

## Minutes of a meeting of the Executive

At 9.00 am on Thursday 10th November, 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 John McGhee, Anne Lee, Lyn Buckingham, Dorothy Maxwell, Mark Pengelly, John McEwan, William Colquhoun, Barbara Jenney, Leanne Buckingham, Gill Mercer and Jean Addison

### 320 Apologies for absence

No apologies for absence were received.

### 321 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 13th October 2022

**RESOLVED** that: The Executive agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

### 322 Members' Declarations of Interest

No declarations were received.

### 323 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 – Hackney Carriage Fares Tariff	Cllrs Anne Lee, Mark Pengelly, William Colquhoun, Lyn Buckingham and Dorothy Maxwell
Item 7 – NNC Taxi and Private Hire Policy	Cllrs Anne Lee and Dorothy Maxwell

Item 8 – UK Shared Prosperity Fund	Cllrs John McGhee, Anne Lee, Mark Pengelly and Lyn Buckingham
Item 10 – Street Lighting LED Upgrade	Cllr Dorothy Maxwell
Item 11- Proposed amalgamation of Tennyson Road Infant School and Alfred Street Junior School in Rushden	Cllrs Gill Mercer and Dorothy Maxwell
Item 12 - Procurement and Implementation of Children’s Social Care Case Management System	Cllrs Lyn Buckingham and Dorothy Maxwell
Item 13 - Integrated Care Northamptonshire – Strategy, Outcomes Framework, North Place Delivery	Cllrs John McGhee and Dorothy Maxwell
Item 15 – Annual Report of Northamptonshire Children’s Trust	Cllrs Leanne Buckingham and Cllr Dorothy Maxwell
Item 22 – Surplus Asset Disposal (EXEMPT)	Cllr Mark Pengelly

Cllr Dorothy Maxwell withdrew from speaking in relation to Items 6, 7 and 10.

Cllr Mark Pengelly had left the meeting at the point Item 22 was considered and consequently did not speak on this item.

### **324 Performance Indicator Report 2022/23 (Period 6 - September 2022)**

The Executive Member for Finance and Transformation, Cllr Lloyd Bunday 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.

Cllr Bunday reported that 58.5% of performance indicators were currently on target or overperforming, with 13.8% within 5% of their respective targets. A total of 27.7% of indicators were underperforming and outside the 5% tolerance, with work being undertaken to address these.

Information provided as part of the report continued to be refined to reduce duplication, to focus attention on important data and improve the details relating to variances in performance and the actions taken to address any issues arising.

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

- Customer Services had assisted 47,500 customers in the period, with 3,000 face-to-face interactions.
- A total of 1800 road defects had been repaired across North Northamptonshire
- 94% of food establishments were now compliant with food safety legislation

Cllr Lawman welcomed the decline in road defects outstanding, and the increase in the number of defects repaired. In addition, it was positive to note the reduction in fly-tipping incidents.

## **RESOLVED**

That the Executive:

- a) Noted the performance of the Council as measured by the available indicators at Period 6 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 6, 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

### **325 Hackney Carriage Tariffs**

The Chair, Cllr Jason Smithers invited Cllr Anne Lee to address the meeting. Cllr Lee stated that harmonisation of fares was a complex subject and the volume of objections to an increase in fares should be heard and taken into account. Cllr Lee requested that the 50% increase for hirings after 5am on Sundays be considered for removal.

The Chair thanked Cllr Lee for her contribution before inviting Cllr Mark Pengelly to address the meeting. Cllr Pengelly noted the uniqueness of Corby with regards to its usage of Hackney Carriages and noted the volume of objectors to the proposals. The increases would have an impact on residents during a cost-of-living crisis and he echoed the comments of Cllr Lee regarding the 50% increase for Sunday hirings.

The Chair thanked Cllr Pengelly for his comments and invited Cllr William Colquhoun to address the Executive. Cllr Colquhoun spoke to state that drivers charging under the maximum tariff could cause chaos for residents. Again, the volume of objections was referenced, with a review of the proposals required given the strength of opposition in Corby.

Cllr Colquhoun was thanked for his comments, before the Chair welcomed Cllr Lyn Buckingham to the meeting to address the Executive. Cllr Buckingham echoed comments of earlier speakers, noting the unique role of taxis in Corby and that the comments of residents should be considered prior to any decision being made.

The Chair thanked Cllr Buckingham for her comments before inviting Cllr David Brackenbury, Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration to introduce a report that asked the Executive to consider objections received following the decision to agree fare increases made at the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022. The

Executive was also asked to consider whether these increases should stand or be amended, noting that any revised Fares Tariff/Table of Fares recommended were the maximum amount that could be charged, with Hackney Carriage Proprietors being at liberty to charge a lower fare.

Cllr Brackenbury thanked the speakers at both Executive meetings where the matter had been considered for their input into the complex process of fare harmonisation. It was heard that a legitimate request had come forward from the trade for an increase in fares across the four former sovereign areas to cover increased motoring costs and the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis. A unified maximum fare structure would provide clarity and consistency for Hackney Carriage users across North Northamptonshire and would feed into a larger piece of work regarding harmonisation of taxi and Hackney Carriage policies.

Cllr Brackenbury noted the strength of feeling and the volume of objections from Corby and recognised the unity and organisation of the Corby Hackney Carriage Association and the special role Hackney Carriages played in the town. The Council wished to see the trade thrive, however it was considered that the fare increase was fair and reasonable, and drivers were under no obligation to charge the maximum tariff and could charge less than this maximum to reflect local circumstances.

