

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive

At 10.00 am on Thursday 13th October, 2022 in the Council Chamber, Corby Cube, George Street, Corby, NN17 1QG

Present:-

Members

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

Also in attendance – Councillors Wendy Brackenbury, Lyn Buckingham, Barbara Jenney, William Colquhoun, Dorothy Maxwell and Mike Tebbutt

302 Apologies for absence

No apologies for absence were received.

303 Minutes of the Meeting Adjourned on 15th September 2022 and Reconvened on 27th September 2022

RESOLVED that: The Executive agreed the minutes of the meeting held and adjourned on 15th September 2022 and reconvened on 27th September 2022 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

304 Members' Declarations of Interest

A personal interest was declared by Cllr Lloyd Bunday in respect of agenda item 16, Legal Service Provision.

305 Notifications of requests to address the meeting

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

Agenda Item	Speakers
Item 6 – Household Support Fund	Cllr Dorothy Maxwell, Cllr Lyn Buckingham
Item 7 – Parking and Bus Lane Enforcement Service Options	Cllr William Colquhoun, Cllr Lyn Buckingham

Item 12 – Transforming NNC Adult Social Care Provider Services	Cllr Dorothy Maxwell, Cllr Lyn Buckingham
Item 15 – Fletton Field, Oundle	Cllr Lyn Buckingham

In relation to Item 7 – Parking and Bus Lane Enforcement Service Options, Cllr Lyn Buckingham withdrew from speaking on this item. Cllr William Colquhoun arrived at the meeting after this item had been considered and therefore did not speak.

306 Performance Indicator Report 2022/23 (Period 5 - August 2022)

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

The Chair reported that the information provided as part of the report had been streamlined to reduce the level of duplication and to focus attention on important data. The comment section of the appendices had been reworked to provide better explanation of any variance in performance and the actions taken to address any issues arising.

The meeting received highlights from the current reporting period, noting that:

- 90% of waste in collected in North Northamptonshire had been diverted from landfill
- 97% of Council invoices were paid within 30 days
- Customer Services had handled 189,000 phone calls since April 2022, with 2700 web-chat interactions with customers.
- 99% of face-to-face appointments had been kept within 5 minutes of the agreed time.
- 90% of planning applications had been dealt with inside the agreed 13-week timeframe.
- 8,200 road defects had been repaired across the Council area.
- Workforce data outlining post and vacancy information was being improved and further defined.

Cllrs Brackenbury and Lawman spoke to welcome the information contained within the report as well as the improvements made to performance around planning applications and repairs to the road network.

RESOLVED

That the Executive:

- a) Noted the performance of the Council as measured by the available indicators at Period 5 2022/23 as set out in the appendices to this report.
- b) Noted the progress being made in the development of the Council's approach to performance management.

Reason for Recommendations – to better understand the Council’s performance as measured by performance indicators as at Period 5, 2022/23.

Alternative Options Considered – reporting performance data on a less frequent basis is an option but monthly reporting is considered useful at this stage of the Council’s existence, reporting alongside budget information.

307 Household Support Fund (HSF) 3

The Chair invited Cllr Dorothy Maxwell to address the Executive. Cllr Maxwell spoke to welcome the support for the most vulnerable in society as part of the grant funding process and queried how the grant funding message would be circulated to ensure all those eligible could access payments. Cllr Maxwell also queried what would be done to combat potential fraudulent claims.

The Chair thanked Cllr Maxwell for her contribution before inviting Cllr Lyn Buckingham to address the meeting. Cllr Buckingham also welcomed the report but noted that support services in the community were overstretched and funding for this sector could be of great benefit for residents.

The Chair thanked Cllr Buckingham for her comments before introducing a report that sought approval for the management and distribution of a third tranche of the Household Support Fund grant funding from central government totalling £2.465m to support households in the most need with food and energy bills because of the recent cost of living increases. It was noted that the fund could also be used to support households with essential costs related to those items and other essential household costs.

The Chair noted that the funding would allow for the continuation of the provision of food vouchers during the October half-term for those children eligible for free school meals, an offer the Council would not be in a position to make without this vital grant funding.

Cllr Helen Harrison spoke in support of the fund, noting the success in distributing the first two tranches of grant funding to the most vulnerable families in North Northamptonshire. Cllr Harrison noted that new government guidance would allow the Council to target funding at demographic groups who had yet to receive assistance to date.

Cllr Scott Edwards also spoke in support of the report and recommendations and noted that the continuation of food vouchers for those eligible for free school meals was a positive step that could only be undertaken as a result of this grant funding being provided to the Council.

