

COUNCIL MEETING – 15 OCTOBER 2019

REPORT OF THE ARTS & LEISURE SUB-COMMITTEE

16 April 2019

Present: Councillors Harrington (Chairman), Griffiths (Vice-Chairman), Maguire, Morrall, Scarborough and Simmons.

Also present: Mrs L Elliott, (Managing Director), Miss K Denton, (Assistant Director), Mrs G Chapman (Principal Community Support Manager), Mr M Cleverley (General Manager at Castle Theatre) and Miss E McGinlay (Electoral Services Officer).

(The meeting commenced at 2pm.)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that Councillor Harrington be appointed as chairman

2. APOLOGIES

RESOLVED that apologies were received from Councillor Bailey

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED to note that no declarations were made

4. ARTS & LEISURE SUB-COMMITTEE – TERMS OF REFERENCE

The annexed circulated report of the managing director was received to seek approval to the terms of reference for the arts & leisure sub-committee.

It had been agreed at the council meeting on 22 May 2018 that this sub-committee be established to consider any matters relating to the allocation of grant funding to the arts, cultural and leisure sectors, management and performance of Castle Theatre and the provision of cultural and leisure facilities in the borough.

Members considered the appended draft terms of reference for the sub-committee and recommended that these be approved by the services committee.

RESOLVED to recommend that services committee approve the terms of reference for the arts & leisure sub-committee.

5. CASTLE THEATRE UPDATE REPORT

The annexed circulated report of the assistant director was received to provide the committee with a report on the performance of Parkwood Leisure Ltd

(Parkwood), under its contract with the council for the operation and management of Castle Theatre.

The report provided a summary of the performance and activity for the theatre through the council's agreement with Parkwood in the first three months of operation under the new management. It gave an update on the financial statistics, programming, health and safety and marketing of the venue.

The general manager of the theatre addressed the committee and confirmed that he had recently carried out a user group meeting with some representatives of the community groups who use the theatre. He explained that there had been some concerns raised by the community users at the proposed price increases to the hire charges at the theatre, which would be coming into effect in January 2020.

Members were assured that the meeting with community users had concluded somewhat positively and explained the reasoning behind the increase in hire fees at the theatre. As highlighted by the financial summary in the update report, the venue had recognised a loss of over £40,000 during the first three months of operation in 2019 as a result of unsustainable fees and this was the main reason for the increase to hire fees.

Members discussed the report and increase to the hire fees at the theatre and agreed that a members briefing note be issued to inform all members of the pricing structure with comparative information to demonstrate the need for the increase.

The general manager explained that a review of the prices would be undertaken once the catering facilities had been brought back in house and the audience levels have grown.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) The position regarding the performance to date be noted;
- (ii) The matters brought to the attention of the service operator have been noted.

6. PROVISION OF FACILITIES AT REDWELL LEISURE CENTRE

The annexed circulated report of the assistant director was received to seek approval to review the facilities available at Redwell Leisure Centre, by considering local needs and the long term viability of the centre, including options for refurbishment.

The report highlighted that considerable investment had been put into the other council-owned leisure centre in the borough, the Waendel Centre, which provided a modern, town centre facility offering a range of services comparable with commercial operators. It confirmed that the Redwell Leisure Centre was less up to date and its future offer needs to be considered soon, particularly in light of the imminent addition of a 3G all weather sports pitch.

It was highlighted that the feasibility study and options appraisal would provide members with a wide range of options which would not only offer the option of a simple refurbishment to the venue, but may suggest alternative routes of how the council offers leisure facilities to its residents.

Members discussed the report and highlighted how important it was to provide sufficient leisure facilities, especially given the growing health and wellbeing agenda and the imminent increase in population in the borough, due to housing developments at Stanton Cross and Wellingborough North. It was agreed that there was also a need to look at the venue's ability to be self-sufficient, or to generate surplus revenue in the future.

RESOLVED that options be explored in relation to the facilities and services operating from the Redwell Leisure Centre, and that it be noted that a further report on the assessment and feasibility of the options would be received at the next committee meeting.

Chairman

The meeting concluded at 3.25pm.

COUNCIL MEETING – 15 OCTOBER 2019

REPORT OF THE PARTNERSHIPS AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

1 July 2019

Present: Councillors Graves (Chairman), Lloyd (Vice-Chairman), Aslam, Bone, Maguire, and Patel.

Also present: Miss K Denton (Assistant Director), Mrs V Jessop (Assistant Director) and Mr S Whiteley (Electoral Services Team Leader).

(Mr B Gallyot (Wellingborough Norse) attended for item 4; Ms M Clarke, Ms C Cooke-Chambers and Mr D Crofts (Central and East Northamptonshire Citizens Advice) attended for item 5.)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED to note that apologies for absence we received from Councillor V Waters.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED to note that there were no declarations of interest.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2019 be confirmed and signed.

4. PRESENTATION FROM WELLINGBOROUGH NORSE

The annexed circulated report of the director was received to introduce the presentation from Wellingborough Norse. The chairman invited Mr B Gallyot to deliver the presentation.

Mr Gallyot provided members with an overview of Wellingborough Norse, including summaries for 2018/19 with a look to the primary objectives of Wellingborough Norse for 2019/20.

He went on to explain some of the developments and efficiencies being made by Wellingborough Norse, including moving to battery powered gardening equipment and deploying modern, more fuel efficient vehicles with rear steering to improve manoeuvrability in villages and tighter spaces.

