

COUNCIL MEETING

Date: 25 January 2021

Venue: Online meeting, via MS Teams

Time: 7.30pm

Present: Councillors:-

Helen Howell	(Chairman of the Council)
David Brackenbury	(Vice-Chairman of the Council)
Steven North	(Leader of the Council)

Annabel de Capell Brooke	Andrew Mercer
Tony Boto	Gillian Mercer
Wendy Brackenbury	Sarah Peacock
Val Carter	Harriet Pentland
Richard Gell	Janet Pinnock
Glenvil Greenwood-Smith	Rupert Reichold
Helen Harrison	Alex Smith
Marian Hollomon	Geoff Shacklock
Dudley Hughes	Peter Tomas
Sylvia Hughes	Robin Underwood
Barbara Jenney	Jake Vowles
David Jenney	Peter Wathen
Richard Lewis	Lee Wilkes
Dorothy Maxwell	Colin Wright

309. SILENT TRIBUTE TO FOR COUNCILLORS ROGER GLITHERO AND RON PINNOCK

The Chairman invited members to join her in paying silent tribute to former Councillor Ron Pinnock, who had sadly passed away on 30 October 2020.

Councillor Pinnock had been the ward member for Rushden Sartoris, a member of Rushden Town Council and had formerly represented Rushden West at Northamptonshire County Council. He had been mayor of Rushden Town Council in 2002/03 and Chairman of East Northamptonshire Council during 2004/05, whilst also being a long-standing member of the Planning Management Committee.

Members were further invited to pay silent tribute to former Councillor Roger Glithero, who had sadly very recently passed away.

Councillor Glithero had joined the Council at its inception in 1974 as ward member for Kings Forest West. In the 47 years of service to residents of East Northamptonshire he had held many posts including as former Deputy Leader of the Council, long standing chairman of the Personnel Sub-Committee and a member of Policy & Resources Committee and Planning Management Committee.

On behalf of all councillors and staff, the Chairman expressed her deepest sympathies to their families and asked members to join her for a period of two minutes silence.

310. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Phillip Stearn.

311. MINUTES

The minutes of the council meeting held on 26 October 2020 were agreed as a true and correct record of the proceedings, except for the need for the reference to Cllr Tony Boto to be removed underneath the fourth paragraph of minute 229.

It was noted that the Chairman would sign the minutes at the next available opportunity.

312. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman invited those who wished to do so to declare any interests in respect of items on the agenda.

No declarations were made.

313. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman of the Council made the following announcements to the Council:

As you can imagine there hasn't been any civic events for me to report on, but I'd like to say a big thank-you to those members who agreed to be included in my Christmas card. I was really delighted with it and we have had many positive comments, so thank you.

Another thankyou goes to those members who have placed some of their remaining community empowerment funds to support me in raising funds for my chosen charity, East Northants First Responders. The First Responders need the funds for a range of things including uniform, PPE equipment, training equipment, masks, medical supplies, and new defibrillators just to name a few. The volunteers have to raise every single penny for all of this equipment, they don't even get paid for the mileage they do, so as you can imagine during the pandemic they are working flat out to assist the NHS, not forgetting they have full time jobs to hold down. They are also currently carrying out Covid testing in schools and administering vaccines. These men and women are truly our East Northants heroes so thank you on their behalf. If any of you still have funds available don't let them go to waste. With ENC ceasing, please pledge them and then you will know that they will be used across East Northamptonshire.

I have also had a great response to my Chairman's Champions Awards. We are going through the entries and are working on the arrangements for virtual presentations. So, thank you to all those who sent in nominations.

Thank you.

314. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chief Executive had no announcements to make.

315. LEADER'S ADDRESS

The Leader of the Council made the following address to Council:-

Good evening members.

This year has started as last year was, in very difficult circumstances, and that was only compounded this morning by receiving the very sad news of Councillor Roger Glithero's passing. Obviously Chairman, I support the comments you made and I'm sure there will be opportunities in the future to pay our respects to Roger, and to all those members we have lost in the recent past. I have already spoken to the family and passed on our condolences but in the circumstances, I don't feel it appropriate to add to those tonight.

There is very good news in respect of Planning Policy later this week. I have a copy of the draft Local Plan, as I'm sure other members of Planning Policy Committee do, in its totality in draft form. So hopefully, subject to any issues at the meeting on Wednesday we shall be issuing a final technical consultation, which is not a public consultation, for anyone who wishes to approach the Inspector ahead of the enquiry. So hopefully in the next period of time we shall be able to submit the Local Plan before the end of the Council. Yes, we haven't submitted it in time to get it back, but obviously it will be very good if we can get the local plan off before the sad demise of this Organisation. Hopefully by the next Council meeting it will have been whisked off to the Inspector.

The only other thing I would like to do Chairman, is like at the last Council meeting, I would like to thank all the staff for what they are doing, in performing their extra Covid tasks way above their normal day to day jobs. If we are having issues conducting ourselves virtually then staff who are doing it all day long are coping admirably, and I would certainly like to pick out Lucy Hogston, Greg Macdonald and their teams for all the ways in which they are dealing with the Covid monies we are receiving from Government, making sure that businesses are supported, and getting that money out.

Many, many staff are doing lots of hard work, including the Finance Team, but I would like to note them in particular, for supporting businesses and getting out money received from Government.

That's all from me this evening.

Thank you Chairman.

316. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

(a) Policy and Resources - 2 November 2020

The report of the above Committee, presented by its Chairman, Councillor Richard Lewis, was received.

Economic Recovery Prospectus

RESOLVED:

- (i) That progress to date on the Economic Recovery Prospectus Phase 1 be noted.
- (ii) That the Economic Recovery Prospectus Phase 2 and associated work streams be approved.

(Reason: To put in place measures to support and accelerate economic recovery across the district to address the economic crisis resulting from the pandemic.)

(b) Policy and Resources - 18 January 2021

The report of the above Committee, presented by its Chairman, Councillor Richard Lewis, was received. It was noted that the recommendation of the Committee in relation to 'Financial Support Required by Freedom Leisure' would be dealt with elsewhere on the council agenda, under item 13.

- i) Budget Monitoring Report to 30 September 2020

RESOLVED:

That an increase of £68,439 to the 2020/21 approved capital programme in relation to Disabled Facilities Grants, to be funded from capital grant income, be approved.