RESOLVED

KEY DECISION

That the Executive:

- a. Noted that the Household Support Fund (3) investment is to be managed locally.
- b. Approved the Recommended Scope and Diversity of Distribution as set out in section 4 of this report.
- c. Approved the control and oversight approach to be undertaken through a central operational team.
- d. Authorised any funds that have not been assigned or committed to by 31st January 2023, according to the distribution methodology set out in section 4, to be redistributed in line with the wider Department for Work and Pensions Guidelines (attached as Appendix A to the report)

Reason for Recommendations:

- It is recommended that the Household Support Fund (3) is directed to funding to a lower income sector of the working community, and families with children.
- The recommended option seeks to support eligible families, who have children receiving Free School Meals, through the School Holiday Food awards from October until the end of the scheme
- The option also provides alignment to community engagement activity, community hubs, food banks and support for winter emergencies

Alternative Options Considered – The Council could choose not to draw down the funds, but this is not recommended as many vulnerable residents would miss additional support at a time when there are increased concerns regarding the cost-of-living increases. In choosing to draw down the funds and by applying the DWP guidelines and local insights there are three options in terms of distribution of funding to the community, 1) through a highly distributed network, 2) via simplified segmentation, or 3) to the lower income sector. For the reasons set out in section 5 of the report, 'Issues and Choices', option 3 is recommended.

308 Parking and Bus Lane Enforcement Service Options

The Chair invited Cllr Graham Lawman, Executive Member for Highways, Travel and Assets to introduce a report that sought approval of an operational model for a North Northamptonshire Council Civil Parking and Bus Lane Enforcement service following the decision by the Shared Services Joint Committee to disaggregate the Highways and Transport service.

Cllr Lawman stated that parking and other traffic enforcement was currently delivered in North Northamptonshire (with the exception of the Kettering area) by the Highways and Transport Service on contract to West Northamptonshire Council, which hosted the service. This contract was due to end in March 2024; however, an earlier end had been negotiated for the North to March 2023.

As a result the Council would be required to arrange its own enforcement, including the back-office services needed to process any penalty charges and appeals. This

would require a budget as well as a recruitment and procurement process to be undertaken.

It was recommended to run the enforcement service in-house, aligning it with the Kettering wardens, with the back-office functions requiring specialist skills and knowledge put out to external contract, at least initially, to ensure processing of penalty notices was in place on time and to provide resilience.

It was anticipated that having in-house enforcement officers would enable the Council to direct resources to where they were needed most. It was acknowledged that there would be some initial start-up costs as staff were recruited and trained, but it was expected that the service would become cost neutral at least, with any surplus directed to lawful highway improvements.

Cllr Helen Howell spoke to welcome the report, noting the positivity of taking control of enforcement in the Council area, with the ability to target specific areas and to be in full control of the service.

RESOLVED

KEY DECISION

That the Executive:

- a) Approved the Parking enforcement service model, as per Option 2: Delivery of enforcement services via an in-house enforcement team with external processing of penalty notices
- b) Approved the amendment of budgets for 2022/23 and 2023/24, per the business case, to establish a net nil budget for the Parking Enforcement service, noting that in year start-up costs will create a pressure.
- c) Delegated Authority to the Executive Member Highways, Travel & Assets, in consultation with the Assistant Director Assets & Environment, to enter into the contractual arrangements for the back-office processing of Parking Charge Notices.

Reasons for Recommendations:

The recommended course of action is considered the lowest risk and the most cost-effective, within the disaggregation deadline provided, for the following reasons:

- A detailed financial modelling exercise has been undertaken demonstrating that Option 2 (Delivery of enforcement services via an in-house enforcement team with external processing of penalty notices) is the most cost-effective option for delivery of the parking and bus lane enforcement system. It carries start-up costs that are estimated to be £42,000 lower than Option 1 because it requires the induction and training of the fewest staff.

- It is also estimated that the service can be provided under Option 2 on a cost neutral basis, with the ongoing revenue costs funded from the income generated largely by Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs), which, as detailed in the finance section of this report is income that can only be used in accordance with section 55 (as amended) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Option 1 is estimated to cost around £14,000 a year more to operate than Option 2.
- Option 2 minimises recruitment risks: Based on the experiences of WNC, there are likely to be challenges to recruiting and training the back-office staff required for processing PCNs, who require specialist training to operate specialist systems in a complex area of law, often subject to challenge. In addition, the job market is currently challenging across all sectors, especially in specialist areas such as this.
- Option 2 enables the council to have full control over the Civil Enforcement Officers, directing them to areas of need, both with regards to enforcement, but also to other duties in the event of unforeseen emergencies.

