

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive

At 10.00 am on Thursday 20th April, 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 Wendy Brackenbury, Keli Watts, Anup Pandey, Dorothy Maxwell and Jean Addison

412 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of the following officers:

- Adele Wylie – Executive Director of Customer & Governance (Monitoring Officer)
- Janice Gotts – Executive Director of Finance and Performance (Section 151 Officer)
- David Watts - Executive Director of Adults, Health Partnerships and Housing (DASS)
- AnnMarie Dodds – Executive Director of Children’s Services
- George Candler – Executive Director of Place & Economy (Deputy Chief Executive)

413 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 16th March 2023

RESOLVED that: The Executive agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 16th March 2023 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

414 Members' Declarations of Interest

A personal and prejudicial interest was declared by Cllr David Howes in Agenda Item 10 – Houses in Multiple Occupation. Cllr Howes left the meeting for the duration of the debate and voting on this item.

A personal interest was declared by Cllr Harriet Pentland relating to a number of agenda items having attended meetings where the items in question may have previously been discussed.

415 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	Speaker
Item 5 - Performance Indicator Report 2022/23 (Period 11 – February 2023)	Cllr Dorothy Maxwell
Item 6 – Household Support Fund 4 Distribution	Cllr Dorothy Maxwell
Item 10 – Houses in Multiple Occupation	Cllr Dorothy Maxwell
Item 14 – Budget Forecast 2023/24 – Period 11	Cllr Dorothy Maxwell
Item 16 – Knights Farm, Rushden, Overage Agreement (EXEMPT)	Cllr Dorothy Maxwell

Cllr Dorothy Maxwell opted not to speak in relation to Agenda Items 5 and 14.

416 Performance Indicator Report 2022/23 (Period 11 - February 2023)

The Leader invited the Executive Member for Finance and Transformation, Cllr Lloyd Bunday to introduce a report that sought to provide an update on the performance of the Council across a range of services as measured by performance indicators (PI), 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 the Period 11 report indicated a positive picture of Council performance and an encouraging direction of travel. A total of 61% of indicators were performing above target, with 13% within tolerance levels and 26% below target. Of the 101 PIs reported for the period, 48 had shown improvement, with 18 deteriorating since the Period 10.

Reference was made to PIs relating to Information Governance, specifically Freedom of Information, Environmental Information Regulation and Individual Rights requests and the significant increase in the volume of such requests, with a case management system being sought to allow for the processing of these to be streamlined. In regard to complaints handled, an additional member of staff was being recruited to improve performance in regard to complex complaint cases.

Cllr Bunday noted the positive reduction in staff sickness absence that showed under one day being lost per full-time employee across the winter period. Figures relating to agency staff spend were being reviewed to ensure accuracy with a view to being reported again from the July meeting of the Executive.

Cllr Brackenbury spoke to welcome the report and the improvements made in regard to PIs for the Planning Service given the significant work undertaken to enhance the service offer. Cllr Scott Edwards offered his thanks to officers for their work that had resulted in an increase to the number of North Northamptonshire's primary schools rated as good or outstanding.

Cllr Matt Binley spoke to welcome the improvement in the PI for Private Sector Disabled Facilities Grants following recent staff recruitment, noting that the backlog of applications could now be addressed.

RESOLVED

That the Executive:

- a) Noted the performance of the Council as measured by the available indicators at Period 11 (February) 2022/23, 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 Key Performance Indicators as at Period 11 (February) 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.

417 Household Support Fund 4 - Distribution

The Chair invited Cllr Dorothy Maxwell to address the meeting. Cllr Maxwell welcomed the continuation of the Government's Household Support Fund grant, but stated the need to ensure that funding was allocated to those residents who most required assistance, including those who might not be aware, or did not believe, they were eligible. Cllr Maxwell also stated that the funding should be utilised to pay for a variety of goods and services that claimants required, including transport costs.

The Chair thanked Cllr Maxwell for her comments before inviting the Executive Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing, Cllr Helen Harrison to introduce a report that sought to provide a background to the Household Support Fund (HSF) as well as detailing the type of support that the Council sought to offer, built on the success of previous schemes for earlier funding tranches.

