



Democratic Support Service
PO Box 136
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MINUTES of the Business Meeting of the NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
held at County Hall, Northampton on 20 March at 10.30am

PRESENT:

Councillor Joan Kirkbride (Chairman)
Councillor Stan Heggs (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor	Sally Beardsworth	Councillor	Derek Lawson MBE
"	Paul Bell	"	Stephen Legg
"	Catherine Boardman	"	Chris Lofts
"	Wendy Brackenbury	"	Arthur McCutcheon
"	Julie Brookfield	"	John McGhee
"	Jim Broomfield	"	David Mackintosh
"	Michael Brown	"	Allan Matthews
"	Robin Brown	"	Andy Mercer
"	Mary Butcher	"	Dennis Meredith
"	Michael Clarke	"	Ian Morris
"	Adam Collyer	"	Steve Osborne
"	Elizabeth Coombe	"	Bill Parker
"	Gareth Eales	"	Bhupendra Patel
"	Brendan Glynan	"	Suresh Patel
"	Matt Golby	"	Ron Sawbridge
"	Andre Gonzalez de Savage	"	Bob Scott
"	Christopher Groome	"	Mick Scrimshaw
"	James Hakewill	"	Judy Shephard
"	Eileen Hales MBE	"	Steve Slatter
"	Alan Hills	"	Heather Smith
"	Sue Homer	"	Danielle Stone
"	Jill Hope	"	Winston Strachan
"	Dudley Hughes	"	Michael Tye
"	Sylvia Hughes	"	Sarah Uldall
"	Phil Larratt	"	Allen Walker
"	Graham Lawman	"	Malcolm Waters

Also in attendance (for all or part of the meeting):

Dr Akeem Ali – Director of Public Health & Wellbeing
Paul Blantern, Chief Executive
Art Conaghan –Political Assistant to the Conservative Group
Martyn Emberson, Chief Fire Officer
Laurie Gould, Monitoring Officer
Paul Hanson, Executive & Regulatory Manager
Alex Hopkins, Director of Customers, Communities & Learning
Carolyn Kus, Director for Adult Social Care Services
Michael Quinn, Political Assistant to the Liberal Democrat Group
Jenny Rendall, Democracy Officer (Minutes)

Ben Wesson, Political Assistant to the Labour Group

And 12 members of the public.

08/14 Apologies for non-attendance:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mike Hallam, Jim Harker OBE & Russell Roberts as well as Honorary Aldermen John Bailey, Gina Ogden & Priscilla Padley and the Director for Environment, Growth & Development, Tony Ciaburro.

09/14 To approve and sign the minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday 20 February 2014:

RESOLVED that: Council approved the minutes of the Council meeting held on Thursday 20 February 2014.

10/14 Notification of requests by members of the public to address the meeting

Item 6: Ms Helen Mallett, Mrs Julie Normington & Mrs Abigail Miller

11/14 Declarations of Interest by Councillors:

There were none.

12/14 Chairman's Announcements:

The Chairman made the following announcements:

Northamptonshire County Council had once again received official recognition that the authority's carbon footprint had been reduced and that it was committed to lowering its direct impact on climate change. The Carbon Trust Standard had been awarded to the Council for successfully measuring, managing and improving carbon efficiency across all operations, including schools, by a further 18 per cent. This award was the highest recognition of achievement that could be gained for carbon management and actual carbon reduction. In the last 2 years energy efficiency strategies had been honed to cut carbon emissions by another 15,812 tonnes of CO₂. These carbon reductions had been achieved by three key strategies:

- The street lights switch off and implementation of the street lighting PFI programme
- The rationalisation of the Council's office and other non-school property estate
- The continued investment in energy efficiency works in schools and other council buildings

At the Chairman's invitation Councillor Michael Clarke who paid tribute to the staff who had achieved this award, particularly the Strategic Lead for Energy & Carbon Management, Darren Perry whose tireless work enabled the Council to stand proud of not only retaining the award originally won 2 years previously but for improving on its achievements.

The Chairman then received the award from Mr Lionel Tibble of the Carbon Trust who stated it was a real pleasure to recognise the Council's commitment to carbon reduction as well as its achievement of a further 18% carbon reduction.

At the Chairman's invitation, the Chief Executive, Paul Blanter paid tribute to the contribution of the Council's partners in this endeavour, some of whom were in attendance in the meeting from British Gas.

Following recent external assessment the Council's Customer Service Centre had achieved the Customer Service Excellence Standard. The Standard which was owned by the Government's Cabinet Office and the assessment process tested in great depth those areas that research had indicated as a priority for customers with particular focus on delivery, timeliness, information, professionalism and staff attitude. There was also emphasis placed on developing customer insight, understanding the user's experience and robust measurement of service satisfaction.

The assessment report stated:

'The commitment to customer service excellence demonstrated in the evidence was confirmed by all the advisors, team leaders, management, service areas and other partners to the assessor.'

'The spirit of continuous improvement within a positive and supportive working environment was commented on by all. This resulted in just one partial compliance, an exceptional achievement at first full assessment, together with an exceptional number of 12 Compliance Plus (Best practice) elements.'

The Chairman then congratulated the Customer Service Centre, the Libraries Service and the Archives Service who had been awarded the Standard and invited the Customer Service Centre Manager, Leanne Hanwell and Operations Manager, Andy Cosford to the front of the Chamber to receive the certificate.

At the Chairman's invitation, the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Heather Smith added her congratulations stating the Customer Service Centre received in excess of a quarter of a million calls per year which equated to just over 5,000 calls a week. During the last 12 months when more information had been made available online, she noted the Customer Service Centre had not had an expected drop in call volume as staff managed queries relating to children's safeguarding. She therefore considered this award to be good recognition of their hard work.

The Chairman then presented the award to the Customer Service Centre Manager and Operations Manager.

A report by Experian had highlighted Northampton as the best performing town for businesses in the UK. The report looked into key areas of economic performance including the number of start-ups and business turn-over. It pointed out Northampton as being the top performing town in the country, highlighting the county's continued commitment and success in generating business growth and strengthened the town's strong track record of creating the right environment for businesses to succeed.

The report also emphasised the importance of partnership working and recognised the success of the Council's work with Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership (NEP), Northampton Borough Council and the University of Northampton as well as the importance of innovative schemes such as 'Northampton Alive' in stimulating regeneration and driving forward change to allow businesses to flourish. The Chairman felt this was an excellent report that could make everyone proud of Northamptonshire.

The previous Monday, the Council supported by the University of Northampton hosted a very important delegation of from the European Union (EU), the Economic & Social Committee who had specifically visited Northampton to learn how modern public service was being transformed in the light of common issues of austerity and growing and ageing populations. The Committee were interested in the enlightening solutions the Council was using including its strategies for adult social care, LGSS shared services, the Olympus Care Services Teckal company, its strategic partner work with organisations such as Kier MGWSP, BT and British Gas. The Committee representatives came from all over the EU and had stated they wished to use Northamptonshire's example to assist to steer EU policy.

The Northamptonshire's Music and Performing Arts County Brass Band would be representing England in the European Championships due to be held in Perth, Scotland. The Chairman offered to send a letter of congratulations on this achievement.

At the Chairman's invitation, Councillor Michael Brown then stated he had recently attended an event at which the County Brass Band was entertaining. He referred to 20,000 county children who attended the Music & Performing Arts School and congratulated the Conductor of the Brass Band, Mr Brad Turnbull, and his staff for developing the best brass band in the county.

A DVD of the work of the Standing Advisory Council for Education (SACRE) would be played during lunch highlighting the work of SACRE.

There would be an awards event for the Council's Looked After Children (LAC) on Friday 28 March 2014. All councillors were invited to this important event that highlighted how important the Council's LAC were to it. On behalf of the LAC, the Chairman thanked councillors for their contribution of £100 from their empowering councillors funds without which the event could not have taken place. Councillors were also reminded of the annual easter egg collection for LAC. Those wishing to contribute could donate their eggs through the Cabinet Office who would pass them on to the Children's Rights Service.

RESOLVED that: The Chairman would forward a letter of congratulations to the Northamptonshire County Brass Band on representing England at the forthcoming European Championships.

13/14 Petitions:

At the Chairman's invitation, the following people addressed Council regarding the proposals for schools in East Northamptonshire which affected King John Middle School highlighting the following:

Mrs Julie Normington stated the proposal to move from a 3-tier to 2-tier model of education would result in the closure of 2 highly regarded middle schools who were a vital and important part of the communities in Thrapston and Oundle. The closure of the King John Middle School would reduce the provision of education in a growing town as well as close a vital community resource to children and families. It was in her opinion contrary to the Thrapston Town Plan and required a thorough examination and consideration of the

options. The design of a 3-tier system was based on the known facts of educational development. Middle schools offered the opportunity for children to grow to young adults in a safe environment and at a pace suitable for them. It provided a broad-based curriculum and increased opportunities that matched the rapid progress of emotional and intellectual growth. The specialist Key Stage 3 staff were not provided in a primary school. Middle schools successfully developed high self-esteem, excellent behaviour and a keen sense for learning. They assisted children to meet the challenges of GCSE's and reduced the need for children aged 11 years to travel up to 8 miles for their secondary education. Whilst it had happened in other areas of the country, many parents were quite rightly questioning the reasoning for these changes and in Thrapston it could result in a separation between the young people and families and local provision.