Cllr Graham Lawman spoke to note that no objections had been received from any of the other former sovereign areas except Corby and noted the opportunity for drivers to charge less than the maximum if it was felt that there was an affordability issue for passengers.

The Chair spoke to thank Cllr Brackenbury and the team of officers for bringing a complex matter to a conclusion. The Chair noted the strength of local feeling on the matter, but also the need for a fare increase in the current financial climate.

## **RESOLVED**

### **KEY DECISION**

That the Executive;

- a) Approved an increase in fares in the Corby zone based upon the aligned fare tariff detailed in the public notice within **Appendix A**

Reason for Recommendation: The trade previously made representation that an increase in fares is required to ensure that the increased costs of running the service are covered. Since there were no objections received for the East, Kettering or Wellingborough zone, three aligned Table of Fares have been introduced in these areas. Full alignment of fares across all four zones is considered to be important, so that all residents within North Northamptonshire will be subject to the same maximum fare, regardless of where they reside or work.

Alternative Options Considered: The below options were considered for the Corby zone on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022 and can be reconsidered;

- i) To recommend the approval of the Corby Hackney Owners Association (CHOA) proposed increase in fare tariff
- ii) To recommend a different increase in fares
- iii) Refuse any increase

## **326 North Northamptonshire Council Taxi and Private Hire Policy**

The Chair, Cllr Jason Smithers invited Cllr Anne Lee to address the meeting. Cllr queried why no speakers had been allowed at the Licensing Committee when considering this item and stated that the Council was not listening to the opinions of those who had to live with the outcomes of decisions being made by the authority. Cllr Lee also queried emissions standards timings within the report.

The Chair thanked Cllr Lee for her contribution and clarified that there was currently no mechanism under the Council's Constitution to allow for speakers to be involved at Licensing Committee meetings.

The Chair then invited Cllr David Brackenbury to introduce a report that sought approval for the North Northamptonshire Taxi and Private Hire Policy which would harmonise a number of legacy policies and standards in place for licensed vehicles, drivers and operators. One unified policy was required to ensure consistent standards and decision making across the authority.

Cllr Brackenbury stated that the new policy would raise standards and assist the Council in moving the trade locally towards net zero emissions. It was appreciated that this would be a balancing act and needed to be carefully phased. The Council had therefore taken into consideration concerns raised during the associated consultation process to do with age limits on licensed vehicles, fold down seats in certain vehicles and emissions standards. A separate piece of work would be undertaken regarding a training and testing regime for drivers.

A number of responses regarding zero emission vehicles had been received. The draft policy had provided a two-stage approach to help meet the Authority's climate change target as below:

- From 2025 no new applications would be accepted for vehicles fuelled only by diesel or petrol and all new vehicle licence applications were required to be zero emission vehicles
- No licences for vehicles fuelled by petrol only or diesel only would be renewed after 31<sup>st</sup> December 2030 and all existing licences for petrol only and diesel only fuelled vehicles would expire on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2030.

In view of the feedback received and recognising the considerable investment required, the first stage had been removed from the policy. Cllr Brackenbury concluded by thanking all those involved in the production of a complex and involved policy document.

Cllr Lawman spoke to state that he was willing to engage with taxi drivers regarding the siting of electric charging points in North Northamptonshire to support in the conversion of the trade to electric vehicles. In addition, he spoke to welcome the provisions of the policy in relation to wheelchair users.

## **RESOLVED**

### **KEY DECISION**

That the Executive approved the policy and appendices for adoption by North Northamptonshire Council with an implementation date of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.

Reason For Recommendation: Each of the sovereign authorities currently has their own Taxi and Private Hire policies and standards in place, which have very different requirements for licensed vehicles, drivers and operators. One unified policy is required to ensure consistent standards and decision making across the authority.

The draft policy has been amended following feedback received from the trade and was discussed and agreed with Members of the Licensing and Appeals Committee on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

Alternative Options Considered: The Executive could further amend the content of the policy before implementation or could refuse to approve the policy. Failure to approve the policy would however result in the council continuing to operate under the four sovereign policies, resulting in the continuation of differing standards for licensed drivers, vehicles and operators and the council would not have one single unified policy which promotes consistent decision making.

### **327 UK Shared Prosperity Fund**

The Chair welcomed Cllr John McGhee to the meeting and invited him to address the Executive. Cllr McGhee queried whether the Council had yet received the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) award from the Government and whether the full amount could still be expected given the national financial crisis. Cllr McGhee raised concerns regarding the decision-making process as to where the money would be spent and requested access to the minutes of UKSPF Panel meetings where decisions had been made. Cllr McGhee concluded by stating that he believed the funding was not being utilised sufficiently in “left-behind” areas.

The Chair thanked Cllr McGhee for his comments and invited Cllr Anne Lee to address the meeting. Cllr Lee registered her disappointment at the plans for the funding and the lack of support for the levelling-up agenda and stated that she would be requesting a breakdown of where the funding had been spent.

The Chair then invited Cllr Mark Pengelly to address the Executive. Cllr Pengelly stated that the Shared Prosperity Fund was a central pillar of the levelling-up agenda and asked the Executive to make a commitment to circulate more information to members regarding the use of the funding award.

Cllr Lyn Buckingham was then invited to speak to the meeting. Cllr Buckingham welcomed the proposals in the report for “rural-proofing” noting that rural areas of North Northamptonshire had pockets of deprivation. Cllr Buckingham also queried why no funding had been allocated to the People and Skills area for the first two years and whether utilising funding on the Greenway was correct given the current financial climate. Cllr Buckingham concluded by querying the level of funding that had been

allocated to undertake feasibility studies in relation to Communities and Place projects.