In response to Cllr Maxwell, Cllr Harrison noted that the fund could be used to offer a wide variety of support for residents across North Northamptonshire, making reference to the success of the first three rounds of funding distribution and noting the significant checks and balances built into the system to ensure funding was distributed fairly. Details were provided of the wide-ranging scheme advertisements utilising social media, schools, foodbanks and partner organisations to help those eligible access funding.

Cllr Harrison noted that the Government had announced a fourth round of the HSF in September 2022, with the scheme extended to cover a 12-month period rather than the previous six-month schemes. The Council had received a grant allocation of

£4.93m and details were provided of previous successes in relation to the distribution of earlier funding tranches under the scheme.

The meeting noted that the fund had supported the area's most vulnerable residents, with over 12,000 households benefitting from previous rounds of funding and 10,500 children eligible for Free School Meals continuing to receive meals throughout the school holidays.

The scope and diversity of the planned funding distribution was highlighted to the meeting, with 3-monthly checks in place during the process to ensure that funding was allocated in an equitable and consistent manner.

Cllrs Edwards and Pentland spoke to welcome the report, with particular reference to free school meals and prepaid fuel meters.

RESOLVED

KEY DECISION

That the Executive:

- a) Noted the allocated funding from the Household Support Fund 4 in the sum of £4,930,984.
- b) Acknowledged that the Household Support Fund 4 will continue to be managed locally, with oversight through the existing Communities and Leisure team.
- c) Agreed that a temporary team is recruited to manage the fund and provide clear distribution controls.
- d) Noted that funds are unspent from each distribution of the Free School Meals (FSM) School Holiday Food Support will be re-issued to the local Food Banks to provide them with an additional source of regular income.
- e) Noted that a consultation process will take place during quarter one - 2024, to allow feedback to be gathered through the community, users and educational teams. This is to reflect the experience of transitioning from the FSM School Holiday Food Support model based on a schools distribution (Phase 1) to an application-based process (Phase 2).
- f) Approved the Recommended Scope and Diversity of Distribution as set out in Section 4 of this report.
- g) Delegated authority to the Director of Public Health to redistribute any funds that have not been assigned or committed to by 30th September 2023, according to the distribution methodology set out in section 4, in line with the wider Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Guidelines (attached as **Appendix A** to the report).

Reasons for Recommendations:

- It is recommended that the HSF4 fund will primarily be used to fund priority recipients, the lower income sector of the working community, households in severe financial crisis, and families with children.
- The distribution of funds must meet financial needs of the wider communities, where other grants and funding are not available.
- The online application process (as is required) will be managed in-house, as this provides additional security and confidentiality of data.
- Where possible the level of duplication of grants for the same purpose must be minimised. This is mitigated by oversight from the in-house team.
- The recommendations provide real benefit to underpin the North Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy and ensure residents most in need receive support.
- The recommendations build on the previous successful Household Support Fund scheme partnerships with the voluntary sector.

Alternative Options Considered – The Council could choose not to draw down the funds. This is not recommended as many vulnerable residents would then lose the opportunity for additional support at a time when many residents are struggling with cost-of-living pressures.

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:

- a) through a highly distributed network
- b) via simplified segmentation
- c) to the lower earned income and benefits sector

For reasons set out in section 5 of this report, 'Issues and Choices', Option C is recommended.

418 Traffic Enforcement at George Street, Corby

The Chair invited the Executive Member for Highways, Travel and Assets, Cllr Graham Lawman to introduce a report that sought approval to replace the existing Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) covering George Street, Corby to provide a means of enforcing existing vehicle access restrictions, whilst continuing to facilitate access to adjoining roads which were permitted under the TRO. The report also sought approval of the introduction of bus lane enforcement with the use of CCTV cameras using

Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology on a section of George Street.

Cllr Lawman reported that there were safety concerns for pedestrians using the George Street pedestrian crossing that were exacerbated by ineligible vehicles contravening the existing TRO. It was noted that the existing TRO was currently unable to be enforced as the area it covered also included access points to other side roads that required legitimate access for drivers.

