

EXECUTIVE

14th March 2024

Report Title	Update to North Northamptonshire Council Unacceptable Customer Behaviour Policy
Lead Member	Cllr Lloyd Bunday, Executive Member for Finance and Transformation
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Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Which Corporate Plan priority does the report most closely align with?	Safe and thriving places

List of Appendices

Appendix A – North Northamptonshire Unacceptable Customer Behaviour Policy
Appendix B – Climate Change Impact Assessment tool

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for adoption of proposed revision of the [North Northamptonshire Council 'Unacceptable or Unreasonable Communications and Behaviour policy'](#) ahead of presentation to Members of the Executive.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The current policy was drafted by Future Northants for implementation at vesting day and signed off by the Shadow Executive. A review is now required to ensure the policy reflects North Northamptonshire Council working practices and experiences and embodies the values of North Northamptonshire Council. Feedback from internal consultation has informed the proposed revision and better addresses experiences and needs of North Northamptonshire Council.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. It is recommended that the Executive approves the North Northamptonshire Council Unacceptable Customer Behaviour Policy
- 3.2. Reasons for Recommendations –
- The current policy confirming how the Council will manage unacceptable behaviour was drafted under the Future Northants programme board and adopted by the Shadow Executive. It is recommended that policies are reviewed regularly to reflect the environment the authority operates in.
 - The Council has a responsibility to mitigate risk and ensure health, safety and wellbeing of staff and contractors and a robust policy should provide clarity on what behaviours are considered unacceptable and how those behaviours will be managed. The policy will also address persistent vexatious contacts and how these will be managed; these place a strain on the Council's ability to deliver services impacting other customers by monopolising resources.
- 3.3. Alternative Options Considered: Option to not revise and continue to operate under policy drafted by Future Northants and adopted at vesting day. This is not recommended.

4. Report Background

- 4.1. The Council provides services to thousands of customers across a wide area and varying demographics. It is an unfortunate reality that sometimes while providing those services staff are met with what are considered incidents of unacceptable behaviour. It is both advisable and expected to have a policy that is clear on what behaviours are not acceptable which mitigates and manages those behaviours.
- 4.2. A review on the current policy was undertaken by Customer Services and Health, Safety & Wellbeing, in consultation with our recognised trade unions, management and staff to understand working practices, issues and areas requiring clarity. The proposed draft policy was developed through consultation, incorporating direct feedback to ensure concerns were considered and addressed.
- 4.3. The policy was reviewed alongside the internal staff alert register of recorded risk including those arising from reported incidents of unacceptable behaviour to ensure a robust consideration of issues.
- 4.4. The policy will inform the management of incidents, ensuring staff, contractors and customers understand the Council prioritises health, safety and wellbeing always.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1. The existing policy was drafted by Future Northants for implementation at vesting day and signed off by the Shadow Executive. It is now time to review and revise the Council's policy to ensure it best suits the needs of North Northamptonshire Council and is informed by experience and evolved working practice.
- 5.2. The proposed policy has been developed with Health, Safety and Wellbeing colleagues and consulted on widely between internal services, senior management and our recognised trade unions combining experience and knowledge to address the requirement of assuring safety of staff, contractors and customers and provide practical measures for managing unacceptable behaviour.
- 5.3. The draft NNC Unacceptable Customer Behaviour Policy has been developed in consultation to provide clarity on what is considered unacceptable and to provide practical measures to manage unacceptable behaviour. It is intended to be a fair and transparent policy to address the need to manage unacceptable with key changes being format and specificity.
- 5.4. Key changes are format and specificity. It addresses the generality of the original policy, providing clarity around what is classed as unacceptable behaviour and how the Council will manage those behaviours
- 5.5. Retention of the current policy was considered; it was considered a revision provides the opportunity to ensure the policy is reflective of best practice and the experiences and values of North Northamptonshire Council.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. If approved, the draft policy will be adopted and published on the Council's website providing a clear statement of expectations for behaviour.
- 6.2. The new policy will be communicated to colleagues and help support the management of unacceptable behaviour robustly and timeously where this occurs.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources, Financial and Transformation

- 7.1.1. There are no resource or financial implications arising from the proposal in this report.