(Reason: To ensure that the Council complies with its Constitution.)

- ii) Council Tax Base 2021/22

RESOLVED:

That a tax base of 32,547 for the year 2021/22 be adopted.

(Reason: To fulfil the Council's statutory requirements.)

- iii) Treasury Management Report to 30 September 2020

RESOLVED:

That the Treasury Management performance for the period to 30 September 2020 (Quarter 2) in financial year 2020/21 be noted.

(Reason: In accordance with CIPFA guidance and best practice in Treasury Management.)

(c) Planning Management – 11 November, 12 November, 18 November, 9 December, 16 December 2020 and 20 January 2021

The reports of the above Committee, presented by its Vice-Chairman, Councillor Gill Mercer, were received.

(d) Planning Policy – 10 December 2020

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

317. OTHER REPORTS FROM LICENSING PANELS

The reports of the Licensing (Taxi Licensing) Panel of 9 November 2020 and Licensing (Liquor Licensing) Panel meeting of 12 November 2020 were received.

318. MOTIONS

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

319. QUESTIONS

The following questions were submitted by Councillor Dorothy Maxwell under Procedure Rule 10.2:

1. **With committee meetings now taking place on Teams/Zoom, what possibility is there of ensuring that the public can hear the officers? Last Wednesday at a planning meeting on the 'Application for Rockingham Speedway', the Officer was unable to talk at times and the Environmental Officer stepped in. Could this technical issue be sorted out in future? The public are really interested in planning applications in their area and in listening to the Case Officer.**

Reply by the Chief Executive

I can confirm there were no technical ICT issues at the meeting of Planning Management Committee last Wednesday. An individual external officer attending the meeting had some IT issues but these were localised to that individual and were not in our control.

2. **The telephones are still an issue. The operators do not know who is contactable, on holiday or has left. I found out on Friday that an Officer I had left messages for, had left! This does not present a good image for the public, and members cannot communicate if the Officer has left.**

Reply by the Chief Executive

Cllr Maxwell has asked a version of her second question twice in the last six months, so I do not propose to read it out or to respond a third time. I invite her to refer to the minutes of the Council meetings in July and October last year.

3. **Lastly, the front entrance is a massive improvement. Would it be possible to have a timeline of East Northants history in the front entrance?**

Reply by the Chief Executive

An officer working group is currently looking at 'Ending East Northants Council Well' and is considering how best to celebrate the history of ENC, so her suggestion will be forwarded to the working group for consideration.

320. REQUEST TO TRANSFER CHAINS OF OFFICE TO NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager presented a report asking Council to consider a request from the Shadow North Northamptonshire Executive to transfer the East Northamptonshire Council Chains of Office to the new North Northamptonshire Council, from 1 April 2021.

It was noted that all of the Mayoral insignia currently in use by Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough was expected to be transferred to successor Town Councils. As such, ENC had now been approached to establish if it would be willing to transfer its three chains of office to the new Council for re-use by them. It would be necessary to replace the insignia within the chains to reflect the change of council and this would be at the expense of the new Council. The work required to re-purpose the chains would not take place until after 1 April 2020 when the current Chairman, deputy Chairman and Chairman's Consort terms of office had concluded.

As the chains currently in use by ENC were inherited from the former Rushden Urban District Council, Rushden Town Council had also been written to seeking their consent to this transfer. It was noted that the Clerk of Rushden Town Council had advised that at a meeting of the Town Council in December 2020 it was resolved that they would like the original Rushden Urban District Council chains returned to them so they could be retained as part of Rushden's civic history.

During debate members expressed support for the chains being given to Rushden Town Council, noting that other aspects of civic regalia would be dealt with by the new Council.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the three civic chains of office be given to Rushden Town Council for retention as part of its civic history;
- b) That a plaque be commissioned and provided to Rushden Town Council bearing the names of those Chairmen whose names were not listed on the current chain of office.
- c) That the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager be requested to convey this decision to the Shadow North Northamptonshire Authority.

321. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED:

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 as exempt information may be disclosed:-

- Support for Freedom Leisure

322. SUPPORT FOR FREEDOM LEISURE

The Executive Director, Resources and Commercial and Healthy and Active Lifestyles Officer presented a report on the impact the Covid-19 pandemic had had on Freedom Leisure and the support it have requested from the Council to maintain the business and the future of East Northamptonshire Council's (ENC) Leisure Services Contract, and to propose further support for the period up to 31 March 2021. The report was not for publication in accordance with paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972.

RESOLVED:

That Council:

- a) notes the proposals of the Policy and Resources Committee on 18 January 2021, to resolve to recommend to Council to: -
 - (i) Agree to approve that the identified underspend for the period 20 March to 31 October 2020 is used to cover the additional costs identified for the period 1 November 2020 to 31 March 2021.
 - (ii) Agree to meet Freedom Leisure's additional estimated contract deficit of up to £25,199 for the period 1 November 2020 to 31 March 2021, subject to final approval via the open book accounting reconciliation process.
 - (iii) To forego the monthly management fee due to the Council of £12,083 for the period 1 February to 31 March 2021, totalling £24,166.
 - (iv) To agree the funding recommendations (i), (ii) and (iii) will come from the Covid-19 Grant from Government, the Covid-19 earmarked reserve or the SLC and NLRG government funding schemes.
- b) approves the above recommendations set out in a) (i) to (iv).

(Reason – To support the continued delivery of a critical contract to implement the council's Healthy and Active Lifestyles Strategy which encourages residents to adopt healthier and active lifestyles)

Chairman

PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE

Date: 27 January 2021

Venue: Virtual Meeting

Time: 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: David Brackenbury (Chairman)
Tony Boto (Vice-Chairman)
Steven North (Leader of the Council)
David Jenney (Deputy Leader of the Council)

Val Carter Gill Mercer
Richard Lewis Sarah Peacock
Dorothy Maxwell Rupert Reichhold
Jake Vowles

323. PUBLIC SPEAKER

At the invitation of the Chairman, two speakers addressed the meeting in respect of the following item:

- Agenda item 5 – Pre-Submission East Northamptonshire Council Local Plan Part 2

324. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

325. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2020 were approved as a correct record.

326. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

327. QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.3

No questions had been received under Council Procedure Rule 10.3.