The Chair thanked all the speakers for their involvement before inviting Cllr David Brackenbury, Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration to introduce a report that set out the progress made to date towards unlocking the allocated UK Shared Prosperity Fund through the submission of Investment Plans and sought approval of further detailed plans and initiatives as well as approval to submit the Rural England Prosperity Fund addendum to secure allocated funding.

Cllr Brackenbury thanked the speakers for their input and clarified a number of points raised, noting that the allocated funding level had not altered despite national financial pressures. It was noted that the funding award was comprised of three funding streams:

- The Core UKSPF Investment Plan allocation of £4,835,332
- The Rural England Prosperity Fund allocation of £1,161,812 to support both local rural communities and businesses in rural areas.
- The Multiply Investment Plan allocation of £1,909,635 ringfenced to support adult numeracy programmes.

Cllr Brackenbury noted that careful consideration had been given as to how the funding could be spent to attract footfall and investment to North Northamptonshire. The use of funding towards the creation of a DiscoverNN Tourist Information Unit at Rushden Lakes would be beneficial in promoting everything the Council had to offer, whilst funding relating to the Greenway would bolster one of the largest active travel programmes in the country. At the same time, areas of deprivation had not been forgotten and would also receive support.

In regard to the People and Skills element not receiving funding for the initial two years, it was heard that this area was currently funded from EU funding streams which would come to an end in 2024 at which point UKSPF funding would commence.

Cllr Brackenbury concluded by stating that a wide-ranging engagement exercise had been undertaken with stakeholders regarding use of the funding, with a UKSPF Panel convened comprised of five Executive members to develop and submit the necessary investment plan required for the funding to be accessed. The panel had tried to provide a balanced, well-coordinated use of the funding, with a view to developing alternative sources of funding to deliver other projects pump primed by the UKSPF.

Cllr Helen Howell spoke to note that a significant number of projects had come forward for possible funding in various stages of development, however only projects that were ready to go could be submitted due to funding deadlines involved. There was nothing to prevent suggested projects from further work to become viable in future. Cllr Howell spoke positively of the Greenway, noting the potential for improving accessibility to employment and leisure opportunities while reducing vehicle reliance.

Cllr Matt Binley spoke to note that as “levelling-up” formed part of his portfolio, he had made a number of comments in regard to the distribution of funding that had been included in the final plans. Cllr Binley stated that while a levelling-up theme ran through the plans, investing in the whole of North Northamptonshire would have a wider impact on revenue generation for the whole area.

Cllr Helen Harrison spoke to note that should projects not be immediately ready to go, access to future funding streams would not be available. The Multiply Investment Fund was considered to be an innovative and imaginative proposal that would assist with the levelling-up agenda by getting to the root of adult numeracy issues that many people in North Northamptonshire struggled with.

Cllr Harriet Pentland spoke to note the importance of the Greenway project in encouraging more people to cycle and walk to work.

Cllr David Howes welcomed the positive nature of the report and referenced the funding for Rural Areas, noting that there were a number of businesses within the rural community that needed the support this funding could offer.

Cllr Graham Lawman spoke in support of the DiscoverNN Tourist Information Unit given the number of visitors attracted to Rushden Lakes annually. In addition, support for the Greenway was of great importance to allow the Council to meet its commitments for carbon neutrality.

## **RESOLVED**

### **KEY DECISION**

That the Executive:

- a) Approved Core UKSPF interventions and allocations set out in Section 4 and **Appendix A** of the report, and delegated authority to the Executive Member for Growth & Regeneration in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing, Communities & Levelling Up and the Executive Director of Place & Economy to agree further details of delivery and related initiatives, including any contracts, funding agreements and/or variations to allocations
- b) Delegated authority to the Executive Member for Growth & Regeneration in consultation with the Executive Member for Rural Communities & Localism, and Executive Director of Place & Economy to submit the Rural England Prosperity Fund addendum.
- c) Delegated authority to the Executive Member for Growth & Regeneration in consultation with the Executive Members for Rural Communities & Localism; and Housing, Communities & Levelling-Up in consultation with the Executive Director of Place and Economy to consider and agree the Rural Addendum with priority interventions for submission by 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022.



#### Reasons for Recommendations:

- To enable projects to commence delivery and enable Year 1 spend by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023
- To facilitate preparation work to commence on Year 2 and Year 3 interventions and related initiatives
- To ensure that the Rural addendum, with priority interventions, is submitted before the deadline of 30<sup>th</sup> November to enable North Northamptonshire to secure its allocated funding

#### Alternative Options Considered:

- The Council did not submit an Investment Plan or does not submit a Rural addendum, meaning that the area is not able to access its allocation resulting in the loss of significant funds and related outcomes and benefits

### **328 Provision of Building Cleaning Services**

The Chair invited Cllr Graham Lawman, Executive Member for Highways, Travel and Assets to introduce a report that sought to summarise the work undertaken to analyse the options to secure cost-effective, medium-term Building Cleaning Services across North Northamptonshire Council's buildings. The report also recommended a preferred way forward and sought permission to use an established framework agreement to appoint a suitable Cleaning Services provider.

Cllr Lawman noted that the appointment of a service provider would regularise arrangements for the cleaning of buildings across the Council's operational estate, providing consistency and a cost-effective service as well as flexibility. It was hoped that local suppliers would sign up to the framework allowing them to tender for the service, subject to meeting the relevant requirements.