Members discussed the work of Wellingborough Norse in the borough with a specific focus on fly tipping and what was being done to combat this in problem areas. Councillor Aslam thanked Mr Gallyot for the assistance from Wellingborough Norse in a community litter pick. Mr Gallyot noted Councillor Aslam's gratitude and explained that technological solutions were in the process of being implemented with a view to reduce the instances of fly tipping and increase the opportunities for prosecutions where evidence of fly tipping was successfully captured.

Members also discussed the ways in which messaging to customers could be improved to increase the amount of constructive feedback received by Wellingborough Norse.

The chairman and other members thanked Wellingborough Norse for the work undertaken in the borough.

RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

5. PRESENTATION FROM CENTRAL & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

The annexed circulated report of the director was received to introduce a presentation from Central & East Northamptonshire Citizens Advice Bureau (CENCAB). The chairman invited Ms M Clarke, Ms C Cooke-Chambers and Mr D Crofts of CENCAB to deliver the presentation.

Ms Clarke thanked the chairman for the invitation to committee. The presentation outlined the work of CENCAB within the borough and how it relates to Citizens Advice on a national level, along with information relating to the volume of clients who access the service and the types of advice and information being provided to clients.

Particular focus was given to the time spent with clients who required advice, as volunteers frequently attempted to help establish the causes of issues that clients presented with to ensure the provision of correct advice or signposting to the relevant agency.

The presentation also outlined the independent nature of the organisation and the advice offered, alongside partnership working with other organisations including the assistance with the Department for Work and Pensions, and offering advice to those who had applied or were considering applying for Universal Credit benefit.

Members discussed the presentation and the challenges faced by CENCAB whilst delivering their services, including financial and resourcing pressures. Members also considered the potential for CENCAB to diversify their funding streams.

Councillor Maguire proposed that it be recommended to Resources Committee that the contract with CENCAB be extended into 2020/21 to ensure consistency of the service throughout local government reformation in Northamptonshire. This was seconded by Councillor Aslam and, put to the vote, was carried.

Members thanked CENCAB for their work throughout the borough.

RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

RESOLVED to recommend to Resources Committee that the contract for CENCAB be extended for 2020/21.

6. PERFORMANCE: COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – 1 OCTOBER 2018 to 31 MARCH 2019

The annexed circulated report of the assistant director was received to inform the committee of the council's performance, including Wellingborough Norse, during the second half of 2018-19 in handling customer feedback, including complaints which had been referred to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).

Members discussed the report, considering the options and outcomes of complaints that had been received. It was noted that there had been an overall reduction of the number of complaints that had been received and that there were no significant issues to consider.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

7. PROGRAMME OF WORK 2019-20

The annexed circulated report of the assistant director was received to seek guidance from the committee as to what broad areas of policy they would like to review in the coming year.

Members discussed the organisations proposed and which services and organisations they would like to call to present to the committee within the current committee cycle. Particular attention was given to avoid the duplication of work alongside other member workshops and reports to other committees.

RESOLVED that the work programme for 2019-20 at Appendix B to the report be agreed.

Chairman

The meeting closed at 9:20pm.

COUNCIL MEETING – 15 OCTOBER 2019

REPORT OF THE PARTNERSHIPS AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

30 September 2019

Present: Councillors Graves (Chairman), Aslam, Bone, and Patel

Also present: Miss K Denton (Assistant Director), Mrs G Chapman (Principal Community Support Manager), Mr M Swann (Principal Planning Manager), Mrs C Haybyrne (Technical Services Team Leader) and Miss E McGinlay (Electoral Services Officer)

(Councillors G Lawman and Scarborough attended as observers)

(Mr D Ward (Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire) attended for item 5.)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED to note that apologies for absence we received from Councillors Lloyd, Maguire and V Waters.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED to note that there were no declarations of interest.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2019 be confirmed and signed.

4. PRESENTATION FROM VICTORIA CENTRE

The annexed circulated report of the director was received to introduce the presentation from the Victoria Centre. Unfortunately, a representative from the Victoria Centre was unable to attend the committee so the presentation was not delivered to members.

RESOLVED to note that the Victoria Centre did not attend and will be invited to a future meeting.

5. PRESENTATION FROM VOLUNTARY IMPACT NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

The annexed circulated report of the director was received to introduce a presentation from Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire (VIN). The chairman invited Mr Ward to deliver the presentation.

Mr Ward thanked the chairman for the invitation to committee and delivered his presentation to members. The presentation outlined VIN's work both within the borough and across the county. It highlighted that VIN had two main areas of focus: county-wide infrastructures - such as public health and social care developments with relevant partners, and local infrastructures - such as local charities and community development.

Mr Ward confirmed to members that at the core of their work, VIN were dedicated to ensuring that voluntary sector organisations and work streams remain a key partner in the transformation of local government across Northamptonshire. He also confirmed that VIN would be focussing on the strategic development of the sector and would not be duplicating work completed by other organisations.

Members discussed the report and queried how the success of the project would be measured. It was confirmed that there were several measurements, one of which was a “state of the sector” report produced by VIN which shows how successful funding has been within the voluntary sector.

Members thanked Mr Ward and VIN for their work throughout the borough and shared their wishes for the continuation of the successful service delivery from voluntary sector organisations after the reorganisation of local government.

RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

6. PRESENTATION FROM THE PLANNING TEAM - PERFORMANCE

The annexed circulated report of the assistant director was received to introduce the presentation from the planning team regarding its performance.

Mr Swann and Mrs Haybyrne delivered the presentation to members and highlighted the changes in approach and procedures that had happened across the planning team. They provided facts and figures on the service performance over the last few years and demonstrated the significant effort and improvements that had been achieved. A notable feature of the presentation showed that the council’s planning team were now ranked 14th out of 342 authorities by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government for delivering timely planning decisions

Members praised and congratulated the planning service for all of their hard work in achieving such positive results and asked for their thanks to be noted and shared with all members of the team.

RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

7. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN: ANNUAL REVIEW LETTER 2019

The annexed circulated report of the assistant director was received to advise members on complaints and enquiries made to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for the year ending 31 March 2019.

The assistant director advised that the report provided no concern and that the council had performed particularly well with no investigations or decisions made by the LG&SCO for the year.

Members acknowledged the positive performance.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Chairman

The meeting closed at 8.10pm.

COUNCIL MEETING – 15 OCTOBER 2019

REPORT OF THE SERVICES COMMITTEE

2 July 2019

Present: Councillors Lloyd, Scanlon, Bone, Watts and Abram.

Also present: Mrs V Jessop (Assistant Director), Mrs A Wilcox (Principal Environmental Health Manager), Mr B Gallyott (Operations Director at Wellingborough Norse), Mrs G Chapman (Principal Community Support Manager), and Miss E McGinlay (Electoral Services Officer).

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by Councillor Bone and seconded by Councillor Scanlon that Councillor Lloyd be appointed as chairman for this meeting. On being put to the vote, the motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED that Councillor Lloyd be elected as chairman for this meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED to note that apologies for absence were received from Councillors Allebone and Stevenson.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED to note that no declarations of interest were made.

4. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 January 2019, be confirmed and signed.

5. AMENDMENT TO ORDER OF BUSINESS

In accordance with clause 4.2.11 (c) of the constitution the chairman proposed a change to the order of business on the agenda to hear agenda item 5 first. On being put to vote, the motion was carried.

RESOLVED that the order of business be changed and that agenda item 5 be heard first.

6. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE WASTE PARTNERSHIP – UPDATE OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The annexed circulated report of the managing director was received to seek approval for the updated memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the Northamptonshire Waste Partnership (NWP).

The MOU had been updated to reflect the changes in circumstances. The main changes proposed were as follows:

- Northampton Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council reinstated into the list of partners
- The quorum for meetings had been increased from 3 to 4 partners
- A section was included to clarify that if members of the partnership decided to leave then they would not receive a share of the partners' reserves.

Members queried if the partnership worked well for the partners, to which the operations director at Wellingborough Norse confirmed it did. He explained that the full complement of partners secured value for money and cost savings across the authorities and helped them to manage waste more efficiently.

RESOLVED that the updated memorandum of understanding for the Northamptonshire Waste Partnership be adopted.

7. REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ENFORCEMENT POLICY

The annexed circulated report of the director was received to propose the adoption of the updated environmental health enforcement policy. The policy had been out for consultation and received no comments from any stakeholders.

The policy was updated to incorporate guidance on the new areas of enforcement, which were not previously part of the environmental health service area. The main changes that resulted in the change of policy were:

- The new community protection enforcement officer posts which deal with education and enforcement relating to anti-social behaviour
- The private sector housing team who were moved into the environmental health team from 1 January 2019.

Members discussed the changes to the policy and queried if the additions to the service area had been beneficial. The environmental health manager explained that the expanded team worked well and that the additions of the new enforcement officers and private sector housing officers had brought the regulatory functions within the same service area.

The environmental health manager confirmed that the community protection enforcement officers were in regular communication with the police and often took part in patrols with them. It was highlighted that the team plan to change and adapt their approaches to enforcement as they become more experienced in the area.

RESOLVED that the environmental health service enforcement policy be approved.

8. NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

The annexed circulated report of the director was received to brief members of the dissolution of Wellingborough community safety partnership board and the formation of a new community safety partnership board for north Northamptonshire.

Members discussed the report and new governance arrangements and agreed that they needed streamlining in preparation for the changes to local government which were coming into force from April 2021.

A query was raised about whether the new community safety board would be able to focus more on reporting and combatting hate crime in the area. The principal community support manager confirmed that any work on hate crime would be directed by the renewed countywide action plan and implemented by the environmental health team. She confirmed that Northamptonshire Police had a dedicated hate crime officer, whose details could be shared with members.

RESOLVED that the changes to the governance of community safety partnerships boards in the north of Northamptonshire be endorsed.

9. URGENT ITEM

The chairman decided that the following item was urgent within the meaning of **Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act 1972** for the reason set out below:

Minute no.	Subject	Reason
10	Arts & Leisure sub-committee – terms of reference and minutes	The terms of reference and minutes needed to be approved before the next scheduled meeting of the sub-committee

10. ARTS & LEISURE SUB-COMMITTEE – TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MINUTES

The urgent report of the assistant director was received to seek approval for the terms of reference for the Arts & Leisure sub-committee and the minutes of the first meeting held on 16 April 2019. The sub-committee was created at the council meeting on 22 May 2018 to consider matters relating to the arts, leisure and cultural facilities in the borough.

The terms of reference were debated and agreed at the first meeting of the sub-committee but needed sign off from the services committee as its “parent committee”.

The report was added as an urgent item to allow for work to be started on the options appraisal for Redwell Leisure Centre, as agreed by the members of the Arts & Leisure sub-committee.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the terms of reference for the Arts & Leisure sub-committee be approved; and
- (ii) The minutes of the first meeting of the Arts & Leisure sub-committee be noted.

Chairman

The meeting concluded at 7.35pm.

COUNCIL MEETING – 15 OCTOBER 2019

REPORT OF THE SERVICES COMMITTEE

1 October 2019

Present: Councillors Allebone, Bone, Lloyd, Scanlon, Watts and Abram.

Also present: Mrs V Jessop (Assistant Director), Mrs A Wilcox (Principal Environmental Health Manager), Mrs G Chapman (Principal Community Support Manager), Mrs T Chapman (Housing Manger) and Miss E McGinlay (Electoral Services Officer).