328. PRE-SUBMISSION EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN PART 2

The Planning Policy Manager presented a report which sought approval to carry out consultation under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning Act (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 for the East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2, and following that consultation period to submit the Plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination.

The report also detailed the work that had been completed to reach the current position with the Local Plan, and the intention to undertake the statutory 6 week Regulation 19 consultation from 5 February to 19 March 2021. Officers also presented the associated documents contained in several appendices to the report.

The Committee considered the documents and appendices in detail, and the following changes were proposed:

Section 4.0, Spatial Development Strategy.

No amendments were proposed, although the Committee sought assurance that the Council were in a strong position to retain open space in respect of the Bedford Road housing supply land allocation. Officers advised the Committee that it was proposed to allocate greenfield land to meet the strategic housing requirements, and the Council would be well placed to resist further development as there would be no justification for it.

Section 5.0, Natural Capital.

The title of the link to the website on page 4 to be updated to reflect the correct date. It was noted that the link did lead to the correct web page.

It was requested that reference be made to the A605 at 5.14, Policy EN7.

Section 7.0, Economic Prosperity.

At 7.19 clarification was requested regarding the number of jobs delivered by Primark in Islip. The figure of 1300 was derived from the planning permission.

At 7.42, table 12 contained references to businesses that had since closed and it was suggested that these be removed.

At 7.40, Members requested that clarification of Nene Valley Business Park (Oundle) being separate to the recycling centre be made.

Typographical errors on pages 16 and 18, making reference to EN21 would be amended.

At 7.71, it was proposed to rename London Road/Warth Park, Raunds to London Road/Michael Way Hub.

Councillor Peacock left the meeting at 20.30.

Section 8.0, Housing Delivery.

At 8.9, reference to 376 dwellings to be amended to 306 dwellings.

At 8.29, the Committee noted that there was no reference made to speed limits or visibility splays.

At 8.30, Cllr Vowles advised that the site was not in the middle of a housing area, but bordered by the A605, a bridleway and playing field.

Section 9.0, Delivering Sustainable Urban Extensions.

No amendments were suggested, although the Committee did seek assurance regarding the 5 year housing land supply, and the risk of non-delivery in relation to the Irthlingborough West site. Officers advised that there was no reliance on the Irthlingborough West site to achieve housing numbers, and that there should be no issues with the 5 year housing land supply.

Section 10, Town Strategies.

References to London Road/Warth Park, Raunds would be amended to London Road/Michael Way Hub, as at Section 7.0.

At 10.60, Members advised that the former car park at Herne Park was still in use.

At 10.62, Members advised that the owner of the Riverside Hotel was due to submit a planning application in the near future.

References to EN40 on pages 15 and 23 to be amended to read as EN42.

329. SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 8

At 20.56pm, it was proposed that Council Procedure Rule 8 (Duration of Meeting) be suspended to enable the Committee to continue with the business on the agenda.

RESOLVED:

That Council Procedure Rule 8 be suspended to enable the Committee to continue the business on the agenda.

Section 11, Monitoring and Implementation.

The Committee noted that there were several typographical errors and some numbering issues to be rectified throughout Section 11. Officers noted this, and advised that the addendum to the report highlighted where the policies needed to be realigned.

RESOLVED

- (i) That being satisfied that the preparation of the Local Plan has complied with the relevant regulatory requirements and being of the view that the Regulation 19 pre-submission Local Plan is ready for submission to the Government for independent examination, to endorse the decision to approve the Regulation for pre-submission Local Plan for consultation.
- (ii) Following the conclusion of the Regulation 19 consultation period, agrees the submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination, together with the submission documents prescribed by Regulation 22 of the 2012 Regulations by 31 March 2021, unless matters arising from the consultation raise issues of fundamental significance in respect of the strategy of the Plan
- (iii) To delegate any non-material, typographical formatting, mapping and other minor amendments to the Plan, as required, prior to the submission of the Plan to the Secretary of State, to the Head of Planning Services in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Planning Policy Committee and to the Chairman of the Rushden East Project Board as maybe appropriate.

(Reason: to ensure that the Council can progress its Local Plan to submission in accordance with the timescales set out in the Local Development Scheme and to allow the Local Plan to be examined in advance of its adoption.)

Chairman

PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE

Date: 08 February 2021

Venue: Virtual Meeting

Time: 7.00pm

Present: **Councillors:** **David Brackenbury** **(Chairman)**
 Tony Boto **(Vice-Chairman)**
 David Jenney **(Deputy Leader of the Council)**

Val Carter **Gill Rupert Mercer**
 Sylvia Hughes **Sarah Peacock**
 Richard Lewis **Reichhold**
 Dorothy Maxwell

330. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Steven North.

331. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2021 were approved as a correct record.

332. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

333. QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.3

No questions had been received under Council Procedure Rule 10.3.

334. RESIDENTIAL ANNEXES DRAFT SPD

The Planning Policy Officer presented a report seeking Members approval to undertake a consultation on a guidance document on householder residential annexes with a view to adopting it as a Supplementary Planning Document. If approved, the 4 week consultation would allow public consultation to commence in advance of the pre-election purdah period.

The Committee raised concerns about the degree of independence the occupier of the annexe would be able to achieve, particularly with regards to the suggestion of a kitchenette which it was felt may not be adequate. Members requested that an amendment be made in reference to the kitchen at 4.6, to allow more flexibility and ensure each application would be considered on a case by case basis. The Committee was also concerned with the perception of a granny annexe, and those that would occupy one.

In response to the issues raised, officers advised that an annexe must be ancillary to the main dwelling, and measures must be taken to ensure that it would not constitute a separate dwelling. Pre application advice would be recommended to allow for early engagement and compromise. Officers would consider the issues raised and propose further amendments to the SPD as appropriate.

RESOLVED

- (i) To approve the draft Residential Annexes Supplementary Planning Document for consultation, and to propose that the consultation should take place over 4 weeks in line with national guidance to allow the consultation to be completed in advance of the pre election period.
- (ii) To delegate any amendments to the document as required, prior to consultation, to the Head of Planning Services, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Planning Policy Committee

(Reason: to allow the Residential Annexes draft Supplementary Planning Document to be subject to public consultation)

335. UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ISSUES

The Planning Policy Manager provided an update on several outstanding Planning Policy issues.