Alternative Options Considered:

- Option 1 - Establishing an in-house Penalty Charge Notices (PCN) processing team was considered and rejected on the grounds that it is expected to carry both higher start-up cost and higher annual operation costs. This option also carries significant risk of failing to recruit sufficient qualified back-office staff for processing PCNs. The use of a specialist contractor for this function provides better value for money and minimises the staff recruitment, training, and retention risks.
- The option of a fully outsourced model (for both enforcement and processing) was considered but rejected on the grounds of that it could not be delivered within the required deadline and on the basis that it did not give the Council direct control over targeting enforcement.

309 Award of Contract for Highway Professional Services to WSP UK Limited

The Chair invited Cllr Graham Lawman, Executive Member for Highways, Travel and Assets to present a report that sought approval to award a contract to WSP to deliver Highways service activities and projects until they reached a suitable stage to transition to the new Highways Services Contract provider (Kier), or be delivered by another specialist provider through a separate procurement process.

It was heard that on 12th September 2022, the new Highways Contract with Kier had commenced. The previous contract had been with KierWSP, with WSP being their design partner, but not being a part of the new contract.

WSP were still undertaking significant and important work for the Council at the time the new contract commenced, and additional costs, re-working and delays could occur were any new contractor required to familiarise themselves with the projects, were that work not to be progressed to a point where it could be handed over to Kier, a new designer, or completed.

Works referred to above included responding to planning applications, managing the Council's Strategic Transport Model, capital projects and Completion of the Local Cycling & Walking Improvement Plans for Corby and Kettering.

Cllr Lawman requested that Executive approve the award of a contract to deliver such activities outlined above, noting that an award was within the current budget envelope, that no new work would be commissioned through the award and that officers would seek to achieve handover at the earliest practical time.

Cllrs Harrison, Pentland, Howes and Brackenbury welcomed the recommendation and the continuity that an award of contract to WSP would bring to a number of important programmes and designs.

RESOLVED

KEY DECISION

The Executive approved a direct award to WSP under the Crown Commercial Services (CCS) Construction Professional Services framework Lot 1: Built Environment.

Reasons for Recommendation

- The proposed direct award to WSP is for the continuation of technical support on projects which WSP have already commenced work on and built up a working knowledge and experience. Changing service provider at this stage would result in delays as a new service provider becomes acquainted with the work as well as additional costs for reviewing WSP's prior work and possible re-working.
- Council officers have reviewed the intended scope of any direct award to ensure that WSP are only retained on those service activities and projects where to not retain WSP is considered likely to result in reputational and financial risk to the Authority. It is not intended to use this award to commission new work with WSP and officers will be working to hand work over to the new highways service provider as soon as practicable.
- The CCS Construction Professional Services framework was assessed as being available for use by the Council and offering the most advantageous route to a direct award based on WSP's rates and fee percentage; offering better value for money than the alternative available frameworks.

Alternative Options Considered: The Council has a number of options regarding how to manage these projects namely:

- Passing them onto the new Highways Services Contract provider, Kier, to pick up the remaining work and continue it until it is completed.
- Procuring a new supplier to pick up the remaining work and continue it until it is

completed.

- Procuring a contract with WSP to continue with the work until it is completed or at a suitable stage to hand over to another supplier.

Either of the first two options would result in additional risks and cost to the Council. This is because a new supplier who had not previously worked on the projects would need to satisfy themselves as to the adequacy of any previous work undertaken by others prior to taking on liability, if indeed they were willing to do so. They would also result in delays to projects while this process took place and whilst the new supplier became acquainted with all relevant aspects of the project.

The third option in awarding a contract to WSP to continue delivering these service activities and projects would not result in either of these risks.

Whilst other suppliers could pick up the work currently being undertaken by WSP under the now expired KierWSP Highways Services Contract, there are significant financial and reputational risks to the Council due to delays, if we are not to retain the existing WSP resources to complete their current commissions. On this basis, the alternative options considered primarily relate to procurement routes available to enable a direct award to WSP, as follows:-

ESPO – ESPO is a public sector owned framework which the Council has access to. WSP are approved suppliers on the ESPO framework. The ESPO terms and conditions vary between direct award and award following mini competition. WSP confirmed that they would not be able to agree to the terms and conditions for a direct award under ESPO and this option was therefore discounted.

PAGABO – PAGABO is a commercially owned and managed framework, as opposed to being publicly managed. It is open for use by any employing organisation, including the private sector. WSP are approved suppliers to the PAGABO framework and, whilst their rates are comparable to the CCS framework, WSP's fee percentage or margin was approximately three times higher under PAGABO than under the CCS framework. This route has therefore been discounted on the basis of not providing value for money.