Ms Helen Mallett referred to under-performance at the Prince William School. Of the 13 schools within the 3-tier system in this large, mixed geographical area which was growing on its western side, 11 were good, 1 required improvement and 1 was in a special category. The presence of any school in a category 4 was not acceptable but she suggested this was as a result of a failing system. Stakeholders needed to know the conversion to a 2-tier system was the best way to achieve improvements at the Prince William School. In noting improvement was the main reason for conversions, she referred to the progress of Northampton schools since conversion, stating that of 9 secondary schools, 5 could demonstrate value added progress, 4 were significantly below the national average and only 2 were demonstrating above average progress. Ofsted had noted significant disruption in fragile schools including that caused by structural changes and she suggested Prince William School did not have the internal strength to convert and improve at the same time. Reference was made to a whole generation of children who would be affected by the proposed changes with no guarantee of a successful improvement in the Prince William School and she considered this to be too big a risk to take. She felt the Prince William School should be supported financially, with mentor support and an open minded and ambitious team that could make the improvements required to make the school to the jewel in the crown it had once been.

Ms Abigail Miller referred to the professional and personal experience of the parents, teachers and governors within the cluster stating the 3-tier system was fit for purpose. She referred to concerns raised by their local MP that the consultation was flawed because it was premature, rushed and too narrow in scope. Stakeholders felt insecure about the process as no criteria had been published for the process. She voiced concerns that the published outcomes would result in the closure of 2 middle schools: King John Middle School in particular had been rated by Ofsted as good with outstanding features. Its closure would devastate the community. She felt there was no evidence to justify the closure of a school with strong community support. She then referred to officer's advice that the primary and secondary schools that would need to expand to accommodate children of middle school age would be provided with additional revenue and capital budgets stating in Northampton, Norfolk and Suffolk there had been failures as a result of similar changes. Whilst the monetary cost would be in the millions, the damage to individuals would be far higher. In presenting a petition of 1,597 signatures to save the King John Middle School Ms Miller asked that the Council repaired those schools that required it and leave the system as it was.

RESOLVED that: Council noted the petition presented regarding the effect on King John Middle School of proposals to alter the education system in the Kings Cliffe, Oundle & Thrapston area of Northamptonshire.

14/14 Northamptonshire Association of Youth Clubs (NAYC):

The Chairman invited Adam Pope and Richard Buckingham from NAYC to provide a presentation on their support to Youth Clubs who highlighted the following:

- NAYC had been responsible for a youth provision contract with the Council since 2010 and were now in the first year of a second contract. They were on track to meet all their targets and in some cases would exceed the expected outcomes.
- NAYC had worked with youth for over 50 years and currently employed 8 youth workers to support district and borough areas of the county.
- They worked with over 10,000 young people in the county every week and had over 3,500 volunteer youth leaders.
- Existing youth groups were supported through support to their leaders and young people with any issue that arose.
- New groups were assisted wherever a need for provision was identified. They were currently assisting 80 new groups in the county.
- Training was provided for leaders and sustainability was provided through the training to youths who could assist with the responsibility for their group in the future.
- Special needs groups were supported as were young people within their groups with special needs.

Two examples of their work were then given, the first relating to a youth group in Crick which was run by the local community but affiliated to NAYC. The local area worker regularly visited the group and when discussing how they could enhance the experiences of the young people in the group, it was decided a residential trip would be a good method for offering the young people an experience they would not otherwise have and give them a challenge. As the leaders of the group felt too inexperienced to lead such a trip, they were given training and during a 'taster' weekend NAYC youth workers showed them activities and share experiences which would build their confidence. At the same time the area worker assisted them to secure funding from various sources including NAYC. The young people also undertook some fundraising, receiving support from arts and crafts workers to create items they could sell. The young people in the group decided to hold an open day for the community which also successfully raised funds which were then used to take advantage of NAYC's support package which offered reduced rates to a NAYC centre. The parents of one youth member were concerned that their child's particular health needs could not be met. An additional needs worker was therefore provided to work with the family and provide that reassurance that their son's health needs would be addressed and he was then able to take part in the activity. Part of this particular support was the attendance of a specialist NAYC worker during part of the weekend. Positive feedback was received following the visit from the NAYC support worker and youth leaders of the group. The young people not only had the opportunity for this new experience but also learned new fundraising and arts and crafts skills.

The second example was given of how they supported new groups to open. When visiting the area of Lilbourne, a parent who was new to the area asked for assistance to address the issues he had heard of from neighbours of youth involvement in anti-social behaviour and health and safety issues arising from young people using a main road to visit a truck stop to buy snacks. An area worker liaised with this parent, local police, other parents and the parish council and it was decided the provision of a youth group would assist to address the issues. 9 months later a committee had been formed, consultation had been undertaken to ascertain from young people what they would like from a youth group, youth leaders had been identified and funding had been received from NAYC, a local village charity, a local councillor and a local wind farm business. A local young person with leadership experience was also identified who was willing to manage the group on a permanent basis. Equipment was sourced and the club opened in January 2014.

Approximately 30 young people between the ages of 8 and 14 years regularly met within the group and NAYC were continuing to work with the group to identify other funding sources to fund costs associated with the club including the hire of the village hall and provision of equipment and excursions. NAYC would continue to work with this exciting new vibrant group in Lilbourne to develop and sustain it. Part of this was a current consultation the club was undertaking with those aged 14 years and above to identify if they could include them in the work being done.

The 2 representatives concluded their presentation by asking councillors to let them know of any existing or new provision they could assist to provide in their divisions.

In answer to queries the following was stated:

- Young people were involved in setting NAYC priorities in more than one way. At a community level they were involved in the consultation when any new group was set up. They were also encouraged to be involved in the committees running groups. As an organisation, NAYC managed youth forums in every area of the county for representatives aged 16 years and over to meet and discuss the needs and concerns in those areas. These issues were then fed back to the NAYC leadership team who used them to set priorities.
- Local people were encouraged to provide provision and NAYC provided a trainer to visit groups, discuss their issues and provide training within localities. Training was also provided at NAYC's headquarters on a variety of more generic issues such as the Disclosure & Barring Service.
- The recruitment of volunteer leaders was always an issue. They did not work with young people below the age of 8 years as that would then require Ofsted type ratios and regulations. Their adult-to-youth ratio was 2 adults to every 10 youths with a minimum of 2 leaders present. They also worked with local volunteer bureaux and also tried wherever possible to create a rota of leaders so a group was not reliant on the same people every week.
- The number of young people not in employment or education (otherwise known as NEETs) was an issue as it affected their self-esteem and ability to take on responsibilities; key issues for young people as they moved forward into work. Whilst NAYC did not tackle this issue directly, they actively encouraged emerging leaders and alongside partners at Bedford College they provided a course for youths aged 15-17 years that over the course of 2 years would provide them with an NVQ Level II qualification which would in turn build their confidence and self-esteem.
- Assistance from councillors to identify areas of need and contacts within communities was as valuable as the funding the Council provided to fund the 8 area workers.
- NAYC's contract with the Council enabled them to widen their remit as far across the county as possible. Networking and creating links with other organisations, families and communities was important. They worked with all young people in all different circumstances including LAC.

Councillors also thanked NAYC representatives for the support of the organisation to local communities, giving examples of assistance provided to local groups in the divisions they represented. It was also felt the work of NAYC should be publicised more widely as an excellent provision in the county.

RESOLVED that: Council noted the contents of the presentation made on behalf of the Northamptonshire Association of Youth Clubs.

15/14 Opposition Priority Business:

At the Chairman's invitation, Councillor Chris Lofts moved the following motion:

NCCs most recent corporate performance report shows a significant and worsening failure to tackle NEETs and avoid creating the feared “lost generation.” In the spring of last year, NEET rates in the County were notably higher than either the regional or national average, and by autumn, while the rate was falling nationally, in Northamptonshire it increased a further 50%.

Council therefore resolves to take direct action to help ensure young people Not in Education, Employment or Training are not left behind. Council requests a thorough examination of schemes implemented by other Councils, such as the “Sutton Economic Support Taskforce”, which have been shown to significantly help young people get back into work, education or training. Council further requests the development of a plan to implement the best of these initiatives in Northamptonshire as soon as possible.

The monetary cost to society of a high number of NEETS runs to billions. The cost to the individual, in damaged life chances, in unused potential, is far greater.’

In moving the motion, Councillor Lofts recognised the efforts of various sectors across Northamptonshire to increase the supply of jobs and reduce unemployment. He was proud of the county’s overall unemployment rate of 2.7% and thanked the many organisations who had worked hard to achieve this including the Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership (NEP) and South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) who were assisting to deliver economic development funding. Whilst statistics could be used to make points and identify trends, the facts behind these stats were real people with real issues and barriers to work. Research showed that the 16-24 age-group struggled to recover once they had been unable to secure a first job. Their earning potential was permanently dented and as a vulnerable part of society, they required specific assistance to find their way into employment. He felt there were strong links to councillors as corporate parents and noted research by the Rowntree Foundation identified issues were greatly exacerbated against LAC. The scars of NEET status were incredibly damaging often leading to other issues such as anxiety and depression. It affected job security with lifetime earnings on average 16% lower for someone coming from a NEET background.

