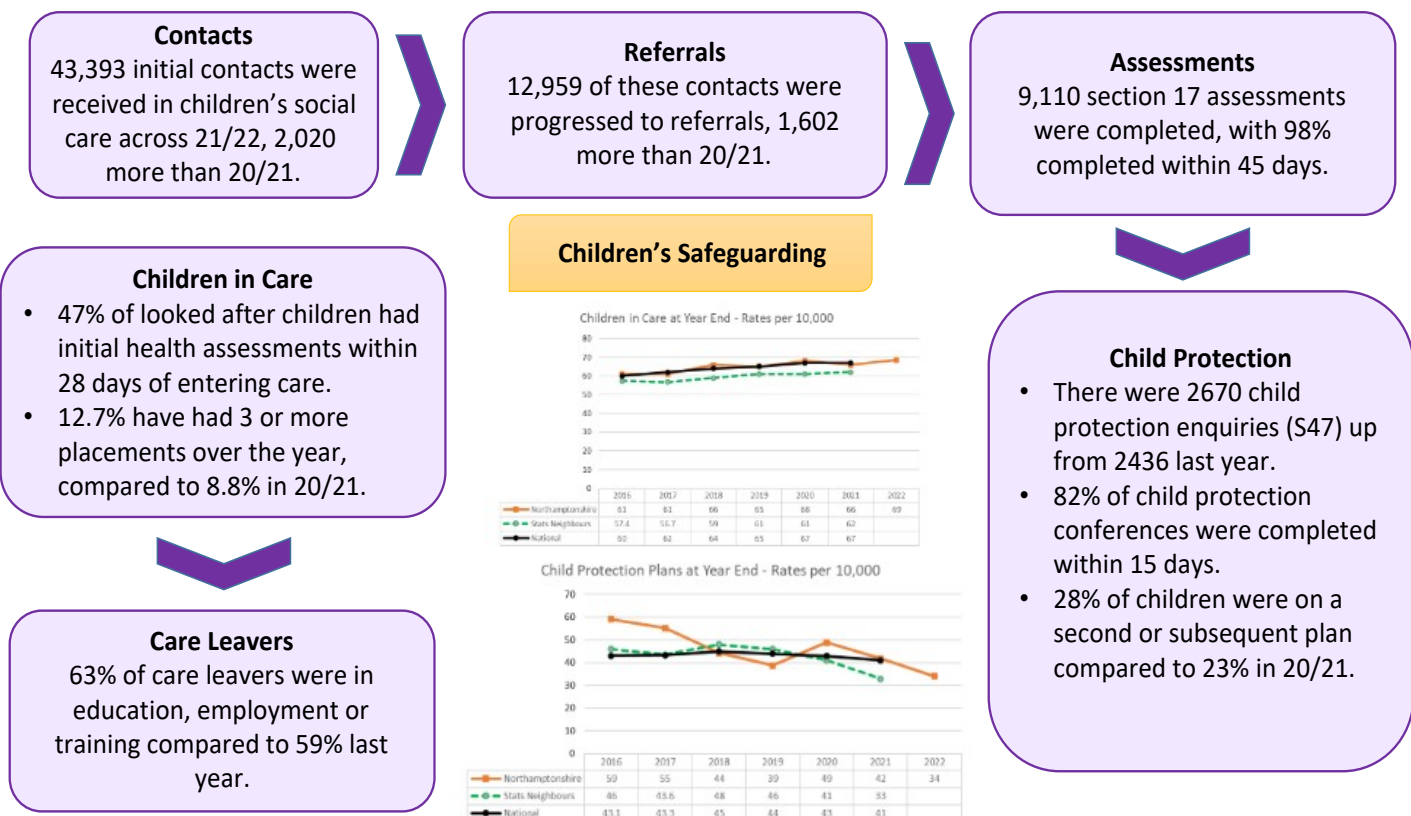
Since the previous Census in 2001 there had been an increase in non-white ethnic groups of 3.5%. It is also relevant to note a more rapid change in the number and proportion of those who describe themselves as 'White Other' becomes evident between 2001 and 2011. 'White Other' means not White British, Irish or Gypsy or Irish Traveller and therefore captures change within the predominantly 'White' EU population.



2. Progress through 2021-2022

During the year, as a consequence of the continued challenge posed by the pandemic and significant global events, there has been a continued need for the partnership's response to safeguarding children to be flexible and responsive to meet the demand, and support children and families effectively.

The below diagram sets out the numbers of contacts and referrals through Northamptonshire Children's Trust compared to the previous year:



Data shows a pattern of fluctuating demand experienced during covid lockdowns and school closures and as the pandemic restrictions have lifted, Northamptonshire Children's Trust has seen an increase in the number of safeguarding referrals.

43,393 initial contacts were received by children's social care through 2021-22, an increase of 2,020 on the previous year 2020-21. An increase was anticipated as the remaining pandemic restrictions were lifted. The referrals sent into the MASH present more complex issues experienced by families and children because of the impact of lockdown, combined with a reduction in support network and services available, has increased the pressure on the families and as such they have experienced greater levels of need.

In addition to that, as a direct result of Covid-19, Northamptonshire has seen the impact of poverty, anxiety, non-school attendance, poor child and adult mental health, loss and bereavement that have contributed to an increase in the number of families requiring support due to complexity of needs. The impact of the rising cost of living is also exacerbating the needs of families.

As part of an ongoing programme of review and improvement, a revised operating model was adopted to enable a better management of the contacts and referrals in the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) and achieve more consistency in decision making together with better application of thresholds. An initial evaluation by our Partners in Practice (Lincolnshire), along with feedback from professionals are positive.

An increase in child protection enquiries (S47) was highlighted in 2021-22 which reflects the national trend; however, a robust partnership response is ensuring that the vast majority of the initial child protection conferences take place within 15 days with good attendance from all professionals which ensures children, young people and their families receive the multi-agency support they need at the earliest opportunity.

