

COUNCIL MEETING

Date: 12 December 2016

Venue: East Northamptonshire House, Cedar Drive, Thrapston

Time: 7.30pm

Present: Councillors:-

Rupert Reichhold	(Chairman of the Council)
Steven North	(Leader of the Council)
Glenn Harwood MBE	(Deputy Leader of the Council)

Rosalie Beattie	Sylvia Hughes
Tony Boto	Barbara Jenney
David Brackenbury	David Jenney
Wendy Brackenbury	Richard Lewis
Val Carter	Dorothy Maxwell
Richard Gell	Andy Mercer
Roger Glithero JP	Gill Mercer
Glenvil Greenwood-Smith	Phillip Stearn
Sylvia Hobbs	Jake Vowles
Helen Howell	Peter Wathen
Dudley Hughes JP	Pam Whiting

318. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Farrar, Marika Hillson, Marian Hollomon, Sarah Peacock, Janet Pinnock, Ron Pinnock, Valerie Raven-Hill, Anna Sauntson, Geoff Shacklock, Alex Smith, Robin Underwood and Colin Wright.

319. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 17 October 2016 were agreed as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

320. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

321. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chairman made the following address to the meeting:

On 23 October I was the guest of the Mayor of Corby at her Civic Dinner.

On 4 November I was the guest of the Chairman of Northamptonshire County Council at a luncheon to celebrate the Heritage of Northamptonshire at Deene Park – made available by the kind invitation of Mr and Mrs Robert Brudenell.

On 9 November I attended and made the opening speech at the East Northamptonshire 6th Annual Youth Conference in Rushden. The themes of the Conference were community safety in general and healthy relationships in particular. I was impressed by the common sense and idealism of the young people present.

On 13 November, Remembrance Sunday, I laid our Council's wreath at the Oundle War Memorial.

On 21 November I represented our Council at the SPARSE Group meeting in London. This was a positive meeting; I reported accordingly to the Leader, the Chief Executive etc and will be submitting this report to the next meeting of the Council.

On 11 December I was the guest of the Mayor of Corby at her Civic Service at St John's Church, Corby.

Finally, I take this opportunity to remind councillor colleagues that my Civic Dinner will be on Friday 27 January 2017 at the Chequered Skipper, Ashton.

The Chief Executive had no announcements to make.

322. LEADER'S ADDRESS

The Leader of the Council advised Council that he had no major issues to report.

323. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

(a) Planning Management Committee – 26 October, 16 November and 7 December 2016

The reports of the above Committee, presented by the Chairman, Councillor Phillip Stearn, were received.

(b) Policy and Resources Committee – 7 November and 5 December 2016

The reports of the above Committee, presented by the Chairman, Councillor Richard Lewis, were received.

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations in the following minutes be approved:

301 Community Support Grants

That an additional £5,000 for the community transport theme grant be approved.

(Reason – to increase capacity in the community transport theme grant to meet the demands of the service in the future.)

304 The Smoke Free (Private Vehicles) Regulations 2015

That provision is made in Part 3.2 of the Constitution (Scheme of Delegation) to authorise the following officers to enforce the provisions of the Smoke Free (Private Vehicles) Regulations 2015:

- a. Environmental Health Officers
- b. Environmental Health Technical Officers
- c. Environmental Protection Officers
- d. Licencing Enforcement Officers
- e. Health Protection Officers
- f. Waste Management Officers

(Reason – to accord with legislation.)

(c) Scrutiny Committee – 9 November 2016

The report of the above Committee, presented by the Chairman, Councillor Jake Vowles, was received.

(d) Planning Policy Committee – 21 November 2016

The report of the above Committee, presented by the Chairman, Councillor David Brackenbury, was received.

(e) Governance & Audit Committee – 30 November 2016

The report of the above Committee, presented by the Deputy Chairman, Councillor Peter Wathen, was received.

RESOLVED:

That the recommendation in the following minute be approved:

286 Changes to Arrangements for Appointment of External Auditors

- (i) That the preferred option is to join the national scheme proposed by the Local Government Association where external auditors will be appointed through a Sector Led Body arrangement.
- (ii) That formal acceptance to “opt-in” to this scheme be submitted by the deadline of 9 March 2017.

(Reason: To ensure the Council has appropriate arrangements in place and can satisfy its obligations in appointing an external auditor in accordance with the deadline of 31 December 2017)

324. OTHER REPORTS

(a) From Representatives on Outside Bodies

There were no reports from Outside Bodies representatives.

(b) Licensing Panels

(i) Liquor and Gambling – 28 November 2016

The minutes of the meeting of the Licensing (Liquor and Gambling) Panel held on 28 November 2016 were received.

325. MOTIONS

It was reported that no Notice of Motions had been received under Procedure Rule 11.

326. QUESTIONS

It was reported that no questions had been received under Procedure Rule 10.2.

327. NOTIFICATION BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL OF CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Leader advised Council that he had amended the membership of the Planning Management Committee to replace Councillor Sylvia Hobbs with Councillor Marika Hillson. The Leader thanked Councillor Hobbs for her work on the Committee

Chairman

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Date: 9 January 2017

Venue: East Northamptonshire House, Cedar Drive, Thrapston

Time: 7.30pm

Present: Councillors: Richard Lewis (Chairman)
Glenvil Greenwood-Smith (Vice Chairman)
Steven North (Leader of the Council)
Glenn Harwood MBE (Deputy Leader of the Council)

Tony Boto Glenvil Greenwood-Smith
David Brackenbury Marika Hillson
Wendy Brackenbury Dudley Hughes JP
Val Carter Sarah Peacock
Roger Glithero JP Phillip Stearn

328. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Andy Mercer.

329. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2016 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

330. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Helen Harrison and Richard Lewis both declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 8 (Discretionary Rate Relief Policy Review) and left the meeting during the consideration of the item.

331. QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.3

There were no questions submitted under Procedure Rule 10.3.

332. MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES

a) Housing Policy Working Party – 19 October 2016

The minutes of the meeting of the Housing Policy Working Party held on 19 October 2016 were received (see pages 258 to 262).

b) Finance Sub Committee – 19 December 2016

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance Sub Committee held on 19 December 2016 were received (see pages 263 to 266).

c) Welfare Reform Sub Committee – 21 December 2016

The minutes of the meeting of the Welfare Reform Sub Committee held on 21 December 2016 were received (see pages 267 to 268).

R. 18 RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL:

That the Council Tax Support Scheme 2017/18 for East Northamptonshire adopts the existing Council Tax Support Scheme with the following amendments:

- a) Limit the number of dependent children within the calculation for Council Tax Support to a maximum of two.
- b) Reduce the period for which a person can be absent from the United Kingdom and still receive Council Tax Support to four weeks.
- c) Remove the Work Related Activity Component in the current scheme for new Employment and Support Allowance claimants.
- d) Remove entitlement to the severe Disability Premium where another person is paid Universal Credit Carer's Element to look after them.

333. HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION GRANT FUNDING

The Housing Strategy and Delivery Manager advised the committee that for a number of years the council had allocated Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) funding through its budget. The amount had originally been set at £50,000 in 2012/13 but had decreased by 10% per annum in line with the reduction in the Revenue Support Grant allocation from the Government. The Homelessness Prevention Grant funding for 2017/18 would be £29,525. Bids from external agencies for the funding had been received totalling £42,594 and there were also internal demands on the money totalling £6,500. Total current 'bids' for 2017/18 budget therefore totalled £48,994.

Further duties were likely to be placed on the council as a result of the Homelessness Prevention Bill; homelessness numbers remained relatively low in the district compared to neighbouring authorities but applications and acceptances under the homelessness legislation were increasing and applications were increasing in complexity. The cumulative increase in applications in the two years from 2014/15 was predicted to be 23% with an almost 50% increase in acceptances. The Housing Policy Working Party at its meeting on 6 December 2016 had agreed to recommend to this Committee that a Homelessness Prevention Grants Panel should be appointed to analyse the various bids for the HPG funding and make recommendations to this Committee on how it should be allocated, and that further consideration should be given to future HPG funding requirements.

Members expressed support for the proposal, noting that the proposed preventative work would offer a better solution for the homeless whilst also representing better value for money. A number of issues were discussed including the availability of specialist accommodation for victims of domestic violence. It was suggested that the Panel should also look strategically at the issue of homelessness and measures that could be implemented to tackle the problem.

RESOLVED:

1. That a Homelessness Prevention Grants Panel be appointed, comprising three members of the Policy and Resources Committee, to consider:
 - a) the bids for 2017/18

- b) the evidence of increasing homelessness and the implications of impending legislation in respect of future requirements for Homelessness Prevention Grant funding.
2. That the Terms of Reference of the Homelessness Prevention Grants Panel be approved.
3. That authority be delegated to the Leader of the Council to appoint three members to the Homelessness Prevention Grants Panel.

(Reason – to ensure the fair and transparent allocation of the available funding and ensure appropriate funding of statutory duties)

334. COUNCIL TAX BASE 2017/18

Billing Authorities were required to carry out the calculation of their council tax base and their budget requirement, inclusive of any local precepts, to set an amount of council tax for each financial year. The council tax base was the measure of the relative taxable capacity of different areas and was calculated in accordance with prescribed rules. The tax base figure represented the estimated full year equivalent number of chargeable dwellings in the area, expressed as the equivalent number of band D dwellings. It also took into account the Billing Authority's estimated collection rate.

The Revenues Manager reported that the estimated Billing Authority tax base for 2017/18 was 30,871 compared to 30,084 for 2016/17. The increase in the tax base was attributable mainly to property growth and the reduction in Council Tax Support expenditure. The proposed tax base for 2017/18 also took into account other discounts and exemptions, anticipated additional new properties and a small provision for non-collection.

RESOLVED:

That a tax base of 30,871 be adopted for the year 2017/18.

335. DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF POLICY REVIEW

(Councillors Helen Harrison and Richard Lewis left the meeting during consideration of this item)

The Revenues Manager reported that in 2012 members had approved the adoption of a policy for granting Discretionary Rate Relief to business rate payers in East Northamptonshire. The policy had been reviewed in response to legislative changes, forthcoming changes to the rating system and a new rating list, effective from 1 April 2017.

In summary, the key changes to the policy were:

- A process for determination of an application for Hardship Relief.
- A new heading, 'Charitable/Not for profit organisations'
- Removal of 'Retail Premises Relief' and 'Reoccupation Relief'
- S44A relief to be included in the policy

In addition it was proposed that authority be delegated to the Revenues Manager to make any changes required by statute to the RV ranges and % levels in S4.3 of the policy, relating to Rural Rate Relief and that applications for Section 44A relief be determined by the Finance Manager in consultation with the Revenues Manager.

