



Minutes of a meeting of the Executive

At 10.00 am on Thursday 12th January, 2023 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 Anne Lee, Jean Addison, Lyn Buckingham, Mike Tebbutt, Dorothy Maxwell and William Colquhoun

363 Remembrance of Councillor David Jenney

The Chair, Cllr Jason Smithers invited officers and members to stand to observe a two-minute silence in remembrance of Cllr David Jenney who had recently passed away.

364 Apologies for absence

No apologies for absence were received.

365 Members' Declarations of Interest

No declarations were received.

366 Notifications of requests to address the meeting

The Chair, Councillor Jason Smithers stated that Agenda Item 6 (Public Health & NHSE Integrated Sexual Health and HIV services) had been deferred to a future Executive meeting date.

It was reported that there were requests to address the meeting as set out below:

Agenda Item	Speakers
Item 4 – Performance Indicator Report – P8	Cllrs John McGhee, William Colquhoun, Lyn Buckingham and Jean Addison

Item 5 – Director of Public Health Annual Report	Cllrs John McGhee and Jean Addison
Item 7 – Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2021-22	Cllrs Anne Lee and Jean Addison
Item 8- North Northamptonshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy	Cllr Anne Lee
Item 10 - Procurement of Shared Parts and Materials Suppliers for Housing Stock	Cllr Lyn Buckingham
Item 11 - Budget Forecast 2022/23 as at Period 8	Cllr Anne Lee

Cllr John McGhee was not in attendance at the meeting and consequently did not speak on the items indicated above.

367 Performance Indicator Report 2022/23 (Period 8 - November 2022)

The Chair invited Cllr William Colquhoun to address the Executive. Cllr Colquhoun made reference to the level of complaints answered within the Service Level Agreement for October and November 2022 and queried what action was being taken to improve this percentage.

The Chair thanked Cllr Colquhoun for his comments before inviting Cllr Jean Addison to speak to the meeting. Cllr Addison noted that the number of Freedom of Information requests completed on time had decreased and questioned what additional resources were being provided to rectify this. Cllr Addison also made reference to an increase in school pupil suspensions and enquired whether this was the result of a specific issue and what actions were being taken to ensure these pupils continued to receive an education. Concluding, Cllr Addison queried sickness and absence statistics and the work being undertaken to identify issues and support staff.

The Chair thanked Cllr Addison for her comments and invited Cllr Lyn Buckingham to address the meeting. Cllr Buckingham spoke to congratulate all those involved in the positive Housing-related performance indicators and acknowledged the hard work of staff in ensuring targets were met. Cllr Buckingham noted the high number of emergency repairs carried out to Council owned houses and that the turnaround of void properties took too long and impacted the Council's ability to house new tenants.

The Chair thanked Cllr Buckingham for her comments and noted that the housing sector faced a challenging situation but was not facing a crisis as had been suggested.

The Executive Member for Finance and Transformation, Cllr Lloyd Bunday then 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 noted that individual Executive members would respond personally to the queries raised above by speakers. Cllr Bunday also welcomed Rob Atkins to the Council as Interim Head of Performance.

Highlights of the report were provided to the meeting that noted a further reduction in data breach figures, and an improvement on the number of births registered within 42-days. It was heard that new staff were being trained for the Customer Services team with a view to improving the number of calls answered within target times. The number of complaints upheld against the Council was reported as remaining low.

Cllr Matthew Binley referenced the addition of a new key performance indicator that detailed the level of housing rents collected. Cllr Binley also noted that emergency housing repairs showed an increase at specific points of the year due to inclement weather and that harmonisation work was ongoing in respect of reporting on void properties.

Cllr Scott Edwards confirmed that a breakdown of school suspensions would be provided to Cllr Addison, with the Council working with specific schools showing a higher level of pupil suspensions.

Cllr Helen Harrison noted that winter was a difficult time for staffing and illness, especially within her area due to the level of face-to-face contacts that took place. Staff absences were continually monitored, with the Council doing all it could to reduce the level of agency staff use.

RESOLVED

That the Executive:

- a) Noted the performance of the Council as measured by the available indicators at Period 8 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 8, 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.

368 Director of Public Health Annual Report 2020-22

The Chair invited Cllr Jean Addison to address the Executive. Cllr Addison expressed her surprise that the current Interim Director of Public Health was not mentioned within the Annual Report. Cllr Addison referenced the great work of volunteers during the COVID-pandemic period covered in the report and queried what had been done to harness that momentum moving forward.

The Chair thanked Cllr Addison for her contribution and stated that the Council was indebted to volunteers across the county for their work in supporting Council services and the residents of Northamptonshire.