The proposal before the Executive sort to better define the TRO area so that legitimate access to side roads could occur, while preventing ineligible vehicles from driving across the pedestrian crossing. A traffic survey carried out over a period of six days in June 2022 had indicated in excess of 23,000 infringements of the existing TRO.

Cllr Lawman stated that not only would a revised TRO and enforcement improve pedestrian safety, but it would also assist in improving air quality in the area and encourage active travel. Motorists infringing the new TRO would receive a warning notice for any initial offence prior to a penalty charge notice being issued for any further infractions. It was reported that establishment of a £25,000 invest to save revenue budget was proposed to investigate opportunities for further enforcement schemes within North Northamptonshire including Newland Street in Kettering.

Cllr Lloyd Bunday spoke to note that enforcement of the TRO should never be considered to be a source of revenue for the Council, rather it was designed to encourage a change in the behaviour of drivers. Cllrs Edwards and Binley spoke to welcome the report in regard to the potential improvement to public safety as a result of the revised order.

RESOLVED

KEY DECISION

That the Executive:

- a) Approved the replacement of the existing TRO governing the main crossing in George Street to operate Monday to Saturday between 8am to 6pm restricting access to buses, taxis, and cyclists only and to commence the statutory and public consultation relating to the TRO accordingly.
- b) Approved the introduction of enforcement with the use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras on the small section of George Street to seek to improve the safety for pedestrians crossing this busy street.
- c) Approved the allocation of a £25k invest to save revenue budget to be used to identify additional locations across North Northants that would benefit from greater levels of or the introduction of traffic enforcement.

Reasons for Recommendations:

- The proposal reflects the concerns raised by residents and stakeholders to review the safety of this road;
- Restriction on the access to this road will decrease the number of vehicles driving over this crossing, reducing the volume of vehicles entering the crossing, improving road safety, the environment and air quality for pedestrians.
- Enforcement of bus lane contraventions is proven to reduce the current level of moving traffic contraventions in bus lanes, resulting in improved journey times and journey time reliability for bus passengers, therefore, enhancing the attractiveness of public transport to potential users.

Alternative Options Considered – The only other option is to do nothing which would not see any improvements to the safety of the pedestrians using this crossing during busy times. Due to the increase in population in Corby, the number of contraventions is likely to rise over time. This could increase safety concerns, increase car emissions and increase noise from vehicles in this area of the town centre. As this is a deliverable project with benefits to pedestrians using this route, this is not considered a viable option.

419 Schools Education Capital Programme Business Case – Kingsley Special School Mobile Unit Replacement

The Chair invited the Executive Member for Children, Families, Education and Skills, Cllr Scott Edwards to introduce a report that sought approval of the Capital Project to replace the double temporary mobile unit classroom at Kingsley Special Academy, Kettering with a permanent classroom block. It was noted that the costs would be funded solely by Department for Education (DfE) High Needs Provision Capital Allocated Grant funding.

Both The Chair and Cllr Helen Howell spoke to welcome the proposal, noting the positivity of continued Council investment in local schools, particularly with permanent classrooms replacing temporary facilities.

RESOLVED

KEY DECISIONS

That the Executive:

- i) Approved the Project to replace the Temporary Mobile Units at Kingsley Special Academy, Kettering with a permanent classroom block.
- ii) Noted the scheme will be funded via the High Needs Provision Capital Grant funding received directly from central government; The budget approval is included within the Capital Programme Update report to Executive elsewhere on this agenda.
- iii) Delegated authority to the Executive Member for Children, Families and

Education and the Executive Director of Place and Economy in consultation with the Executive Director of Children's Services, to authorise all necessary legal, property and financial agreements to ensure effective delivery of the scheme.

Reasons for Recommendations:

- Presently, there is a double classroom mobile unit on the school site. The mobile unit has come to the end of its life expectancy. The temporary planning approval for the temporary mobile classrooms **(KET/2012/0608)** dated 9th November 2012 has lapsed and therefore the removal of the mobile unit is required. The temporary mobile classroom must therefore be removed as to allow it to remain in situ is a breach of the planning permission.
- The school is oversubscribed with a shortfall of teaching spaces and currently does not comply with the Building Bulletin BB104 Standards Guidelines for Special Schools. The new build classroom block will provide the necessary teaching and spaces needed to comply with the BB104.
- There is a deficit of SEND places across North Northamptonshire currently and will be in the forthcoming 2023/24 academic year. This proposal ensures that there is good quality permanent capacity at Kingsley Special Academy.
- The Council has a statutory obligation to provide a sufficiency of SEND places across the county, if the Council cannot provide sufficient places in its maintained or academy provision in Northamptonshire, then it is required to utilise far more expensive independent and out of county provisions to meet demand. Places in independent or out of county provisions which are significantly more costly than those within the Council's own provision.