The Leader of the Council, in addressing the report, cautioned that rate relief for larger businesses may impact the council in future if it became more reliant on business rate income in order to provide its services. The Deputy Leader requested an amendment to paragraph 4.5.3 of the revised policy to ensure that applicants under Section 44A will be visited as part of the application process.

RESOLVED:

1. That, subject to the additional amendment to Paragraph 4.5.3, the amendments to the council's Discretionary Rate Relief policy be endorsed; and
2. That authority be delegated to the Revenues Manager to make changes to the rateable value ranges and percentage levels in section 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 of the policy in response to legislative changes relating to the 2017 Valuation List.

(Reason - to accord with legislation or the policy of the Council and for consistency with previous decisions)

336. SHARED SERVICES STRATEGY

The Chief Executive presented a report setting out a proposed Shared Services Strategy, The Council had been involved in many shared services, entering into these partnerships where one or more of the following outcomes could be achieved without jeopardising the others:

- Increased capacity
- Increased resilience
- Improved capability
- Improved quality of service
- Efficiency savings

While the rationale for our entering into these arrangements had always been clear, a recent Internal Audit report identified the need to document that rationale, to set out the criteria that should be used to evaluate new opportunities, and to clarify the governance arrangements that should be in place. The strategy aimed to address these requirements.

RESOLVED:

That the Shared Services Strategy be approved subject to minor amendments to the Shared Services Checklist.

(Reason - to ensure that the shared service arrangements entered into by the council help to achieve its corporate outcomes and are properly governed.)

337. PLANNING SERVICES – PROJECT FUNDING

The Planning Services Manager reported that the following research and advisory projects had been identified as priorities for completion within the 2016/17 financial year:

- Rushden East Business Incubation Centre Feasibility Study: £10,000
- Housing Mix Study: up to £20,000
- Local Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal (Part 1): up to £20,000
- Ashton Conservation Area Design Guidance: £5,000

As there was no Planning Services budget coverage in 2016/17 for these projects it was proposed that up to £55,000 be identified from reserves to cover the costs of these projects.

Members expressed their support for the proposal in order to ensure that these vital pieces of work could be undertaken.

R.19 RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL:

That up to £55,000 be allocated from the Delivering the Corporate Plan Reserve to enable the completion of Planning Services projects as identified in the report.

(Reason – to ensure that development in the district meet the needs of local communities in respect of housing, employment and conservation)

338. WASTE AND CLEANSING CONTRACT PROCUREMENT UPDATE

The Head of Environmental Services reported on the work of the Waste Project Board (WPB), which had been formed in early 2016 to commence and direct the procurement of the next Waste and Cleansing contract. The Board's first objective had been to establish the specification of the service. The current specification was based on:

Residual waste – fortnightly collection - 180 litre wheeled bin

- Dry recycling - fortnightly co-mingled collection - 240 litre wheeled bin
- Food waste – weekly collection - 10 litre bin and caddy
- Garden waste - fortnightly collection (subscription-based) - 240 litre wheeled bin

Members acknowledged a wish to maintain stability, consistency and simplicity of the service for the residents of East Northamptonshire and also noted the high customer satisfaction levels the service enjoyed. The current collection arrangements satisfied the requirement of The Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 and the subsequent amendment of 2012 which required waste collection authorities to take all reasonable measures to apply the waste hierarchy and to provide separate collections of paper, plastic, metal and glass where it is technically, environmentally and economically practicable. The WPB had therefore recommended that basic specification of the waste and cleansing service should not be changed.

The WPB was keen to highlight that the first stage of the project was about establishing how the Council wished the service to look. Future stages would include consideration and recommendations on how the service is delivered which would then determine how the service was procured.

The Leader of the Council advised members that the authority had recently rejoined the North Northamptonshire Waste Partnership and that it was encouraging to note that no alternative recommended practices were emerging from that body.

RESOLVED:

That the procurement of the next waste collection and cleansing contract be based on the specification of the service as set out in paragraph 2.1 of the report

(Reason – the current specification of the waste collection and cleansing service provides a service that is effective and provides good customer satisfaction)

339. DRAFT WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

The Monitoring Officer presented a revised Whistle Blowing Policy to the Committee for consideration. Whistleblowing formed part of the governance framework for the council and provided a mechanism for anyone with information about potential fraud, bribery & corruption, and weak financial or other systems such as health and safety, to bring the matter to the Council's attention in a confidential manner. It also provided protection for those that 'blew the whistle' to ensure that they were not harassed or victimised as a result.

Although the policy was accessible and staff awareness of it was good, actual use of the policy had been limited, with only three reports being made under the policy in recent years. All allegations had been investigated in accordance with the policy and no evidence of wrongdoing had been found.

The key change since the last revision of the Whistle Blowing Policy arose from provisions in the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013. Improvements had also been made to the introduction and layout to improve readability and to include reference to the additional prescribed persons for whistle blowing laid down by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy.

Members discussed the revised policy and queried the provision for anonymous complainants. The Monitoring Officer explained the rationale behind this provision and pointed out that such complaints would require a judgement in line with Paragraph 6.2 of the policy and that anonymous complaints tended to be less powerful than those from a named source as it was difficult to obtain sufficient supporting evidence.