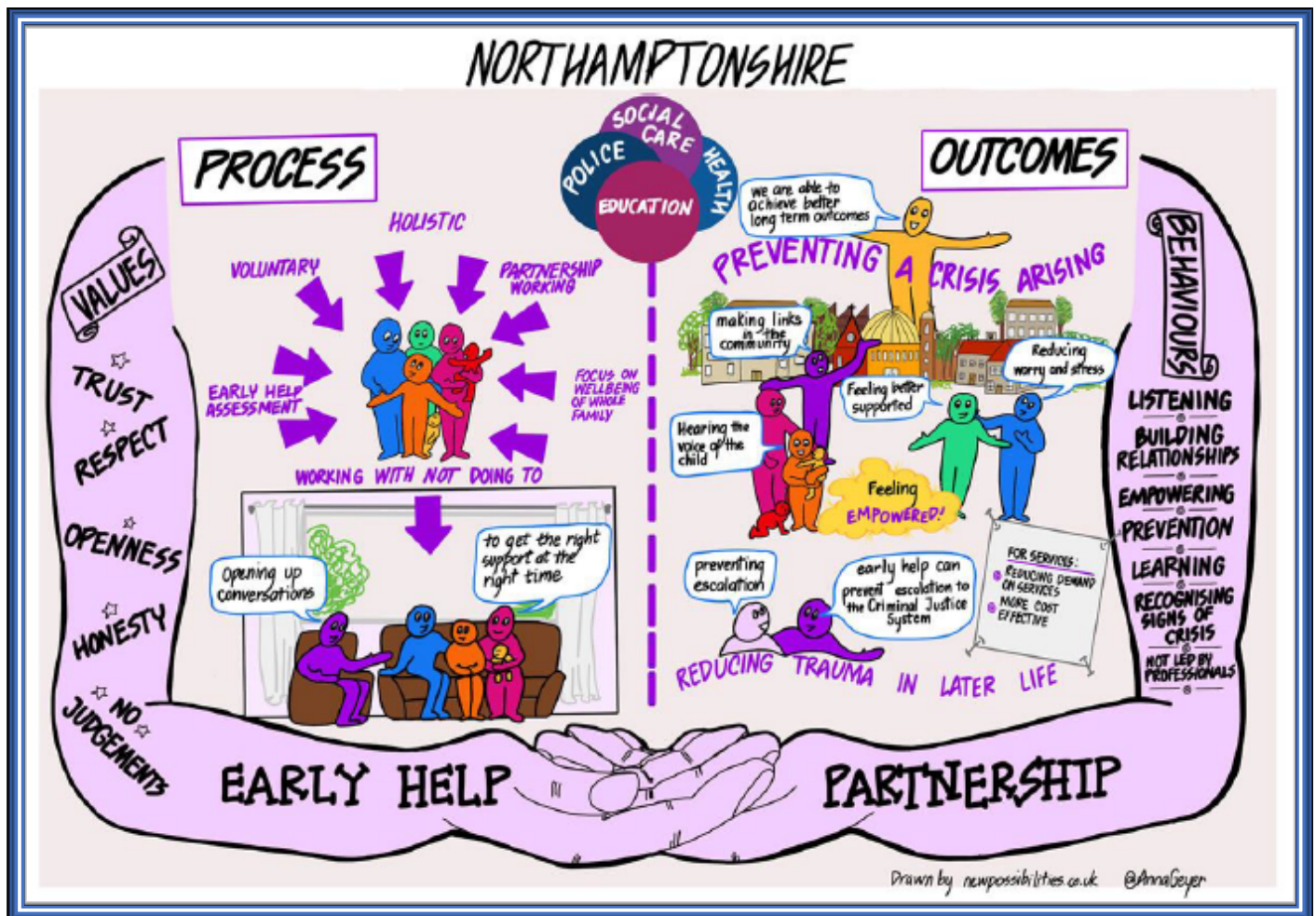


Progress through 2021-22 is set out against the partnership's three priorities:

- 1. Taking positive action early enough to protect children.**
- 2. To support children, young people, and families at risk of exploitation; and**
- 3. To work effectively as a partnership and support our staff.**

Priority 1. Taking positive action early enough to protect children

Early help is a collaboration not a service and in its simplest terms *everyone* is involved in the delivery of early help. This includes families, communities, voluntary groups, “universal” provision, schools, health and targeted support and this has been a priority area for the NSCP this year.



There has previously been an under-developed early help offer in Northamptonshire and the impact of this meant that children and families did not necessarily receive the right support at the right time and in some instances, this continues to have an impact on children’s outcomes. It also meant agencies were more likely to refer to children’s social care although a child may not be at risk of significant harm because they did not feel there was sufficient early help available. This contributed to a poor reputation for Northamptonshire which can influence our partnership working, community engagement, and attraction of social workers and other professionals.

Northamptonshire Children’s Trust (NCT) Early Help has been redesigned as Children and Family Support Services (CFSS) with a focus on developing and supporting the partnership to provide more effective early support to families. A multi-agency Early Help Partnership Board has been developed, that will be multi-agency and managed by the Trust. The Early Help Partnership Board will report to both the NSCP and Children and Young People’s Transformation Delivery Group as part of the Integrated Care System (ICS). Terms of Reference and governance arrangements are drafted ready for this board to go live early in 2023, with strategic membership in place to strengthen focus on early help provision ensuring children, young people and their families will receive earlier intervention and support.

West and North Northamptonshire Early Help Partnership networks have now been successfully established including a revised simpler early help assessment and Team around the Family Support plan.

There is strong commitment from the partnership to enable the right and timely support for families and improvements are starting to be noted. Rates of referral to Early Help have increased from 12% in November 2020 to 21% in October 2021.

Neglect

The impact of neglect in the lives of Northamptonshire children is not underestimated and neglect continues to be the main Abuse Category in Child Protection Plans and also the highest category for children who come into care.

Following the successful rollout of the Graded Care Profile 1 toolkit, and in order to support practitioners in identifying and addressing neglect, a partnership decision was made to invest in NSPCC's Graded Care Profile 2 toolkit and a suite of training will be undertaken during 2022-23 to support practitioners to use the tool appropriately and effectively.

The new Early Help Partnership board will build on the strong transformation work in Early Help. Early Help is the responsibility of all partners, and the partnership has continued to support staff to develop their knowledge, competence, and confidence by facilitating relevant training and reflective learning including:

- E-Learning introduction to neglect
- Child Development that includes impact of neglect
- Neglect training provided as part of regional events offered in early 2022
- Tea Break Guide for neglect of medical needs

In addition to the above, Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT) developed shared resources that support practitioners' practice in cases where neglect is a theme:

- Using NICE guideline on child neglect and abuse
- Learning from national and local reviews
- All NCT practitioners have access to Making Research Count and Research in Practice training.

Supporting professionals to identify neglect quicker is improving responses to ensure children and young people receive more timely support. Neglect was a theme from a Child Safeguarding Practice Review published during this reporting period and implementation of the learning has focused on the Graded Care Profile 2 and strengthening professionals' knowledge and understanding of neglect for earlier intervention.