Councillor Lofts also referred to the broader economic costs to the wider community noting research by the University of York conservatively estimated the cost of NEETS to the economy at £15billion; £97,000 for each and every person who was a NEET for more than 3 months. This loss of income potential also added to a reliance on state assistance during their lifetime. There were 8,000 NEETS in the county and reference was made to a project by the London Borough of Sutton which was based on 3 principles, the first of which was recognising the extent of the issue, to then work in partnership across sectors and thirdly to provide a 1-stop access point for NEETS. Following this model would not require a huge increase in expenditure as it would use current funds in a different way to also provide other support such as housing advice.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Jill Hope who referred to the need to assist NEETS with specific requirements such as transport costs to attend interviews. The real issue in her opinion was not spending money but providing an effective single point of contact. She referred to 45 vacancies advertised by Connexions which they struggled to encourage young people to apply for. Training providers had informed her that despite trying to work with NEP and the University there were still vacancies and many employers informed her young people lacked essential skills. These young people would never be at the front of any queue for a job as employers were suspicious of people who had not worked in the long-term.

Councillors comment as follows:

- The work of the county's 2 University Technical Colleges (UTCs) was noted in promoting specialist job opportunities in the county.
- It was noted the Sutton Report had also highlighted the over 50s age group as that of biggest need.
- Some felt there was a need to encourage young people to take greater advantage of the opportunities provided in the county through various education specialists such as the UTC's, Tresham College and various other education centres. Councillors could also become more involved with their schools to ensure all that was possible was undertaken to support and help young people to gain self-esteem and make the best use of opportunities available because unless young people would only take advantage of the opportunities if they wanted to.
- One NEET was one too many and it was felt by some that despite the Experian report, Northamptonshire remained a low-wage, low-skilled county. Aspirations in the county had to be raised particularly for young people. It was suggested this was hindered by a fragmented careers service leading to schools sometimes providing out of date information. There was a need to understand what people were learning, where apprenticeships were available and the remuneration offered.
- Reference was made to a need to provide job guarantees for all those out of work for at least a year as this would assist 450 people in Northamptonshire alone.
- Concerns were raised that there was an inadequate provision of specialist jobs for those undertaking apprenticeships in an area of expertise. For example, there were more people taking hairdressing apprenticeships than jobs available and too few local employers to meet the needs of the UTCs.
- It was noted existing schools still under-performed against the national average. The UTC's assisted with the issue of losing the interest of young males in education. This type of approach should be spread across other sectors across the county and provision should be provided based on the local industry to ensure more people left with good employment prospects.
- It was suggested more could be undertaken with partners to link job creation schemes with employers providing apprenticeships.
- It was felt by some that young people required as much help as possible to access opportunities. Organisations such as Connexions played a vital role in this and concerns were raised that schools should be encouraged to form strong links with Connexions.
- The figure of NEETs in 2011 was noted as the county's lowest ever and concerns were raised that this should be improved in future years.
- Some felt it was the Council's responsibility to assist young people, many of whom might have been let down by the education system and may not have supportive parents. It was felt the motion was celebrating what had been done and proposing to do even more for young people as they left statutory education.
- Many NEETS it was noted had been failed by their school and did not attend further education because they likened it to the classrooms they had attended at school. As more NEETS attended good training provision that was focussed on meeting their needs, they would inform their friends that it was not like the classroom and more NEETS would apply and gain the life chances they deserved.
- It was noted the Council had a good reputation for supporting the needs of NEETS. The issue however was much wider being a nationwide one and it was suggested Central Government should do more to stop the country's highly skilled people working elsewhere. It was suggested people within the current workforce should be trained by organisations to work their way up into the higher levels of that company. It was felt that the situation would not improve until the issue was tackled within the private sector.

- It was suggested a youth training centre would assist to encourage young people to take training opportunities as it could be tailored to their particular ways of learning.
- It was noted the county was performing better than both the regional and national averages in this regard having the lowest return of NEETs in the country. This had been achieved in a variety of ways including a joint strategy with partners. The Connexions service provided 24 drop-in clubs per week across the county, had held 2 careers fayres with a further 7 apprenticeship and job fayres planned across the county, vacancy and recruitment teams to provide online and telephone support to young people, advisors to work with priority groups in education such as those with special educational needs, who are persistent absentees and LAC. Through NEPs jobs brokerage service designed to match NEETs with employers, 94 vacancies had been advertised and 434 candidates interviewed. There was also a focus on assisting employers to recruit, managing vacancies for training.
- The motion was considered to be addressing the issue in a preventative way and was compared to how preventative work within public health prevented trips and falls.
- Concerns were raised that the motion suggested the Council was not doing anything to tackle the issue when in fact as many councillors had noted, the county had a very good reputation for its work in supporting NEETs and reducing the number in the county.

In reply Councillor Loftis noted there was a wide range of issues involved in influencing whether a young person was a NEET and a complex web of activities was required to prevent young people from falling into that category. He praised the range of activities the Council was already providing but felt NEETs required encouragement to access them and he felt this was the Council's responsibility. He asked who would take overall responsibility if not the Council as it was perfectly placed to co-ordinate solutions with partners.

As she noted the first paragraph of the motion had caused some controversy during the debate, the Chairman allowed Councillor Loftis to alter his motion by deleting the first paragraph. Upon the vote, Council rejected this alteration.

The Chairman then invited Council to vote upon the original motion.

Upon a recorded vote of 31 against and 17 for with 5 abstentions and 4 absentee members, the motion was rejected

At the Chairman's invitation the Chief Executive then informed Council that at a recent event, some very good practical examples had been highlighted that would be expanded across the county. The Council provided over 100 apprenticeships, 2 of which he had recently visited at the Grendon Outdoor Learning Centre, 15 were provided in the Council's Payroll Department and the sum of £50,000 had just been awarded to assist Tresham College to provide an apprenticeship scheme.

RESOLVED that: Upon a recorded vote of 31 against and 17 for with 5 abstentions and 4 absentee members, the motion was rejected.

16/14 questions, if any, to the Chairman of the Audit Committee relating to the work of the Audit Committee since the last ordinary meeting:

The Chairman invited the Independent Chairman of the Audit Committee, Mr David Watson to address Council who highlighted the following:

- There were 5 meetings throughout the yearly audit cycle and the minutes from the November 2013 meeting (copies of which had been previously circulated) detailed a summary of the year's work.
- Whilst there had been a number of issues raised by the external auditors in respect of property valuations, the situation was considerably improved from better years as demonstrated in a much reduced audit fee. (Down in the past 5-6 years from £500,000 to £240,000 and £197,000 for the forthcoming year). The Audit Team was congratulated for their hard work in achieving this.

In answer to queries on the report the Independent Chairman stated the following:

- As the Council has become more of an enabling one, more contractors were employed to provide services. It was difficult but important to ensure the procedures within these contractors were as good as those of the Council. Schools were an example where a busy Headteacher could be at risk of trusting an unscrupulous bursar. This was less of a risk where there was a governor with the relevant financial knowledge to monitor the accounts. The only sanction the Council could impose on a school that fell victim to fraud was to place it in a category and this was considered to be a harsh action. Academies fell outside of the Council's remit which could provide issues, particularly as funding was a County Council issue. The Internal Audit Team would focus on these areas during the forthcoming year.
- The workplan for the Internal Audit Team was as much based on national issues that arose as examples of areas that could be reviewed as much as the areas the Committee had already identified from internal experience.
- The Council managed a rolling programme of property valuation that was worth approximately £2billion. There had been changes in the professionals undertaking valuations leading to some re-evaluations that would not normally be expected from the general economy and property market. An investigation had therefore been undertaken into the basis for valuations which provided valuable knowledge. Valuations were very subjective, being based on the individual valuer's assumptions of the property market and it was noted any property was only as valuable as the price a potential buyer wished to pay. Valuations were therefore very much approximate figures.
- A thematic method for auditing primary schools was used. A particular issue was reviewed amongst a range of schools and the ensuing report was provided to all schools. Finance training was provided for all governors but it was very difficult to recruit governors with the relevant experience of managing accounts on a daily basis. Many governors were already extremely busy in their everyday work and within the voluntary sector already.
- There were a lot of procedures around the valuation of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and some of the procedures and reconciliations the external auditors relied on had not been undertaken. Concerns had been raised with those responsible who had provided assurances they would be addressed for the following year. One of the improvements to the process was an earlier audit and the processes of reconciliation would be discussed at the Audit Committee meeting to be held in May 2014 to ensure issues had been addressed.
- It was worth noting there had been a very smooth audit of the LGPS during the last 5 years and issues that had arisen that year did not raise any major concerns.
- Minutes for the most recent Audit Committee would be provided to councillors as soon as they were available.

Councillors also thanked the Independent Chairman and Audit Committee for the excellent job they undertook for the Council, particularly in the reduction of audit fees which would enable the Council to concentrate more of its budget on provision of front-line services.

RESOLVED that: Council noted the update and answers to questions from the Independent Chairman of the Audit Committee.