336. CHAIRMANS CLOSING STATEMENT

The Chairman thanked all Members of the Committee, officers, members of the public and all who had contributed to the work and achievements of the Planning Policy Committee.

Chairman

PLANNING MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Date: 17 February 2021

Venue: Virtual Meeting

Time: 6.30pm

Present

Councillors:	Philip Stearn	Chairman
	Gill Mercer	Vice Chairman
	Dudley Hughes	Geoff Shacklock
	Bert Jackson	Peter Tomas
	Andy Mercer	Peter Wathen
	Harriet Pentland	Lee Wilkes

337. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barbara Jenny and Robin Underwood

338. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th January 2020 were approved as a correct record.

339. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND INFORMAL SITE VISITS

(a) Declarations of Interest

Councillors	Application	Nature of Interest	DPI	Other Interest
Peter Tomas	20/01244/VAR and 20/01196/FUL	His company had carried out work for both applicants in the past		Yes
Harriet Pentland	20/01447/QRY	Attended a meeting as an observer as part of working with Tom Pursglove MP		Yes
Geoff Shacklock	20/01361/VAR	The applicant is a family friend		Yes – will not take part in this item
Geoff Shacklock	20/01533/FUL	Had been advised that there was a possible family connection		Yes – will not take part in this item

It was noted that two of the public speakers were District Councillors and were known to all of the Committee members.

Several members of the Committee had received correspondence regarding several of the applications, and stated that they had not pre-determined the applications and came to the meeting unbiased, and with an open mind.

(b) Informal Site Visits

Councillors Peter Wathen, Lee Wilkes and Bert Jackson, Lance Jones and Dudley Hughes declared that they had visited Hillside, Brick Kiln Road, Raunds (20/00347/OUT).

Councillors Bert Jackson and Lee Wilkes declared that they had visited 28 College Street Irthlingborough (20/01196/FUL).

Councillor Gill Mercer declared that she had visited John Clark Way, Rushden (20/00937/ADV) and (2001464/ADV).

Councillor Bert Jackson also declared that he had visited Home Suite Home, 4 Higham Road, Rushden (20/00445/FUL), John Clark Way, Rushden (20/00937/ADV) and (2001464/ADV), Land West of Rushden Lakes, Ditchford Lane, Rushden (20/00534/FUL), and Rushden Memorial Clinic, Hayway, Rushden (20/01244/VAR).

340. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.3

There were no questions under Council Procedure Rule 10.3.

341. SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS & DELEGATIONS TO HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES

The Committee received a report which provided an update on the progress of drafting S106 Agreements in respect of matters where the Committee had previously resolved to grant planning permission and on the applications where actions had been delegated to the Head of Planning Services.

The Committee noted that no extensions of time had been requested.

The progress on delegations to the Head of Planning Services was noted as follows:

- 15/00119/VAR 735 dwellings, Priors Hall – the current application was unlikely to proceed, and a new planning application had been considered and had a resolution to grant planning permission. Update to follow on next steps for application.
- 19/01024/OUT 11 dwellings, Mike Wells Cars, Montague Street, Rushden – decision issued.
- 19/01425/FUL 84 dwellings, Rear of Green Close Wellingborough Road, Irthlingborough – with case officer to continue negotiations
- 20/00090/FUL 10 dwellings, 7 Wharf Road Higham Ferrers – wording agreed. Awaiting completion of S106.
- 19/01318/FUL change of use from agricultural to provide football facility at SP97144 68428 Land Off Newton Road, Higham Ferrers – with case officer to resolve outstanding matters

- 19/01726/FUL 14 dwellings, Land Off Huntingdon Road and Market Road, Thrapston – decision issued.
- 20/00840/FUL demolition of detached two storey outbuilding. Extension of existing 8 bedroom care home to create six additional bedroom suites with ancillary facilities. Parking for 13 cars at 2 Essex Road, Rushden – decision issued.
- 19/01219/OUT Outline application for up to 3500 dwellings at Priors Hall, Kirby Lane – with case officer to resolve
- 19/01781/FUL – Hybrid application for residential development and commercial development at Land at Federal Estates, Newton Road, Higham Ferrers and Land at Chelveston Renewable Energy Park, Caldecott – with case officer to resolve.
- 20/01158/FUL – Erection of maintenance unit, wash bay and further ancillary items for vehicle storage and refurbishment, including resurfacing works and the provision of car and HGV parking at Rockingham Motor Speedway – decision issued.

The Committee requested that application 10/00857/OUT be deleted from the report.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the report be noted.
- (ii) That the progress of the delegations to the Head of Planning Services as detailed in Appendix 2 be noted.

342. APPEAL DECISION MONITORING REPORT

The Committee received a report which provided an update on the planning appeals determined by the Planning Inspectorate from 9 November 2020 to 22 January 2021.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the report be noted.

343. PUBLIC SPEAKERS

The following people spoke on the items as indicated:

- 20/00347/OUT – Hillside, Brick Kiln Road – Raunds Town Council and on behalf of the applicant
- 20/00445/FUL – Home Suite Home, 4 Higham Road, Rushden – Ward Member, Rushden Town Council and agent on behalf of applicant

344. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Committee considered the planning application report and representations made by public speakers at the meeting. It was noted that there was additional information on the applications included in the update sheet.

(i) 20/00347/OUT – Hillside, Brick Kiln Road, Raunds

The Committee considered an outline application for residential development for up to 21 dwellings and access (with all matters reserved except access)

During debate on the application, Members raised concerns regarding road safety, particularly in respect of visibility. The relocation of the bus stop from the right side to the left side was seen to be relocating the issue of visibility, rather than addressing it. Concerns were also raised regarding the safety of pedestrians when crossing Brick Kiln Road, as it was felt that they would likely cross directly from the site, as opposed to walking up to the traffic lights. It was felt that the proposed development would increase the actual vehicle movements from the site and intensify the traffic movements on the already busy Brick Kiln Road. The visibility splay minimum requirements had also not been met, with it being less than the necessary 120m. The Committee also felt that the application was contrary to several policies of the Raunds Neighbourhood Plan.

In response to the issues raised, officers advised that although the minimum visibility splay requirements of 120m were not met in either direction, it was very close to this. Officers were of the opinion that there would not be a severe impact on highway safety, and the Highway Authority had not objected to the application. 2m wide footways linking either side of the site would be included as part of a Section 278 Agreement.