310 Safer Streets Fund Round 4 - 2022-23

The Chair invited Cllr Matthew Binley, Executive Member for Housing, Communities and Levelling-up to introduce a report that sought approval for the implementation of the Safer Streets Round 4 projects for William Knibb and All Saints, Kettering; and Queensway, Wellingborough following a funding award from central government.

Cllr Binley noted that the proposed projects were designed to support the local community to tackle crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in neighbourhoods disproportionately affected by both based on information provided from police and crime prevention officers.

It was heard that the layout and structure of certain estates could cause issues relating to crime and ASB, with proposed alley-gating and CCTV installation potentially eliminating this aspect. In addition, vulnerable residents would be provided with home security packs and target hardening; and there would be provision and improvement of facilities and amenities to divert young people away from crime.

It was heard that the Council was a key delivery partner in Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's (OPFCC) funding bid, with the Council managing the CCTV elements, outdoor gym equipment provision and enhancements to a local bike track in Wellingborough, totalling £285,000. Delivery of the projects would be ongoing to September 2023. Cllr Binley offered his thanks to the OPFCC for their support with the funding bid.

The Chair, Cllr Jason Smithers, welcomed the report noting the importance of residents being able to feel safe in their community and the input of the OFPCC and the power of partnership working.

Cllrs Pentland, Lawman and Harrison all spoke in support of the report and the projects detailed within it, with Cllr Harrison noting that the funding had wider potential than just preventing crime and ASB, with the opportunity to improve the health and wellbeing for residents as another outcome of the projects.

RESOLVED

KEY DECISION

That the Executive:

- a) Approved the implementation of the Safer Streets Round 4 projects, using the funding award as detailed in this report and appendices.
- b) Delegated authority to the Executive Member Housing Communities and Levelling Up, in conjunction with the Executive Director Adults, Communities and Wellbeing, to take any necessary action to ensure these projects are implemented.

Reason for Recommendations: To ensure the funding available from the 2022/23 Safer Streets Funding programme is invested as set out in the Funding Agreements and the projects delivered as set out in this report.

Alternative Options Considered:

- a) The Council was not duty-bound to apply to the Safer Streets Fund or confirm support for the OPF&CC bids. However, it would have presented a significant missed opportunity to secure Government funding for making improvements to localities suffering significant crime.
- b) The Council could also have rejected the Home Office's offer of grant funding for the William Knibb/All Saints project, and or withdraw our support for the Queensway one. Both bids had a high level of work from officers in terms of preparations and such rejections and withdrawal could impact negatively on the Council's reputation both as a responsible partner organisation in the community safety partnership, and as the unitary authority responsible for the project areas.

311 Kettering Station Quarter Masterplan

The Chair invited Cllr David Brackenbury, Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration to present a report that informed Members of the content of the Kettering Station Quarter Masterplan and sought approval of the Masterplan document and method for the Council to promote the delivery of improvements to the station and investment in the surrounding area.

Cllr Brackenbury noted that in 2019 Kettering Borough Council had made a successful application for funding to prepare a Masterplan for the reimagining of the Kettering Station Quarter. Details of the area and current site constraints were outlined to the meeting, including flooding issues caused in the vicinity of Slade Brook adjacent to the station.

It was noted that current access to the station did not provide an attractive or easily accessible gateway into the town and a lengthy piece of work had been undertaken factoring in other improvement works ongoing elsewhere in Kettering. The Masterplan outlined five proposed phases that would involve sequential moving of car-parking facilities and the redevelopment of these sites to result in more attractive, accessible gateway to the town. Significant engagement with stakeholders and landowners had been undertaken in the production of the Masterplan.

The ambition of the scheme was noted, and although there was a current identified funding deficit of £11m, work continued to be undertaken to seek other funding streams that could improve the viability of the project moving forward.

Cllr Brackenbury concluded by welcoming the input of both the Climate Change, Environment & Growth and Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panels (EAP) in consideration of the Masterplan.

Cllr Harriet Pentland stated that the Climate Change, Environment & Growth EAP had considered the importance of biodiversity and the mitigation required to avoid significant impact on this as the development came to fruition.

Cllrs Edwards and Howell welcomed the Masterplan, noting that it would be beneficial for local residents in reducing congestion and parking issues as well as forming part of the bigger picture as the Council developed its cycling, leisure facilities and Greenway.

RESOLVED

KEY DECISION

That the Executive:

- i) Approved the content of the Kettering Station Quarter Masterplan as a document to guide investment and redevelopment opportunities and form a part of the Council's evidence base in terms of planning policy;
- ii) Agreed ways for the Council to promote the delivery of improvements to the station and investment in the surrounding area.