(Councillor Andre Gonzalez de Savage arrived at 1.15pm)

17/14 Business items (including Budget & Policy Framework items, Appointments & Annual Reports):

(a) The 2014 Pay Policy Statement:

At the Chairman's invitation, Councillor Bill Parker proposed the report (copies of which had been previously circulated) highlighting the following:

- A Pay Policy that was reviewed on an annual basis was a requirement of the Localism Act 2011.
- The 2014/15 Policy applied predominantly to all managers graded SM1-6 as well as the Chief Executive.
- A number of changes had been made as detailed in Section 5 of the report as part of the Council's programme to improve Children's Services and integrate Public Health. The Corporate Management Team structure had also been updated to reflect these changes.
- Local pay negotiations had resulted in a 0.6% pay award and the new pay scales were provided in Appendix 1 to the Report.
- The Policy had also been updated to incorporate changes to the LGPS effective from April 2014.

The report was seconded by Councillor Michael Tye

In answers to queries on the report the following was confirmed:

- A written answer would be provided following the meeting regarding the amount of honorarium payments made over the last 3 years, what they were made for and the sums paid.
- The Assistant Director, Place, Transformation and Wellbeing would be responsible for various elements of the national agenda relating to localism, developing communities and assisting them to help themselves. Their remit would include the creation of community hubs, ensuring integrated community services were provided as close to communities as were required. They would also work with communities to develop the sense of place that had proved to be so important to the people of the county. They would also be responsible for ensuring public health messages were disseminated amongst communities and assist the wellbeing agenda through the provision of adult learning.
- All existing market factor supplements had been removed as part of the Pay & Benefits Review. Staff could apply for them and there would be an annual review of any paid. Currently there were 35 paid to staff in the areas of Children's Social Care, IT and some Fire & Rescue specialist roles.

RESOLVED that: Council:

- 1) Agreed the Council's Pay Policy for the financial year 2014-15 (as set out in appendix 1 to the report);**
- 2) Endorsed the Corporate Management Team structure as of 1 April 2014 (as set out in appendix 2 to the report); and**
- 3) A written answer would be provided to Councillor Danielle Stone following the meeting regarding the number of honorarium payments had been made in the last 3 years including details of the reason for and sum of these payments.**

(b) Changes to the Constitution:

At the Chairman's invitation, Councillor Heather Smith proposed the report (copies of which had been previously circulated) who referred to the recent change in legislation which required councils to undertake a recorded vote on any final decision taken at a budget meeting.

The report was seconded by Councillor Allen Walker who re-iterated the need for this alteration in law.

RESOLVED that Council agreed:

- 1) The constitutional changes set out in Section 4 of the Report; and**
- 2) That these changes would take immediate effect and that the Monitoring Officer be delegated authority to make these amendments, any associated conforming amendments and to republish the Constitution.**

(c) Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) Annual Report (2012/13):

At the Chairman's invitation, Councillor Dudley Hughes proposed the report (copies of which had been previously circulated) who stated SACRE was a statutory body the Council was obliged to support. He referred to a Government Report issued recently in which referred to the need for inclusive education and the danger of ignoring religious education was not just the loss of basic information but also the creation of mistrust and ignorance. The UK was a multi-ethnic society and there was a need to work hard to ensure it did not become a multi-fractional society. SACRE provided a syllabus that schools could adopt if they did not wish to create their own. SACRE also communicated with teachers to assist them to teach the syllabus and provide materials.

The report was seconded by Councillor Wendy Brackenbury.

Councillors commented as follows:

- It was noted the all-parliamentary group that wrote the recent Government report had emphasised the importance of religious education and keeping all citizens informed.
- Some felt that whilst there were many myths and stereotypes it was something that was part of the country's history, present and future and provided children with transferrable skills and the confidence to discuss all moral and religious issues.
- The Government report had voiced concerns that over 50% of teachers of religious education were not qualified in that area and the requirement for all students to take a full religious education course had been welcomed by the National Association of Headteachers, particularly as there was a need to provide a safe place for children to raise concerns.
- It was suggested Humanism should also be represented in the syllabus.

In reply Councillor Hughes stated Humanism was part of the agreed syllabus and SACRE included a representative from the Society of Friends which gave a wider view of society. He felt there was a need for more religious teachers and noted SACRE did its best to educate non-specialists in this area.

RESOLVED that: Council approved the SACRE Annual Report for 2012/13 for circulation to schools to improve the quality of provision for Religious Education and Collective Worship.

(d) Youth Justice Plan:2013/14:

At the Chairman's invitation, Councillor Catherine Boardman proposed the report (copies of which had been previously circulated) highlighting the following:

- The aim of the Northamptonshire Youth Offending Service (YOS) was to reduce offending and re-offending by children and young people. YOS was placed both within Children's Services and the Criminal Justice System.
- The report had been agreed by the YOS Management Board in October 2013.
- The YOS was a top performing service delivering top quality outcomes within particular budgetary constraints. It worked with young people to reduce offending and re-offending, was a multi-agency service which was also multi-funded. It was an excellent example of how partnerships could improve outcomes for the county, working with the police, offending service, Nene and Corby Clinical Commissioning Groups and the Northamptonshire County Council.
- The report outlined achievements as well as the range of services involved to support 172,000 members of the county's population; all aged between 0 and 19 years.
- The YOS main target group was those aged 10-17 years (approximately 10% of the county's population).
- The report reflected the needs of statutory agencies and provided details of achievements against national indicators. It was recognised as high performing in all of the 5 indicators, not just maintaining but improving on the results of the previous year.
- Reference was made to the work of the Targeted Prevention Team which had prevented many young people entering the Criminal Justice System.

The report was seconded by Councillor Dudley Hughes who congratulated the Targeted Prevention Team for their successes in preventing more young people from entering the Criminal Justice System.

Councillors commented as follows:

- Concerns were raised about the 10% reduction in funding and it was suggested the impact of this should be monitored to ensure the Service continued to be highly performing especially as young people in the Criminal Justice System were more likely to have high levels of welfare need and support from other agencies. It was also noted young people failed by services were more likely to enter the Criminal Justice System and it was felt intervention had contributed to the success of the YOS. It was therefore suggested that without monitoring the progress could be reversed.
- It was felt this was an excellent example of partnership working to provide a service. Concerns were then raised about the need to house vulnerable young people with the appropriate support.
- Concerns were raised that some of the partnerships within the YOS were struggling and it was noted there was a vacancy in the team for an educator. Whilst it was suggested this could be the local economic climate making it difficult for agencies to provide a representative, there was still a real need for people to be available to address the issues created when young people are failed by the system. It was therefore suggested the partnerships within the YOS also required monitoring.
- Volunteers within the YOS were praised for their support in making referral arrangements. It was noted it was increasingly difficult to recruit volunteers and they all made a real difference to the service.
- The YOS was also congratulated for achieving the Investors in Volunteers Award.

In reply Councillor Boardman agreed it was important to monitor the impact of any changes to the Service. She also praised all those who volunteered to support some of

the most vulnerable members of society without whom a good service could be delivered. She also noted the Health & Wellbeing Board was now involved with the YOS and in co-ordinating a new strategy for housing it was important to work with colleagues with the relevant responsibilities to ensure delivery of some of the services on which the YOS relied.

RESOLVED that: Council agreed the Youth Justice Plan 2013/14.

(e) Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service (NFRS), Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Update & Review 2014:

At the Chairman's invitation Councillor Andre Gonzalez de Savage proposed the report (copies of which had been previously circulated) highlighting the following:

- The IRMP was a statutory requirement of the Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service (NF&RS) for which the Council was responsible.
- This particular update had been provided for consultation with various bodies and councils before being presented to Cabinet and now Council.
- Innovation was considered to be the key element of its mission and the report highlighting some of the various ways in which NF&RS was leading the world in terms of fire-fighting and fire safety and pride was noted in the men and women of the NF&RS who put themselves in danger to protect the county's communities.
- The COBRA Academy, placed at RAF Chelveston trained firefighters to use a tool originally developed for road traffic collisions which was now being used across other areas providing more fire safety compliance. This training could also be provided to other fire authorities, thus providing an income to assist to retain the facility.
- Local firefighters were thanked for their assistance to neighbouring parts of the country affected by recent flooding.

The report was seconded by Councillor Andy Mercer.

Councillors commented as follows:

- Concerns were raised that there had been a decrease in the number of Black Minority & Ethnic (BME) communities had responded to the questionnaires and it was felt a greater effort was required in this area which councillors could assist with. It was suggested they could be contacted via local church and community leaders.
- Further concerns were raised regarding a proposed merger with the Police. Almost £1.2million had been awarded to achieve this but public consultation was queried and whether the Council knew local people's opinions on the proposals and whether these opinions would be noted.
- Benefits to the families of firefighters who died on active service were welcomed including a waiver on inheritance tax.
- The IRMP and the process for completing it was praised including the work undertaken by officers in managing this process and producing the report.
- Concerns were raised that merger proposals could result in a loss of jobs. It was noted 2 jobs could possibly be lost as a result of sharing facilities and there appeared to be no recruitment plans as part of a 'blue light' merger.

In reply Councillor Gonzalez de Savage stated the following:

- He would be happy to discuss with colleagues ways in which to encourage greater response from BME groups.
- Benefits to the families of firefighters who lost their lives whilst on active service were very much welcomed and it was suggested this should be extended to all those who provided emergency services.