Safer Sleeping

Public Health have undertaken a broad public facing safer sleeping campaign through social media. Hits to the site around the articles published have been in their tens of thousands, showing that the message is reaching far and wide. To complement this, the NSCP continues to ensure advice and guidance on safer sleeping is available to all practitioners and is accessible on the NSCP website.

Northamptonshire Children's Trust has introduced an expectation through local guidance and recording processes that all families of all babies under 12 months, open to children's services, receive safer sleeping messages as part of normal practice, echoing and reinforcing the practices of health colleagues during pregnancy and early months of a child's life.

During this reporting period, one child death has been attributed to unsafe sleeping. A further campaign is scheduled for the Autumn of 2022, with robust multi-agency input to ensure the right, consistent messages continue to be promoted.



Priority 2. To support children, young people, and families at risk of exploitation

Safeguarding partners have been working in partnership with the University of Bedfordshire, Research in Practice, and the Children's Society to support and further develop a local partnership strategy to tackle child exploitation. Positive progress includes finalising the child exploitation strategy with a county wide partnership approach to prevention and early intervention and includes the local authorities Community Safety Partnership Boards. In addition, a countywide definition for child exploitation has been adopted. This has been driven forward by the partnership's Child Exploitation Sub Group.

Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness Day

On 18th March 2022 to coincide with national Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness Day, the NSCP held a Virtual Child Exploitation Conference, where practitioners could join throughout the day to hear speakers from a variety of professionals on different areas of Child Exploitation. Over 120 professionals logged on at its peak during the day. The sessions taking place on the day included:

- RISE and Sarah's Story
- Online Safety
- Vulnerable Adolescent Panels
- Drug and Alcohol Misuse and Exploitation
- Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism

Positive interaction and feedback have been received from practitioners about this event.

Vulnerable Adolescent Panel

VAP is a multi-agency information sharing and consultative process. The panel aims to ensure that as a multi-agency partnership we effectively share information to support young people who are at risk of being exploited and address extra familial harm with a view to utilising a contextual safeguarding approach to make our communities safer.

VAP was introduced in December 2020.

The positive implementation of the Vulnerable Adolescents Panel (VAP) which considers all young people who are referred with concerns about extra-familial harm, regardless of social care threshold, is echoed by the young people's feedback:

*"I am in a good place and feel I can make safe decisions and have people I can go to if I am worried about anything"
young person aged 17*

Police Community Initiative Reducing Violence (CIRV)

Northamptonshire Youth Offending Service Prevention work in partnership with the CIRV to reduce violent crime and tackle the emerging concerns in relation to gang related offending. A recent Child Safeguarding Practice Review has included the work of CIRV, and the partnership has seen evidence of the excellent work this service undertakes through the victim's reflections of their work with the service.

This work also directly links with the North and West Community Safety Partnership Boards who implemented the partnership's Critical Incident Response following a child safeguarding incident in the community, whereby key agencies and community groups come together to ensure the neighbourhood and its residents remain safe. Such a response was undertaken during the summer, following a knife crime in a neighbourhood in the county, and the reflection by the community on the response was very positive.

Children and Young People Missing

It is recognised that there is a clear link between child exploitation and children and young people who go missing. Northamptonshire partners work closely on understanding missing episodes. Northamptonshire Police has provided additional resources into its Children and Young People's Missing Team reflecting this concerning priority.

A partnership Missing Forum has been created and considers at risk children who are going missing, and the Young People's Service offers preventative support. NCT independent return interviews have been reviewed and made more robust to ensure all risks and support needs faced by children, young people and their families are considered

and that effective support plans are in place.

Priority 3. To work effectively as a partnership and support our staff

E-Learning Training

In 2020-21, the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in large parts of the partnership working from home which in turn significantly increased the use of the e-learning training. During this period there was a total of 13734 course completions. The period 2021-22 has seen an expected reduction on the volume of e learning used in the previous year with **6,839** course completions.

The range of courses being completed by practitioners remains consistent with previous years with many practitioners using the system to gain initial knowledge of safeguarding children and then moving on to explore some of the other subject specific courses available within the catalogue.

A significant piece of work undertaken by the Training & Development Sub Group during the reporting period was to review all the e-learning content to ensure it was fit for purpose and aligned with the NSCP policies and procedures. This has ensured practitioners receive the most current training content in line with national learning.

Analysis and evidence of the impact these courses have had on practice is included below: -

- 88% of delegates stated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the training.
- 97% stated that they would recommend this course to other people.
- 78% stated that Participation in this e-learning course has supported me to make measurable improvements to my work practice.
- 72% of learners who completed an impact evaluation agreed or strongly agreed the course they had taken had a positive impact on practice.
- When rating improvements in knowledge, skills and confidence, all aspects recorded that 85% of learners felt there had been an increase, these scores remain broadly consistent increasing slightly (3%) with results seen in previous years.

Evaluation is consistent with previous years data and continues to show the positive impact the e-learning package is having on practice and the value learners place on its availability through the partnership.

Face to Face Multi-Agency Training

The NSCP has not offered a training programme since 2018 due to resource constraints and pandemic restrictions. However, Strategic Leads during the reporting period agreed to a more blended approach which has enabled a mix of training pool delivery and commissioned training to be delivered and extend the positive impact of multi-agency training.

This will enable a mix of training pool delivery and commissioned training to be delivered and extend the positive impact of multi-agency training. During 2021 the NSCP offered the following Face to Face Training:

- Threshold and Pathways Training – 38 sessions were undertaken with a 76% attendance, which was considered positive as several professionals cancelled their places due to sickness within their teams
- Trauma Informed Training – Due to the success and inspiring session delivered to 100 professionals, a further six sessions have been scheduled between April-September 2022
- Child Exploitation Conference

- Learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews – this training has been reviewed and updated to reflect learning from a thematic perspective rather than per review undertaken. This new format was well received by colleagues within the Social Work Academy and will be further updated before broadening to a multi-agency audience.

Learning Summaries from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs)

The purpose of CSPRs, is to identify improvements to be made to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Learning is relevant locally, but it has a wider importance for all practitioners working with children and families and for the government and policymakers. Understanding whether there are systemic issues, and whether and how policy and practice need to change, is critical to the system being dynamic and self-improving.

Three CSPRs have been published in the reporting period and for each review a Learning Summary is developed as a quick guide for professionals individually or within a team setting to be informed of the local learning.

The format of these reviews has been refreshed and updated to include more context and understanding of learning, including links to local and national research. This is positively supporting professionals in identifying learning and themes to reference in their day-to-day work and ensuring earlier support is put in place for children and families.

Learning Summaries are also produced where a Rapid Review is undertaken, but not progressed to a Child Safeguarding Practice Review – this supports and broadens professionals learning. A Rapid Review is undertaken when a case meets the criteria for notification to Ofsted and The Child Safeguarding Practice Review National Panel.