It was proposed to refuse the application on the following grounds, relating to highway safety and amenity for new residents:

- The proposal will result in an intensification of use of the access when compared to the current, longstanding low activity as opposed to an unlikely theoretical fallback position;
- There would be inadequate visibility from the new junction, which falls short of the Local Highway Authority's standards of 120m in each direction for a 40mph road, and as the area would change to residential there would be more families / children using Brick Kiln Road and it would be more dangerous for them to cross.

It was moved and seconded that the application be refused. On being put to the vote the Committee **agreed to refuse** the application, **contrary to officer recommendation**.

(ii) 20/00445/FUL – Home Suite Home, 4 Higham Road, Rushden

The Committee considered an application for the creation of 34 flats and 3 dwellings. Demolition of some buildings on site. Change of use of the majority of the site from retail to residential

During debate on the application Members raised concerns regarding the impact of the development on the existing street scene, and it was felt that the proposal constituted an over development on the site, in comparison with neighbouring properties and their curtilages. The amount of parking provision was considered inadequate particularly in an area with such a high rate of people commuting out of town using their own vehicle and was well below the County required provision of 70 spaces, with just 38 spaces proposed.

The Committee highlighted that whilst the proposed development would retain and preserve the building, the new block of flats would overwhelm and detract from this.

These concerns were echoed in the comments received from the Senior Conservation Officer who considered that the development would have a negative impact on the building's significance as a non-designated heritage asset.

Members were also not satisfied that the proposed amenity space was insufficient, and that the access to it was poor and provided little to no privacy. The suggestion that residents are able to access amenity space at a nearby park was not considered ideal and it was noted that the applicant was not able to contribute any S106 funding which the Committee felt was unacceptable. Concerns were also raised in respect of the noise levels and air pollution and the impact that this could have on residents of the development.

In response to the issues raised, officers advised the development was in accordance with policy H4 of the Rushden Neighbourhood Plan. The S106 had been considered and assessed in line with policies and could not be rightly justified through the development. Officers advised that the proposed flats fronting Higham Road would be required to keep the windows closed in order to meet the noise standards, and that other means of ventilation would need to be sought by residents. An air quality assessment had concluded that air quality standards would be met and that there would not be an impact on residents. Officers also confirmed that access to the roof garden would be via fire escape stairs. A condition could be imposed to ensure that the roof garden was sectioned off for the benefit and privacy of the residents of the three townhouses.

345. SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 8

At 20.29pm, it was proposed that Council Procedure Rule 8 (Duration of Meeting) be suspended to enable the Committee to continue the current application. On being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED:

That Council Procedure Rule 8 be suspended to enable the Committee to complete consideration of the current application.

346. CONTINUATION OF PLANNING APPLICATION

Officers also acknowledged the potential harm to the heritage asset, but advised that this had been balanced against the renovation and retention of the building, and the development of flats was seen to be a meaningful way to do this.

It was proposed that the application be refused for the following reasons:

- Lack of parking;
- Poor design and layout;
- Negative impact upon the heritage asset;
- Negative impact on the character and appearance of the street scene;
- Lack of Section 106 contributions resulting in unsustainable development; and
- Overdevelopment of the site

It was moved and seconded that the application be refused. On being put to the vote the Committee **agreed to refuse** the application, **contrary to officer recommendation**. The final wording of the refusal reasons to be delegated the Head of Planning Services, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of this Committee and the Ward Member.

347. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The meeting was adjourned at 20.44 and would be reconvened on Monday 1st March 2021 at 6.30pm, to consider the remaining applications on the agenda

Chairman

JOINT STANDARDS COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE

Date: 24 February 2021

Venue: Online meeting

Time: 7.30pm

Present: East Northamptonshire Councillors:
Rosalie Beattie **Andy Mercer**
Annabel de Capell Brooke **Robin Underwood**
Gill Mercer

Town and Parish Councillors:
Dave Munday Chairman (Stanwick Parish Council)
Nigel Rudd (Warmington Parish Council)
Adrian Winkle (Irthlingborough Town Council)
Arthur Whittaker (Yarwell Parish Council)

Vivienne Barnard (Independent Member)
Andrew Sortwell (Reserve Independent Member)

348. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

349. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Standards Complaints Committee held on 14 October 2020 were approved as an accurate record, to be signed by the Chairman at a later date.

350. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman invited those who wished to do so to declare interests in respect of items on the agenda.

No declarations of interest were made.

351. QUESTIONS SUBMITTED UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 10.3

There were no questions submitted under Procedure Rule 10.3.

352. REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

The Deputy Monitoring Officer reported that there had been no requests for dispensations made in advance of the meeting.

353. ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

The Deputy Monitoring Officer submitted a report providing a brief update on Monitoring Officer activity covering the period from the last meeting of the Committee on 14 October 2020.

During discussion it was noted that:-

- i) Since the last report all outstanding complaints had now been completed. Of the five complaints that were ongoing at the date of the last meeting, four Investigation Reports had since been received from External Investigators and the Monitoring Officer, having considered the findings and following notification to the Independent Person and Chairman and Vice-Chairman of this Committee, decided that no further action was necessary.
- ii) The fifth had been dealt with by the Joint Standards Complaints Hearing Panel during October and November 2020, and having decided that a breach of the Code had taken place and imposed three sanctions, the Deputy Monitoring Officer confirmed that each had now been complied with and so the case closed.
- iii) The Local Government Association (LGA) consultation on the new Model Code of Conduct had ran for ten weeks from 8 June to 17 August 2020, with an informal additional deadline running to the end of August. As members had been made aware, ENC had responded to the Consultation within the initial timeframe. The new Model Code had then been issued on 23 December 2020 and could be found at the LGA's website.
- iv) Work continued on the preparations for the Standards regime within the new North Northamptonshire Council. The new Monitoring Officer, Adele Wylie, had been appointed by the Shadow Authority on 17 August 2020 and taken up post in December 2020. It was further noted that the draft Constitution for the new Council, containing the new Standards regime was due to be published on 17 February 2021, for consideration by the Shadow Authority on 25 February 2021.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report in terms of monitoring of complaint activity be noted.

(Reason: to demonstrate active monitoring of the local ethical standards position).

354. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

In closing the final meeting of the Committee, on behalf of all District and Town and Parish members present, the Chairman wished to thank past members, present members, officers, independent persons and particularly monitoring officers in their various guises who had made the lives of Committee members a lot easier in undertaking their work over the years.

Chairman

PLANNING MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Date: 1 March 2021 – Reconvened from 17th February 2021

Venue: Virtual Meeting

Time: 6.30pm

Present	Councillors:	Philip Stearn	Chairman
		Gill Mercer	Vice Chairman
		Dudley Hughes	Geoff Shacklock
		Bert Jackson	Peter Tomas
		Barbara Jenney	Alex Smith
		Andy Mercer	Robin Underwood

355. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

356. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND INFORMAL SITE VISITS

(a) Declarations of Interest

Councillors	Application	Nature of Interest	DPI	Other Interest
Robin Underwood	20/01196/FUL	The agent was known to him		Yes
Geoff Shacklock	20/01361/VAR	The applicant is a family friend	Yes – will not take part on this item	
Geoff Shacklock	20/01533/FUL	Had been advised that there was a possible family connection	Yes – will not take part in this item	

Councillors Lee Wilkes and Barbara Jenney had received correspondence regarding several of the applications, and stated that they had not pre-determined the applications and came to the meeting unbiased, and with an open mind.

It was noted that a number of the speakers were known to Members of the Committee.

(b) Informal Site Visits

Councillor Barbara Jenney declared that she had visited Starbucks, John Clark Way, Rushden (20/00937/ADV) and Rushden Service Station, John Clark Way, Rushden (20/01464/ADV).

357. PUBLIC SPEAKERS

The following people spoke on the items as indicated:

- 20/01242/FUL – 1 Braesby Lane, Glapthorn– objector and applicant
- 20/00937/ADV – Starbucks, John Clark Way, Rushden – District Councillor and Rushden Town Council
- 20/01464/ADV – Rushden Service Station, John Clark Way, Rushden – District Councillor
- 20/00534/FUL – Land West of Rushden Lakes, Ditchford Lane, Rushden – Rushden Town Council and a Supporter
- 20/01244/VAR – Rushden Memorial Clinic – Ward Member
- 20/01361/VAR – TLO1257 90298 Benefield Road, Glapthorn – Agent for the Applicant
- 20/01533/FUL – Bluefield Farm, Nassington Road, Apethorpe – an Objector and the Agent for the Applicant
- 20/01196/FUL – 28 College Street, Irthlingborough – a District Councillor, on behalf of Irthlingborough Town Council and the Agent for the Applicant

358. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Committee considered the planning application report and representations made by public speakers at the meeting. It was noted that there was additional information on the applications included in the update sheet.

(i) 20/01447/QRY – East Northants Resource Management Facility, Stamford Road, Kings Cliffe

The Committee were asked to give it views to Augean South Ltd, on its proposals for an extension in the area and life of the East Northants Resource Management Facility (ENRMF) including an extension to the west of the existing landfill site (comprising active hazardous waste and low level radioactive waste (LLW) landfill) and increasing the throughput of the waste treatment facility (“Proposed Development”).

During debate on the report, Members raised concerns regarding the potential penetration of the capping layer due to the proposed planting. It was felt that the provision of photomontages was insufficient, and there were concerns raised regarding the change in scenery and landscape.

In response to the issues raised, officers advised that the nature of the site containment including the basal and side wall lining system and the capping layer would be specified through the Environmental Permit.

On being put to the vote, the Committee **agreed to authorise the Head of Planning Services to respond** to ASL’s Development Consent Order Pre-Application to include:

- Request that the applicant undertake an analysis to determine what trees and vegetation would have grown on site in 200 years time to ensure protection of the capping layer;
- Further explanation of the dome profile be provided
- Confirmation that the soil thickness of 1m – 1.5m beneath the dome would be sufficient
- The provision of additional photomontages; and

- Request that the applicant take into the account the advice from the Lead Local Flood Authority

(ii) 20/01242/FUL – 1 Braesby Lane, Glapthorn

The Committee considered an application for part conversion of a detached garage including addition of habitable space, raised roof, external staircase and two dormer windows.

Members raised concerns about potential overlooking in respect of the outside staircase and its landing but were pleased to note that bamboo screening would be conditioned to mitigate this.

It was moved and seconded that the application be granted. On being put to the vote, the Committee **agreed to grant** the application subject to the conditions detailed in the officer report.

(iii) 20/00937/ADV – Starbucks, John Clark Way, Rushden

The Committee considered an application for 16no. Adverts

- 1) Int-Illum 9mtr Totem
- 2) In-Illum Drive Thru Directional
- 3) Int-Illum Height Restrictor
- 4) Int-Illum Preview Menu Board
- 5) Int-Illum Speaker Canopy
- 6) Int-Illum 5 Panel Menu
- 7) Int-Illum No Entry/Thank You Directional
- 8) Int-Illum No Entry/Thank You Directional
- 9) Int-Illum 1500mm Roundel
- 10) Int-Illum Drive Thru Letters
- 11) Int-Illum 1500mm Roundel
- 12) Int-Illum 250mm Wordmark
- 13) Int-Illum 250mm Wordmark
- 15) Non-Illum Welcome Mesh Directional
- 16) Non-Illum Thank You Mesh Directional
- 17) Non-Illum Banner Frame

The Committee noted that 11 out of the 17 proposed signs were illuminated, and raised particular concerns regarding the 9m totem sign, which was felt to have the most impact on local residents. Members welcomed the proposed additional condition to limit the lux levels of the illuminated totem sign to a maximum of 600cdms².

Members requested that the totem sign be conditioned to ensure that its orientation would be set, and an informative be included to request that the hours of lighting be reduced where possible.

It was moved and seconded that the application be granted. On being put to the vote, the Committee **agreed to grant** the application, subject to the conditions detailed in the officer report and the inclusion of additional conditions regarding the maximum lux levels of the totem sign, its orientation, and an informative regarding the lighting hours.