Option 1. Do Nothing. This is not considered to be a viable option as this relates to the fulfilment of the Council's statutory obligation of providing sufficiency of places its schools' estate. To allow the unit to remain in situ the Council is in breach of the existing planning permission.

Option 2. Replace the existing mobile units in a similar position with similar footings but as a modular construction which would be subject to a detailed review of the impact on the adjoining spaces. This option is not recommended because temporary mobile classrooms provide only a basic educational need for the school and we are seeking to provide permanent good quality classrooms which meet our statutory responsibilities for the longer term.

Option 3. The preferred option is to construct a new permanent classroom block on the school site. After consulting with the Planning Authority and the school it is considered that this preferred solution is the most effective way of providing the pupil places at Kingsley Special Academy

420 Schools Education Capital Programme Business Case – Little Stanion School Roof Replacement

The Chair invited the Executive Member for Children, Families, Education and Skills, Cllr Scott Edwards to introduce a report that sought approval of the Capital Project to replace the main roof at Little Stanion Primary School, Corby and install a man safe system to enable a proper maintenance regime. The meeting heard that the costs of the works would be funded entirely by the School Minor Works Grant Allocation 2022-2024.

RESOLVED

KEY DECISION

That the Executive:

- i) Approved the school managed scheme project to replace the main roof at Little Stanion Primary School, Corby with the Council acting as funding body.
- ii) Noted the cost of the proposed works in the sum of **£875,330**
- iii) Noted the scheme will be funded via the School Minor Works Programme 2022 – 2024 which is already approved and forms part of the Approved Capital Programme.
- iv) Delegated authority to the Executive Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Children, Families and Education and the Executive Director of Place and Economy, to authorise all necessary legal, property and financial agreements to ensure effective delivery of the scheme.

Reasons for Recommendations:

- The school roof has been leaking for several years and is out of warranty.
- Recent condition surveys have identified several issues with the leaking roof, with immediate attention required to avoid any additional damage and disruption caused as a result of the water ingress.
- The roof has significant levels of ponding, even on a dry day. Rising damp and sagging upstand, which suggests that the roof below is saturated, has poor detailing, rippling and a baggy field area with patch repairs.
- The hall roof has a 15mm penetration through the covering which is allowing water within the existing build up.
- The Council has a statutory obligation to provide school buildings that are safe and fit for purpose and conducive to teaching and learning. If the Council cannot provide safe school buildings in its maintained provision in North Northants, then it could be subject to health and safety breaches.

Alternative Options Considered:

Option 1. Do Nothing. This is not a viable option as this relates to the fulfilment of the Council's statutory obligation of providing safe school buildings that are fit for purpose. The condition report confirms that the roof is in need of repair.

Option 2. Continue to attempt to rectify the issue by spot fixing the locations on the roof where each individual leak has occurred. This option is not recommended because of the ongoing cost implications on the schools minor works budget and disruption to the school operation.

Option 3. To replace the roof. Replacement of the main roof and the installation of a man safe system to ensure safe means of maintenance, develop and agree a new maintenance regime will ensure the roof is maintained in good condition. The surveyors and the school arrived at the preferred solution as the most effective way of providing a new roof at Little Stanion Primary School. This is therefore the recommended option.

421 Houses in Multiple Occupation

(Cllr David Howes left the room prior to consideration and voting on this item)

The Chair invited Cllr Dorothy Maxwell to address the Executive. Cllr Maxwell spoke to note that the true figure for Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) would also include those currently unregulated. Cllr Maxwell stated the need to build more affordable homes to reduce reliance on HMOs and queried whether many of the HMOs in the area were habitable.