The aim of a rapid review is to enable safeguarding partners to:

- gather the facts about the case, as far as they can be readily established at the time
- discuss whether there is any immediate action needed to ensure children’s safety and share any learning appropriately
- consider the potential for identifying improvements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- decide what steps they should take next, including whether or not to undertake a child safeguarding practice review

Note: further information regarding CSPRs, and Rapid Reviews can be found in the government guidance document: [*Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*](#)



3. Other safeguarding updates through 2021-2022

Safeguarding Children with Disabilities

Children with disabilities receive services from a dedicated team within Children's Social Care. This is a specialist long term service, supporting children with most severe and complex needs; although majority of the children are supported under a Child In Need plan, social workers in the team also carry out all other statutory children social work tasks and interventions under Child Protection, Public Law Outline, Care Proceedings and Looked After Children's procedures thus ensuring that the children who required the specialised support of the team continue to receive them from professionals they know and trust.

Planning for transitions commences when children reach age 14 and children's transition to Adult Social Care is managed via a panel and a referral to Adult Social Care when they are 16 years old. The team have relationships with colleagues in children's continuing health care, CAMHs, Community Team for People with Learning Disability (CTPLD) and partners with the local Parent Forum Group NPFG and Northamptonshire Carers. Northamptonshire carers are commissioned to complete carers assessments under the Care Act 2004 and, they provide support to siblings of children with disabilities and young carers.



Ofsted focussed visits have highlighted many positive areas of practice in the Disabled Children's Team, particularly how well social workers know the young people they work with, multi-agency working, and the support provided to families in terms of the multi-disciplinary approach and short breaks support which greatly benefits children and their families.

Children and Families Fleeing Conflict

Safeguarding partners have had to respond to an increase in children, young people, and families fleeing conflict. Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children from Afghanistan as well as families fleeing conflict from Ukraine who have located in Northamptonshire have been supported with increased partnership collaboration to ensure they feel safe and settled.

In July 2022, the government announced the intention to introduce a scheme to support unaccompanied children from Ukraine to live in the UK with someone known to their family, with parental consent. Early indications suggest arrangements would be considered as private fostering arrangements, and that local authorities would need to approve the sponsorship arrangements. The impact on the universal targeted and specialist services is as yet unknown and agencies are developing processes to ensure these children and young people are safe and supported.

Education

Northamptonshire education staff and settings have continued to ensure that the most vulnerable children and families remain protected during the periods of Covid-19 restrictions, with an emphasis on a robust multi-agency joined up approach to meeting the needs of the most vulnerable children and young people.

The beginning of 2022 saw schools under immense pressure, working tirelessly to keep schools open despite surging numbers of Covid-19 cases amongst both students and staff.



Elective Home Education

This data has been broken down between West Northamptonshire Council and North Northamptonshire Council:

NorthNorthants Council

The electively home educated population saw an increase at the beginning of this reporting period by 26 to 874 children in April 2021, the highest number thus far. This was the third month to show consecutive record volumes. April registered the sixth successive increase, while the last three months have each posted consecutive records. By the end of April, there were 87 more electively home educated children than there were one year ago, and the current cohort comprises 147 more children than at the end of the previous academic year.

WestNorthants Council

The electively home education population saw a sharp decrease at the beginning of this reporting period from approximately 700 to 600, this number has steadily increased back to the region of 700 throughout the rest of the reporting period.

Children and Young People Missing from Education

This data has been broken down between West Northamptonshire Council and North Northamptonshire Council:

NorthNorthants Council

The number of children missing from education during the reporting period decreased by 21 to 253 children at the end of April, marking the lowest volume in the current academic year. The latest cohort comprises 150 children fewer than the peak of 403 children in October and 11 children fewer than this time last year. An average of 263 children were missing between February and June 2021. By comparison, an average of 283 children were missing in the last three months.

WestNorthants Council

The number of children missing from education stated at approximately 150 at the beginning of this reporting period, peaking at just over 200 in October 2021 before steadily decreasing to 123 at the end of this reporting period.

Education Health and Care Plans (EHC)

NorthNorthants Council has seen a steady monthly average increase in the number of EHC assessment, averaging 74 per month at the beginning of the reporting report increasing to an average of 80 per month towards the end of the reporting report.

WestNorthants Council requests for EHC assessment generally range between 60 to 80 during term time, peaks, and troughs during the lead up to school holidays have caused fluctuation.

Long term, work continues to take place to develop a robust graduated approach, based on early help across the four localities, with the expectation of support and provision for children in receipt of top up through a send support plan.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse now sits within the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) portfolio and under that banner remains a matter of priority for the partnership and in particular, Northamptonshire Police.

It is recognised that it is always a difficult decision for victims or survivors to come forward and therefore through a partnership approach, Northamptonshire Police continue to ensure they are fully supported by strengthening existing processes such as crisis Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) which have been embedded in the Force Control room and with patrol officers at times of peak demand to improve the service offered to victims.

During this reporting period, recorded domestic abuse has dropped by 7.2% within the County and there are 6% fewer victims of domestic abuse crimes. This is not in line the national trend which has seen increases in the amount of recorded domestic abuse and it is believed that this position is because of strengthened performance.

Northamptonshire Police arrested 36% of domestic abuse perpetrators in the 12 months up to March 2022 and this is significantly above the national average of 27.3% in the same period and may help to explain the current victim satisfaction rate which sits at 90.7%. Victim satisfaction and the early arrest of perpetrators figures are very much linked.

Children and Young People's Voices

Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT) has Young Inspectors are part of their Practice Week Teams. They contribute to the design of the Practice Weeks, the assessment processes and are an integral part of developing recommendations for action planning. The principle of the Young Inspectors scheme is for young people to quality assure the services and provisions available/provided for children and young people and to be able to provide positive feedback and areas for improvements, highlighting and sharing good practice.

NCT benefits from strong engagement of children and young people through our formal participation groups - Children in Care Council, Care Leavers Council and Shooting Stars (children with special educational needs and disabilities) and Young Inspectors, whose voice shapes the Trust's vision, transformation, and review of services. This has been evidenced through internal and external quality assurance, including Ofsted visits. We know that there is much more that we need to do though t ensure that the voice of the child is captured, and this feedback is used to influence change.