(Cllr Griffiths attended as an observer.)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED to note that apologies for absence were received from Councillor Stevenson.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED to note that no declarations of interest were made.

3. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2019, be confirmed and signed.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

The annexed circulated report of the assistant director was received to update members on environmental health activity over the past 12 months.

Members discussed the report and queried why hate crime was classed as low level antisocial behaviour, and not a more serious crime dealt with by the police. It was confirmed that hate crime reports were usually dealt with by the police hate crime co-ordinator in conjunction with the council where appropriate.

A request was made for hate crime figures to be sent to all members, to which it was agreed that an MBN would be issued shortly.

A query was raised regarding any service level agreements the council had with Wellingborough Norse surrounding fly-tipping in the borough. It was confirmed that there was an agreement in place that Wellingborough Norse would undertake fly-tipping enforcement, but there was no specific agreement that states how it should be dealing with this. The council works closely with Wellingborough Norse to find ways of combatting this issue.

The environmental health manager confirmed that new cameras had been purchased and would soon be placed in the worst affected areas across the borough in an effort to try and increase enforcement.

RESOLVED that the update on environmental health be noted.

5. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE STRATEGY 2019-22

The annexed circulated report of the assistant director was received to present the draft Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2019-2022 (the strategy) to members and propose the adoption of the updated strategy as a means of preventing and responding to domestic abuse and sexual violence in the county.

The principal community support manager introduced the strategy and confirmed that it was a county-wide initiative but approval was being sought from each partner agency separately, following their usual governance streams.

Members discussed the report and agreed that there was a great need for an updated strategy to be in place to enforce the strategic direction of the support and commitment to preventing, tackling and reducing domestic abuse and sexual violence.

A query was raised as to whether there were any specific agencies that helped victims of stalking. The principal community manager confirmed she was unsure of any specific agencies, but would bring it up with the board to see if it could be investigated further.

RESOLVED that the Northamptonshire domestic abuse and sexual violence strategy 2019-22 be approved.

6. NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY

The annexed circulated report of the assistant director was received to seek a decision from members to adopt the North Northamptonshire homelessness and rough sleeping strategy (2019-2024).

The housing manager introduced the strategy to members and highlighted that there was a legal need for all authorities to have a strategy that pertained to rough sleepers and the homeless before December 2019.

It was confirmed that there were currently 17 registered rough sleepers within the borough that the housing team were dealing with, 2 of whom had been offered temporary accommodation within the last few days. It was hoped that this number would reduce in the coming months with the recruitment of 2 new tenancy sustainment officers and 1 outreach worker within the housing team.

It was communicated that the strategy was a working document and may undergo a few minor changes before its adoption, however the objectives and strategies would remain unchanged.

RESOLVED that the homelessness and rough sleeping strategy be approved.

Chairman

COUNCIL MEETING – 15 OCTOBER 2019

REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

23 July 2019

Present: Councillors Simmons (Chairman), Ekins (Vice-Chairman), Graves, Francis, and Henley.

Also present: Mr S Darcy, (Director & S151 Officer), Mr E Symons (Assistant Director), Mrs S Penfold, (ICT Business Support Manager), Mr N Harris, (Associate Partner at EY), and Miss E McGinlay (Electoral Services Officer).

(Cllr Griffiths attended as an observer.)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED to note that apologies were received from Councillors Allebone and L Lawman.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED to note that no declarations of interest were received.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2019 be confirmed and signed.

4. ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT OPINION 2019-19 INCLUDING FINAL PROGRESS REPORT FOR 2018-19

The annexed circulated report, along with the exempt appendix, of the section 151 officer was received to present members with the head of internal audit's opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the council's control environment.

The head of internal audit was unable to attend the committee and present the report to members; however he had given an update to the section 151 officer, who relayed this information to members.

The report confirmed that the overall internal audit opinion was that significant assurance can be given that there is generally a sound system of internal control and that controls are generally applied consistently. The majority of individual reviews had been given a moderate or significant level of assurance, except the financial management and reporting and homelessness and housing options reviews.

The final area that scored a limited level of assurance was exempt from the public, in accordance with section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, due to the potential implications it could cause if it was released to the public. Once this matter has been resolved and there is no potential risk, the

information will be published on the website. It is likely that this will be as part of the next audit committee in September 2019.

The reasons for the lower level of assurance on the two areas noted above are as detailed:

- Financial management and reporting – the control objectives that received a limited level of assurance are the council's reliance on reserves and the need for identification and delivery of savings.
- Housing options and homelessness – the control objectives that received a limited level of assurance are the council's homelessness strategy and policy and level of resources available to implement all aspects of the legislation.

The section 151 officer explained that there had been progress on the above areas since the audits had taken place, some of which were completed in December 2018. For example, it was confirmed that the council's reliance on reserves had reduced since the last projection, falling from £1.7 million to £1.1 million.

Members expressed their relief on the reduction but agreed that work still needed to continue to ensure the council remain in a stable financial position in terms of revenue. The section 151 officer confirmed that he had undertaken budget clinics with each budget manager to try and identify savings that could be made across the council, and that these clinics would continue. Reassurance was also given that the audit opinion would likely be a moderate rating based on the council's current position.

It was highlighted that the homelessness audit was completed before the new housing manager was fully in post and any substantial changes had been implemented. It was confirmed that the housing team were now in a better position and that colleagues across the county had been coming to the council's housing team for best practise sharing and advice on homelessness.

Members discussed the updates on the report and queried why there was no information on the outstanding recommendations made by the internal audit team, a table which usually featured on the internal audit reports. The section 151 reassured members that the recommendations were being monitored and that he would circulate this information to members shortly.