#### **RESOLVED**

#### KEY DECISION

That the Executive:

- a) Confirmed the preferred procurement route for a cleaning service contract via an appropriate framework agreement.
- b) Delegated authority to the Executive Member for Highways, Transport and Assets, in consultation with the Assistant Director of Assets & Environment to:
  - i. finalise the scope of services, list of buildings and the preferred service standards to be specified.
  - ii. ensure scalability and willingness of the supplier to invest are included as key requirements.
  - iii. to enter into the necessary contractual arrangements to secure best value for delivering the cleaning service.

#### Reasons for Recommendations:

- The recommendation provides a cost-effective solution, which can be deployed to suit the changes in service need and delivery throughout the contract period.
- The proposed option will provide a reliable cleaning service, provision to monitor contractor performance, providing quality services for North Northamptonshire residents.
- The proposed framework route will allow flexibility to add and remove the buildings covered by the contract as the Council's estate is reviewed and evolves over the coming years.

Alternative Options Considered: A number of alternative options were considered by both operational managers and procurement colleagues, including building an in-house team or undertaking the bespoke procurement of a new Cleaning Services contract. The preferred option was deemed to offer the best value for money to the Council in terms of time to deploy the new arrangements, access to established providers, procurement costs, risk and overall value for money.

### **329 Street Lighting LED Upgrade**

The Chair invited Cllr Graham Lawman, Executive Member for Highways, Travel and Assets to introduce a report that set out the proposal to replace the existing Highway Street Lighting Private Finance Initiative stock lanterns with light-emitting diode (LED) units, whilst maintaining current lighting standards.

Cllr Lawman stated that the report only referred to those streetlights within the Council's PFI agreement with Connect Roads/ Balfour Beatty. It did not include those street lighting assets formerly owned and managed by the district and borough councils. In addition, no areas that had previously been de-illuminated would be re-illuminated.

It was heard that the project had been considered by the Council's Strategic Capital Board with a case for investment made on the basis of a number of benefits including lowering of the Council's carbon footprint, mitigation of future increases in energy costs, maintenance of current lighting standards, the increased life of assets and the ability to improve management and potentially further reduce costs through remote monitoring. It was anticipated that the pay-back point would be after approximately 10.5 years and the installation programme would last around 120 weeks.

Both Cllrs Harriet Pentland and Matthew Binley spoke to welcome the proposal, especially the positive reduction in CO2 emissions that would arise as a result of the installations.

#### **RESOLVED**

#### **KEY DECISION**

That the Executive:

- a) Confirmed approval to proceed with the LED replacement and Central Management System (CMS) upgrade of streetlights within the PFI agreement with Connect Roads/ Balfour Beatty.
- b) Delegated authority to the Executive Member for Highways, Travel and Assets, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance, the Executive Director for Finance and the Executive Director for Place and Economy to:
  - i. secure and allocate appropriate funding, through Prudential Borrowing;
  - ii. agree the necessary changes to the PFI funding agreement with Connect Roads/Balfour Beatty to complete the required works.

Reason for Recommendations: The recommendations will deliver against the Council's priorities to provide efficient services that deliver value for money, whilst maintaining a safe public highway and reduce carbon emissions in line with the Council's commitment to becoming carbon net zero by 2030.

Alternative Options Considered:

- An alternative is to continue with the current street lighting lanterns, which would avoid the need to provide capital funding for investment. This option would not deliver the financial, social or environmental objectives of the proposed recommendations
- It would be possible to change the lanterns to LEDs, but not install the CMS. This would not deliver the operational and potential financial and environmental benefits of having remote control over the network of streetlights, so this is not recommended.
- The Council owns and manages streetlights, inherited from the former district and boroughs, which are not part of the street lighting PFI. In order to convert those assets to LED, they would first need to be transferred into the PFI. It is not proposed to transfer those assets to the PFI through this project as it will require additional inspection and upgrade of those assets in order to meet the strict specification requirements of the PFI. This is a separate consideration, and investment, that the Council may want to explore at another time.

### **330 Proposed Amalgamation of Tennyson Rd Infant School and Alfred St Junior School, Rushden**

The Chair invited Cllr Gill Mercer to address the Executive. Cllr Mercer stated there had been some confusion regarding the consultation in relation to the proposed amalgamation of Tennyson Road Infant School and Alfred Street Junior School. It was heard that consultations should be clear as to what was being asked, as there was an expectation among some respondents that that the consultation was to agree a single site for the amalgamated school. Full consultation would be required should school governors later decide to move to a single site, with ward members and stakeholders kept fully apprised.

The Chair thanked Cllr Mercer for her contribution and invited Cllr Dorothy Maxwell to address the meeting. Cllr Maxwell noted that the amalgamation process had taken a significant amount of time with aspects of the consultation not being clearly defined.

The Chair then invited Cllr Scott Edwards, Executive Member for Children, Families, Education & Skills to introduce a report that sought to inform the Executive of the outcomes of the statutory period of formal consultation approved by the Executive on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2022 and further sought its decision on the proposed amalgamation for Tennyson Road Infant School and Alfred Street Junior School as requested by the respective governing bodies

Cllr Edwards clarified that the proposed amalgamation would have no impact on the operation at either site. Any proposed future change to either site would be further investigated and involve further consultation.

Cllr Edwards proposed a recommendation that Tennyson Road Infant School and Alfred Street Junior School in Rushden be amalgamated.

## **RESOLVED**

### **KEY DECISION**

That the Executive approved the amalgamation of Tennyson Road Infant School and Alfred Street Junior School in Rushden.