- Congratulations to the staff working on the IRMP would be fed back to them as would the pride expressed towards the county's firefighters.
- He was not aware of any job losses as a result of blue light mergers or merging HQ buildings within NF&RS.
- There was currently no legislation for any Police and Crime Commissioner to take responsibility for fire services anywhere in the county. However, the 2 services in Northamptonshire were working closer together. The response from Government to the Ken Knight Review was still awaited but the relevant Government Minister had indicated it was important action was taken to respond to community need.
- Northamptonshire was leading the way in terms of partnership work and transformational funding had been awarded in recognition of the opportunities the 2 emergency services were creating for the future making communities as safe as possible.

RESOLVED that: Council approved the IRMP Update 2014.

(f) High Speed Rail (London – West Midlands) Bill – Petition:

At the Chairman's invitation, Councillor Michael Clarke moved the report (copies of which had been previously circulated) highlighting the following:

- The High Speed 2 (HS2) project was gathering momentum and this report would provide the Council with the ability to petition against the Bill. There was however a requirement for an absolute majority of the membership to agree the report.
- Petitioning was not an indication that the Council was against or favour of the Bill but merely enabled it the ability to bring specific petitions to the relevant committee established to review issues raised. This Committee consisted of 12 MPs unconnected to HS2.
- Various areas of the country would be adversely affected by the HS2 line including a number of villages in Northamptonshire and it was therefore important to discuss issues with them to mitigate the effects as much as possible.
- A number of areas of concern were highlighted in Section 7.4 of the report including the A361 Chipping Warden Bypass which was required as the route would split the village. Information on HGV movements was also required as they would be very disruptive to the lives of those serving a number of parishes in the county.
- Other issues to consider related to rights of way, general railway construction and the removal of 5 platforms from Euston Station which could lead to serious issues to the current service particularly to commuters.

The report was seconded by Councillor Phil Larratt who stated that although he was a supporter of HS2 there was a need to consider the issues as highlighted in Section 7.4 of the report and have the ability to petition the relevant government committee to mitigate them. He also voiced concerns about the effect on Euston Station and services Northampton commuters currently relied on as well as the regeneration of Euston Station and the area around it. He concluded by welcoming the report from the new Chairman of HS2 which promised to have the project completed by 2027.

Councillors commented as follows:

- The ability to petition the relevant Government Committee was considered to be important.
- Concerns were raised regarding connectivity between HS2 and the current railway infrastructure.
- Concerns were also raised regarding Euston Station and it was suggested lessons could be learned from the Crossrail and Thameslink projects with regard to building lines through rather than to London. It was noted the Railway Act that prevented

lines being built through London had only recently been addressed and the proposal to link HS2 with HS1 at St Pancras Station was considered to be sensible as it would reduce the need to change trains in the area.

- It was felt there should be greater links to London Kings Cross and St Pancras stations as it would reduce the carbon footprint on London and assist local commuters.

In reply Councillor Clarke stated that whilst the points raised were very important and high on the list of topics to discuss with ministers, there was a need to focus on the issues for Northamptonshire. Amongst future important debates he listed a link to Crewe as was the whole HS2 budget.

RESOLVED that: Council unanimously:

- 1) Agreed to oppose in Parliament the High Speed Rail (London – West Midlands) Bill deposited in the Session 2013-14 for the reasons set out in Section 7 of the report;**
- 2) Agreed that the Director of Environment, Development & Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport, Highways & Environment should have delegated power to approve the County Council's petition(s) to have their case against the Bill heard by the House of Commons and/or House of Lords; and**
- 3) Further agreed to delegate the Director of Environment, Development and Transport in consultation with the relevant Cabinet member the power to appoint legal specialists to assist and advise on matters relating to the Bill and Petition process.**

18/14 Cabinet Business:

At the Chairman's invitation, the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Heather Smith presented the report (copies of which had been previously circulated) highlighting the following:

- The Council was planning to add to the number of apprentices it employed.
- Michael Ellis MP was thanked for lobbying Government to increase funding for road repairs. Reference to his requests by the Chancellor of the Exchequer was considered to be unprecedented and it was noted it had resulted in a further £2million for road repairs in the county.
- The route for the Women's Cycling Tour taking place between 7 and 11 May 2014 would traverse many parts of the county in the north, west and around the county town of Northampton. This would require a number of road closures and support was requested in the form of marshals for the event.

The Chairman referred Council to written questions and the answers received (appendix 2 to the minutes). In answer to supplementary questions the following was confirmed.

- No letters of condolence had been sent to the families when any significant leader had passed away.
- The Northampton Boot and Shoe website had only recently opened and any input from the Northampton Museum and Art Gallery would be welcomed.
- Kettering General Hospital was undertaking many activities as part of its improvement programme, 1 of which was the joint work between their discharge service and the Council's social services department. The urgent care centre in Corby had also had a beneficial impact on the number of patients suing the accident and emergency department. The Health & Wellbeing Board was encouraging all partners to learn from each other's experiences to bring about improvements.

- The contracts for those providing domestic abuse support services had been extended to enable those organisations to review how they raised funds and ensure they were as effective as possible. The Council's funding had never been for the provision of refuges but rather the support the organisations provided. Many charities had not considered other sources of funding and the current time of austerity had caused all organisations whether commissioners or providers of a service to reconsider the service provided and how best to provide it. The University of Northampton was leading a piece of work to establish best practice across not just the country but the world. It was also considered important that the Home Office understood the impact of domestic violence on children and it was hoped overview and scrutiny could consider changes taking place and the impact on services.
- A written answer would be provided following the meeting to Councillor Stone to confirm whether the rate paid to interim social workers included the costs of accommodation and subsistence;
- The Council would submit their bid for a share of the recently announced additional £200million road repair funding as promptly as possible.
- The Cabinet Member for Adult Care Services would discuss the way in which Council safeguarded vulnerable adults in care homes with Councillor Sally Beardsworth following the meeting

Verbal questions were then answered as follows

- The business case for Project Angel would be provided to councillors who had joined the Council following the May 2013 elections. The Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee would also be discussing progress of this project at their meeting on 27 March 2014.
- It was noted many councillors had also lobbied Government for additional funding for road repairs.
- Councillors were encouraged to provide suggestions of cycleways they felt required repair.
- The consultation on the proposed re-structuring of education in the areas of Oundle and Thrapston was due to close the following day. There were a number of schools within the cluster and a variety of options that could be considered. The views of all schools and residents in the area would be considered and a further decision would be required on a preferred proposal followed by a period of representation before a final decision was made in the summer.
- It was considered to be a good time to celebrate local successes in the county.

RESOLVED that: Council noted:

- 1) The report by the Leader of the Council:**
- 2) The responses provided to written and verbal questions on the work of Cabinet;**
- 3) That a written answer would be provided following the meeting to Councillor Stone to confirm whether the rate paid to interim social workers included the costs of accommodation and subsistence; and**
- 4) That the Cabinet Member for Adult Care Services would discuss the way in which Council safeguarded vulnerable adults in care homes with Councillor Sally Beardsworth following the meeting.**

19/14 Overview & Scrutiny Business:

At the Chairman's invitation, the Chairman of the Scrutiny Management Committee, Councillor Judy Shephard moved her report (copies of which had been previously circulated) thanking scrutiny councillors for their dedication which was reflected in the high standard of the report following budget of the Council's budget. She commended the

ability of the overview and scrutiny function to adapt to internal and external issues. She also confirmed support to domestic violence issues had been included in the work programme for the forthcoming year for the Health, Adult Care & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee. As this was a wide issue, a scoping exercise would be undertaken to clearly identify the scope of the review.

The report was seconded by Councillor Jim Hakewill who stated he considered the overview and scrutiny function to be very much alive and responding well to queries raised by councillors of all political parties.

In answer to queries on the report the following was confirmed:

- The Health, Adult Care & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee would consider the Australian model when undertaking the scope for the review into support for domestic violence related issues, particularly to ascertain if it was still relevant as the original scrutiny report that had suggested it had been written in 2005.
- Pupil attainment was an issue taken very seriously by the Children, Learning & Communities Scrutiny Committee. It was difficult for the Council to influence secondary schools as being academies, they were no longer under the Council's control.
- It was noted there were a shortage of sporting venues from which to host extra-curricular sporting activities for pupils and councillors were asked to let the Committee know of any premises that could be available.
- The meeting to discuss the call-in of the decision by Cabinet to approve Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) in relation to the re-opening of part of Abington Street, Northampton considered the process relating to the TRO's and found it had been followed. The meeting was not held to discuss the issue of whether Abington Street should be re-opened.

RESOLVED that: Council noted the Report from the Chairman of the Scrutiny Management Committee.

20/14 Motions submitted by Councillors under Rule 13.1:

(a) Motion submitted by Councillor Jill Hope:

At the Chairman's invitation Councillor Jill Hope moved the following motion:

'Council notes the traffic chaos around Sixfields Stadium and Franklin's Gardens in Northampton on Saturday afternoon 1 March 2014 which has been described as the "worst ever" by frustrated motorists, due to the fact the town's rugby and football club's kicking off within 15 minutes of each other. St James and most of the town centre area remained gridlocked until 7pm and it was a "living hell" for drivers and people who lived in the area.

Two days later, the town centre was gridlocked for hours following the opening of the new bus station.