This has supported the development of a Children & Young Peoples Engagement Strategy which sets out a vision and strategic priorities for 2022-25. The aim of the strategy is to make sure:

- Our children and young people have a voice about decisions that affect them
- Our children and young people are given as many opportunities as we can for them to engage and participate and are supported to do so
- Our children and young people are listened to and their views help to shape our services
- Our children and young people are able to hold us to account if we are not listening and using their views to influence how we are doing things
- Using the strategic priorities for engagement, linked to our improvement plan priorities, we will develop our annual engagement action plan each year to deliver this strategy over the next 3 years.

Children and young people are engaged at an individual level. Some examples of this include;

- Roll out of confidential virtual platform for children and young people to express their views
- introduced a more child and young person friendly version of the Child in Care plan to help looked after children and young people engage more in the decisions being made about them.
- There is a successful Independent Visitors Service that matches volunteers with looked after young people to be a mentor/friend
- Developed a dictionary to assist our workforce in using language that is appropriate and meaningful to children and young people, rather than jargon or labelling language
- Children and young people are aware of the compliments, comments and complaints process and work has been undertaken with the complaints team to ensure the process is user friendly
- Created videos of some young people sharing their experiences of attending child protection conferences and what difference this has made for them
- There are some great examples of children and young people having their voices heard by the professionals working with them and this being used to inform the work done with them
- Some good examples of safety plans, care plans and pathway plans developed in conjunction with children and young people

Children and young people are engaged at a service level. Some examples of this include:

- Feedback loop form has been developed on the Young Northants website to provide a confidential anonymous space for children and young people to give feedback on services.
- Children and young people are aware of the compliments, comments and complaints process and work has been undertaken with the complaints team to ensure the process is user friendly
- Children and young people have been recruited to a Young Inspectors group and have taken part in a project on children and young people in custody working directly with the police.
- Children and young people have taken part in the commissioning of services alongside commissioners, both in helping to develop service specifications and in evaluating bids.
- Children and Young People have met with Ofsted Inspectors on several occasions to give their views

Engagement of children and young people at a strategic level. Some examples of this include:

- Well established groups for children in care, care leavers and children with disabilities mainly centred in West Northamptonshire. The Participation and Engagement team have built great positive relationships with all groups so that the children and young people feel safe and free. Weekly groups run for each as well as holiday activities.
- Excellent contribution from children and young people to NCT's Equalities Strategy on what they would like to see to improve inclusivity of participation.
- There is a programme of activity for children and young people to take part in formal participation groups, especially over the school holidays. This provides opportunity to capture the voice of the child.
- A new participation group has been set up for children and young people with a child in need or child protection plan to help us improve.
- Brilliant care leavers council, children in care council and group for children with disabilities.
- Fabulous Participation and Engagement Team who support young people to express their views.
- Starting to use social media and virtual platforms more effectively to increase our reach.

Work of the Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO)

LADO continued to work using virtual platforms in 2021/2022; this has enabled partner agencies easier access to Joint Evaluation Meetings (JEM's) and LADO-led professionals' meetings as needed. Full LADO data is not yet available for the financial year (2021/2022) as some cases have not yet been concluded.

LADO received 429 contacts in the year which is a significant reduction (32% n202) from 2020/2021 (n631). 89 contacts were managed as consultations (compared with 90 in 20/21) and 340 were managed as LADO referrals (541 in 20/21). It is likely the reduction of referrals is largely due to the closure of Rainsbrook STC part-way through the year as this organisation had previously been, by far, the most significant source of LADO referrals. This trend is

reflected in the highest number of contacts by occupation (residential workers, including Rainsbrook); whilst this reduced to 22.1% (n95) it was still the highest percentage by occupation. The other occupation with contacts in double percentage points is foster carers (10.9% - n 47). With residential workers and foster carers, this data may reflect increased pressures on homes caring for children who were in their care for more time as a result of lockdowns.

During 2021/2022 LADO worked closely with management and regulators for Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre (STC) prior to its closure in 2021. LADO has also continued to work closely with CQC and NHSE and hospital management to oversee improvement in safeguarding provision for young people placed at St Andrews specialist inpatient mental health provision in Northamptonshire. LADO has highlighted concerns about these providers' safeguarding to local Strategic Partner Leads which has enabled oversight and action. For both of these large providers, there has been significant LADO input at case level (peer-on-peer violence, allegations against staff) along with support for internal safeguarding management and wider partnership oversight of the provisions. In part, due to concerns highlighted by LADO, both providers reduced numbers of residents to improve care arrangements for those remaining whilst supporting work on systemic staff performance and training. Ultimately, Rainsbrook STC closed as it could not address these issues, including as identified by LADO. LADO continues to work with all parties to drive improvements at St Andrews Hospital.

LADO has supported the wider children's workforce through ready access to consultation and also provided training for internal and external partners on the role of LADO, particularly where this overlaps with the agency's own safeguarding duties. LADO consultation is available daily, with a 'Duty LADO' available every day to help partners identify safeguarding threshold referrals.

In early summer 2022, changes were made to how agencies access LADO support and consultation; these changes were advised through NSCP webpages and presented to multi-agency service delivery improvement group. Further improvements are underway to improve LADO recording and reporting processes, routing all referrals through MASH and onto a confidential section of the CareFirst children's database.

LADO attends Licencing forums to support partnership safeguarding duties and planning in West and North Northants Unitary authorities; this includes premises (off and on licence) and taxis. LADO is involved in making sure children's safeguarding is considered in these forums.

LADO training delivery was devised around thematic information provided in previous year's data; for example, LADO delivered training for Passenger Assistants in transport with vulnerable children (virtually) after identifying an increase in referrals and complaints in this area. This will be replicated for data from 21/22.



4. Plans for 2022-2023

Continue to strengthen our responses to the health and wellbeing of our children and young people

- **Timeliness of initial and review health assessments for children in care** - remains below target and focused work is being undertaken between Northamptonshire Children's Trust and health commissioners and providers to ensure the health needs of all children are understood and supported in a timely way.
- **Right placement in the right area for the child** – focus on stronger collaborative working with relevant partners to ensure a child is placed in the most appropriate setting to improve their experiences and outcomes.
- **Cost of living crisis** – ensuring support is readily available to newly identified vulnerable families whilst continuing to support those already known to services.

Development of new governance arrangements for the NSCP

- Creation of a Strategic Assurance Board meeting three times per annum to oversee the work of the partnership
- Commissioning of an Independent Chair of the partnership to strengthen and improve the partnership's safeguarding responses.

Creation of a Countywide Safeguarding Children structure

- The NSCP, in liaison with the Integrated Care System (ICS) and two local Community Safety Partnership Boards is developing a countywide safeguarding children structure. The main purpose is to streamline safeguarding work and activities to provide a consistent, robust response to the children, young people, and their families in our county. A draft structure was agreed by the end of this reporting period with phase two being developed for the creation of an Operational Management Group to focus on delivering priorities.
- There will also be a focus on creating a children and young people's group to create a direct line of communication for safeguarding forums to hear their voices and understand their concerns, utilising existing means.