Cllr Helen Harrison, Executive Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing was then invited to introduce the Director of Public Health Annual Report covering the period 2020 to 2022. Cllr Harrison noted that the current Interim Director of Public Health did not take up his post until after the reporting period for the report concluded, therefore he was not referenced in the report. It was heard that the report had first been presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board in July 2022 and covered a period of two years as the main timespan of the COVID-pandemic.

The contents of the report detailed the response to the pandemic and the partnership working that helped to deliver an effective response to the biggest Public Health crisis of a generation. It was heard that cross-organisational activities continued to enable a resilient response to be provided to any situations that may arise in future.

The report also highlighted health inequalities across the county that were being tackled with renewed vigour. It was heard that the Integrated Care System formed an integral part of this work alongside community wellbeing forums and Local Area Partnerships to tackle deep-seated inequalities. Progress on this front would be identifiable once the Annual Report for 2022-23 was published.

Cllr David Brackenbury spoke to highlight the importance of a multi-agency approach to Public Health work, with a spirit of cooperation commended in providing the best possible outcomes for the people of Northamptonshire.

RESOLVED

That Executive:

- a) Noted the contents of the Director of Public Health Annual Report 2020-2022 and the recommendations made within it.
- b) Noted the progress made with regard to the recommendations in the previous annual report.

Reason for Recommendations – To accord with legislation or the policy of the Council. This is a statutory requirement of the Director of Public Health role.

Alternative Options Considered – This is a statutory requirement of the Director of Public Health role. Given the significance of the Covid pandemic in this time period it was essential that this was a central theme of the report.

369 Public Health & NHSE Integrated Sexual Health and HIV services

This item was withdrawn prior to the meeting and deferred to a future Executive meeting date.

370 Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2021-22

The Chair invited Cllr Anne Lee to speak to the Executive. Cllr Lee queried the next steps after a Children's Safeguarding assessment, noting a huge backlog for child

mental health support services. Cllr Lee sought more insight into data regarding children and young people missing from education.

The Chair then invited Cllr Jean Addison to address the meeting. Cllr Addison queried the number of children with extra needs waiting for assessments and placement, and what systems were in place to ensure a child's educational needs were met.

The Chair thanked the speakers for their contributions before inviting Cllr Scott Edwards, Executive Member for Children, Families, Education and Skills to introduce the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) Annual Report 2021-22, which outlined the achievements of the partnership during the reporting period.

Cllr Edwards responded to queries raised by the speakers, noting that answers regarding children missing from education and home education safeguarding would be provided outside of the meeting.

Cllr Edwards reported that the Council was one of five strategic leads representing the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership (NSCP), a statutory requirement of the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 guidance. The Partnership was required to produce an annual report providing an overview of the partnership's achievements against the NSCP Business Plan.

Details were provided of the strategic lead partners involved in the partnership, while attention was drawn to the data, key messages and impact of activities relating to the three priorities set out in the NSCP Business Plan. It was heard that the NCSP directly supported and aligned with the key commitments of North Northamptonshire's Corporate Plan. Members also noted that the Council's annual contribution towards the NCSP budget was £24,646.

Cllr Edwards reported that there had been 43,393 initial contacts received in children's social care across the reporting period, an increase of more than 2,000 over the previous year. It was anticipated that as the remaining pandemic restrictions were lifted a further increase in contacts would be seen, with referrals presenting with more complex issues because of the impact of lockdown, combined with a reduction in support networks and services available. Need for services had been further exacerbated by the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

The three partnership priorities were outlined as below, with work undertaken over the year in relation to each priority detailed to the meeting:

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

RESOLVED

That the Executive received the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership's Annual Report 2021-22 (**Appendix A** to the report) and noted the findings.

Reason for Recommendations – To accord with legislation or the policy of the Council; Under the statutory guidance ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018’, the five key strategic lead agencies are accountable for safeguarding children and young people, including the Local Authority, who in turn are required to publish an annual report (see Section 8 Background papers).

Alternative Options Considered – The report not to be considered by Executive members, however this would not comply with the governance arrangements and expectations of the Partnership.

371 North Northamptonshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy

The Chair invited Cllr Anne Lee to address the Executive. Cllr Lee raised queries regarding the timing of the report, cancellation of associated Executive Advisory Panel (EAP) meetings and the timeline of the strategy. Cllr Lee requested that members be kept informed regarding implementation of the strategy.

The Chair thanked Cllr Lee for her comments before inviting Cllr Harriet Pentland, Executive Member for Climate and the Green Environment to introduce a report that sought approval for the Council’s role as a Responsible Authority for preparing and publishing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for North Northamptonshire and to recommend a suitable governance process for overseeing the development and delivery of this duty.