Council regrets the disruption caused to vehicular and pedestrian users of the road system and the embarrassment this causes to NCC as the highways authority. NCC is tasked with dealing with the consequences of decisions that are not necessarily their own – and it is fundamental that the impact of these decisions are properly understood, and that as a Council we learn from these mistakes.

Council notes that the leader of a partner authority commented after one such episode "The Council worked with the clubs on a traffic management plan that seems to have led to some big delays for people today... I would ask the County Council... to listen to people's concerns." This comment suggests that the Council leader might lack a proper understanding of the fact there are limitations to the capacity of any road network.

Council therefore agrees to an independent investigation into the failures of traffic planning around Northampton, the County town, and a forensic financial audit of the full cost to the Council of the additional works that have been carried out in the past two years. This should include proper consultation with local groups, such as St. James Resident's Association, costings of NCC officer time spent correcting situations, as well as plans for increasing the influence of NCC on partner authorities to ensure they recognise the limitations of the infrastructure network.'

In moving the motion Councillor Hope referred to a motion of the previous year that also raised the issue of traffic in the town of Northampton, particularly the area of St James. She expressed disappointment that she had not been invited to a recent meeting between local residents, officers and the Cabinet Member for Transport, Highways and the Environment. She expressed empathy with those living in the area of Northampton that included 2 major sporting venues; the Rugby and Football clubs as it could take 2-3 hours to return home. She considered this to be indicative of some serious infrastructure issues in this area of the town that could not be resolved in one meeting. She noted residents from the St James Residents Association had informed her many of their suggestions had been rejected by officers, some of which were very simple to implement. In return the Northampton Borough Council had suggested arranging different kick-off times when both clubs were using the venues. Much more, however was required and she felt the Council had failed to plan and implement a sufficient road traffic plan for these occasions. She also voiced concerns about future matches when this situation would arise.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Sarah Uldall.

Councillors commented as follows:

- It was felt this issue could be resolved outside of a meeting of Council and it was suggested councillors bring concerns to the relevant cabinet member who was happy to discuss them in greater detail outside of a meeting.
- It was noted many of the issues were outside of the Council's control although it worked closely with the Police, NF&RS and local residents living in the area to attempt to mitigate issues as far as possible.
- It was also noted that at the recent meeting with local residents, some constructive and positive proposals were made to resolve the issue.
- Inviting 18,000 people into a small part of any town would always cause traffic issues and policies were being created to mitigate issues and ensure traffic flowed as freely as possible.
- Reference was made to the suggestion in the motion to conduct an independent investigation and it was felt the Council had the resources to conduct an investigation. It was suggested the issue be referred to scrutiny to ensure cross-party support.
- It was suggested residents planned wherever possible to avoid driving in that area on match days. Although traffic was greatly increased, having 18,000 people visiting 2 major sporting venues in the town was considered to be of great economic benefit.
- Some noted the issues affected other areas of Northampton that were located close to venues such as a large supermarket. Local businesses would also struggle to trade as people avoided the area.

- Concerns were raised that this and similar motions could be avoided by raising issues with the relevant cabinet members outside of meetings of Council.
- It was suggested the issue required a long-term solution that could be identified through scrutiny of the issue.
- The issue was noted as a national one as many other towns with major sporting clubs were affected by the same issues.
- Some felt the issue had been exacerbated by the decision to allow Coventry City Football Club to use Sixfields Stadium for their home matches. It was then noted actions that would be taken to mitigate possible traffic issues that would arise had not been carried out.
- Concerns were raised about the cost of an independent investigation, particularly at a time when the relevant cabinet member was attempting to resolve the issues.
- Some noted the support for the sporting clubs in Northampton and a commitment was made to continue to work with partners on a traffic management plan. Plans had been put in place for the next weekend when both venues would be in use and it was suggested a review be undertaken to ascertain if they had been successful before any further action was taken.
- It was considered by some to be important to support local sporting clubs which attracted many visitors to the town and were in many places part of a town's heritage.

In reply Councillor Hope stated residents had informed her they did not consider the recent meeting to discuss issues to be very constructive and had in fact claimed to have felt as though they had not been listened to. She felt all relevant stakeholders should be engaged in the discussions including local councillors.

RESOLVED that: Upon the vote the motion was rejected:

(b) Motion submitted by Councillor Chris Lofts:

At the Chairman's invitation Councillor Chris Lofts moved the following motion:

'Council notes that the relocation of Towcester Library into the civic building in Moat Lane will leave the current library building vacant and surplus to the Council's requirements. Council notes the lack of accommodation for community groups and organisations in Towcester and resolves to ask for a full evaluation and report into the potential use of the existing library building for community use, including the financial options and implications for both the Council and the local community.'

In moving the motion Councillor Lofts stated this was a strategic issue as this was one of several Council-owned buildings located in historical areas of the county. He felt that should the Council have no further use for this building which had been donated by Lord Hesketh, the local community had a right to comment on its future. He noted that South Northamptonshire District Council had stated they had no interest in the building because it was a County Council building and he asked for some clarity on the future of this building. He then stated he felt there was a wider need for a strategy on the future use of Council owned buildings.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Brendan Glynnane.

Councillors commented as follows:

- It was noted Cabinet had approved a £3million investment in Towcester in the area of Moat Lane but this could only be funded on the basis of capital receipts at a later date.

- It was also noted several local charities operated from the building.
- Discussions with South Northamptonshire County Council regarding the future use of the building were in the early stages.
- The Deputy Leader of the Council confirmed she was happy to discuss what she considered to be a divisional issue with Councillor Lofts outside of the meeting.

Councillor Chris Lofts then withdrew the motion.

RESOLVED that: The motion was withdrawn.

21/14 Urgent Business:

There was none.

22/14 Exempt Items:

There were none.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 3.25pm.

Jenny Rendall
Democratic Services
24 March 2014

Chairman's signature:-

Date:-

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Recorded Votes for Council:					
Date of Meeting: Thursday 20 March 2014					
Item No: 8 – Opposition Priority Business					

Surname	First Name	For	Against	Abstain	Absent
Beardsworth	Sally	√			
Bell	Paul		√		
Boardman	Catherine		√		
Brackenbury	Wendy		√		
Brookfield	Julie	√			
Broomfield	Jim		√		
Brown	Michael			√	
Brown	Robin		√		
Butcher	Mary	√			
Clarke	Michael		√		
Collyer	Adam			√	
Coombe	Elizabeth	√			
Eales	Gareth	√			
Glynane	Brendan	√			
Golby	Matthew		√		
Gonzalez de Savage	Andre				√
Groome	Christopher			√	
Hakewill	James		√		
Hales	Eileen	√			
Hallam	Mike				√
Harker	James				√

Surname	First Name	For	Against	Abstain	Absent
Heggs	Stanley		√		
Hills	Alan		√		
Homer	Sue		√		
Hope	Jill	√			
Hughes	Dudley		√		
Hughes	Sylvia		√		
Kirkbride	Joan			√	
Larratt	Phil		√		
Lawman	Graham		√		
Lawson	Derek		√		
Legg	Stephen		√		
Lofts	Chris	√			
McCutcheon	Arthur	√			
McGhee	John	√			
Mackintosh	David		√		
Matthews	Allan		√		
Mercer	Andrew		√		
Meredith	Dennis	√			
Morris	Ian		√		
Osborne	Steve		√		
Parker	Bill		√		
Patel	Bhupendra			√	
Patel	Suresh		√		
Roberts	Russell				√
Sawbridge	Ron		√		
Scott	Bob	√			

Surname	First Name	For	Against	Abstain	Absent
Scrimshaw	Mick	√			
Shephard	Judy		√		
Slatter	Steve		√		
Smith	Heather		√		
Stone	Danielle	√			
Strachan	Winston	√			
Tye	Michael		√		
Uldall	Sarah	√			
Walker	Allen		√		
Waters	Malcolm		√		
Totals		17	31	5	4

Answers to Questions submitted under rule 10.2

1. Question to Councillor Jim Harker, Leader of the Council from Councillor Gareth Eales:

Last week, Bob Crow - the leader of the Rail Maritime and Transport (RMT) union - and Tony Benn - former cabinet minister and veteran campaigner - sadly passed away. Their deaths have prompted tributes from across the political spectrum, including from London Mayor, Boris Johnson. Will the Administration send a letter of condolence to the families of Bob and Tony (and in Bob's case – the RMT trade union too)?

Whilst the County Council has no official protocol to cover circumstances such as this, we suggest that, should they, in their capacity as individual members or Political Groups of the County Council feel it appropriate, send letters of condolence directly.

2. Question to Councillor Heather Smith, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities from Councillor Brendan Glynane:

We were delighted to see the launch of the “Northamptonshire Boot and Shoe” website, and read about its partners across the County. Notably absent from the list mentioned in the press was the museum in Northampton that is specifically centred around the County's boot and shoe heritage. Is this an oversight, or is the museum actually involved? If not, why not?

Northampton Museum and Art Gallery (NMAG) were an initial partner to NCC's 2012 Global Footprint project which included as a legacy to the project the development of the 'Northamptonshire Boot & Shoe' website. However due to a lack of internal capacity, NMAG withdrew from the project at a very early stage. The opportunity remains however for NMAG to engage with and provide content for the new website as per the project's original intention.