7.2. Legal and Governance

7.2.1. The draft policy has been reviewed by NNC legal services; it has been confirmed the right to restrict or specify the method of service delivery should a customer's behaviour be deemed a health, safety or wellbeing risk for staff or contractors to the Council and/or pose an exceptional strain on the Council's ability to deliver services.

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

7.3.1. The policy supports our Corporate Plan key commitments to provide safe and thriving places and connected communities allowing our staff and customers to carry out business with the assurance they are doing so in a safe environment with assurances of managed risks.

7.3.2. This proposed policy will help support the internal Health, Safety & Wellbeing process - Staff Alert Process. This is an internal process helping ensure safety of staff by the sharing of information on known potential risks that employees and partners may encounter through their work activities. The purpose of sharing information is so that suitable and appropriate controls can be taken to eliminate or reduce that risk prior to contact. Effective management of unacceptable behaviour will reduce and deter such incidents.

7.4. Risk

7.4.1. There are no significant risks from the proposals in this report. The proposed policy revision reduces risk to staff health, safety and wellbeing by providing a clear policy to confirm expectations of behaviour to our staff.

7.4.2. The proposed revised policy provides clarity on what is classed as unacceptable behaviour and how it will be managed to support robust and timeous management and increase transparency.

7.5. Consultation

7.5.1. Consultation for this policy was undertaken in conjunction with Health, Safety and Wellbeing, heads of services, staff and trade union representatives between Spring and Autumn 2022.

7.5.2. Engagement sessions enabled staff to have direct input and provide feedback which was incorporated into the final draft.

7.5.3. Consultation ensured the policy was informed by and reflects staff experience and opinion.

7.5.4. Consultation has ensured the policy provides clarity to our staff and customers on what is unacceptable and provides our managers with practical means

7.6. Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel

7.6.1. This policy and covering report were presented to the Connected Customer Executive Advisory Panel on Wednesday 28 March. Feedback was positive, in particular, on how the policy has been drafted to be easily understood. A suggested inclusion from the panel was being clear on the steps for an appeal process. This has been reflected in the attached policy under section 8.

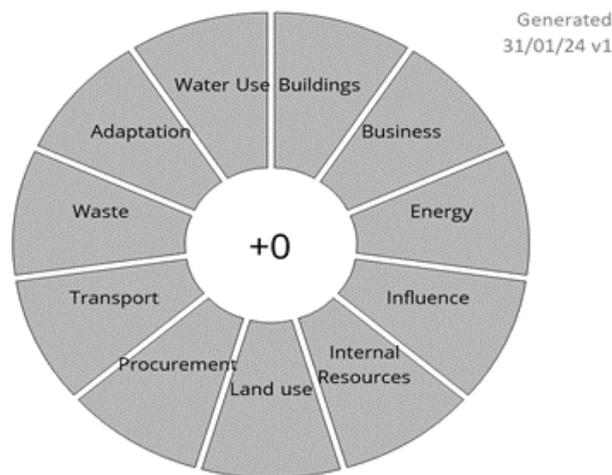
7.7. Equality Implications

7.7.1. Equality Screening Assessment confirms no impact to protected groups.

7.8. Climate Impact

7.8.1. The assessment completed, zero impact. The contents of the policy revision no direct positive or negative dependencies on NNC's climate response.

7.8.2. The infographic shows the relative costs and benefits of the decision on 11 different categories with respect to the climate: Buildings, no effect. Business, no effect. Energy, no effect. Influence, no effect. Internal Resources, no effect. Land use, no effect. Procurement, no effect. Transport, no effect. Waste, no effect. Adaptation, no effect. Water Use, no effect.



North Northamptonshire Council has committed to being a carbon neutral organisation by 2030, 5 yrs & 11 mos away.

7.9. Community Impact

7.9.1. No community impacts are associated with this report.

7.10. **Crime and Disorder Impact**

- 7.10.1. Management of unacceptable behaviour could positively impact crime and disorder reducing requirement to access emergency services with practical methods of managing unacceptable behaviours which should provide a deterrent to criminal behaviour.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1. Current policy –[Unacceptable or unreasonable communications and behaviour policy](#)
- 8.2. Equality Screening Assessment