RESOLVED:

That the revised Whistle Blowing Policy be approved

(Reason - to ensure the council has an up to date Whistle Blowing Policy which accords with the legislative provision as part of its governance framework)

340. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED:

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business as it was likely that exempt information, as defined under paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 may be disclosed.

341. PROPERTY INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Housing Strategy and Delivery Manager presented an update on negotiation to buy back and refurbish two properties through a 'clawback' provision in the original transfer of the properties.

The price proposed for the properties offered value for money and represented a good investment opportunity for the council.

R.20 RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL:

That the maximum purchase price of the properties in question be increased to in line with the figure stated in the report, to include purchasing costs, and that this is added to the Approved Capital Programme and funded from the Investment Opportunities Reserve.

(Reason - The recommended course of action is the most cost-effective)

Chairman



**Housing Policy Working Party
Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 19th October
2016 at 2pm in the Kasen Room**

Present

Councillors **Tony Boto (Chair)**
Steven North
Helen Harrison
Sarah Peacock

Also in attendance

Executive Director	Sharn Matthews	SM
Planning Policy and Conservation Manager	Richard Palmer	RP
Housing Enabling Officer	Aine Cooper	AC
Housing Strategy and Delivery Manager	Carol Conway	CC
Environmental Protection Manager	Jenny Walker	JW
Housing Services Officer	Louise Bagley	LB
Principal Planning Policy Officer	Louise Jelley	LJ
Homes Direct	Beverley Tebbutt	BT

		<u>ACTION</u>
1.	Apologies and introductions	
1.1	Apologies were received from Cllr Richard Lewis and Paul Bland	
2	Minutes of the meeting of 7th September 2016	
2.1	An amendment is to be made to 6.4: which reads: ' <i>Further consideration of the issues and financial implications would therefore be required before any recommendation could be made to P&R committee</i> '. This should now read: 'Members expressed serious concerns on this funding proposal and further consideration of the issues and financial implications would therefore be required before any recommendation could be made to P&R committee.'	

	With this amendment, the minutes were approved and signed by the chairman.	
3	Matters arising	
3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JW advised that there are still no updates on the OT service, and that the numbers of OTs haven't changed. Concerns were raised that there may be backlogs if the OTs are reduced, and this would in turn affect our budgets. CC advised she is still in negotiation with the housing association regarding the purchase of two properties 	
4	Updates	
4.1	Housing: CC advised that there are no updates on the Housing and Planning Act or the Voluntary Right To Buy. A private member's homelessness bill is currently going through parliament, and is due to have its second reading on 28 th October. It has cross party support and if enacted, additional homelessness duties would be placed on local authorities.	
4.2	<p>Welfare Reform: The revised benefit cap is to be implemented from 7th November. 12 households in the district are affected by the existing benefit cap. This will increase to 97 under the revised cap.</p> <p>The local housing allowance benefit cap will not be applied to supported housing until 2019. The government are looking at proposing a new system, with a pot of money to allocate to supported housing schemes. Formal consultation on this will be published shortly, and CC to bring the formal consultation to the meeting upon its publication. If consultation timescales do not allow for this, authority to approve a response to be delegated to the chairman.</p>	CC
5	Housing Allocation Policy – draft for review attached	
5.1	New sections have been added to the policy, along with more detail on some of the existing aspects of it.	
5.2	Concern was raised over those who do some work in this area but whose employment is not based here. BT advised that this would only be an issue if there was no other local connection such as family in the area. LB suggested that if this situation did arise, it would be looked at by the social needs panel under exceptional circumstances. Band X is applied where someone who is excluded from our list or is only eligible for some exception site properties. Greater clarity is needed to better explain Band X.	

5.3	Concern was raised that RPs could refuse nominations under some circumstances but it was accepted this was needed in the policy to enable further nominations to the property where the council agreed the refusal was reasonable. The Housing Allocation policy will go to P&R subject to the agreed minor amendments being made to it.	CC
5.4	BT left the meeting at 14.40	
6	District Housing Mix	
6.1	RP gave an overview of the report and draft consultancy project brief to investigate whether a lack of higher value houses may impact upon the economic development of the district and how this might be addressed.	
6.2	It was agreed that this was a corporate Council project, not just part of the HPWP's remit and that the housing mix for the whole district needed to be considered, not just Rushden East. The brief would consider the potential for providing larger properties within the Rushden SUE, and provide emphasis for smaller properties within the rural areas of the District with the aim of improving the overall mix of properties and improving economic prosperity of the area.	
6.3	The following points were raised in discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns over the loss of bungalows in the district, with many being developed into two storey dwellings. This is difficult to prevent, and the development of new bungalows should be promoted. This would be beneficial as newly built bungalows would have more manageable gardens and be built to current standards, decreasing the demand for adaptations in the future. Young people were being priced out of villages which has a longer term impact on sustainable communities. The consultants would need to liaise with employers on wage profiles and to look at neighbouring districts and boroughs to establish demand/who might move to the district. 	
6.4	It was agreed that delivering the part 2 objective of the study should be the main focus of the consultant's brief, with greater emphasis on where we want to be, rather than where we are now. Part 2 of the brief should therefore be progressed with the proviso that Part 1 may need to be reviewed dependant on the outcome of the initial work.	RP/PB
6.5	Subject to the above amendments it was agreed that quotes be sought for the work. A request to fund the work from reserves will be put to Finance Sub Committee in December. An update on quotes received from consultants will be provided at the next meeting or beforehand if available.	RP/PB