### **Reasons for Recommendation:**

- i) To support children and young people and their families to access high quality sustainable education that facilitates the achievement of best outcomes
- ii) To progress the amalgamation of the schools in accordance with legislative requirements and Department for Education statutory guidance.
- iii) Based upon the financial position and school performance it is not a viable solution to take no action to progress the statutory process for the amalgamation

Alternative Options Considered: Having been approached by the governing body of both schools with the proposal to merge, the Council considered the benefits of this option against the maintenance of the two separate schools. The conclusion reached was that the merger provided a much greater opportunity to drive the improvement in outcomes for children at pace, and to deliver efficiency savings that would contribute to the financial stability of the new school. Further details of these considerations are set out in this report.

### 331 Procurement and Implementation of Children's Social Care Case Management System

The Chair invited Cllr Lyn Buckingham to address the Executive. Cllr Buckingham sought clarity on the finances involved in the request for a Children's Social Care Case Management System.

The Chair thanked Cllr Buckingham for her comments and clarified that the current contractual arrangements would come to an end in January 2025 and there would therefore be a cost to implement a new Case Management System contract.

The Chair then invited Cllr Dorothy Maxwell to speak. Cllr Maxwell stated that it was time for the Council to take responsibility for delivering its own programme.

The Chair thanked Cllr Maxwell for her comments before inviting Cllr Scott Edwards, Executive Member for Children, Families, Education and Skills to introduce a report that sought approval to proceed with the replacement of the Case Management System for Children's Social Care across Northamptonshire, to be operated by Northamptonshire Children's Trust through a contribution by North Northamptonshire Council.

Cllr Edwards stated that the current contract had no provision to be extended beyond January 2025, therefore a new system contract was required. The meeting heard that a previous capital bid for funding of the procurement and implementation costs associated with a new system had been submitted to Strategic Capital Board in June 2022. However, following the NNC Capital Board and further due diligence it was now confirmed as being a revenue bid, as it was deemed that an asset would not be created, the system being "cloud-based" and therefore could not be funded from capital resources.

The costs of the new system would be split between West Northamptonshire Council and North Northamptonshire Council on a 56%/44% basis, the total contribution by North Northamptonshire being £1.236m.

#### **RESOLVED**

#### **KEY DECISION**

That the Executive:

- a) Agreed to proceed with the replacement of the Case Management System for the Children's Social Care across Northamptonshire, which will be operated by Northants Children's Trust (NCT), contribution by North Northamptonshire is £1.236m as outlined in section 5.5.
- b) 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.
- c) Recommended to Council that it delegates authority to the Executive Member of 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.

Reason for Recommendations: To implement a new Case Management System which is fit for purpose and meets the statutory obligations in delivering Children's Social Care across Northamptonshire.

Alternative Options Considered:

- For the current system (CareFirst) to continue to be used impacting the transformation and process changes to be reflected on the case management system.
- For the Eclipse system to be implemented under the current contract. However, the contract will still expire in Jan 2025 and a re-procurement would need to begin prior to implementation of the system.
- To have no case management system would not be a viable option that could be considered.
- There are no other case management software applications in use within the Council that that could be utilised by NCT.

### **332 Integrated Care Northamptonshire - Strategy, Outcomes Framework, North Place Delivery**

The Chair invited Cllr Dorothy Maxwell to address the meeting. Cllr Maxwell noted that the production of an Integrated Care Northamptonshire Strategy was a positive step forward, but there remained issues to be worked on. Cllr Maxwell referenced rural connectivity, health needs of residents, childhood obesity, fuel poverty and the impact of socio-economic factors on residents' wellbeing.

The Chair thanked Cllr Maxwell for her comments and invited Cllr John McGhee to address the meeting. Cllr McGhee made reference to the lack of detail regarding the alignment of budgets that would allow for true integration of the care system. Cllr McGhee also referenced the inequality in life-expectancy across North Northamptonshire and the need to concentrate efforts on the areas with greatest inequality.

The Chair thanked Cllr McGhee for his attendance before inviting Cllr Helen Harrison, Executive Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing to introduce a report that provided an overview of the development of the Integrated Care Northamptonshire Strategy and its outcomes framework. The report also provided an overview of the progression of the Northamptonshire Integrated Care System development of the 'North Place' as it moved into the implementation phase.

Cllr Harrison reported that one of the Northamptonshire Integrated Care Partnership responsibilities was to have oversight of existing strategies and health inequalities, with the document before members detailing ten specific areas considered to be priorities in the development of a five-to-ten-year strategy to support the planning and improvement of health and care. It was noted that the ten ambitions of the strategy aligned well with the Council's own strategies and would allow delivery of commitments as the strategy developed.

Cllr Harrison advised the Executive that the alignment of existing and future Council strategies to the emerging Integrated Care Strategy would be presented to the North Health and Wellbeing Board on 29<sup>th</sup> November before presentation for approval at the Integrated Care Partnership on 1<sup>st</sup> December.

The meeting heard that there was an intention to deliver the ambitions of the strategy through a joined-up approach across all the organisations and services involved through a North Place delivery model involving seven Local Area Partnerships (LAPs) and four Community Wellbeing Forums (CWF). It was noted that Corby and Wellingborough rural LAPs had their inaugural meetings in November, with the remaining the LAPs being implemented in December and January 2023. The initial CWF meetings were taking place in the forthcoming days in Kettering, Wellingborough and Corby, with representation from a variety of partner organisations bringing together intelligence and resources to solve problems locally.

The Chair commended the work that had been undertaken in relation to the strategy and offered his thanks to all those involved in its preparation.