Develop bespoke local virtual training

- Under contract with Virtual College for e-learning, the partnership now has the facility to develop its own local content training courses to be hosted on the virtual College platform.
- This will provide opportunities for local priorities and learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

Strengthening the response to Child Exploitation

- **Adolescent Risk Management (ARM)** - The partnership will review its current response to young people at risk to ensure an effective pathway to identify and support children at risk of Extra-Familial Harm.
- **QLIK Data Reporting** - Northamptonshire Police has been developing the QLIK data reporting system to see how this could be expanded to include data for all agencies to map young people and / or locations where exploitation is suspected of taking place. It is hoped that the data contained within this system can then be used to highlight potential areas for intervention at an earlier stage and is hoped to be available for 2022-23.

Consistency and promotion of good practice

Review of Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub

- Further refresh of Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), developed in partnership, with an ongoing rollout of thresholds training.
- Focus and improve on the quality, effectiveness, and appropriateness of referrals into MASH with improved signposting to reduce the number of cases where no further action is required.
- Ensuring partner representation is adequate.

Public Neglect campaign

- Raising the importance and significance of neglect and this will include continuing to support professionals' knowledge and confidence in dealing with neglect, along with an understanding of the Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) to support workers assessments of neglect.



Appendix 1 – Governance and Accountability

Statutory and Legal Context

In July 2018, [Working Together To Safeguard Children 2018](#) was published. It replaced previous versions that set out the requirements for local authorities to establish Local Safeguarding Children Boards and is in accordance with Section 13 and the objectives set out in Section 14 of the Children Act.

Working Together 2018 was published in response to The Wood Report and sets out the requirements for a system that focuses on the needs and interests of children and families and not the other way around. In such a system, practitioners will be clear about what is required of them individually, and how they need to work together in partnership with others.

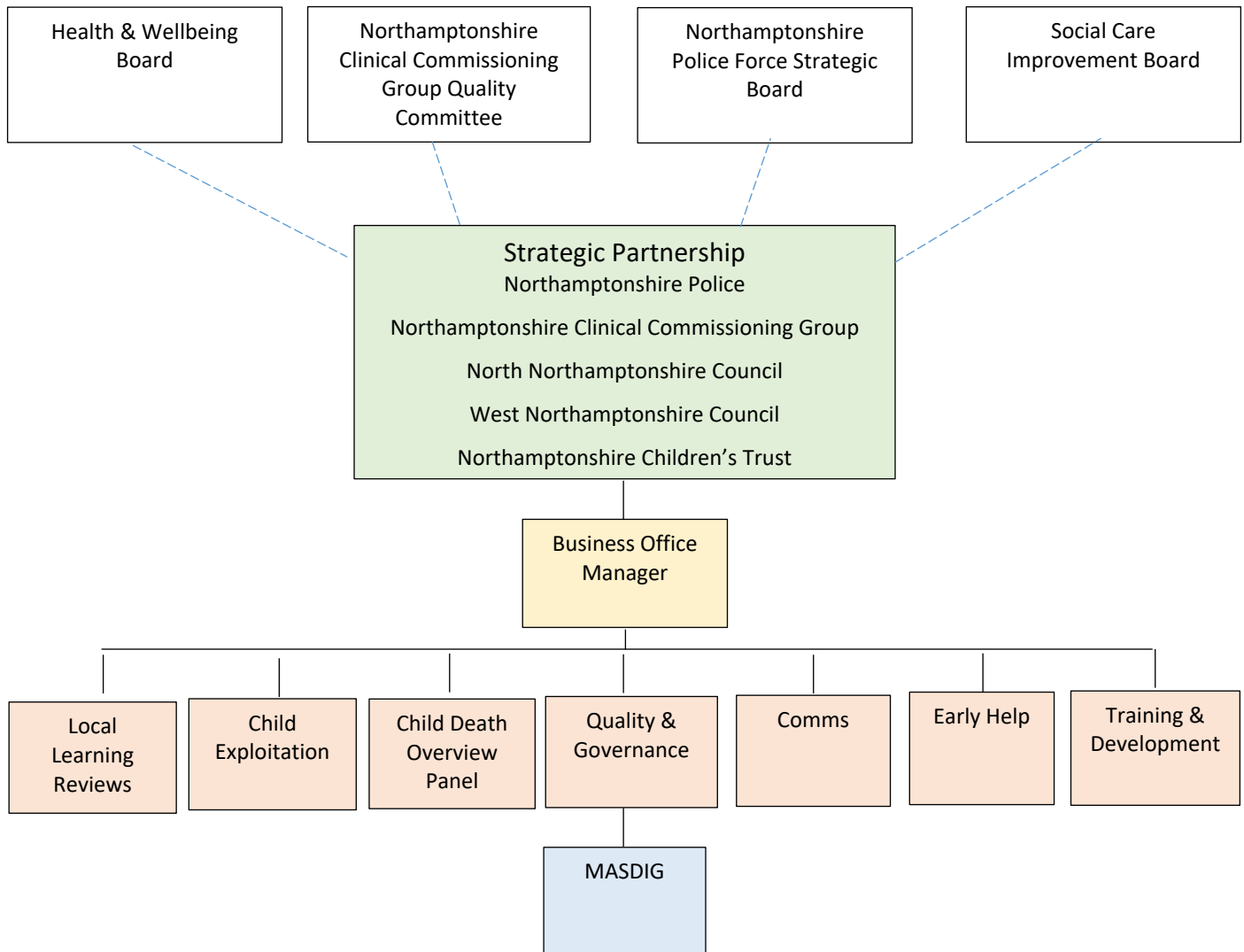
Local authorities, working with partner organisations and agencies, have specific duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area. The Children Acts of 1989 and 2004 set out specific duties: section 17 of the Children Act 1989 puts a duty on the local authority to provide services to children in need in their area, regardless of where they are found; section 47 of the same Act requires local authorities to undertake enquiries if they believe a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm.

The NSCP is not an operational body and therefore has no direct responsibility for the provision of services to children and their families. The NSCP's responsibilities are to hold partner agencies to account for their safeguarding arrangements and ensure the quality of those arrangements through policy, guidance, setting standards and monitoring.

The delivery of services to children and their families is the responsibility of the partners – the commissioning and provider agencies, not the NSCP itself.