RESOLVED that annual internal audit opinion and final progress reports be noted.

5. EXTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT AND UNAUDITED STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2018-19

The annexed circulated report of the section 151 officer was received to give members an update on the external audit progress from Ernst and Young (EY). It also presented the draft Statement of Accounts (SOA) for the year

ending 31 March 2019, prior to the audit being completed and any subsequent amendments to the draft statement.

The report confirmed that the draft SOA were signed by the section 151 officer on 31 May 2019 and that the external audit of these is due to take place in August, with the audit opinion to be issued in September. The audit date is later than planned due to EY experiencing significant issues in retaining and recruiting staff. It was explained that the situation was the same for all other authorities in Northamptonshire.

The associate partner at EY addressed the committee and apologised on behalf of EY for the inconvenience of the delayed audit, but confirmed that the delay will ensure that the audit that does get delivered is of a high standard.

It was confirmed that a good amount of preparatory work had already been completed on the audit, which had enabled the council's finance team to prepare for the audit in August. The associate partner noted that the value for money exercise had mostly been completed and that no significant issues had arisen as a result of this.

Members discussed the delay to the audit and expressed their concern and disappointment that it could not be completed on time and requested that a more detailed explanation be given to them. The associate partner confirmed that a letter giving a more detailed explanation from the managing director at EY had been sent to the senior management team, and that he was happy for this to be shared with members. The section 151 officer confirmed he would share this letter and issue a members briefing note giving further details on the external audit issues.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the matters, as set out in the council's external auditors letter, be considered; and
- (ii) the annual governance statement and unaudited statement of accounts be considered, prior to final approval at the September 2019 committee.

Chairman

The meeting concluded at 8:15pm

COUNCIL MEETING – 15 OCTOBER 2019

REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

24 September 2019

Present: Councillors Simmons (Chairman), Ekins (Vice-Chairman), Allebone, L Lawman and Henley.

Also present: Mr S Darcy, (Director & S151 Officer), Mr E Symons (Assistant Director), Mrs S Penfold, (ICT Business Support Manager), Mr M Watkins (Head of Internal Audit) Mr N Harris, (Associate Partner at EY), and Mr S Whiteley (Electoral Services Team Leader).

(Cllrs Griffiths and Weatherill attended as observers.)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED to note that apologies were received from Councillors Francis and Graves.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED to note that no declarations of interest were received.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2019 be confirmed and signed.

4. PROGRESS REPORT ON INTERNAL AUDIT ACTIVITY FOR 2019-20

The annexed circulated report of the section 151 officer was received to brief members on the work carried out by the Internal Audit service for the first five months of the 2019-20 financial year to the end of August 2019.

The chair invited the section 151 officer and the head of internal audit to present the report to members.

Mr Watkins confirmed that this was the first report for 2019-20, and that of the three audits detailed in the report, full assurance was being provided on two of the audits. He outlined some detail of the audits; for recruitment, fifteen appointments had been sampled across various service areas and the audit had found that from request to recruit through to appointment that no weaknesses had been shown in the process, and that the process was open and transparent to scrutiny.

Mr Watkins then outlined the audit of planning applications. He provided some background to the service, including a previous audit in 2016-17 which had only provided moderate assurance, with some risks identified. The planning team were commended for the significant improvements against performance

targets and the amount of work undertaken over the last two years to raise this to full assurance.

Mr Watkins closed by giving a brief outline of the recommendation tracking summary, whilst the majority of assessments have been implemented, some improvements are required around reporting from managers with the demands of services having an impact on the regularity of reporting.

Members then discussed the ongoing recommendations and requested that revised target dates be provided. The ICT business support manager outlined some of the work being undertaken to address the ongoing recommendations including member and staff training on malware breaches, software and hardware updates and how local authorities across Northamptonshire were working together on various aspects of ICT.

The committee thanked the auditors for working closely with ICT, and Mrs Penfold recognised the support of Internal Audit across the ongoing recommendations.

RESOLVED that the progress report on internal audit activity for 2019-20 be noted.

5. AUDITED STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2018/19

The annexed circulated report of the section 151 officer was received to give members the presentation of the draft statement of accounts for the year ending 31 March 2019 following the audit being completed and any subsequent amendments to the draft statement for approval.

The section 151 officer explained that further information had been provided to members amending some of the information in the report in order to bring the report up to date with new accounting terminology standards, and that there had been no impact to the published figures.

The associate partner at EY Audit, Mr N Harris, apologised for the delay in the audit starting as had been discussed at the last committee meeting, but that despite the delays and some issues related to a change in auditing practice for the council compared with the previous auditor, the audit of the accounts was substantially concluded pending some minor queries with officers.

Outstanding queries relating to assurances from the pensions fund auditor were preventing the conclusion of the audit; the section 151 officer confirmed that he would update the committee once assurance had been provided.

Members sought assurances that the delays to the start of this year's audit would not happen in future. Mr Harris confirmed that processes were in place to ensure that the audit process next year would be delivered as expected.

Mr Harris closed by outlining a consultation being undertaken by the National Audit Office concerning local authority auditing, financial reporting and how

external auditors were used. It was agreed that the section 151 officer would formulate a response to this consultation in the first instance and then circulate to the members of the committee for comment prior to submission.

The committee thanked Mr Harris for attending and expressed their gratitude to him and the officers at the council for completing the audit in difficult circumstances.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the matters raised by the council's auditors in their report appended, taking notice of the adjustments made in the redrafted financial statements presented, be noted;
- (ii) approval be given to the section 151 officer and chairman to sign the letter of representation as detailed at appendix A;
- (iii) the section 151 officer be authorised to approve any amendments, if required, prior to the official signing of the accounts.