Reason for Recommendation: To provide Member awareness; approve the Kettering Station Quarter Masterplan; and agree ways for supporting the delivery of improvement, investment and redevelopment opportunities at the station and surrounding area.

Alternative Options Considered: The Council could determine not to agree the Masterplan, or part of its content, but this would weaken its ability to secure solutions to issues (e.g. access conflict at the entrance and flooding) and encourage investment in the area. To progress most of the Masterplan projects still needs further detailed design and costings work, as well as consultation. For the Council to decline to approve the Masterplan, would reduce the impetus gained to date, and the potential for delivering a significant regeneration project, based around sustainability and public land, to Kettering and North Northamptonshire.

312 The Chief Principal Social Worker's Annual Report

The Chair invited Cllr Helen Harrison, Executive Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing to introduce an item that provided the Executive with a report of the work undertaken by the Chief Principal Social Worker (CPSW) during 2021/22, her reflections on this and the priorities for her work in 2022/23.

Cllr Harrison noted the huge amount of positive work and outcomes achieved by the CPSW in her short time in post and offered her thanks for a thorough, forward-looking report that was ambitious for both staff and the service in the future.

Cllr Harrison then invited David Watts, Executive Director of Adults, Communities and Wellbeing to provide some context behind the report of the CPSW. It was noted that it was the role of the CPSW to act as a conduit between service staff and the Executive Director as well as to improve social work practice and support social work staff in their roles within the organisation.

Details of the current workforce structure and support offered to trainee staff were provided to the meeting, as well as an outline of procedures reviewed since the CPSW came into post and priorities for 2023/24.

The Chair thanked the CPSW for her comprehensive, in-depth report and noted the checks and balances put in place to improve the current service offer to the benefit of North Northamptonshire residents.

Cllrs Brackenbury, Lawman and Harrison welcomed the honesty of the report, noting that it did not shy away from the issues faced by the social care service such as staff retention, but identified a clear path to service improvement going forward.

RESOLVED

That the Executive noted the contents of the report and the priorities for 2022/23.

Reasons for Recommendation - These priorities are ones which have been identified through the Chief Principal Social Worker's work, through work with the Senior Leadership Team and with front line workers, and they align with Adult Social Care's priorities to provide an excellent service for the people of North Northamptonshire.

Further priorities may be identified during the year and work picked up. The Chief Principal Social Worker's work includes wider themes and priorities will continuously be monitored and reviewed.

Alternative Options Considered: The Chief Principal Social Worker is responsible for completing an annual report to highlight work undertaken, priorities for the forthcoming year and the Chief PSW's view of the Council's Adult Social Care Services. As such it is important the Executive is provided with the same report that has been presented to Corporate Leadership Team; not to do so would leave Executive without information that has been presented to CLT and that is provided within a report that sits within Social Care statute.

313 Transforming NNC Adult Social Care Provider Services - Strategy and Case for Change

The Chair invited Cllr Dorothy Maxwell to address the meeting in relation to this item. Cllr Maxwell stated that in terms of social care, the Council should ensure staff received suitable training and pay as well as recognition for their work as this was vital in ensuring retention and allowed the Council to offer a quality of service that was to a level expected by residents.

The Chair then invited Cllr Lyn Buckingham to address the meeting. Cllr Buckingham welcomed the report and the focus on the case for change but noted that a "one size fits all" approach should not be adopted given the breadth of services that Adult Social Care encompassed.

The Chair thanked both speakers for their input before inviting Cllr Helen Harrison, Executive Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing to introduce a report that sought Executive approval to consult on the proposed strategy for transforming in-house Adult Social Care Provider Services with the people using those services with a view to allowing the Council to deliver the highest quality assessment, re-ablement and enablement to support people to live their lives independently and be ambitious for their future.

It was heard that approval of the strategy would transform services for the user, improve training, pay and career progression for staff and allow for the provisions of up-to-date facilities to provide the enhanced care required in North Northamptonshire. Members heard that the strategy was not a cost-cutting exercise, rather a strategy to provide an improved, better value service.

An honest assessment of the current service position was outlined, with members noting that the legacy service had suffered from poor investment and was not currently fit for purpose, with care staff low paid, receiving minimal training and development and working in poorly rated facilities. It was noted that the Council was competing with a well-established care market and struggled to access this level of quality for its own users. In addition, the Council faced a struggle to recruit and retain staff based on the

issues outlined above and it was imperative that a plan was enacted to address these problems.