[The Children Act 2004](#), as amended by the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#), strengthens this already important relationship by placing new duties on key agencies in a local area. Specifically, the police, clinical commissioning groups and the local authority are under a duty to make arrangements to work together, and with other partners locally, to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area.

Appendix 2 – NSCP Structure



Full Partnership

It was agreed that the full Partnership would meet twice yearly to review the previous six months of activity and look to the next 6-12 months to set priorities.

As Covid-19 has continued to provide concerns and difficulties through the year, there have been no full partnership meetings in this period. This has been acknowledged as a clear gap that could impact on the strength of the partnership and forms part of the ongoing discussions around the NSCP review.

Strategic Leads

The Strategic Leads Group has continued to meet on a monthly basis.

During 2021-22, the Strategic Leads representatives have changed, largely to reflect the county is now set out as two unitary authorities, therefore representation comprises:

The group comprises:

- Director of Children's Services for North Northamptonshire Council
- Director of Children's Services for West Northamptonshire Council.
- Assistant Chief Constable and Deputy for Northamptonshire Police.
- Chief Nurse and Deputy for Northamptonshire Clinical Commissioning Group.
- Chief Executive and Deputy for Northamptonshire Children's Trust.
- Director or Safeguarding, Northamptonshire Children's Trust
- School representation as a fourth non-voting agency. This is currently a Head Teacher from a special school and Head Teacher from a primary school.

- Representative for the Office for Police and Fire Crime Commissioner.
- Independent Scrutineer

Please note from 1st July 2022, the Integrated Care Board (ICB) replaced the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

Independent Scrutineer

Provides assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Northamptonshire, including arrangements to identify and review Child Safeguarding Practice Review cases. His role is objective and acts as a constructive critical friend to promote reflection to drive continuous improvement.

The NSCP established the areas of activity for scrutiny in its initial Governance Document as follows:

- Attend the Strategic Leads Group and Strategic Partnership Group.
- Review the Partnership's annual report.
- Review audits and performance data, including Section 11 and Section 175 audits.
- Determine the effectiveness of arrangements to identify and review local child safeguarding reviews.
- Involvement in the escalation and conflict resolution process.
- Have regular direct contact with frontline practitioners to receive frontline practice feedback.
- Ensure the voice of the child is at the heart of all aspects of safeguarding and receive direct feedback from children, young people and their families to monitor the effectiveness of their voice and experiences with performance and practice.
- Embed scrutiny as a positive process and measure throughout the partnership with learning as the outcome.
- Ensure informed challenge from elected Members takes place.

Continues to provide constructive challenge and scrutiny with Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and identifying relevant and constructive learning to strengthen services in the future. His suggestions and observations will continue to support Strategic Leads through 2022-23.

Sub Groups

NSCP Sub Groups have continued to meet on a virtual bi-monthly basis.

Quality and Governance

Aims to develop a culture of open, honest, and meaningful challenge and scrutiny, in order to identify areas of good practice and areas of concern and to make recommendations for action and improve safeguarding and is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of single agency and multi-agency safeguarding processes incorporating audit, performance analysis and views of children, families and practitioners.

The Sub Group has processes in place to manage:

- Section 11 and Section 175
- Multi-Agency Practice Review
- Scorecard key performance data

The Multi-Agency Practice Review process has been reviewed and refreshed and a schedule developed to consider key priorities over the next twelve months.

Training and Development

Due to an increased agreed training budget for 2021-22 and 2022-23, the sub group is focusing on developing a face-to-face training offer through classroom and/or virtual platforms.

E-Learning is due to move to a new management system from June 2022, which will allow the creation of bespoke training courses to be accessed via the same on-line platform. These courses will focus on local learning and priorities identified through scorecard data and learning from local reviews.

Local Learning Review

Responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of local arrangements to safeguard and protect children through individual Rapid Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, ensuring dissemination of lessons learned, and monitoring implementation of actions arising from case learning.

A key achievement in the past year has been to finalise the updated NSCP suite of guidance and documents in line with Working Together 2018; to support case learning, including Rapid Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, and this is now available on the NSCP website.

The sub group over the past year has been focusing on managing case learning activity. The culture of undertaking effective reviews must be an iterative process, and almost every case the sub group has worked on this year has prompted reflection and learning on how to further improve processes.

Please see Appendix 3 for statistics and further information on the reporting period.

Early Help

Aims to understand the current Early Help Offer across the Partnership and is responsible for monitoring and evaluating strengths and gaps in the system which will inform the revision of the Early Help Strategy and work focus for the next three years.

This year the sub group has focused on refreshing the Neglect Strategy and reviewing the Early Help Strategy and action plans.

Early help provision remains a focus for the partnership, and with the launch of the Integrated Care System (ICS) due in July 2022, work has been undertaken to ensure early help's profile is heightened with the creation of an Early Help Partnership Board, that will report into the NSCP and ICS with activity reports. This will be in place from mid-2022.

Child Exploitation

Aims to understand and reduce the prevalence of child exploitation in Northamptonshire and is responsible for monitoring and evaluating responses to tackling child exploitation by meeting the aims and objectives set out in the Northamptonshire Child Exploitation Strategy.

This sub group has not met regularly throughout 2021-22 due to unforeseen circumstances and changes in chairing the group; however, a Child Exploitation Strategy was developed and agreed towards the end of the year and an associated action plan will be created to drive forward measures and tasks through the next financial year.

Communication Sub Group

This sub group has been reinitiated to focus on working with schools and students to develop videos for young people, made by young people focusing on topics they want to learn more about. This fantastic initiative has been well received but unfortunately, the lockdown and immense pressures on schools has meant this has not been able to be launched.

The group has created a NSCP YouTube Channel in readiness for when schools have re-opened and settled to pick this great opportunity up again and a forward plan of topics has been created.

In going forward, this group will also focus on developing content for regular NSCP newsletters, theme based, that can be disseminated across the partnership.

Child Death Overview Panel – The overall purpose of Northamptonshire CDOP is to undertake a comprehensive and multiagency review of all child deaths, to better understand how and why children across Northamptonshire die, with a view to detecting trends and/or specific areas which would benefit from further consideration.

The national process of reviewing child deaths was established in April 2008 and updated in Chapter 5 of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. It is the responsibility of the Child Death Review Partners to ensure that a review of every death of a child normally resident in their area is undertaken by a CDOP. Child death review partners are local authorities and any clinical commissioning groups for the local area as set out in the Children Act 2004, as amended

by the Children and Social Work Act 2017. Across Northamptonshire, the Child Death Review Partners are the two Local Authorities and NHS Northamptonshire CCG and locally it has been agreed that CDOP should remain within the remit of local safeguarding arrangements and processes managed from within the Business Office.