Cllrs Howell, Brackenbury and Lawman spoke to welcome the report and the ambitious vision it contained, noting the opportunity to directly engage in setting the health agenda locally as well as the benefits of utilising a multi-agency approach.

## **RESOLVED**

### **KEY DECISION**

That the Executive:

- a) Considered the alignment of NNC strategies with the development of the Integrated Care Northamptonshire Strategy – Live Your Best Life.
- b) Noted the progress of the Integrated Care Partnership North Place development and implementation and its role in delivering the strategy.

Reason for Recommendations: The Executive is asked to consider alignment of existing and future NNC strategies to the emerging Integrated Care strategy.

Alternative Options Considered: There are no other options as this is a national request

## **333 Northamptonshire Safeguarding Adults Board - Annual Report 2021/2022**

The Chair invited Cllr Helen Harrison, Executive Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing to introduce a report that presented to the Executive the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Adult Board (NSAB) Annual Report 2021-2022 and outlined Board and statutory partner achievements during the year.

Cllr Harrison proposed an additional recommendation that would see the Annual Report presented to Full Council for noting at its meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> November.

The meeting noted that the 2020/21 annual report of the Board had been received by Executive at its meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> August. The report of the Board was a statutory requirement and provided an overview of the progress and achievements against the NSAB Strategic Plan for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. The progress made against the plan was detailed via the achievements of the NSAB Sub-Groups, work of the Delivery Board and Strategic Board. In addition, updates from the Chairs of sub-groups had been brought forward.

It was noted that since the previous iteration was presented, engagement had increased and there was now an Independent Scrutineer overseeing the work that was being undertaken to provide constructive challenge. The meeting noted that a range of learning events for partners agencies had been delivered and reference was made to Safeguarding Adult Reviews activity undertaken.

The Chair welcomed both the report and the proposed additional recommendation, noting that safeguarding was the responsibility of all Members with the report providing an understanding of the depth of the work undertaken in this area.

Cllrs Pentland, Brackenbury and Howell spoke to welcome the report, the depth of work undertaken, and the positive impact seen in the reduction of domestic abuse statistics.

Cllr Harrison concluded by noting that the position of Chair of the Safeguarding Adults Board had now gone to David Watts, Executive Director of Adults, Health Partnerships and Housing, with the annual report for 2022/23 set to be written by him.

## **RESOLVED**

That the Executive:

- a) Noted the NSAB Annual Report 2021-2022 as approved by the NSAB Strategic Board on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2022 at Appendix A of the report
- b) Acknowledged the contribution that North Northamptonshire Council has made in supporting NSAB's achievements in keeping adults safe from harm.
- c) Recommended that the NSAB Annual Report be taken to Full Council for consideration and noting at its meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> November.

Reason for Recommendations: The report provides assurance to the Executive of the activities undertaken to help safeguard adults across North Northamptonshire.

Alternative Options Considered: That the report is not presented for consideration by the Executive as the DASS approved the report as the Chair of NSAB.

## **334 Annual Report of Northamptonshire Children's Trust**

The Chair invited Cllr Leanne Buckingham to address the Executive. Cllr Buckingham welcomed the report being sent to councillors but raised concerns regarding a lack of



detail in regard to the work undertaken by the Trust, the strategies being used and the progress of the internal audit review for 2021/22. Cllr Buckingham noted that there remained much work still to do, especially at a strategic level given the Trust had significantly exceeded its annual budget, with better insight needed to allow for young people to be served more quickly and in their own area.

The Chair thanked Cllr Buckingham for her comments before inviting Cllr Dorothy Maxwell to speak to the Executive. Cllr Maxwell queried the numbers of outstanding assessments and educational psychologists employed, as well as the number of children located outside North Northamptonshire and those in care.

The Chair thanked Cllr Maxwell for her contribution before inviting Cllr Scott Edwards, Executive Member for Children, Families, Education & Skills to introduce a report that provided Executive with an update on the Annual Report of Northamptonshire Children's Trust and sought approval on the report being shared at the next Full Council meeting.

In response to a point raised by Cllr Buckingham, Cllr Edwards clarified that all of the internal audit review audits had now been completed for 2021/22. It was noted that the report before members had been submitted to the Scrutiny Commission meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> November who heard that demand led pressures were increasing and putting pressure on the Children's Trust budget. The report would be submitted to Full Council at its meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> November.

It was reported that a key part of the annual review process was considering whether any changes needed to be made to the contractual agreements between the Trust and West and North Northamptonshire Councils. The Trust had put forward some initial suggested amendments to the current Key Performance Indicators used to monitor performance, with these due to be reviewed in light of the recent Ofsted Inspection report that was expected to be published on 25<sup>th</sup> November.

Cllr Edwards stated that the Trust had overspent against its £123.348m budget by £3.701m, and mitigations to offset this overspend were outlined to the meeting. Cllr Edwards concluded by noting that the Trust continued to work with the Council to offer the best value for money and importantly the best possible service for the children of North Northamptonshire.

## **RESOLVED**

That the Executive:

- a) Noted the content of the Annual Report that was completed in line with the service delivery contract.
- b) Noted 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) due to take place in Autumn 2022.
- c) Recommended that the annual report is taken to Council for consideration.

#### Reasons for Recommendations:

- The Annual Review process and subsequent Annual Report provides a procedure through which the Councils can review the Service Delivery Contract and Northamptonshire Children's Trust performance in delivering its functions
- Making changes to the Service Delivery Contract after the expected Ofsted inspection allows any changes to be considered in the context of the outcome of this inspection and any recommendations from Ofsted
- Taking the report to Full Council gives all elected members an insight into the work of Northamptonshire Children's Trust and supports the discharge of their Corporate Parenting duties

Alternative Options Considered: No other options considered

### **335 Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2023/24**

The Chair invited Cllr Lloyd Bunday, Executive Member for Finance and Transformation to introduce a report that updated the Executive on the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2022/23 and proposed the continuation of the scheme for 2023/24.