Chairman

The meeting concluded at 8pm

COUNCIL MEETING – 15 OCTOBER 2019

REPORT OF THE ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

9 September 2019

Present: Councillors Carr (Chairman), Bell, Ekins, Hallam, G Lawman, L Lawman, Maguire, Partridge-Underwood, Patel, Walia and Watts.

Also present: Mr A Piper (Assistant Director/Committee Manager), Mrs V Phillipson (Principal Property and Projects Manager), Mr J Murray (Economic Development and Delivery Officer), Mr S Darcy (Director of Resources/Section 151 Officer), Miss B Cox (Communications Officer) and Mrs C A Mundy, (Democratic Services Officer).

(Councillors Griffiths and M Waters attended as observers.)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED to note that apologies were received from Councillors Anslow, Emerson, Skittrall and V Waters.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED to note that in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, the council's code of conduct and the council's constitution, the following declarations were made:

Councillor	Min no.& Item	Reason
Carr	3 – Wellingborough BID – New proposal	Personal – knows some of the speakers
Ekins	3 – Wellingborough BID – New proposal	Personal – knows some of the speakers
Hallam	3 - Wellingborough BID – New proposal	Personal – speaks with the local business community
L Lawman	3 – Wellingborough BID – New proposal	Personal – knows some of the speakers present and has previously received hospitality from one of the speakers
G Lawman	3 – Wellingborough BID – New proposal	Personal - previous BID director, knows some speakers and has attended events as a councillor
Maguire	3 – Wellingborough BID – New proposal	Personal – knows some of the speakers

3. WELLINGBOROUGH BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID) – NEW PROPOSAL

The annexed circulated report of the managing director was received to update the committee on the Wellingborough Town Centre Business Improvement District's new business plan, as appended to the report, to enable a decision to be made on how the council should vote in the new ballot to be held in September for the period 2019-2024.

Appended to the report were the following:

- Appendix 1 - BID new business plan 2019-2024;
- Appendix 2 - Previous BID plan 2019-2024;
- Appendix 3 - BID new area map;
- Appendix 4 - BID financial expenditure changes;
- Appendix 5 - List of BCW properties in new BID area;
- Appendix 6 - BID clarification letter;
- Appendix 7 - BID survey results June 2019;
- Appendix 8 - Wellingborough Chamber of Commerce and Town Centre Partnership letter of support for the BID.

The chairman had received five requests from the public, along with one from a councillor, to speak at the committee.

Mr R Rowlatt, Mr S Taylor, Ms M Richardson, Mr C Bailey, Mr S Toseland and Councillor M Griffiths all addressed the meeting and answered questions of clarity.

The speakers made reference to the benefits of the BID which they considered included cost savings, the enhancement to the streetscape, website presence and town centre app., used to promote special offers, the delivery of events, including the promotion of the heritage of the town centre, community and cultural celebrations, competitions and arts provision at both the Castle Theatre and the museum, and the promotion of Wellingborough as a place to live and work.

The Bid levy payers also appreciated the benefit of training and support and marketing through the BID website. Small business owners often did not have the time, or money to create their own website and they considered this was a vital benefit in the current climate and a good way of promoting the town.

The holding of events increased footfall and encouraged people from other towns to visit Wellingborough, and with the benefit of the free parking these people frequently returned to shop and spend money in the small businesses in the town centre.

The advantages of the recycling service were considered to be good value for money and had saved the levy payers a great deal of money and the speakers considered this to be financially beneficial to them.

Members of the BID board wished to work with the council to achieve the best for the BID levy payers and the traders in the town centre. The new BID made reference to the ambitions of the council with the introduction of a town centre coordinator to work with partners and local business and this included the '10 Point plan'. The town centre needed to be a vibrant place and a destination of choice where people wanted to visit and use the shops, coffee shops, bars and restaurants, not just at night but during the day as well.

Local retailers would face more and more competition and online retailing was expected to rise considerably in the next few years.

Encouragement to support the BID was also given by the Wellingborough Chamber of Commerce and Wellingborough Town Centre Partnership. They informed the committee of the background to the original BID, which had been established in 2009 as a council initiative, to encourage businesses to contribute and make a real difference to the town centre by becoming more involved and taking ownership of its future. The commitment of £900,000 over the next five years would ensure that the town centre would thrive, particularly with competition from on-line shopping and Rushden Lakes.

Councillor Griffiths, noted the changing national shopping habits. He referenced the two large developments taking place at Glenvale Park and Stanton Cross. These urban extensions would bring large numbers of people to the town and therefore significant footfall to the town centre.

The council was planning to make improvements to the public realm at Burystead Place, where the Tithe Barn was located and there had been grant funding made available to enhance the shop fronts. The work on the Hind Hotel was ongoing and progressing well. Work would soon commence on the improvements to the multi-storey car park. There would be an opportunity for the public to attend open day workshops in the autumn to comment on the proposed improvements. It was intended that free car parking would remain for the duration of the council. The annual International Waendel Walk Weekend also brought visitors to the town centre. Parkwood Theatres had recently taken over the running of the Castle Theatre and there was an excellent programme of shows to encourage people to visit the town and enhance the night time economy.

He expressed surprise that the redefined BID area plan meant that there was a reduction from 18 council properties to 8 in the BID area. Key service delivery hubs, such as the Tithe Barn Road offices, Swanspool House and Waendel Leisure Centre were no longer included.

He noted the comments made about the difficulties over the years between the council and the BID and he hoped that if the BID was successful that relationships would improve and that the town centre could thrive.