7	Resident's Survey	
7.1	<p>The housing results of the resident's survey were presented. Existing residents had been asked about their current homes; whether rented or owned, any plans to move and why, and their desired location. The resident's survey is open to everybody in the district, but mainly residents aged 45+ completed it. The responses are therefore anecdotal rather than statistically accurate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of respondents own their own homes and have no plans to move. • Of those wishing to move, just over half want to stay in East Northamptonshire. • Reasons for wanting to move were varies but 27% want to move to suit changing needs such as a disability or medical requirement and a further 22 wish to downsize. • 15% need or want a bigger property – 33% of respondents wanting a bigger or smaller property want 2 bedrooms, 40% want 3 bedrooms, 17% want 4 bedrooms. 	
8	Workplan Update	
8.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk review - completed • Clawback policy – to be considered once Government guidance has been received. • Accessible properties – ongoing. • Housing mix requirements supplementary planning document – this has now moved into the current workstream, with a target of March 2017 subject to government guidance on starter homes and the housing mix research being completed. 	
9	Risk Review	
9.1	<p>The risk register has been updated to reflect those relevant to the HPWP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to deliver sufficient affordable housing in district – the score has risen to 12 to reflect the move towards starter homes and away from affordable renting. The wording of this risk needs to change to provide clarity on the different types of affordable housing which now include starter homes. • Fraudulent homeless and housing register applications – fraud procedures have been strengthened, reducing the impact. • Cessation of the choice based letting scheme – likelihood score reduced from 4 to 3 to reflect the on-going partnership work with RPs and changes to the allocations policy. • Appeals against homelessness decisions are likely to increase in line with an increase in applications. 	CC

10	AOB	
10.1	It was noted that the Farmer report on the construction industry was published this week. It raises issues of skills gaps and an aging workforce which will mean that the firms, capital and labour won't be there to produce the required housing. SM to circulate.	SM
10.2	CC and AC had attended a presentation last week by Moulton College, promoting apprenticeships. They are struggling to get people to join apprenticeships in the construction industry, so are looking to the council and RPs to do some promotional work. All employers with a payroll in excess of £3 million per annum will have to pay a 0.5% levy to apprenticeship schemes but can also use some of the money to provide apprentice places. RP advised that SEMLEP had recently sent a report to DCLG focussing on key issues for housing delivery within the region, which also provided some commentary on barriers to delivery. It is hoped that this report can be circulated to the HPWP when made available.	
11	Next and future meetings	
11.1	The next meeting will be held on 7 December at 2pm in the Kasen Room Future meetings (tentative dates tbc at the next meeting) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18.1.17 • 1.3.17 • 12.4.17 	
	The meeting concluded at 15.40 pm	



Finance Sub-Committee

Minutes of a meeting held on Monday 19 December 2016 at 7.00pm, East Northamptonshire House, Thrapston

Present: Councillors: Steven North (Chairman)
David Brackenbury
Val Carter
Roger Glithero JP
Glenvil Greenwood-Smith
Glenn Harwood MBE
Richard Lewis

Officers: David Oliver (Chief Executive)
Glenn Hammons (Chief Finance Officer)
Michelle Drewery (Finance Manager)

1.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 No apologies for absence had been received.

2.0 MINUTES

2.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Finance Sub-Committee held on 5 October 2016 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

3.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 No interests were declared.

4.0 QUESTIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 10.3

4.1 There were no questions submitted under Procedure Rule 10.3.

5.0 BUDGET MONITORING TO 31 OCTOBER 2016

5.1 The Chief Finance Officer provided an update on the revenue and capital positions against the approved budgets for the period ended 31 October 2016.

5.2 The estimated outturn for services for the year was an underspend of £98,000. This was due to an increase in planning application income, together with other efficiencies and pressures, including a reduction in interest receivable.

- 5.3 Details of a number of performance indicators covering several areas of financial activity were reported to the Sub-Committee. A review of total outstanding debt was currently being undertaken and a report would be submitted to the Sub-Committee in February 2017.
- 5.4 Members were pleased to note the estimated underspend. The levels of debt write offs were discussed and officers provided clarification on the process.

RESOLVED: That

- i) the latest revenue, capital and reserves positions for 2016/17 be noted.

(Reason: This is for information / monitoring purposes)

- ii) the collection and write-off performance for sundry debtors, local taxation and benefit overpayments as set out in Appendix 3 to the report be noted.

(Reason: This is for information / monitoring purposes)

6.0 TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT TO 31 OCTOBER 2016

- 6.1 The Chief Finance Officer presented a report outlining the Treasury Management position for the period ended 31 October 2016.
- 6.2 It was noted that Treasury Management Practices (TMPs) had been taken out of the Council's Constitution during 2016 and were required to be incorporated into the Treasury Management Strategy. This would be done with effect from the 2017/18 Strategy and in advance of this, an example of the TMPs which the Council might wish to adopt within the Strategy were set out in the report.

RESOLVED: That

- i) the Treasury Management performance for period 7 of 2016/17 be noted.
- ii) the Treasury Management Practices (set out in Appendix 2 to the report) for inclusion in the Treasury Management Strategy from 2017/18 be noted.