The Council had the opportunity to completely transform its service and it was proposed that this would be achieved through a phased approach. A number of options for service improvement had been considered, with Option 3 as outlined in the report recommended. Further recommendations to the Executive on the business case for running a Specialist Care Centre would be submitted to 10th November meeting for consideration.

The Chair welcomed the report as it would begin the process of improving outcomes for residents and valued staff members. The Chair thanked Cllr Harrison and David Watts for driving the Council's vision of an enhanced service offer.

Cllrs Lawman, Brackenbury, Edwards and Howes also spoke strongly in support of the proposed strategy in aiming to provide a service that would be fit for purpose and reward the hard work of staff.

RESOLVED

KEY DECISIONS

That the Executive:

- a) Considered the strategy and case for change and approve the proposal recommended option 3 (set out in section 3.3 of this report), to consult with regular users of NNC CQC regulated provider services on the future proposed strategy and implications
- b) Approved the request to engage with Unions and staff affected on the strategy, case for change and the four proposed phases of transformation
- c) Delegated final decision making, following consultation, to the Executive Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing, in Consultation with Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing, to conclude the statutory consultation with people that use those services
- d) Delegated the final decision, to the Executive Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing, in Consultation with the Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing, as to whether to implement the strategy and phased proposals and after that decision to enter into formal consultation with unions and affected staff
- e) Noted that as part of phase 1 proposals that due diligence is being undertaken to consider and make recommendations to the Executive on the business case for running a Specialist Care Centre. It is anticipated that final proposals will be brought to the Executive for consideration at its meeting on 10th November 2022

Reason for recommendations:

- a) The main physical buildings involved in delivering two of the services were transferred to the council on vesting day having had insufficient investment necessary to develop the sites for the future.
- b) Investing in newer facilities will enable us to provide the environments for our staff to deliver better quality services & the right environments to maximise assessment, re-ablement, enablement and opportunities for independent living for people that use the services
- c) The current facilities are in poor condition and require significant investment to return them to an acceptable level of quality, and even if that decision were made the buildings would need to be vacated for significant periods of time to enable the level of works required to be completed and would still struggle to achieve the desired outcomes for the services due to limitations within both sites
- d) Our own staff had experienced impacts on their pay and reward growth over the last decade, and their training and development has been minimal within previous organisations
- e) We have a finite budget within which to work with, which will require a phased approach to transforming ASC Provider Services over the coming three years and will focus initially on those Care Quality Commission (CQC) regulated services.
- f) There is a role for the local authority in delivering services that we struggle to get from the independent sector, or that with more direct control over there is the opportunity to significantly improve outcomes.
- g) It is beneficial for the local authority to retain some services to enable it to be a provider of last resort should that ever be required e.g., following provider failure.
- h) The people that use the services will get a clear understanding of the intended vision and strategy to invest in these services for the future and intended benefits to different stakeholders are explored in this report and the strategy and case for change.
- i) With a clear strategy, strong leadership, improved environments and investment in care and support staff, there should be a marked improvement in recruitment and retention. There should also be a demonstrable impact in areas of improvement required as identified in recent CQC inspection reports.

Alternative Options Considered:

Option 1 – Invest in existing services to make them fit for purpose and address all building issues to maximise capacity.

- All options considered require significant, prohibitive investment
- There is an inability to pay our staff the market rates, as we have a finite budget within which to work with
- We have difficulty in competing with other sectors
- There is also retention and recruitment difficulties in ASC Provider Services
- Residents that live in Beech Close or use Pine Lodge would have to vacate

the buildings for the entire period of refurbishment

- Whilst improving the environment this would not achieve the optimum building environment for either of the building-based services due to constraints on working within the existing footprints and building designs
- For example, an options appraisal commissioned in March 2022 for the Beech Close site explored the following potential options, costs and timescales:

Option	Scope of works	Rooms/ units	Estimated project costs*	Duration
Current provision (do nothing)	42 Bedded residential care home (currently only 21 beds are used due to works required in other areas)	21 current 42 maximum	N/A	N/A
1a	Invest in existing property to make fit for purpose and address all existing building issues, reduce number of beds to provide en-suite facilities	24 ensuite	£6,070,000	33 months
1b	Invest in existing property to make fit for purpose, but with elements of new build to maximise the number of beds	33 ensuite	£7,480,000	35 months
2	Rebuild new residential home fit for purpose with en-suite facilities, and focused delivery for acute dementia beds	41 ensuite	£8,455,000	40 months
3	Rebuild Extra Care provision with individual flats on existing site	20 apartments	£7,515,000	40 months
4	Demolish the existing building to enable the sale of the site	0	£410,000	12 months

*Estimated project costs for each of the proposed option include Professional and Design fees, Planning costs and Employer Risk Allowances

Option 2 – Continue as currently (do nothing)

This option is not recommended, as this will:

- Continue to compound recruitment and retention issues experienced by the service
- Continued undesirable inspection outcomes of Regulated Services and possible closure
- Poor working conditions for our staff
- Poor outcomes for our users
- Poor quality of support
- Increasing building repair costs, including critical failure of certain aspects of the building-based services including hot water and heating.