Some of the questions raised by members for the purpose of clarity are précised below:

- **What did BID payers think was the benefit of being part of a BID?**
It was generally considered that the cost savings of recycling, the website presence, town centre app., promotional events and training received were the key benefits.
- **What training was offered to BID levy payers?**
Workshops were regularly held with subjects including the use of online presence & social media as a marketing tool, a recent training event on window displays had proved to be very beneficial and this had been followed with a competition for the 'best dressed' window.
- **Most events appeared to be held during the day, how did this help those involved in the night time economy?**
Whilst events were generally held in the day or early evening, many of the pubs and restaurants were open during the day and the increased footfall also encouraged people to return and use the restaurants in the evening;
- **The BID area had been redefined, and this had significantly reduced the number of council properties in the area. What was the reason for this?**
The BID board had decided to concentrate on core businesses in the redefined area and it was coincidental that this had resulted in some council properties no longer being included in the BID area.
- **How many BID levy payers were there and how many had voting rights?**
It was clarified that there were 296 BID levy payers who were eligible to vote if they wished to do so.
- **How many BID levy payers were members of the Board of Directors?**
The BID was a not for profit company and was governed by a Board of Directors who were BID levy payers and volunteers drawn from both large and small businesses within the BID area. Any local levy payer was eligible to become a member of the BID company and they could stand for a position on the board.
- **The borough council was expected to form part of a unitary council within 18 months and the BID was asked how they thought the working relationship would look in the future?**
It was hoped that the BID would be able to work with either the unitary council of North Northamptonshire and/or the soon to be formed Wellingborough Town Council with the focus being to continue to encourage footfall and spend within the town.
- **At the meeting in March, Mr Cable, Executive Director of the BID had indicated that discussions were to take place with Bedford, Milton Keynes and Northampton BIDs, how had such discussions progressed?**
It was clarified that Wellingborough BID was in discussion with other BID towns and had shared discussions, ideas, information and objectives.

- **Why, when there was an event held on a Sunday, were some businesses not open?**

It was up to individuals whether to open, for small traders a Sunday was the only day that they had to spend with family.

- **Did the BID feel that it provided good value for money, particularly when the costs of salaries was a large amount from its budget?**

It was considered that staffing costs were kept to a minimum but had to be paid and that there was still a considerable amount of money left to use on other enhancements to the town centre.

- **Did the BID feel that the events supported by the council, such as 'the beach' were good?**

Whilst it was considered that 'the beach' was an excellent and successful event, the purpose of this was to give children a beach experience, rather than to encourage footfall. The BID did not think that the location, in the Market Square, was beneficial to the town centre and their preference was for this to be located opposite the Hind Hotel, so that it could be seen by those walking or driving through the town this would then increase footfall and spend. The current location at the market did not encourage this.

Following the discussion and questions raised, members discussed the report and the new BID proposal before them. There was concern expressed that the BID was particularly critical of the working relationship between themselves and the council. It was considered that for the BID to work well these issues needed to be resolved and that the relationship needed to improve to ensure the best possible outcome for the town centre. The advantages and disadvantages of the BID were also outlined in the reports.

Members raised their individual concerns and expressed their concern that they needed more assurance that the BID could achieve what was being promised in the documentation before them, that they would provide value for money, would work with the council to achieve the '10 point plan' and aspirations for all the businesses in the BID area.

A lengthy debate ensued.

It was proposed by Councillor Maguire and seconded by Councillor Watts that the council instruct the assistant director (corporate landlord) to vote on behalf of the council, to support the Wellingborough Town Centre Business Improvement District (BID) for the period 2019-2024, in respect of the eight council properties.

On being put to the vote there were two votes in favour, three votes against and six abstentions and the proposal was therefore declared lost.

The chairman then asked the committee to vote on the proposition that the assistant director (corporate landlord), on behalf of the council, vote against the BID, in the BID ballot, in respect of the eight council properties.

On being put to the vote there were two votes in favour, two votes against and seven abstentions. The chairman did not use his casting vote.

(Councillors Maguire and Watts asked that their vote against this proposal be recorded.)

A further discussion ensued and the chairman proposed the following amendment:

That the assistant director (corporate landlord) be instructed not to vote in the BID ballot in respect of the eight council properties. This was seconded by Councillor L Lawman.

On being put to the vote there were five votes in favour, three votes against and three abstentions and this was therefore declared carried.

This then became the substantive motion which was put to the vote and declared carried with five votes in favour, two votes against and four abstentions.

RESOLVED that the assistant director (corporate landlord), be instructed to abstain from voting in the BID ballot on behalf of the council in respect of the eight council properties.

Chairman

The meeting concluded at 8.55pm.

COUNCIL MEETING – 15 OCTOBER 2019

REPORT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM SUB-COMMITTEE

10 September 2019

Present: Councillors Griffiths (Chairman) and Councillors Allebone, Francis, Harrington, Scarborough and Partridge-Underwood.

Also present: Mrs L Elliott, (Managing Director), Mr S Darcy, (Director of Resources/Section 151 Officer), Miss K Denton, Mrs V Jessop and Mr A Piper (Assistant Directors) and Mrs C A Mundy (Democratic Services Officer.)

(Councillors Maguire, Skittrall and G Lawman attended as observers.)

(The meeting commenced at 5pm.)

1. APOLOGIES

RESOLVED to note that an apology was received from Councillor Graves.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED to note that in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, the council's code of conduct and the council's constitution, no declarations were made.

3. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 FEBRUARY 2019

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2019 be confirmed.