(iv) 20/01464/ADV – Rushden Service Station, John Clark Way, Rushden

The Committee considered an application for:

- Welcome sign – individually cut brushed aluminium sign
- Greggs sign – internally illuminated fret cut aluminium sign
- Sainsbury's on the go – internally illuminated fret cut aluminium sign
- 24 hours – internally illuminated fret cut stainless steel sign
- EG Ground sign – internally illuminated fret cut aluminium sign with built up stainless steel EG letters
- Sainsbury's on the go – internally illuminated fret cut aluminium sign
- Greggs sign – internally illuminated fret cut aluminium sign
- Starbucks on the go – internally illuminated fret cut aluminium sign
- Opening hours sign
- Statutory information sign
- Window vinyl's
- BP totem sign

During debate on the application Members took into consideration the cumulative impact of all proposed signage on the site, and its impact on local residents. Members welcomed the proposed additional condition to limit the lux levels of the illuminated totem signs to a maximum of 600cdms².

Officers advised that Campaign For Dark Skies had not been formally consulted, however they had advised that the application was below the threshold of those that they would typically consider.

It was moved and seconded that the application be granted. On being put to the vote, the Committee **agreed to grant** the application, subject to the conditions detailed in the officer report and the additional condition regarding the lux levels on the update sheet.

(v) 20/00534/FUL – Land West of Rushden Lakes, Ditchford Lane, Rushden

The Committee considered an application for a revised scheme to construct a new link road between Ditchford Road and Rushden Lakes (with associated site clearance and earthworks) alongside junction works, car parking, footpaths, cycleways, lighting, drainage works, hard and soft landscaping and associated works. Reconfiguration of existing car parking and Service Yard areas and the temporary storage of excavated material for a period of up to five years.

The Committee noted that the application was greatly improved and supported the enhanced scheme. Members sought clarification regarding the provision of electric charging parking spaces, which officers confirmed they would advise on.

It was moved and seconded that the application be granted. On being put to the vote, the Committee **agreed to grant** the application, subject to the conditions in the officer report and update sheet, with the wording of the two additional conditions to be delegated to the Head of Planning Services.

(vi) 20/01244/VAR – Rushden Memorial Clinic, Hayway, Rushden

The Committee considered an application for the variation of condition 2 to reflect changes in drawing referencing the site plan pursuant to application reference number 19/01777/FUL

– conversion and extension to create 14 one and two bed flats for occupation by persons over 55 years of age, including communal parking and amenity spaces (resubmission of 19/00594/FUL). Condition number(s): 2 – drawing numbers.

The Committee noted the three proposed changes submitted to vary condition 2: the relocation of the bin storage area to allow for an additional parking space; construction of a brick wall to the front pedestrian gate; and the provision of new electric vehicular access gates to the front with new brick piers. These were all welcomed as improvements to the overall scheme.

It was moved and seconded that the application be granted. On being put to the vote, the Committee **agreed to grant** the application, subject to the conditions in the officer report and update sheet.

359. SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 8

At 20.26pm, it was proposed that Council Procedure Rule 8 (Duration of Meeting) be suspended to enable the Committee to continue the business on the agenda. A view would then be taken after 30 minutes as to whether to continue with the remaining applications on the agenda. On being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED:

That Council Procedure Rule 8 be suspended to enable the Committee to continue the business on the agenda

Councillor Geoff Shacklock left the meeting for the consideration of the following two items and did not return.

(vii) 20/01361/VAR – TLO1257 90298, Benefield Road, Glapthorn

The Committee considered an application for the variation of condition 2 (approved plans) to allow for variations to the approved stables and outdoor arena pursuant to application 19/01872/FUL – change of use from agriculture to equestrian; erection of stable block and hay barn; creation of all weather outdoor arena; temporary equestrian workers dwelling; access, parking, landscaping and associated works.

The Committee noted that the site would need to be accessed via private motor vehicle, but that this was typical of rural and remote setting.

It was moved and seconded that the application be granted. On being put to the vote, the Committee **agreed to grant** the application, subject to the conditions in the officer report and update sheet.

(viii) 20/01533/FUL - Bluefield Farm, Nassington Road, Apethorpe

The Committee considered an application for change of use of barns and associated land from agricultural to wedding venue, with associated vehicular access, car parking, landscaping; open roof canopy to the side; two free standing pergolas to the rear and installation of a ground source heat pump (consisting of alterations to previously approved scheme 18/00627/FUL).

The Committee was pleased that the application sought to bring farm buildings back into use and noted that the proposed second access would now not be used. Members sought clarification regarding the road surfacing and length of pothole repairs required on the access road. Officers advised that the distance of repairs required to the access road had been measured at 50m, but that this could be conditioned to 60m to provide additional assurance, and it was the officers view that concrete would be used to infill the holes.

It was moved and seconded that the application be granted. On being put to the vote, the Committee **agreed to grant** the application, subject to the conditions in the officer report and update sheet, with an amendment to condition 5a to change the distance specified from 50 metres to 60 metres.

360. SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 8

At 20.56pm, it was proposed that Council Procedure Rule 8 (Duration of Meeting) be further suspended to enable the Committee to continue the business on the agenda. On being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED:

That Council Procedure Rule 8 be suspended to enable the Committee to continue the business on the agenda

361. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The meeting adjourned at 21.00 and reconvened at 21.05.

(ix) 20/01196/FUL - 28 College Street, Irthlingborough

The Committee considered an application for 1.No 3-bedroom dwelling including parking and amenity space (resubmission of 19/01935/FUL).

The Committee was disappointed at the removal of the wall and requested that a condition be imposed to ensure that it would be reinstated should the application be granted. The Committee also noted that the application had been refused in July 2020, and although the proposed access had been altered, it was felt that two of the reasons for the previous refusal had not been addressed within the current proposal. The Committee raised concerns regarding the loss of parking on College Street and felt that the proposal represented an overdevelopment of the site.

In response to the issues raised, officers noted that the application had previously been refused contrary to officer recommendation. Officers advised that the wall had been removed as it was structurally unsound and was unsafe due to being at risk of collapse.

It was moved and seconded that the application be refused. On being put to the vote, the Committee **agreed to refuse** the application, **contrary to officer recommendation** for the following reasons:

- Overdevelopment of the site which would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area
- Unacceptable impact on the Irthlingborough Conservation Area

- Would result in the loss of parking provision in the area

The final wording of the third reason for refusal regarding parking provision, to be delegated to the Head of Planning Services, in consultation with the Chairman, Vice Chairman of the Committee and Ward Member.