The Chair thanked Cllr Maxwell for her comments, noting that construction of affordable housing formed a part of ongoing developments, particularly with reference to that at Nene Fields, Irthlingborough.

The Chair then invited the Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration, Cllr David Brackenbury to present a report that introduced the findings of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Investigation and Evidence Paper and requested consideration of options and recommendations for the introduction of an Article 4 Direction, alongside the preparation of supporting planning policies for the North Northamptonshire Strategic Plan and other complementary measures.

Cllr Brackenbury noted that the Investigation and Evidence paper recommended the introduction of an Article 4 Direction to withdraw specific permitted development rights to convert dwelling houses to a small HMO without planning permission within a specifically defined area of Kingswood, Corby following a six-week period of local consultation. It was heard that although there were concentrations of HMOs in other areas of North Northamptonshire that also required regulation, the report before members was one aspect of a larger piece of work in regard to such dwellings.

Cllr Brackenbury commended the work that had been undertaken in the preparation of the paper, as well as thanking the Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel for instigating the work following its meeting in July 2021.

Cllr Helen Harrison spoke to state her full support of the conclusions of the Investigation and Evidence Paper. It was heard that ward councillors had raised concerns regarding the volume of HMOs within certain wards and thanks were offered to Cllr Brackenbury and officers for the work undertaken in regard to this issue.

Cllr Matt Binley spoke to commend the factual basis of the work carried out to date. He noted that HMOs were an important part of the accommodation mix in the area, but one requiring close management and regulation with the Council able to act upon reports of unlicensed HMOs. Cllr Binley also offered his thanks to Cllr Brackenbury and officers for their work.

Cllr Scott Edwards also spoke to welcome the report and sought assurance that should HMOs be displaced outside the Kingswood ward as a result of the Article 4 Direction, that further work would be undertaken to manage those areas.

Cllr Graham Lawman noted the requirement for a significant evidence base to allow for enforcement relating to HMOs and that the paper before members provided such a level of evidence.

RESOLVED

KEY DECISION

That the Executive:

- a) Noted the findings and review of options and recommendations set out in the HMO Investigation and Evidence Paper in **Appendix A**.
- b) Authorised the making and consultation on the introduction of non-immediate Article 4 Direction for the area defined in the HMO Investigation and Evidence Paper under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015.
- c) Delegated authority to the Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration in consultation with the Executive Director of Place and Economy to formally confirm the non-immediate Article 4 Direction following the 12-month notification period, if having fully considered all representations made during the consultation period, they are of the opinion that the Article 4 Direction should be made.
- d) Supported the preparation of planning policies to control and manage HMO development through the North Northamptonshire Strategic Plan.
- e) Supported the ongoing consideration and review of complementary management measures as part of the current transformation programme.

- f) Noted the consideration of more detailed policies for specific areas to supplement the Strategic Plan through the review of the Local Development Scheme.

Reason for Recommendations: The rationale for the recommendations is documented in the HMO Investigation and Evidence Paper in **Appendix A**, which provides a robust and credible evidence base and explains why the Article 4 Direction is recommended for the defined area. The recommendations will allow the Council to proactively manage HMO development through the introduction of the Article 4 Direction and supporting planning policies, and complementary management measures will improve processes and systems for monitoring HMO development.

Alternative Options Considered: The HMO Investigation and Evidence Paper documents all options considered, along with the main positive and negative aspects of each option, which are summarised within section 5 of the report. The option to introduce discretionary licensing has been discounted as there is not currently sufficient evidence.

422 A43 Northampton to Kettering Improvements Phase 3

The Chair invited the Executive member for Highways, Travel and Assets, Cllr Graham Lawman to present a report that sought to update the Executive on the progress to date with the A43 Northampton – Kettering Improvements Phase 3 and agree joint working agreements with West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) for the delivery of this cross-border major highway scheme.

Cllr Lawman noted that after the Isham By-Pass, the A43 dualling project was the Council's top priority within the Major Road Network improvements, with the section of the A43 under consideration joining the two largest towns in Northamptonshire and being, for the most part, single carriageway, providing a barrier to productivity, the economy and development alongside it as well as being the source of congestion and delays resulting in "rat-running" locally.