The process for reviewing child deaths commences with Notification to the Child Death Review team and culminates in final scrutiny at the Child Death Overview Panel.

A multiagency Child Death Review meeting should be held for each child death by the professionals directly involved in the care of that child during their life and the investigation after their death. A Child Death analysis form should be drafted at these meetings and sent to CDOP for final review. The Child Death Review process integrates with the Perinatal Mortality Review Programme and the Learning Disability Mortality Review Programme (LeDeR).

All data from Child Death Reviews is submitted to the National Child Mortality Database (NCMD) for the purposes of data analysis and learning at a national level.

Please see Appendix 4 for statistics for the reporting period.

Appendix 3 – Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

For the period April 2020 – March 2021

- Seven Rapid Review were undertaken.
- Three requests for consideration of a review were deliberated.
- Two Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews were published in December 2021.
- A third CSPR was published in March 2022.
- Four new CSPR's were commissioned during the period first April 2021 to 31st March 2022.

Some key Safeguarding themes from 2021/22:

Knife crime, gang associations and criminal exploitation have been increasingly recognised as significant concerns nationally but have not previously been the focus of case learning for the Northamptonshire safeguarding partnership.

Two of the CSPRs initiated this year are seeking to obtain learning following the deaths of young people because of knife wounds and include thematic learning from other more minor incidents. This has highlighted adolescent neglect as a contributing factor to the vulnerability of young people linked to knife crime incidents.

Co-sleeping or unsafe infant sleeping continues to be a theme, in association with additional concerns including neglect, parental alcohol misuse, and non-engagement. The confirmed or emerging findings are consistent with those identified in the National Panel's thematic review of cases of sudden and unexpected death in infants. Some of these cases continue to raise concerns about the multi-agency response to neglect.

Following the success of the one-year pilot of 'DadPad,' which was commissioned by Northamptonshire CCG to support the reduction of non-accidental traumatic head injury in babies, this project has now been commissioned for a further four year period.

DadPad is an app and book for father to be and new fathers that aims to provide them with guidance on how to develop the mind-set, confidence and practical skills needed to meet their babies' physical and emotional needs. It is also intended as a resource to assist professionals to engage and build relationships with new fathers and fathers to be.

During the first six months of the app availability, downloads equates to fifty per cent of all new births in the county. Top topics viewed included: when the crying won't stop, safe sleeping and surviving without sleep.

Disguised Compliance

There is a regularly recurring theme of disguised compliance, or very often clearly evidenced noncompliance and disengagement. There is an ongoing need to focus on how to support practitioners to safeguard children when parents do not engage or are actively hostile.

Neglect

See above section 2 – Taking Positive Action Early Enough

Supervision

The partnership has noted that the quality of staff supervision has been highlighted and therefore partners have been encouraged to review supervision policies and procedures. Processes have been strengthened to ensure professionals have opportunities to discuss their cases and, focus on those where they have concerns. This is ensuring professionals are confident in managing their caseloads and that children, young people and their families receive the level of support needed, particularly with complex families.

Invisible Parents

CSPRs and Rapid Reviews this year have once again highlighted potential risk from parents or partners who were not visible to agencies working with the mother of a child who was subsequently injured, and where the parent or partner has subsequently been charged in relation to nonaccidental injury.

This has triggered a debate about how police intelligence on adult violence, criminality and gang association can be shared in a proportionate way. This is a significantly challenging question, but case learning has demonstrated that we need a shared multi agency understanding about when such information should be sought within child protection processes, and the circumstances in which police should proactively disclose concerns about risky adults, for example when it is known that the adult is about to become a father. This will be developed further in 2022-23.

Appendix 4 – Child Death

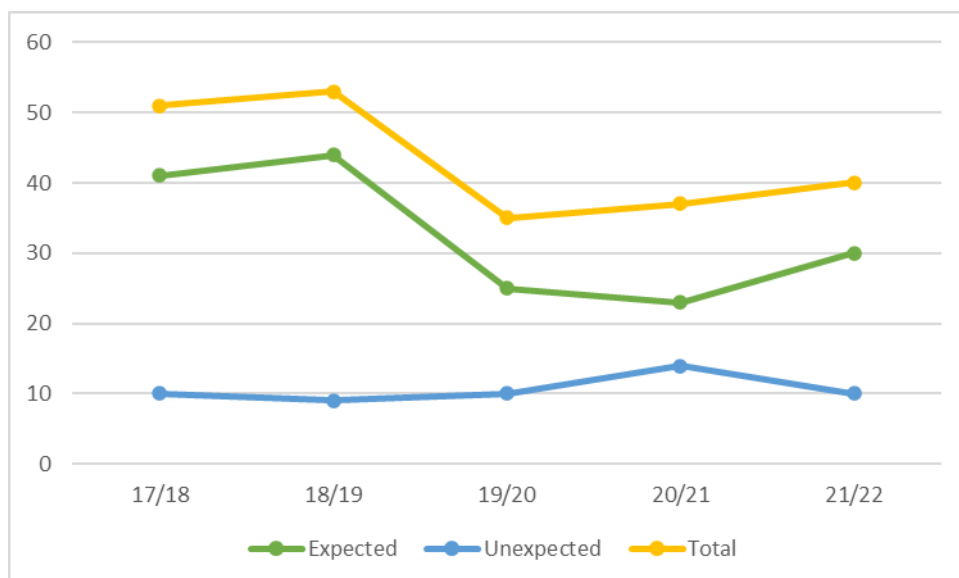
Child deaths in Northamptonshire have shown a slow increase over the past three years after falling significantly in 2019/20. However, with the exception of 20/21 when an increase was seen, unexpected deaths have remained steady over the past 5 years.

It should be noted that detailed analysis and conclusions to be drawn from the data are limited due to the fortunately small numbers of deaths that occur on an annual basis.

Fig. 2. Child death notifications by year:

	21/22	20/21	19/20	18/19	17/18
Expected	30	23	25	44	41
Unexpected	10	14	10	9	10
Total	40	37	35	53	51

Fig 3. Five-year child death notification trends



70% of all child deaths across Northamptonshire occurred in the first year of life with unexpected death occurring more commonly in this age group than any other. This is in line with national figures reported by the National Child Mortality Database (NCMD).

Appendix 5 – Partner Contributions for 2021-2022

Partner Income 2021/22 from Strategic Partner agencies	Annual Contribution to NSCP Budget
North Northants Council	£24,646
West Northants Council	£26,351
Police Funding	£43,000
Health Authority Contribution	£48,949