3. Question to Councillor Bill Parker, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Finance, Performance & LGSS from Councillor John McGhee:

Does this Administration intend to lodge a protest to government about the decision to bar councillors from the local authority pensions scheme?

Through the all-party pensions committee, you will be aware that it has already submitted a response to the consultation indicating our opposition in this issue. The County Council is already working closely through the County Councils Network and Local Government Association to form an appropriate response.

4. Question to Councillor Robin Brown, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Public Health & Wellbeing from Councillor Michael Brown:

It was mentioned on the local television, radio and reported in the Northampton papers last week that Northampton General Hospital had cancelled all non emergency operations for the third day running due to the number of patients turning up at A&E.

The Chief Executive of NGH, Dr Sonia Swart was reported as stating “The cumulative build up of demand for our services is now having a significant impact on our ability to see, treat and discharge patients as quickly as we would wish to”.

With some 26,000 new homes planned in the area and no mention of a new hospital or increased wards, what assurances can you give Northamptonshire people that they will continue to receive good prompt medical care?

Healthier Northamptonshire has a shared aim of delivering Better Health, Better Care, and Better Value by 2019. This came from the acknowledgement that the people of Northamptonshire deserve to enjoy the best possible health and wellbeing, and to receive high quality care when they need it. To do this requires radical, transformational change in the way in which services are organised and delivered across the county.

To deliver this aim the both hospitals, commissioners, the council and community and mental health trust have developed a five year strategy. This is built around a model of care that looks to take the pressure off acute services by developing prevention, primary

and community care in an integrated fashion, given hospitals the ability to manage the most ill in a way that delivers the highest quality outcomes, including ensuring that elective procedures are not cancelled due to urgent care pressures.

This strategy was agreed early in 2014. The Programme has now agreed priorities for delivery and recognises that urgent care and support integration through the Better Care Fund are the top two. Agreement on the delivery of the priorities will be discussed at the Programme Board on 1st April.

Northampton General Hospital is a key partner in Healthier Northamptonshire (HeN). This is a joint Programme working across all strategic health and social care partners in the county, and has recognised that improving urgent care is the number one priority in the short and medium term. The Programme Board acknowledge the need to address this in a proactive and co-ordinated manner and is working on two main delivery plans to support this:

- 1. Development of co-located urgent care centres at NGH and KGH by 2015, building from the primary care triage in the A&E that is being implemented currently*
- 2. Working to improve the effective discharge of patients currently in hospital, with a particular focus on those there linked to mental health and frailty exacerbations*

These changes are already having an impact on performance in the north of the county at KGH, and we are ensuring the lessons from here are rapidly rolled out to NGH.

A national report produced by NHS England estimated that in the ten years from 2001 to 2011 that the number of emergency admissions to hospital for conditions that could have been successfully managed in primary care increased by 40%. HeN acknowledges this and recognises that many people attending A&E can be managed far more effectively through unscheduled care demand and primary care triage. Clinicians across the health system have agreed that a primary care streaming model is required to help manage the current level of A&E demand. This will constitute a model intended to stream appropriate attenders from A&E into an up skilled primary care led service. This will be supported by the second workstream delivering extended working, which in time will ensure that services are available seven days a week.

Hospital discharge has also historically been an issue, although as part of HeN, all partners will be working together to make discharge happen far more efficiently. A number of initiatives have been introduced to address the problem of patients remaining in hospital longer than necessary due to the lack of appropriate support being available to facilitate their discharge, reduce excess bed days and return patients to their own home much quicker.

Two other factors are of note. First that under the Programme NGH and KGH are working together to review their clinical strategies. This, when it reports in June 2014, will outline means by which future occupancy and capacity levels can be effectively managed.

The second is a recognition that associated with any new development, public health colleagues will work to estimate the increased health and wellbeing demands put on the local area. This will inform the county's JSNA. The JSNA for 2012 was used to inform the finance and activity plans for HeN, and therefore the change in demand led by demographic changes is factored in. This will be refreshed in May 2014 and will incorporate changes such as new housing developments. Opportunities associated with Section 106 commitments to support services may want to be explored in the future to further support local pressures.

5. Question to Councillor Robin Brown, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Public Health & Wellbeing from Councillor Mary Butcher:

What is the County Council proposing to do to safeguard vulnerable women and children from domestic abuse?

Following considerable consultation (over two years), with providers and users of services, the Council is in the process of introducing a new service from within the Children and Families Directorate that will respond to the following the needs:

- Working with perpetrators of domestic abuse – a service which offers evidence-based interventions to address perpetration of domestic abuse by reducing incidents and preventing escalation of risk.*
- Working with victims of domestic abuse – a service which responds to the needs of victims to ensure their continued safety and wellbeing.*
- Working with parents – a service which works with parents to help them understand and respond to the detrimental impact of domestic abuse on children in the family and in the household.*
- Working with children – interventions for children affected by domestic abuse to minimise historic, current and future impact of their experiences and to ensure an understanding of healthy and appropriate relationships.*

Adult Services are currently working on a new service that will supplement the work that happens in the Children, Families and Education department. They will be asking potential providers to put in place services that:

- *Reduce the harm caused by domestic abuse*
- *Increase the safety of / reducing the risk to victims of domestic abuse*

As we are all aware there has been some media coverage regarding refuge provision in the County. You will also be aware from the briefing note that was circulated yesterday, that the Council has extended contracts for these Services until September 2014. Within that time there will be detailed work with partners and providers undertaken to re-model how services are delivered. There is an acceptance that some refuge provision is likely to be needed in the County, but the services as it stands at the moment needs re-modelling and updating to respond to the current needs of society.

The University has agreed, on behalf of the Health and Wellbeing Board, to lead a piece of work looking at best practise across the world, this work will influence provision in the County in the future.

The County Council will ensure that our primary focus is on putting services in place to respond to the actual needs and successful outcomes of our vulnerable clients and not simply to sustain partner organisations to continue to deliver what they always have. We all need review, develop and update our practise as the needs of our communities change.

6. Question to Councillor Andre Gonzalez de Savage, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economy, Growth & Public Protection from Councillor Dennis Meredith:

The police commissioner has already been referring to “his fire service” at local meetings – can the portfolio holder confirm the timetable for integrating back office functions, and assure Council that we are looking at partnership working, not passing of responsibility in any form to the Police Commissioner and his office.

The Service’s current and approved (2013 -2017) Integrated Risk Management Plan authorises greater integration with the Police and Ambulance Services. Officers are exploring and progressing this work with their counterparts in the other Emergency Services. This has resulted in the sharing of premises and other functions, which are improving interoperability and the overall level of service provided to the public. Government have indicated their desire to see Emergency Services working more closely

together in the future and to support this DCLG have awarded the Fire and Rescue Service £500k of transformational funding. The Home Office have also awarded similar sums to the Police in order to pursue greater integration. Further work is still on-going and there is currently no timeline set for sharing back office functions.

Under current legislation the Fire and Rescue Service's governing body is the Fire Authority, which is this council. The legislation as currently worded would not allow Police and Crime Commissioners to become the Fire and Rescue Authority.

The Knight review 'Facing the Future' considered the issue of governance and commented on possible future operating models, these are: moving to a national model, as has occurred in Scotland; further embedding Fire and Rescue in the Local Authority, removing stand-alone authorities; finding a new funding formula; allowing Fire and Rescue authorities to procure their Fire and Rescue service from a mutual company; privatisation of the service; merging Fire and Rescue services with one or more of the other blue light services to improve interoperability; sharing governance structures with other blue light services, such as PCC's taking on the role of fire authorities; improving join up at government level between sponsors of the blue light services and other departments that hold an interest in activity related to Fire and Rescue work. We are still waiting for Government's response to this review. When it is made we will consider the position at that time.

7. Question to Councillor Catherine Boardman, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Children, Young People & Education from Councillor Danielle Stone:

Is it true that social workers are being required to work from home?

Social workers are not being required to work from home. As part of the Next Generation Working Project, all social workers in Children's Social Care have been issued with Smart phones and will shortly be issued with laptops to enable them to work closer to the community and families they are working with. There may be times where the social worker works from home to record a case file following a home visit if their home is closer than their office base.

More office space has also been created to increase desk availability for social workers.

8. Question to Councillor Catherine Boardman, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Children, Young People & Education from Councillor Danielle Stone:

Is it right that we can afford to put out of county social workers up in spa hotels but we can't afford transport to get special needs youngsters to school?

All interim social workers are paid on a daily or hourly rate as agreed with the provider and hotel accommodation is paid for out of their own pocket. They would therefore choose where they stay when working in the county.

9. Question to Councillor Catherine Boardman, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Children, Young People & Education from Councillor Jill Hope:

Does the administration believe the fact that Stimpson Avenue Primary has had four different head teachers over two terms is a contributory factor in the fact Ofsted say it is 'not making good progress' out of special measures? How is the administration intending to change procedure in similar circumstances to ensure that improvement of schools is not delayed by uncertainty?

The changes in Head Teacher were felt necessary to secure the long-term improvement of the school. In particular the two interim Head Teachers were highly experienced and brought in to help stabilise the school. The current Head Teacher Anne Hooley has experience of leading a school out of a serious category of concern.

The approach of appointing experienced interim Head Teachers was agreed with the proposed academy sponsor, EMLC Academy Trust, in order to allow the Governors to make a longer-term and substantive appointment. The post is currently being advertised.