It was heard that the former Northamptonshire County Council had organised the dualling of the section to the Overstone Grange roundabout, with this now requiring extension to the Holcot/Sywell roundabout, providing additional capacity particularly with the development at Overstone moving apace. A plan was therefore required in conjunction with WNC as the road passed through both authorities.

The report before members proposed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and other associated arrangements to allow for the Outline Business Case to proceed. Given the majority of this section of the A43 fell within the West Northants area, it was proposed that WNC take the lead, with the MoU in place to ensure that the Council was involved in governance of the scheme. Costs for the business case had been apportioned according to the length of road in each authority, with the predicted share for North Northamptonshire being £89,000 (17%) and this would be taken from the 2021/22 Integrated Transport Block capital funding allocation.

The Chair spoke to note the importance of the route in question, alongside the Isham By-Pass and the A45 between Stanwick and Thrapston.

Cllr Brackenbury noted that it was vital to have the business case completed as soon as possible to encourage funding.

RESOLVED

KEY DECISION

That the Executive:

- a) Noted the progress made to date in undertaking improvements to the A43 between Northampton and Kettering.
- b) Agreed delegated authority to the Executive Member for Highways, Travel & Assets, in consultation with the Executive Director for Place & Economy and the Director of Legal & Democratic, to sign a Memorandum of Understanding and any other associated legal documents with West Northamptonshire Council for joint working on this scheme.

Reason for Recommendations – Unlike the other options considered, the proposed option ensures that the two Councils share the governance of the scheme and a fair distribution of the costs of developing this cross-border highway scheme.

Alternative Options Considered:

- For one Council to construct the project completely at its cost.
- For each Council to construct its section of the road separately.
- To construct the road only in one Council's area.
- To progress improvements to the Holcot/Sywell roundabout only.
- To not progress the scheme at all.

None of these options is recommended.

423 Department for Transport Additional Capital Funding for Highways Maintenance

The Chair invited the Executive member for Highways, Travel and Assets, Cllr Graham Lawman to present a report that sought approval to utilise additional capital funding for highway maintenance allocated to North Northamptonshire by the Department for Transport (DfT) as part of the Spring 2023 budget announcement.

Cllr Lawman report that as part of the Government's spring budget, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had announced £200m of additional funding for highway maintenance for 2023/24, of which the Council's allocation was £1.494m. This was in addition to the £3.735m potholes fund previously advised by DfT.

It was proposed within the report to accept the funding and allocate it to the capital maintenance programme, selected in line with the Council's priority matrix, Asset Management Plan and Network Management Plan.

Discussions had already started with the Council's contractor, Kier, to assess how the funding could be utilised for best value for money and long-term improvement to the network. This funding would be added to the Annual Plan and would be advised to councillors when allocated.

Cllr Lawman concluded by noting that the funding would benefit every resident of North Northamptonshire using the road and pathway network. Whilst it was not sufficient to repair every defect on the network, it would go some way to doing so.

Both the Chair and Cllr Helen Harrison spoke to welcome the additional funding, noting that maximising funding to improve the road network was of great importance to local people.

RESOLVED

KEY DECISION

That the Executive:

- i) Noted and accept the additional highways maintenance and pothole repair funding allocation of £1.494m in 2023/24.
- ii) Agreed to spend the grant on maintaining the highway network in line with the Northamptonshire Asset Management Plan and Network Management Plan.

Reason for Recommendation: Utilisation of government grant to support and maintain the Council's Highways infrastructure and transport network.

Alternative Options Considered:

- Not spending the money and allowing DfT to recoup it.
- Spending the money on schemes that are not a priority on the basis of need in accordance with the Northamptonshire Asset Management Plan and Network Management Plan.

Neither of these options are recommended as they will not deliver the objectives of the Council's corporate priorities.

424 Capital Programme Update 2023/24

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.

Six schemes were highlighted as per the report and recommendation below. In addition, the Executive noted changes to the capital programme relating to Isham Bypass as approved by Council at its meeting on 30th March.

The Chair stated that the report highlighted the proactive nature of the Council's administration by investing in roads, schools and libraries for the people of North Northamptonshire.