Cllr Pentland noted the importance of councillor involvement in the production of the LNRS, and although current guidance from DEFRA was that authorities were expected to start producing their strategy from April 2023, officers had been working on preparatory work to ensure the Council was in a good place to move forward.

It was reported that existing EAP meetings were being remodelled, with revised dates for the new meetings in the process of being set. The previous Climate Change, Environment and Growth EAP had previously been consulted on the initial work regarding the strategy and the revised meeting would continue to be involved going forward. Councillors not involved in that EAP would be able to contribute to the development of the strategy through working groups and consultation processes, with a broad range of external organisations also involved.

Cllr Pentland stated that the Council had an ongoing commitment to looking after the environment locally, with elements of the Environment Act 2021 seeking to strengthen and improve the duty on public bodies to conserve and enhance biodiversity in their areas. DEFRA had provisionally agreed to North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council having responsibility to produce a LNRS for their own areas on the grounds that the two councils work collaboratively. In order to secure grant monies within a set deadline, provisional acceptance of this responsibility had been confirmed, subject to Executive approval.

Cllrs Howell and Brackenbury spoke to welcome the report, noting the importance of developing and adopting the strategy and the involvement of external stakeholders.

RESOLVED

KEY DECISION

That the Executive:

- a) Accepted the appointment of the Council as the responsible authority for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for North Northamptonshire.
- b) Adopted the governance model outlined in the report and **Appendix A** of the report to manage this responsibility.
- c) Delegated authority to the Executive Member for Climate and the Green Environment to approve the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for North Northamptonshire.

Reason for Recommendations:

- Accepting the responsibility will fulfil the Council's duty under the Act
- Accepting the governance model will ensure co-ordination with WNC, and continued involvement with existing Northamptonshire wide environmental partnerships such as the Local Nature Partnership.
- The LNRS will provide a spatial strategy, developed with key partners, that maps the most valuable habitats in the county, the opportunities to improve and connect them and identifies the priorities in relation to these.
- The LNRS will support the Council's ambition for climate change mitigation.
- The recommended course of action is funded through government grant/burdens funding.
- DEFRA has provisionally agreed that North Northamptonshire can be a LNRS area with the Council as the responsible authority. It is therefore helpful to confirm the Council's acceptance of this.

Alternative Options Considered: The option of having totally separate governance between the Council and WNC in the production the strategies for North and West was considered but the option of having a governance mechanism that includes co-operation with county wide partners and WNC was favoured as a means of producing separate, but complimentary, strategies that draw from the same sources of information and make efficient use of the shared countywide partnerships and meets the DEFRA condition to work collaboratively with WNC.

372 Procurement of Contract for the Treatment of Collected Kitchen Food Waste

The Chair invited Cllr Graham Lawman, Executive Member for Highways, Travel and Assets to introduce a report that sought approval from the Executive to commence the procurement of a contract for the treatment of kitchen food waste, collected as part of the Council's kerbside waste collection service.

Cllr Lawman stated that collections of food waste currently took place in the former East Northamptonshire and Corby areas, with a view to including former Wellingborough and Kettering areas under a new four-year collection contract. It was

heard that existing contracts in place for food waste collection could not be extended or modified and the requirements of the Environment Act 2021 meant that the Council would have a duty to collect food waste separately from other household waste going forward.

Cllrs Harrison and Pentland spoke to welcome the report from a harmonisation and environmental perspective.

RESOLVED

That the Executive delegated authority to the Executive Member for Highways, Travel and Assets, in consultation with Executive Director of Place & Economy and the Executive Director of Finance and Performance, to commence a procurement process, award a contract to identify and appoint a preferred bidder for the provision of services relating to the treatment/disposal of collected kitchen food waste and take all necessary steps to conclude the procurement.

Reasons for Recommendation –

- The recommended course of action is the most cost-effective and enables NNC to make informed decisions regarding its medium-term financial planning.
- This option ensures the Authority has a legally procured, compliant contract which demonstrates best value in respect of the treatment of kitchen food waste.

Alternative Options Considered –

- Extending or modifying the existing contracts. This is not possible as the existing contractual arrangements have insufficient scope to include additional material yield from this activity.
- Do nothing – This is not recommended as it leaves the Authority open to challenge for failure to comply with its statutory duty to collect food waste. There is also an increased risk that the Authority will be left with either an unaffordable outlet or limitations to the avenues for disposal of the food waste.

373 Procurement of Shared Parts and Materials Suppliers for Housing Stock

The Chair invited Cllr Lyn Buckingham to address the meeting. Cllr Buckingham welcomed the report and the progress made in relation to Housing parts and materials and referenced a review of gas boiler installations.