Cllr Bunday noted the statutory requirement for the Council to operate a Local Council Tax Support Scheme and advised the meeting that following Unitarisation in April 2021 a single scheme had been consulted on and implemented for North Northamptonshire resulting in a scheme where all working age claimants were required to pay a minimum of 25% towards their Council Tax liability.

The scheme had been reviewed for 2022/23 and had been decided at Full Council on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021 that the scheme for 2022/23 would remain the same as that in place for 2021/22. It was now proposed to continue with the scheme for 2023/24 with a recommendation to Full Council on that basis. It was reported that decreasing the contribution would lead to a budget pressure and increasing the contribution would result in the scheme exceeding the breakeven requirement.

It was reported that Council Tax collection rates were strong, currently 1.01% above the previous year. In addition, the Council operated a discretionary discount scheme to mitigate unforeseen or exceptional hardship for claimants in line with Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act. The Council's Social Inclusion team had spoken with claimants and provided assistance with a variety of benefit eligibility claims and provided general money and debt advice.

The Chair thanked the Social Inclusion Team for their hard work in offering support to North Northamptonshire's most vulnerable residents at a difficult time.

## **RESOLVED**

### KEY DECISION

That the Executive

- a) Considered the information as set out in the report and endorsed a proposed 2023/24 Local Council Tax Support Scheme which maintains the current 2022/23 scheme, allowing for the changes required to reflect the annual uprating of allowances and premiums and any statutory base legislation changes which are required to be made to the scheme.
- b) Recommended the proposed LCTS Scheme 2023/24 to Council for approval at its meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

Reasons for Recommendations: to deliver a Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2023/24 that meets statutory requirements.

Alternative Options Considered: The Council could choose to increase or decrease the minimum contribution payable by the customer. Decreasing the contribution would lead to a budget pressure and increasing the contribution would result in the scheme exceeding the breakeven requirement as detailed in paragraphs 7.1.2 and 7.1.3 of the report.

### **336 Indicative Budget Timeline and Scrutiny Process 2023- 24 - Update**

The Chair invited Cllr Lloyd Bunday, Executive Member for Finance and Transformation to introduce a report that provided an overview of the budget timeline for the 2023/24 budget process for the General Fund, the Housing Revenue Account and the Capital Programme. An update was also provided in regard to the proposed arrangements for scrutiny.

Cllr Bunday stated that the Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee had received the proposed budget timeline and scrutiny arrangements at its meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> October and was generally supportive of the approach and particularly welcomed the greater focus this year on the budget setting for the contract with the Children's Trust. Timelines for scrutiny of the Children's Trust and the General Fund and HRA budgets were highlighted to the meeting.

Members noted that in-year budget scrutiny had already commenced, with Phase 2 to take place once the 2023/24 draft budgets proposals had been reported to Executive. It was anticipated that this would take place at its next meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2022.

## **RESOLVED**

### KEY DECISION

That the Executive:

- a) Noted the proposed timeline for the setting of the budget and that this may be subject to change in line with Government announcements or other factors.
- b) Noted the proposed budget setting and scrutiny arrangements for the Children's Trust as set out in this report, see particularly paragraphs 5.7 to 5.11 of the report.
- c) Noted the overall indicative timeline for the budget setting as set out under paragraph 5.12.
- d) Noted that the process has been to Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee for comment and that the approach outlined in this report was approved.

Reason for Recommendations: To inform Executive of the indicative budget timeline for 2023/24 and the arrangements for the scrutiny of the budget by the Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

Alternative Options: There are no alternative options under consideration, due to the need to meet approval deadlines and consultation requirements. The Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee considered the proposals as set out in section 6 of this report regarding the scrutiny arrangements and were agreed to proceed on the basis as outlined. Some dates of the scrutiny committee work group meetings remain subject to finalisation, as outlined in the report, and others may be affected by further Government announcements.

### **337 Treasury Management Mid-Year Report to September 2022**

The Chair invited Cllr Lloyd Bunday, Executive Member for Finance and Transformation to introduce a report that provided a review of the Council's treasury management and prudential indicators. In addition, the report provided an update regarding North Northamptonshire Council's treasury management activities and performance in the six months to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022, in accordance with the CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management.

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

The report before Members provided an update on the borrowing, investments and cash flows, money market and capital market activities to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

#### **RESOLVED**

#### **KEY DECISION**

That the Executive:

- a) Noted the activity undertaken during the first half of the financial year ended 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022 and the performance achieved as set out in Appendix A to this report: and
- b) Noted that all treasury activities were undertaken in line with the approved Treasury Management Strategy/Annual Investment Strategy.

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

Alternative Options Considered: This report is for information and there are no alternative options for consideration.

### **338 Capital Outturn 2022-23 – Draft Outturn as at Period 6**

The Chair then invited Cllr Lloyd Bunday, Executive Member for Finance and Transformation to introduce a report that set out the provisional capital outturn position for 2022/23 as at Period 6, including requests to rephase scheme expenditure profiles.

The report also detailed the latest capital budgets for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme, including new schemes approved since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022.

It was heard that the outturn for 2022/23 in respect of the General Fund Capital Programme showed a revised capital budget position of £99.4m, including slippage and in-year approved programmes. The outturn showed a spend of £48.5m, an underspend or slippage of £50.8m against the budget. In relation to the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme, the outturn showed a spend of £11.7m, an underspend of £17m compared to budget, which would be reviewed and re-profiled considering the latest position.