Cllr Howell welcomed the various investments, with a focus on Section 106 monies being used to improve the library offer. Cllr Brackenbury, Pentland, Lawman and Edwards also spoke to welcome the important investments for residents across a vast range of services.

RESOLVED

KEY DECISION

That Executive approved the following changes into the capital programme:

- a) Kingsley Special Academy new building to replace mobile classroom, to be moved from the Development Pool into the Capital Programme - £1.432m; £222k in 2023/24, £1.134m in 2024/25 and £72k in 2025/26, which is to be funded from Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Capital grant.
- b) Corby Town Investment Plan, Project 2 Multi-use building – £1.5m; £0.7875 in 2023/24 and £0.7125m in 2045/45 which is to be funded from the Towns Fund Grant.
- c) Rushden Library Improvements - £50k in 2023/24 which is to be funded from S106 contributions.
- d) Wellingborough Library Improvements - £29.3k in 2023/24 which is to be funded from S106 contributions.
- e) Family Hubs – £197k; £130k in 2023/24 and £67k in 2024/25 which is to be funded from the Family Hubs Transformation Grant.
- f) Potholes Repair Funding - £1.494m in 2023/24 which is to be funded from Department for Transport (DfT) Grant.

That Executive note the following changes to the capital programme (approved at Council 30th March):

- a. Isham Bypass - £1.573m in 2022/23 which is to be funded from a virement from the Integrated Transport Block Funding (2021/22 £0.742m; 2022/23 £0.558m) and £0.273m additional funding from s.278 contributions.

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

- To support the statutory delivery of school places and SEND school places across North Northamptonshire.

- To support the Corby Town Deal
- To support the provision of library services within North Northamptonshire
- To support the delivery of the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan

Alternative Options Considered:

- As all the schemes in this report are grant funded/S106 funded, the use of the funding is in line with the agreements, so there are no alternative option proposed in this report.
- Where individual schemes are over £500k, individual reports are presented elsewhere on the agenda/ have already been reported through to The Executive that set out the wider options that were considered before reaching the proposed schemes identified for grant funding.

425 Budget Forecast Update 2022/23 - Period 11

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 11 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 11, was a forecast overspend of £3.862m, an adverse movement of £1.751m since the last report to Executive. It was reported that there were a number of budgetary variances, however, the main pressure still came from an increase in placement costs within the Children's Trust where the forecast overspend was £20.988m, an increase of nearly £6m since the last reporting period. The cost to the Council of this overspend was £9.268m, up from £6.602m in the previous reporting period.

Cllr Bunday noted that Children's and Education, Health and Care Service had been relying on interim workers to fulfil statutory obligations due to an increased level of service need as a result of the impact of Covid-19, a higher level of staff vacancies and a backlog of historic assessments. A further Contain Outbreak Management Fund bid of £220,000 had been approved by CLT mitigating some of the Covid-related pressures, resulting in a net budgetary pressure of £553,000.

It was reported that Adult Services had seen a favourable movement of £250,000 since Period 10, resulting in a £911,000 underspend mainly relating to staffing costs. Within Place and Economy there had been a favourable movement of £290,000, mainly due to a reduction in salaries and lower running costs, savings partially offset by a reduction in planning fees and the increase in professional fees required to provide support for major planning applications. Within Enabling Services there had been a favourable movement of £227,000 resulting from forecast savings on salaries, lower running costs and additional income from registration services.

Cllr Bunday stated that the Council would continue to look to mitigate budgetary pressures in each directorate before utilising reserves.

Cllr Bunday reported that the Housing Revenue Account had a current overspend of £140,000, the main pressure being the recent pay award being higher than budgeted.

RESOLVED

That 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 11 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.

426 Urgent Items

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

427 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 15 - Asset Management Service Contract Review
- Item 16 - Knights Farm, Rushden – Overage Agreement

428 Asset Management Service Contract Review

The Chair invited the Executive Member for Highways, Travel and Assets, Cllr Graham Lawman to introduce a report that sought to inform the Executive of the current arrangements within two functions that the Asset Management Service provided, serviced office management of business centres and estate management for the investment portfolio. The report provided key information on each one and recommended a measured transition to one delivery model for each function.