Other support for the school has been provided and also brokered through NCC:

- School action plan for improvement. NCC commissioned support from a successful Head Teacher to help the school draw up their action plan for improvement which is now recognised by HMI as stronger.*

- *Improving teaching and learning. School-to-school support is being provided by Preston Hedge's Primary School through a linked arrangement.*
- *Development of middle-management in the school. This has been a focus for improvement work as leadership was identified as a concern across the school.*

Good experienced Head Teachers are in short supply and the Council acknowledges the number of changes were not ideal. However, all decisions were made to enable the longer-term improvement of the school. The Council will continue to work closely with Schools, Academy sponsors and Teaching Schools to find the right solutions, and provide support for aspiring Head Teachers in Northamptonshire.

10. Question to Councillor Michael Clarke, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport, Highways & The Environment from Councillor Jim Broomfield:

The Government has announced that £130 million is to be given to councils for road repairs. We shall get about £1.5 million as our share. Can we be assured by the Administration that this will ring-fenced for this purpose only considering the backlog of repairs to our roads across the county?

The actual amount indicated by Government is actually £140m and I can confirm that it is the case that any monies which the government award as part of this allocation will be given wholly to carry out road repairs.

11. Question to Councillor Michael Clarke, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport, Highways & the Environment from Councillor John McGhee:

Our roads are congested and polluted and grid locks are occurring all too frequently. When are we going to have an affordable integrated public transport system to alleviate the problems?

Cllr. McGhee will be well aware of the Northamptonshire Arc which was approved as part of the core Strategy for this Council. This put in place the ethos of having connectivity across the entire Council area and since its adoption considerable investment has been

made to improving the transport corridors and indeed the wider transport infrastructure to both improve and support the wider integrated and sustainable transport agenda. The £36m investment for example in the Corby Relief Road which is due to open in May this year, a new Rail way Station which is currently being constructed, and considerable investments into associated real time information. There have also been numerous improvements and extensions to the cycle network across the County and there is also a bid within the Local Growth fund which is for further investment in technologies for improvements in the integrated transport system around text and go services, etc. The County Council is also proactively participating in a bid for euro funding to run a demonstration project in Northamptonshire which will use an integrated Intelligent traffic system to manage congestion and reduce journey times and air pollution primarily for the HGV freight sector but with the potential for wider applications.

12. Question to Councillor Michael Clarke, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport, Highways & The Environment from Councillor John McGhee

When is the road permanent repair programme that Michael Ellis MP keeps boasting about going to begin?

We can find no reference to “permanent repair programme” or other words pertaining to this meaning in relation to Michael Ellis in his website, his social media, local or national press and in Hansard. We have contacted his office, who has confirmed that Michael and his team have never referred to this or other words to the same inference.

Perhaps Cllr McGhee is referring to our National Award Winning Highways Maintenance Initiative which was introduced in 2010 that moved away from a system which was focused heavily on temporary repairs to one very much more focused on permanent repairs. This new approach has seen the adoption of our model by other local authorities and was praised by the Secretary of State, Patrick McLoughlin on a visit to Michael’s Northampton North constituency late last year.

Michael Ellis, M.P. for Northampton North has been leading a vigorous and persistent campaign for extra funding in relation to road repairs in his constituency. Yesterday, during the House of Commons Budget speech, the Chancellor of the Exchequer praised Michael Ellis and his persistent campaigning for more road repair funding. As a result the Chancellor announced a further £200 million on top of last week’s extra £140 million for

road repairs. Under the circumstances I do think Michael Ellis has something to boast about.

13. Question to Councillor Michael Clarke, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport, Highways & The Environment from Councillor Mick Scrimshaw:

I am pleased that Northamptonshire will be hosting the first stage of the inaugural Women's Tour cycling event in May. What preparations are underway to ensure our roads are in a suitable condition for the event and what is the cost of the preparations to this authority?

I am heartened that Cllr. Scrimshaw is pleased that the County have been successful in securing and attracting this prestigious event in the County. This is a major event and will bring with it positive media attention and PR not only locally but nationally and internationally with live terrestrial TV coverage. In addition the event attracts many supports and followers as well as actual teams support and management teams not to mention the organisers dedicated team all of which will bring income and revenue to the local economy and as such the local community and business sector will also prosper from this event.

It will not only raise the profile and image of the County nationally but also internationally as the event will be broadcast across many countries. It will also promote the healthier lifestyle and promote and engage with the youth in particular the girls in sport.

In relation to the preparations for the event itself, Sweet Spot, who are the organisers of the event, carry out the majority of the stewardships and traffic management for the event, directly through their employed team of experts. In addition sponsorships have also been secured for the event from both local and national businesses, whom are keen to be associated with the event.

A joint inspection of the route is also scheduled to take place, as part of our routine inspection regime, but rescheduled to tie in with the event to ensure that the route is fit for purpose.

The cost of our sponsorship of the vent is £100k, however much of this has already been recovered from local sponsorships and we are confident that all of this will be recovered

and more bearing in mind the increased revenues that this event will bring into the local economy.

14. Question to Councillor Michael Clarke, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport, Highways & The Environment from Councillor Sarah Uldall:

Given the changes needed to the road systems around the new bus station, including the removal of a mini roundabout, line painting, etc., and the speed with which these changes were required (overnight that night in some cases) the costs must have been significant and significantly higher than it would have been had the changes been properly planned and scheduled. Will the County or Borough Council be picking up these costs?

The costs to ensure the smooth flow of the town centre traffic following the opening of the North Gate Station following the 3-4 hour disruption on day 1 are being discussed between the Northampton Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council as part of a series of discussions on the Northampton Alive Programme, worth hundreds of millions of pounds of private and public investment, where we will work very closely together as partners delivering the transformation of Northampton. The costs will be sorted as part of the ongoing working together.

15. Question to Councillor Suresh Patel, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Adult Care Services and Councillor Catherine Boardman, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Children, Young People & Education from Councillor Danielle Stone

How are Adult Social Care Services and Children's Services joined up when the needs of the parents impact on the children?

We conduct a holistic assessment to ensure the needs of children are taken to account with regards to the parents disability and adult workers have been attending training focused upon children issues. They will also participate fully in joint assessment work when required.

16. Question to Councillor Suresh Patel, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Adult Care Services from Councillor Brendan Glynane:

Especially in light of recent funding changes to Adult Social Care, how vigorously do the Council pursue prosecution of those who defraud the tax payer in terms of payment for care?

We pursue this very vigorously and have had and have a number of customers who are subject to legal proceedings in respect of monies owed.

17. Question to Councillor Suresh Patel, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Adult Care Services from Councillor Sally Beardsworth:

Last week a government report outlined the “appalling unlawful detention of tens of thousands of vulnerable people... being wrongly deprived of their liberty in care homes and hospitals”. How regularly does NCC receive applications for Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards? What is being done to ensure that nobody in Northamptonshire is being kept under constant observation without such obtaining such?

The DOLs service has provided training to partner agencies in order to educate and garner an enhanced understanding of the processes linked to Deprivation of Liberty safeguards, the agencies include, CQC, Regional Brain Injury service providers, Northants Police and other NCC Colleagues.

The DOLs service provide information packs and training DVDs to residential providers - and include details of NCC training available on all correspondence to encourage uptake.

Currently OWD provide E- training and are re introducing free training for partner agencies. In order to maintain positive relationships with other agencies the DOLs service also invites MCA leads from NGH, KGH and St Andrews hospital to the annual DOLs refresher training and expect attendees to cascade the learning within their own organisation. Total Voice advocacy service is included in this.

The DOLs service not only seeks to respond to requests but also to educate and provide a resource to be used by partner agencies for advice. The service is ultimately reliant on

contact - so it is imperative that staff who visit or work in residential facilities and hospitals are sufficiently skilled and knowledgeable to understand and apply the law. The House of Lords select committee report into the MCA and DOLs published last week would indicate that there are widespread challenges particularly in respect to. DOLs.

When completing a formal full care home monitoring visit the County Council's Contract Monitoring Officers (CMO's) discuss the legalities of, and compliance with, the Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberty safeguards with Care Home providers and the care staff that work within the home.

Prior to a care home visit CMO's will check electronically produced training records (emailed by the provider) and ascertain whether the care staff has received appropriate training in MCA/DOLs. The Monitoring officers, with their knowledge of each individual service, ask pertinent questions of the care staff to help gauge the level of understanding with regard to the specific duties under the legislation and safeguards.

During the monitoring visits the MCA is always discussed as part of a scored question in relation to provider performance/compliance. While DOLs is not a question that is scored in terms of performance/compliance the importance attached to this is still recognised. The practice of questioning care staff about DOLs will be more prevalent in certain care home settings than others – this is based on the type of service and the potential risk. Where the knowledge of staff is not acceptable remedial action, normally in the form of further training, will be required.

Monitoring Officers will also direct Care Home providers to the training offered by OWD in relation to MCA and DOLs.

Provider Forums for Care Providers have regular up-dates from experts with regard to their duties under MCA and DOLs – these refreshers will continue.

It is recognised that MCA and DOLs are areas where the care provider sector needs to improve in terms of knowledge and practice. Through training and contract monitoring we are endeavouring to help deliver these improvements.