- Uncertainty for staff
- Inability to control reablement delivery and outcomes

Option 3 – Consult on a new strategy for our in-house services and phased approach to transformation

This is the recommended option as it will:

- Ensure that there is a clear, strategy and vision for our in-house provider services that is clear to people that use those services and to staff that work in them.
- Fulfills a gap in the market and places our own services at the heart of maximising independence for people in North Northamptonshire
- Provides a generational change and investment in the direction of travel for our provider services, creating a fit for purpose offer with clear ambitions.
- Improve working conditions for our provider services staff
- Create strong foundations on which to evolve our provider services

314 Capital Programme Update 2022/23

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

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

RESOLVED

KEY DECISION

That Executive approved the following changes to the capital programme:

- a. Earls Barton Library Improvements, increase of £0.051m to the capital programme for 2022/23, to be funded from Section 106 Developer Contributions
- b. Safer Streets, increase of £0.546m to the capital programme; £0.312m in 2022/23 and £0.234m in 2023/24, which is to be funded from Home Office Safer Streets Fund and in partnership with the Office of the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

Reasons for the recommendation are set out in greater detail within section 5 of the report, but can be summarised as:

- To improve facilities at the Earls Barton library.
- To promote safer streets in targeted areas with higher-than-average crime and anti-social behaviour.

Alternative Options Considered:

- Use of the funding is in line with the agreement, there is no alternative option proposed.

- By not approving these recommendations there would be an adverse impact on service provision and the completion of projects in North Northamptonshire.

315 Budget Forecast 2022/23 as at Period 5

The Chair invited Cllr Lloyd Bunday, Executive Member for Finance and Transformation to introduce a report that set out the forecast outturn position for the Council based on the Period 5 monitoring forecasts for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

Cllr Bunday drew attention to the status of legacy authority audited accounts and thanked the Finance team for their efforts in getting to this position, noting that the closure of the 2020/21 accounts for the former County Council was being led by West Northamptonshire Council and was progressing well with only a few small number of items to conclude.

The meeting heard that the overall outturn forecast for the General Fund for 2022/23, as at Period 5 was a forecast overspend of £3.7m against the approved budget, a favourable movement of £908,000 since the last report to Executive. It was reported that both Council Tax and Business Rates collection remained in a strong position. The contingency fund would be fully used by the end of the financial year to offset increased utility costs and the forthcoming pay award. The largest budgetary pressure came from the Children's Trust at £3.082m, with additional budget variances outlined to the meeting, especially those of the Place and Economy Service that was facing several pressures relating to utility costs, waste management and fleet vehicles.

Despite departments working hard to stay within budget, the Council operated a number of demand-led services and still had much to do in terms of aggregation and disaggregation of services as well as restructuring and transformation in the face of a number of financial pressures both national and global.

The meeting heard that the Council's Housing Revenue Account was currently forecasting a £126,000k underspend. Details of forecast rental positions, void rates and maintenance costs for both the Corby and Kettering accounts were provided to the meeting.

RESOLVED

That the Executive:

- a) Noted the Council's forecast outturn position for 2022/23 as summarised in Section 4, alongside the further analysis, risks and other considerations as set out in Section 5 and Section 6 of the report.
- b) Noted the assessment of the current deliverability of the 2022/23 savings proposals in Appendix A of the report.
- c) Noted the release of £500k of the contingency budget which was set aside to fund increased utility costs when the budget was set (see paragraph 5.48 of the report)

- d) Noted an increase in the gross budget of £2.466m to provide support for families and individuals in specific financial hardship to be funded from the Household Support Fund 3 grant (see paragraph 5.72 of the report).

Reason for Recommendations – to note the forecast financial position for 2022/23 as at Period 5 and consider the impact on this year and future years budgets.

Alternative Options Considered: The report focuses on the forecast revenue outturn against budget for 2022/23 and makes recommendations for the Executive to note the current budgetary position as such there are no specific choices within the report.

316 Urgent Items

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

317 Exclusion of the Press and Public

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

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

- Item 16 – Fletton Field, Oundle
- Item 17 – Legal Service Provision

318 Fletton Field - Oundle

The Chair invited Cllr Lyn Buckingham to address the meeting. Cllr Buckingham spoke in support of Fletton Field continuing to be utilised as a community space given its value to the residents of Oundle.