Cllr Lawman report that the Council had a considerable property portfolio, for both operational needs and commercial operations. The Council's operational properties were maintained and managed in-house and were currently under review with the Councillor Asset Rationalisation working group. The Council's commercial properties were maintained and operated through a number of different means, and it was now proposed to harmonise these to a single delivery mode, where possible.

Currently, the majority of the investment portfolio management was delivered in-house, but that taken over from the former Borough Council of Wellingborough was managed under a contract, and the former East Northamptonshire Council Enterprise Centre was operated by an external organisation. The recommendation before members was that management for all these operations was brought in-house, with a time scale to suit the current contract end dates, unless earlier dates could be negotiated and provided the in-house team was sufficiently resourced at that time.

It was considered that a single service model would result in better value for money and control for the Council and a superior service for tenants and leaseholders. Services such as dilapidations, disposals, acquisitions and valuations would still be sourced from professional contractors.

RESOLVED

KEY DECISION

That Executive agreed to the following:-

- i) To confirm the strategic operating service models, for serviced offices and management of the investment portfolio, to be directly managed by in house teams.
- ii) To delegate authority to the Executive Member for Highways, Transport & Assets, in consultation with the Assistant Director of Assets & Environment to complete negotiations to bring the outsourced contracts in house, subject to the terms being beneficial to the Council.
- iii) To note that the optional services of an existing contract have begun to be redistributed to other professional firms using competitive quotation and frameworks, with the core services to be phased out to complete by the end of the contract term of December, 2024. This managed approach represents the least risk to the Council and our Tenants.
- iv) To note the intention to negotiate terms with an existing contract holder to surrender the contract early. The contract does not expire until 2025 and, if the terms are not beneficial to the council, the agreement will continue to the end of the term.

Reasons for the Recommendation

- To provide our customers with one service model will support their business and commercial activity.
- One service model will result in better value for money for the Council.

Alternative Options Considered:

- The Council could outsource all these functions, but that will be the most expensive option and therefore does not provide value for money and the Council would lose a degree of control and influence over these services.

429 Knights Farm, Rushden Overage Agreement

The Chair invited Cllr Dorothy Maxwell to address the meeting. Cllr Maxwell referenced the Oxford-Cambridge arc in relation to the site and requested that residents of the site be kept informed of ongoings.

The Chair thanked Cllr Maxwell for her attendance before inviting the Executive Member for Highways Travel and Assets to introduce a report that sought approval to delegate authority to the Executive Member for Highways, Travel and Assets in consultation with the Assistant Director of Assets & Environment to authorise the completion of a new Deed of Variation for the Knights Farm, Rushden site.

It was reported that the former Northamptonshire County Council had agreed overage provisions for a period of 40 years from 1998 to ensure that the Council gained benefit from any uplift in value coming from a future planning approval for housing. Since then, the site had been used for farming and light industry, but now fell within the Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension, with the developer wishing to progress to build up to 500 residential units on the site. Professional advice sought by the Council indicated that a new Deed of Variation was required following the expiry of the previous deed.

RESOLVED

KEY DECISION

That Executive granted delegations to the Executive Member for Highways, Travel & Assets in consultation with the Assistant Director of Assets & Environment, to authorise the completion of a new Deed of Variation with a longstop date of April 2024.

Reasons for Recommendation:

- It will provide the Council with the most certainty that the scheme will be brought forward for housing.
- This will result in the Council obtaining a capital receipt in a reasonable time frame.
- To take account of issues arising from the alterations to the access to the property arising from the A6 bypass.
- The deed will reduce the amount of legal and other professional fees potentially payable by the Council.
- It is in support of the corporate plan and the Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE).

Alternative Options Considered:

- The Council could refuse to enter into negotiations to vary the 1998 original overage agreement, i.e., do nothing. If the site is brought forward without any variations this would result in the highest capital receipt for the Council, however, the Landowner and Promotor have stated that if they cannot obtain a revision from the Council, they will not pursue the Promotion Agreement and will let it lapse. They would look to retain the existing use on Site rather than promote the alternative redevelopment use (currently in for planning) and this would generate no overage receipt.

Chair

Date

The meeting closed at 11.20 am