(Reason – in accordance with CIPFA guidance and best practice in Treasury Management)

7.0 DRAFT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND PLAN

- 7.1 The Finance Manager presented a report setting out the Council's Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Plan (MTFP) 2017/18 to 2020/21, the outline Revenue Budget 2017/18, Capital Programme 2017/18 to 2026/27 and Treasury Management Strategy 2017/18 updating the MTFS 2016/17 to 2019/20 approved by Council in February 2016.

7.2 The MTFS 2017/18 to 2020/21 had been formulated since the announcement of the Spending Review and the Autumn Statement 2016 and the Finance Manager provided a briefing on the provisional local government finance settlement which had been announced on 15 December 2016.

7.3 The main headlines of the settlement announcement were:

- No new funding allocated to local government as part of the provisional settlement but the social care precept to be allowed to rise by up to 3% instead of 2% p.a. on condition that the total increase by 2019/20 does not exceed 6%.
- New Homes Bonus - national baseline for housing growth of 0.4% introduced where growth below this will not attract a bonus payment. The number of years for which payments are made will change from 6 years to 5 years in 2017/2018, and to 4 years from 2018/2019.
- Further consultation on New Homes Bonus will be announced to encourage more effective local planning.
- Business rates pilots in five areas have been announced that will enable aspects of the further business rates retention system to be tested.
- The top-up and tariff payments for all councils have changed due to the business rates revaluation which comes into force in April 2017.
- The closing date for responses to the consultation on the provisional finance settlement to DCLG is Friday 13 January 2017 with the final settlement expected to be published in February 2017.

7.4 Members discussed the proposed MTFS and the implications of the settlement announcement. There was general consensus that there needed to be a review of the treasury management strategy to ensure maximum return on investments. It was proposed that a report be brought to the February meeting of the sub committee and that the Treasury Management advisor be invited to attend.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted, specifically the:

- Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)
- Draft Revenue Budget 2017/18
- Draft Capital Programme for 2017/18-2026/27 (subject to the on-going review of schemes within that programme)

(Reason: To ensure that the Council complies with its constitution in setting its Budget)

8.0 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED:

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business because exempt information, as defined under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972, may be disclosed.

9.0 ASSET MANAGEMENT – SALE OF LAND AND BUILDINGS PROGRESS UPDATE

- 9.1 The Chief Executive presented a report providing the Sub-Committee with an update on progress made in relation to the sale of Council owned land and buildings.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the update report be noted.

(Reason: To note the progress on the sale of assets)

10.0 INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY / LAND ACQUISITION

- 10.1 The Chief Executive presented a report regarding a site within the District which had recently been put on the market for sale. Due to the strategic location of the site and its potential to generate income it was considered an appropriate investment opportunity for the Council.
- 10.2 The Chief Executive provided the sub committee with a verbal update and advised that the site in question had been withdrawn from the market. However, members agreed that it highlighted the need for an appropriate decision making process to be in place for such matters that may arise in the future.
- 10.3 Members noted that a budget virement of £40,000 to meet the cost of professional advice, agreed under urgency procedures within the Financial Procedure Rules, would not now be required.

RESOLVED:

That the content of the report and the intention to produce a further report to consider an appropriate procedure for any future issues of this nature, be noted.

(Reason: To provide an effective decision making process that supports the Council's commercialisation aspirations.)

Chairman

Welfare Reform Sub-Committee

Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday 21 December 2016 at 10am, in the Council Chamber, East Northamptonshire House, Thrapston

Present:

Councillors: Andy Mercer (Chairman)
 Steven North (Leader of the Council)
 Helen Harrison
 Richard Lewis
 Sarah Peacock

Officers: Lucy Hogston – Benefit Manager
 Julia Smith – Head of Customer and Community Services
 Glenn Hammons – Chief Finance Officer

1.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 There were no apologies for absence.

2.0 MINUTES

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2016 were approved as a correct record.

3.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 No declarations of interest were made.

4.0 QUESTIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 10.3

4.1 No questions had been submitted under Procedure Rule 10.3.

5.0 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2017/18

5.1 At the Sub-Committee's meeting on 19 October 2016, Members considered various options for a Council Tax Support (CTS) Scheme for 2017/18 and approved consultation on the following five proposals:

- Proposal 1 – No change to the percentage reduction in the current scheme (remain at 20%).
- Proposal 2 – To limit the number of dependent children within the calculation for Council Tax Support to a maximum of two.
- Proposal 3 – Reducing the period for which a person could be absent from the United Kingdom and still receive Council Tax Support to four weeks.
- Proposal 4 – To remove the Work Related Activity Component in the current scheme for new Employment and Support Allowance Claimants.
- Proposal 5 – To remove entitlement to the Severe Disability Premium where another person was paid Universal Credit (Carer's Element) to look after them.

5.2 The consultation ran for four weeks and 170 responses were received which was a decrease from the previous CTS consultation for 2016/17. The majority of respondents

strongly agreed or agreed with the proposals.

5.3 The financial modelling presented to the Sub-Committee on 19 October 2016 was based on the following assumptions:

- Grant funding would reduce
- CTS expenditure would reduce by the same percentage levels as experienced during 2016/17
- CTS caseload would reduce by the same percentage levels as experienced in 2016/17
- Council Tax collection rates would stay the same

The Autumn Statement did not make any significant changes to Welfare therefore it had not been necessary to revise the financial modelling.