The Chair thanked Cllr Buckingham for her attendance before inviting Cllr Graham Lawman, Executive Member for Highways, Travel and Assets to introduce a report that sought confirmation of Fletton Field, Oundle as surplus to Council requirements and to authorise the transfer of the site following the statutory process documented in the Asset of Community Value (England) Regulations and the Council's Asset of Community Value Policy evaluation process, noting that any transfer would be subject to a restriction of the main use as public open space.

It was heard that Fletton Field was a former school playing field located within the central area of Oundle. It was left over from the reorganisation of schools in the former East Northamptonshire area. The former County Council had planned to sell it for

development, however these plans had not materialised, and the land became used by the local community for recreation, being declared an Asset of Community Value. Oundle Town Council had submitted a Community Asset Transfer request, so a decision on its future was required.

Both the Chair and Cllr Harrison welcomed the report noting that the status of the site had been a long-running issue and was one that required concluding.

RESOLVED

KEY DECISION

That the Executive:-

- a) Confirmed the category of land use as public open space and so foregoes any potential development value from the site.
- b) Confirmed Fletton Field as surplus and authorised the transfer of the site, following the statutory process documented in the Asset of Community Value (England) Regulations and the Council's Asset of Community Value Policy evaluation process.
- c) Noted that any transfer will be subject to a restriction of the main use as public open space.
- d) Noted that Oundle Town Council had already expressed an interest in acquiring the site to hold it as custodians for the community and maintain its use as public open space and that they will be eligible to bid for the site as part of the Asset of Community Value marketing process.
- e) Noted that Fletton Field Association continue to support community activity on Fletton Field and that this support is encouraged by the Council.
- f) Granted delegations to the Deputy Leader of the Council in consultation with the Assistant Director of Assets & Environment, to evaluate the bids, determine the preferred bidder and agree the financial terms of the transfer.

Reasons for Recommendations:

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- The recommendations provide certainty to the Council and the community regarding a local community asset.
- The Asset Management team tasked with reviewing options for Fletton Field have identified issues that would affect development, furthermore, development was not supported through the planning process, evidenced by two failed planning applications made by NCC.
- The Council is under an obligation to review surplus land holdings and bring sites forward within a reasonable timeframe. This site has been held surplus for over four years so a resolution to determine the outcome is due.

- There is no alternative use identified for this land by the Council.

Alternative Options Considered: The only reasonable alternative for the site would be for the Council to own it as public open space, however, the Council does not currently maintain Fletton Field and considers that ongoing custodianship of the field as public open space is best supported locally (subject to ensuring the land has adequate restrictions registered on the title that protect future use as an open space).

319 Legal Provision

The Chair introduced a report that set out how legal services were currently received by the Council, reviewed the options for legal provision and recommended that the Council utilised an in-house service to provide legal advice across unitary functions to support the Council in the future.

RESOLVED

KEY DECISION

That the Executive

- i) Agreed to the in-house delivery of legal services (Option 4 within the body of the report)
- ii) Noted the implications of agreeing to Option 4 as outlined in the report.
- iii) Delegated authority to the Chief Executive, Shareholder Representative (Cllr Lloyd Bunday) and Shareholder Business Partner (Monitoring Officer) to serve the written notice of termination on Pathfinder Legal Limited with immediate effect.
- iv) Noted that the loan to Pathfinder Legal Limited amounting to £237,500 will be re-payable to the Council through quarterly instalments over a 24-month period.
- v) Delegated authority to the Leader of the Council in consultation with the Director of Governance and HR to effect the transfer of the Council's shares in Pathfinder Legal Limited to Northamptonshire Children's Trust.
- vi) Delegated authority to the Leader of the Council in consultation with the Director of Governance and HR to negotiate and take all necessary steps to effect the Council's termination of its shareholding and receipt of services from Pathfinder Legal Ltd including as necessary the execution of relevant agreements with Pathfinder, West Northamptonshire Council and Northamptonshire Children's Trust in relation to the transfer of shares.

Alternative Options Considered – Alternative options of remaining with a mixed legal provision or transferring all legal services to Pathfinder Legal Ltd have been considered and discounted. The reasons for this are set out within the report.

Reason for Recommendations – An in-house provision is the model of service provision adopted by many local authorities across the country. The model allows the Council to retain control of its legal advice and expertise with the flexibility to deliver the service as needs arise. It also allows a clear line of responsibility, accountability, and governance.

Chair

Date

The meeting closed at 11.46 am