#### **RESOLVED**

That the Executive:

- a) Noted the draft capital outturn position for the General Fund (GF) Capital Programme and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme for 2022/23.
- b) Noted the new schemes that have been approved since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022.

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

Alternative Options Considered: This report is for noting and alternative options are not proposed

### 339 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.

Five schemes were highlighted as per the report and recommendation below. Furthermore, there were two recommendations to Full Council to approve borrowing proposals; the Street Lighting LED Upgrade Project and Children's Residential Homes provision.

#### **RESOLVED**

#### KEY DECISION

That the Executive:

- i) Approved the following changes to the capital programme:
  - a. Garden Communities (sustainable urban extensions) - increase of £1.428m to the capital programme for 2022/23, which is to be funded from the Homes England Garden Communities Grant.
  - b. Changing Places, increase of £0.497m to the capital programme; £0.186m in 2022/23 and £0.311m in 2023/24, which £0.330m is to be funded from Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and £0.167m from capital receipts.
  - c. Discover North Northamptonshire Tourism Hub – increase of £0.245m to the capital programme, which is to be funded from UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
  - d. 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.
  - e. Children's Residential Home provision – increase of £0.762m to the capital programme to be funded from borrowing.
  
- ii) Recommended to Council to approve the following borrowing proposals for:
  - a. the Street lighting LED Upgrade Project - £6.170m.
  - b. Children's Residential Homes provision - £0.762m

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

- To support the delivery of sustainable urban extensions of 25,000 homes within North Northamptonshire.

- To improve changing facilities within North Northamptonshire.
- To promote tourism hubs in targeted area within Rushden Lakes.
- To support the delivery of energy efficient street lighting and reduce carbon emissions.
- To support the delivery of children's residential places within Northamptonshire.

Alternative Options Considered:

- Where grant funded, the use of the funding is in line with the agreement, and there is no alternative option proposed.
- Where the schemes are not funded through a specific grant, then the alternative option at this stage would be to not approve them. However, this would have an adverse impact on meeting service needs, reducing carbon and the completion of other improvements across North Northamptonshire.

### **340 Budget Forecast 2022/23 as at Period 6**

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 6 monitoring forecasts for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

The meeting heard that the overall outturn forecast for the General Fund for 2022/23, as at Period 6 was a forecast overspend of £3.875m against the approved budget, an adverse movement of £157,000 since the last report to Executive. The largest budgetary pressure came from the Children's Trust at £4.9m. Aside from the Children's Trust, it was reported that general spending pressures were as a result of inflationary pressure, especially in relation to increased utility costs that were impacting areas such as streetlighting, traffic signals and the leisure sector. It was recommended that Council provide financial support up to £556k to external leisure providers to help mitigate the pressures faced by the sector. In addition, the recent national pay award had come in above the budgetary assumption of 3% and would need to be met from contingency funds.

Cllr Bunday reported that the Housing Revenue Account had a current underspend totalling £93,000.

It was noted that the main issues facing the budget position were the impacts of inflation and changes within demand-led services. Global and national events and associated inflationary pressure could not have been reasonably foreseen at the current scale, with the economic downturn adversely impacting both service requirements and income generation. The Government's Autumn Statement was keenly awaited to give the Council a greater understanding of the financial implications for itself, businesses and residents as it continued to work hard to balance finances while protecting vital services for its most vulnerable residents.

### **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 that the Council will provide financial support up to £556k to external leisure providers as set out in section 5.45 to 5.48 of the report.

Reason for Recommendations: to note the forecast financial position for 2022/23 as at Period 6 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

### **341 Surplus Asset Disposals**

The Chair invited Cllr Graham Lawman, Executive Member for Highways, Travel and Assets to introduce a report that sought approval to progress the sale of general fund vacant property and land assets deemed surplus on the Council's asset register in order to facilitate local redevelopment and support the Council's capital receipt programme.

It was noted that the Council had inherited a number of assets from the former borough and district councils, with many of these previously approved for disposal prior to unitarisation. If approved, the sale of the six specified assets would not only support the capital receipt programme but save ongoing maintenance costs and assist with the Council's five-year land supply as well as the regeneration of the areas in which they were located.

#### **RESOLVED**

#### **KEY DECISION**

That the Executive granted delegations to the Executive Member for Highways, Travel & Assets, in consultation with the Assistant Director for Assets & Environment, to progress the sale and agree the disposal terms of six sites:

Reasons for Recommendations:

- The Council has fiduciary responsibilities to progress surplus vacant sites within a reasonable time, which government policy recommends no later than three years, to ensure value for money is achieved. The recommendation supports this outcome.
- Progressing these disposals will further the strategic plans for these sites and support the investment to date.



- Bringing sites forward for development contributes to North Northants area housing supply and to regeneration of their respective areas.
- The capital receipts will be used to progress strategic capital projects which align to the Council's Corporate Plan.
- There is market demand to bring the sites forward, with market testing confirming private sector interest. The Council will continue to determine development through the planning policy and process.
- Progressing these sites will result in the Council reducing the revenue holding costs.

Alternative Options Considered:

- Where appropriate relevant services have been made aware of the property's availability, but none have been deemed suitable for any ongoing requirements.
- These sites have incurred substantial public fundings as part of the legacy council strategic objectives. The only realistic return on that funding is to progress per the recommendation above.

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Chair

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Date

The meeting closed at 12.12 pm