5.4 The current CTS scheme would not be cost neutral in 2017/18 and there would be a funding gap of around £31K of which £3K related to ENC.

5.5 In response to questions from Members, Officers confirmed that the proposal to limit the number of dependent children to a maximum of two would only affect those births after 1 April 2017 and would bring the Scheme in line with Child Tax Credit. The introduction of Universal Credit would not likely have an impact in 2017/18 but could in future years.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the Equality Impact Assessment be noted.
- (ii) That the consultation responses be noted.
- (iii) That the Council Tax Support Scheme is reviewed during 2017/18 to ensure that a financially sustainable scheme is in place for 2018/19.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE:

That Council on 23 January 2017 be recommended to approve that the Council Tax Support Scheme 2017/18 for East Northamptonshire adopts the existing Council Tax Support Scheme with the following amendments:

- a) Limit the number of dependent children within the calculation for Council Tax Support to a maximum of two.
- b) Reduce the period for which a person can be absent from the United Kingdom and still receive Council Tax Support to four weeks.
- c) Remove the Work Related Activity Component in the current scheme for new Employment and Support Allowance claimants.
- d) Remove entitlement to the Severe Disability Premium where another person is paid Universal Credit Carer's Element) to look after them.

(Reason – to deliver a Council Tax Support Scheme for 2017/18 that meets all the statutory requirements.)

Chairman

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: 11 January 2017

Venue: East Northamptonshire House, Cedar Drive, Thrapston

Time: 7.30 pm

Present: Councillors:- Jake Vowles (Chairman)
David Jenney (Vice-Chairman)
Rosalie Beattie Dorothy Maxwell
John Farrar Valarie Raven-Hill
Helen Howell Geoff Shacklock

342. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 9 November 2016 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

343. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Roger Powell.

344. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

345. QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.3

There were no questions submitted under Council Procedure Rule 10.3.

346. UPDATE ON CALL-IN OF POLICY DECISIONS

The Committee was presented with an update on the activities of the Council's policy committees and sub-committees and decisions taken since the last meeting of the Scrutiny Committee. No decisions made by the Finance Sub-Committee, Personnel Sub-Committee, Welfare Reform Sub-Committee, Policy & Resources Committee or Planning Policy Committee had been required to be called in.

RESOLVED:

That the update on the call-in of policy decisions be noted.

347. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORTING – QUARTER 2 2016/17

The Corporate Support Manager presented a report detailing the performance of the Council in respect of agreed indicators and other statistics for Quarter 2 2016/17.

Updated performance data for Land Charges searches carried out was submitted.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

348. FINAL REPORT OF THE REVIEW OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The Committee had commissioned a review of ENC appointed representatives on outside bodies in June 2016 with a view to making recommendations to Council regarding the appointments to be made at the 2017 Annual Council meeting. The Committee had appointed Councillors Vowles and Beattie to a Review Panel to work alongside the Executive Director on the review.

The Committee had considered issues arising from the review at its meetings held in September and November 2016 and the Executive Director presented the final recommendations of the Panel to the Committee for consideration.

It was noted that there was currently no provision to require feedback from ENC representatives appointed to outside bodies. The Panel had recommended that Part 2, Article 2, paragraph 2.03 (b iv) of the Constitution should be amended from the current requirement for Council representatives to participate in the activities of outside bodies to which they are appointed to also include a requirement to report back at least annually to a specified Committee or Board of the Council.

R.21 RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL: That

- i) at the 2017 Annual Council meeting, nominations for representatives to outside bodies be made in accordance with Appendix A
- ii) the Constitution be amended to require appointed nominees to submit a minimum of one report per year to the Committee or Board shown in Appendix A

(Reason: To enable the Council to liaise with key partners about activity that impacts on the delivery of its Corporate Plan).

349. FINAL REPORT OF THE REVIEW OF PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

In July 2015, the Committee had agreed to review the Council's approach to Planning Enforcement activity as part of its 2015/16 work programme and Councillors David Jenney, Maxwell and Raven-Hill had been appointed to carry out the review.

The review had been due to commence in November 2015 but had been delayed by the departure of the then Head of Planning Services and had actually commenced in January 2016 following the appointment of the current Head of Service. The Scrutiny Review Panel had met on eight occasions since then.

The following Terms of Reference for the review had been agreed:

To review in a holistic manner the enforcement activity undertaken by this council in relation to the following activities:

- *Implementation of plans and conditions relating to approved planning permissions (including building control regulations and listed building consent)*
- *Other works undertaken which breach planning regulations*

Councillor David Jenney presented a summary of the issues examined, together with the recommendations made by the Panel. Councillor Jenney expressed his thanks to Councillors Maxwell and Raven-Hill and to the officers who had contributed to the review.