Chairman

GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Date: 10 March 2021

Venue: Virtual Meeting

Time: 7.30pm

Present: Councillors: Peter Wathen (Chairman)
Alex Smith (Vice Chairman)

Rosalie Beattie
Richard Gell Peter Tomas
Sylvia Hobbs Robin Underwood

External attendee: Rachel Ashley-Caunt (Head of Internal Audit)

362. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received.

363. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2020 were approved as a correct record.

364. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

365. QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.3

No questions were submitted under Procedure Rule 10.3.

366. UPDATE ON THE ACCOUNTS FOR 2018/19

The External Auditor gave a verbal update on the accounts for 2018/19, advising that they had not yet been signed off due delays caused by Covid-19, staffing issues and the 'going concern' position with the upcoming Unitary Authority. The Committee was advised by the External Auditor that additional work regarding a going concern statement was deemed appropriate for all Northamptonshire Authorities, as this would look twelve months ahead from the date that the accounts would be signed off and would cover the period of transition to the Unitary Authority. A consistent set of disclosures would need to be included in each of the sovereign authority's accounts across Northamptonshire, which would need to be agreed by EY and have the supporting information corroborated. The proposed disclosures had been prepared and stress tested and would now be progressed through the EY professional practice process.

It was confirmed by the External Auditor that ENC Officers had provided the accounts to him in a timely manner. The Committee expressed its disappointment that the 2018/19 accounts had yet to be signed off. Members sought clarification regarding the procedure that would be followed should the accounts not be signed off by 31st March 2021 and were advised that the Unitary Authority and its relevant committees would be responsible for this. The Committee sought confirmation that East Northamptonshire Council's accounts were in good order, which was given verbally, and therefore also requested that written confirmation of this be provided to the Chairman of the committee by the external auditor, which was agreed.

The Committee sought clarification about the position of the new Unitary Authority if the External Audit team formed the opinion at this very late stage that there was material uncertainty in the financial situation of the new Unitary. The Committee were advised that would be a matter for the new Unitary to consider.

RESOLVED:

To note the verbal update.

367. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS UPDATE AND RECOMMENDATION MONITORING

The Head of Internal Audit presented a report which provided information on the progress made by Internal Audit on the delivery of the Annual Internal Audit Plan for 2020/21 and associated measures of performance, advising that there were five finalised audit reports, and the audit plan was on target to be 90% complete by 31st March 2021.

Establishment Control received an assurance opinion of 'good' compliance, with no significant areas of concern. Absence Management received a 'satisfactory' compliance assurance opinion, with performance information being identified as an area for improvement. GDPR Compliance had previously been audited in 2018/19 and was revisited to provide an updated assurance opinion of 'good'. It was noted that the majority of actions had been completed, and gaps in the framework had been addressed. Asset Management had also been revisited and there had been significant progress made with a 'good' assurance opinion having now been received, although this did not reflect the status of commercial leases. Contractor Health and Safety had received a 'good' compliance assurance opinion.

The Committee was also advised that 15 audit recommendations had been closed since its last meeting in November 2020, and there were 20 overdue actions; 9 of which related to cyber security, which the Governance and Audit Working Party and been looking into. It was recognised that some actions were still ongoing, and these would continue to be monitored and be raised with the Unitary Authority.

The Committee thanked Internal Audit for their diligence and hard work.

RESOLVED:

To note the progress and performance of the Internal Audit service and the key findings from audits delivered during the period.

(Reason: to review the performance of Internal Audit against the agreed plan and any key findings regarding the council's risk management and control arrangements in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards)

368. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2019/20

The Finance Manager presented a report of the unaudited Annual Governance Statement 2019/20. The Annual Governance Statement (AGS) would usually be presented as part of the annual Statement of Accounts, however due to delays in the final sign off of the 2018/19 accounts and the pandemic, it had not been possible to present the AGS before this date or with the 2019/20 accounts. The AGS had been prepared following consultation with the Corporate Management Team and discussion within the Governance and Audit Working Party. It was a statement made by the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council.

There were significant governance issues identified in 2019/20:

- Local Government Reorganisation in Northamptonshire
- Asset Management
- CCTV Systems
- IT and Cyber Security
- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

The Committee was advised that additionally, although the first national lockdown in response to the COVID-19 pandemic came into force on 23rd March 2020, and therefore only occurred for nine days in the 2019/20 financial year, the impact on governance arrangements was and continued to be so great that additional disclosures were required specifically for that emergency.

Members suggested additional wording be included in the statement to reflect the reason for the delay in signing off the 2018/19 accounts. The letter which was agreed would be written by the external auditor to the Chairman of the committee would be passed to officers for possible inclusion in the statement.

RESOLVED:

To note the unaudited Annual Governance Statement 2019/20, in preparation for its inclusion within the 2019/20 Statement of Accounts.

(Reason: To ensure the council complies with the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 by producing an Annual Governance Statement).

369. HOUSING BENEFIT GRANT CERTIFICATION 2019/20

The Interim Head of Customer and Community Services presented a report which provided an update on the 2019/20 Housing Benefit grant certification work undertaken by KMPG LLP.

The certification work included:

- Agreeing standard rates, such as allowances and benefit incomes, to the DWP Circular communicating the value for each rate for the year;
- Sample testing of benefit claims to confirm that the entitlement had been correctly calculated and was supported by appropriate evidence;
- Confirming that the subsidy claim had been prepared using the correct benefits system version, and;
- Completing testing in relation to modified scheme payments and verifying the accurate completion of the claim form.

The Committee was advised that there were no issues or errors identified and therefore no recommendations had been made to improve the claim completion process.

The Committee requested that their gratitude and congratulations be passed onto officers; noting the continued excellent work of the team.

RESOLVED:

To note the contents of the report

(Reason: This is an information report which addresses the management of benefits payments by the council)

370. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED:

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of the following items as exempt information as defined under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, was likely to be disclosed.

371. RISK MONITORING UPDATE

The Finance Manager presented a report which provided an update on the council's risk register for Quarter 3 Risks 2020/21.

RESOLVED:

To note the status of risks included in the report for Quarter 3 2020/21.

(Reason: To ensure the council has an up to date and effective risk reporting and governance process in place)

372. FINAL MINUTES OF THE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT WORKING PARTY

Members received and considered the minutes of the Governance & Audit Working Party held on 22nd February 2021. They were not for publication in accordance with Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

RESOLVED:

That the final minutes of the Governance & Audit Working Party be noted.

Chairman