The Chair thanked Cllr Buckingham for her comments and acknowledged the hard work of Housing repair staff before inviting Councillor Matthew Binley, Executive Member for Housing, Communities and Levelling-Up to introduce a report that sought approval from the Executive for three amendments to the spend levels for the supplier contracts for heating and plumbing, windows and doors and kitchens for Corby and

Kettering Housing Property Services, previously agreed by Executive at its meeting in December 2021.

Cllr Binley noted that longer-term options for delivery of the gas repairs, maintenance and replacements across the Council were currently under review with a view to future proofing the service. Since December 2021 there had been a significant change in the economic landscape that had also played a part in the request before members.

The procurement exercise would allow the Council to purchase large quantities of stock on a regular basis that were necessary to complete repairs and maintenance. Furthermore, it would allow for adoption of a standardised approach for contracts and parts procured across the Kettering and Corby housing stock areas, affording the Council greater buying power, efficiencies and better value for money.

Details of the proposed increase in spend were detailed, with the meeting noting that the anticipated spends fitted within existing budgets within the Housing Revenue Account.

Cllr Binley proposed the following additional wording be added to the end of the recommendation before members:

“and noted the updated proposed increased spend levels for the three contracts within the report”

RESOLVED

KEY DECISION

That the Executive approved the amended financial contract values in this report and delegated authority to the Executive Member for Housing, Communities and Levelling Up, in consultation with the Executive Director for Adults, Housing and Health Partnerships, to negotiate, award and enter into contracts to provide ‘plumbing and heating’, ‘windows and doors’ and ‘kitchen’ parts and materials to Council owned housing properties and noted the updated proposed increased spend levels for the three contracts within the report.

Reasons for Recommendations:

- Closely align with local government reform and transformation outcomes, through the use of shared suppliers within the two Housing Property Services teams.
- Procure the new contracts in the most efficient and timely manner to ensure a fully compliant procurement process is in place for the supply of parts and materials.
- Provide better value for money to the Council.
- Ensure tenants benefit from a standard parts and materials service across North Northamptonshire.

Alternative options considered: The use of an external framework arrangement is the most suitable option for this procurement, since the Council has a store in Kettering and a store opening in Corby. EEM, an external framework provider has fair and robust processes in place to ensure best value for its members. Where possible, the framework provider works with manufacturers to fix prices for each financial year. As a result, the Council may benefit from the collective pricing of parts and materials by the supplier(s) appointed to the framework and awarded the contract(s).

An options appraisal of how NNC should purchase stock to maintain and upgrade their properties was undertaken in 2021. The Council would be at risk if it did not enter into supplier contracts, both from not having a compliantly procured supplier(s) and an inability to obtain parts and materials in a timely manner to maintain the Council's housing stock. By operating an in-house store and purchasing stock in bulk ensures a more resilient supply of materials for the Council and is a more efficient use of Trade Operatives time.

374 Budget Forecast 2022/23 as at Period 8

The Chair invited Cllr Anne Lee to address the Executive. Cllr Lee made reference to efficiencies being required to offset the forecasted overspend and queried whether an underspend of £107,000 in Environmental Services could be used to fund a traffic CCTV camera for Newland Street in Kettering.

The Chair thanked Cllr Lee for her attendance before inviting Cllr Lloyd Bunday, Executive Member for Finance and Transformation introduce a report that set out the forecast outturn position for the Council based on the Period 8 monitoring forecasts for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

Cllr Bunday referenced the underspend mentioned by Cllr Lee, noting that this funding was for flood prevention work and that the camera requested for Newland Street was a point of consultation for possible future installation.

The meeting heard that the overall outturn forecast for the General Fund for 2022/23, as at Period 8 was a forecast overspend of £5.752m, a favourable movement of £424,000 since the last report to Executive. Budgetary pressures affecting Children's Services were reported, with the meeting noting positive movements in the budget positions of Adult Services and Waste Management.

It was noted that the remainder of the Council's contingency budget had been applied to reduce the in-year impact of the costs arising from Home to School Transport, alongside the pressures from the pay award which exceeded the budget expectations of 3%. The Council maintained reserves to call on for any overspend remaining, however, it continued to look to achieve in-year mitigations in the first instance.

Cllr Bunday reported that the Housing Revenue Account had a current overspend totalling £281,000, the main pressure being the recent pay award.

Cllr Graham Lawman spoke to note that consultancy work was ongoing with a view to reducing the overspend associated with Home to School Transport.

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**.

Reason for Recommendations – to note the forecast financial position for 2022/23 as at Period 8 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.

Chair

Date

The meeting closed at 11.11am

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