RESOLVED:

That the following recommendations of the Review Panel be supported:

- a) Officers to risk assess all new applications to highlight those that are likely to be ongoing 'causes' of concern and implement monitoring and carry out more checks right from the start.
- b) The Case Officer to provide update/s to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Planning Management Committee plus Ward Councillors when clear issues developing on site that may result in retrospective application arise.
- c) Officers develop a formal communication protocol to ensure relevant Town and Parish Councils, as well as Ward Councillors, are updated on enforcement activity in a timely manner after actions are taken.
- d) Performance measures included in the Enforcement Protocol to be reported quarterly to the Planning Management Committee from January 2017.
- e) The Senior Conservation Officer to review opportunities and implications to improve information on the Council's website about what buildings in the district are listed and what this means for owners etc.
- f) Officers to discuss with Northamptonshire County Council Highways the capacity for all sites or just certain categories/sizes of sites to have transport plans.
- g) Officers to review if two standard conditions can be drafted re delivery time, one near schools and one otherwise.
- h) Officers to consider, if possible, adding commentary to variation applications to aid understanding of the impact of changes.
- i) The revised draft policy is presented to the Planning Management Committee at the end of January for consultation, before being presented to the Planning Policy Committee in February for adoption.
- j) The revised draft Part 5.4 of the Constitution is presented to the Planning Management Committee and the Planning Policy Committee for consultation, before being presented to the Governance and Audit Committee in February and hence to (full) Council for adoption.

- k) Councillors should be offered training on the adopted revised policy and protocol (Part 5.4).
- l) Support be given to the proposal to extend the temporary Planning Enforcement staffing contract for another 12 months to provide succession planning in case of further staffing changes.

(Reason: To implement cost-effective improvements to the Planning Enforcement services offered by the Council and provide clarity to Councillors about activities related to planning services).

Chairman

Review of ENC Representatives on Outside Bodies

Outside Body	2016/17 Representative	Initial Review Outcome	Proposed Reporting Route for Feedback
Community Safety Core Group	Cllr S North	Retain	Policy and Resources (for any policy or resources changes)
Greenway Board	Cllrs S Peacock and P Stearn	Retain	District Regeneration and Tourism Board
Groundwork Northamptonshire	Cllr G Mercer	Retain	Policy & Resources (as make funding decisions)
Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership (NEP)	Cllr S North	Delete	
South East Midlands Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP)	Cllr G Harwood	Retain	Policy and Resources (as related to Economic Policy)
Oundle and Thrapston Youth Counselling (CHAT)	Cllr R Reichhold	Delete	
Welland Market Towns Group	Cllr P Stearn	Further Review (in August 2017)	District Regeneration and Tourism Board
Welland Partnership Board	Cllr G Greenwood-Smith	Agreed by Board in Nov 16 to end	
Welland Joint Committee	Cllrs R Lewis and S North	Delete	
University of Northampton Court	Chairman of Council (Cllr R Reichhold)	Retain	Council – as part of Chairman's Reports
Health, Adult Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, NCC	Cllr H Howell	Retain	Scrutiny Committee
Kettering General Hospital Foundation Trust	Cllr D Maxwell	Retain	Scrutiny Committee
East Northamptonshire Locality Forum - Nene Commissioning area	Cllr M Hollomon	Retain	Scrutiny Committee
East Northamptonshire Locality Forum – Borders (Peterborough)	No appointment	Reinstate	Scrutiny Committee

Commissioning area			
Destination Nene Valley	Cllr S Peacock	Retain	District Regeneration and Tourism Board
Northamptonshire Sports Partnership	Cllr S North	Retain	Scrutiny (as predominately health and well being issue)
Stanwick Lakes Management Board	Cllrs G Greenwood-Smith, D Hughes and R Lewis	Retain	Policy & Resources (potential capital implications)
Campaign to Protect Rural England (Executive Committee of County Branch	Cllr T Boto	Retain	Planning Policy Committee
East Northamptonshire Grounds Maintenance Consortium	Cllr T Boto	Retain -- move to ENC Working Groups and Panels	
North Northamptonshire Development Company (NNDC)	Cllr R Lewis	Delete from March 2017	
River Nene Regional Park Board	Cllr G Greenwood-Smith	Retain	District Regeneration and Tourism Working Party (Tourism related current activity)
Rockingham Motor Speedway Forum	Cllrs R Glithero and H Harrison	Delete (the Forum agreed to no longer meet, by agreement with all parties).	
East Midlands Leaders Board/East Midlands Council	Cllr S North	Retain	Policy and Resources (Strategic Direction)
Fourth Option Special Interest Group	Cllr P Stearn	Delete	
Local Government Association	Cllr S North	Retain	Policy and Resources (Strategic Direction)
Local Government Association Rural Commission	Cllrs V Raven-Hill and R Reichhold	Delete	
Northamptonshire Parking Committee	Cllr G Mercer	Retain	District Regeneration and Tourism Working Party (Town Centre Regeneration Related)

Northamptonshire Partnership	Cllr S North	Delete	
Northamptonshire Police and Crime Panel	Cllr G Mercer	Retain	Policy and Resources (for any policy or resources changes)
SPARSE	Cllr R Reichhold	Retain	Finance Sub Committee (Funding related)
Northamptonshire Pensions Board	Cllr R Lewis	Retain	Finance Sub Committee (Funding related)
Northamptonshire Waste Partnership	Cllrs R Lewis and S North	Retain	Waste Contract Working Party
Community Law Service	Cllr M Hillson	Retain	Welfare Reform Sub-Committee (to monitor community stress levels)
Serve Management Board	Cllr R. Reichhold	Retain	Scrutiny Committee (re Public Transport Review)
Service Six	Cllr R Lewis	Retain	Welfare Reform Sub-Committee (to monitor community financial stress levels)