4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM UPDATE

The managing director gave a verbal update on the reform programme and the appointments and secondments to the programme team, highlighting that one Wellingborough council employee had joined the programme team. Paul Helsby had recently been appointed as the programme manager; he was a proficient project manager and had worked for a short time at the county council.

There were still some positions to be filled, including the communications and engagement manager role, which was being advertised internally with a closing date of 13 September.

Work was ongoing with the upgrade to IT at Wellingborough and East Northants to ensure that up to date systems were in place for the future.

Seven work streams were in place and each chief executive/managing director was acting as senior responsible officer for a work stream. The managing director reported that she was responsible for Children's Social Care and supported by a programme manager and a change manager. She was working towards the implementation of a Children's' Trust as a county council trust.

The local government reform programme leaders' oversight board and design board would be meeting later in September.

Due to the ongoing work of the government with Brexit it was not known if there would be a delay in the structural change order (SCO) progressing through parliament, it was hoped that the timescales would be as agreed and that confirmation of the SCO would be received before Christmas 2019.

The Police and Fire Crime Commissioner, town and parish council elections would be taking place on 7 May 2020 along with the shadow council elections. It was noted that Friday 8 May had been declared a bank holiday and for Wellingborough this was also the Waendel Walk weekend. There were some concerns over the availability of staff to cover the count due to other potential commitments although the date for the count was not confirmed as yet.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

5. NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE WORKING GROUPS

The managing director informed the sub-committee that the working groups had commenced during the summer months and that interim reports would be presented to the North Northamptonshire Joint Committee from the chairman of the Governance Working Group, Statutory Officer Appointments Working Group, Independent Remuneration Panel Working Group and Terms of Reference Working Group.

RESOLVED that the updated information be noted.

6. NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT COMMITTEE – NEXT MEETING

The circulated agenda and reports of the North Northamptonshire Joint Committee to be held on 16 September 2019 were referred to.

The managing director (MD) informed the sub-committee that Mr Helsby would be giving a programme update at that meeting on the future unitary authorities of West Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire.

Members asked for clarification as to whether one team would be delivering the programme for both unitary authorities.

The MD confirmed that this was the case up to May 2020. After May 2020 it was anticipated that there would be a split into two separate programmes for West Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire. This decision would be made by the shadow unitary councils. There would be synergy on some of the

work streams and it was hoped that by working together this would avoid duplication and costs.

Members also asked for confirmation that vesting day was still expected to be 1 April 2021 and that the borough council would continue until 2021. They also asked when the shadow councils would come into effect.

The MD confirmed that vesting day would be 1 April 2021 and that the borough council would continue until 2021 and that there would be no borough council elections in 2020. The elections to the shadow unitary authority would take place on 7 May 2020. The 'Shadow authorities' would come into effect after the elections and would be responsible for delivering the new unitary councils and ensuring that service delivery was integrated. From now until vesting day service delivery would remain with the sovereign councils.

Reference was made to the financial difficulties at the county council. Whilst there had been a significant reduction in the deficit it was considered that the financial position of the county council would indicate how healthy the finances of the future unitary councils would be. Details of services under threat needed to be highlighted as soon as possible, particularly if there were going to be significant cuts.

Members raised concern over staff welfare, particularly across the county council services. The MD informed the sub-committee that employees, particularly at Wellingborough, were extremely well informed and that the communication process was key to retaining staff and ensuring good morale. Each team would have a 'change champion' so colleagues could seek answers to queries about the future.

A request was made that Mr Helsby attend the next meeting of the sub-committee so it could understand the mapping of the baseline and disaggregation of county council services. The MD would invite him to attend.

The MD also referred to the interim websites which would be live in September that would give information on the unitary councils. The website for the north would be www.futurenorthantsnorth.org

The MD also informed the meeting that the business rates pilot had been successful and that she had asked if it could continue for a further year as this could bring in considerable additional funding.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

7. FUTURE MEETINGS

The MD confirmed the dates of future meetings as follows:

Thursday 7 November 2019
Tuesday 14 January 2020
Thursday 12 March 2020

The agendas would be similar to the one for this meeting with verbal reports being provided.

RESOLVED that the date of future meetings be noted.

Chairman

The meeting concluded at 6.35pm.

COUNCIL MEETING – 15 OCTOBER 2019
REPORT OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

25 September 2019

Present: Councillors Griffiths (Chairman), Partridge-Underwood, (Vice-Chairman), Allebone, Bell, Bone, Carr, Graves, Gough, Harrington, Henley, Morrall, Scarborough and M Waters.

Also present: Mrs L Elliott (Managing Director), Mr S Darcy (Director of Resources/Section 151 Officer), Miss K Denton, Mrs V Jessop and Mr E Symons (Assistant Directors), Mr R Watson (Senior Revenue Officer) and Mrs C A Mundy (Democratic Services Officer).

(Councillors G Lawman, L Lawman and Simmons attended as observers.)

(The chairman welcomed everyone, shared the housekeeping rules and informed the meeting that a member of the public intended to film. If anyone objected to this they should indicate this to him.)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Emerson and Francis.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED to note that in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, the council's code of conduct and the council's constitution, no declarations were made.

3. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 19 JUNE 2019

The minutes of the resources committee of 19 June 2019 were received.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the resources committee held on 19 June 2019, be confirmed and signed.

4. GREATWELL HOMES – LAND RATIONALISATION

The chairman informed the committee that he intended to defer item 7 on the agenda, Greatwell Homes – land rationalisation, to the October 2019 meeting. This would enable dialogue to take place with all parties to include ward councillors, officers, Greatwell Homes and the tenants and users of the Hemmingwell Community Centre. Anyone who had registered to speak on this item could still do so if they wished at this meeting but they would only be able to speak once on this subject, in accordance with the constitution; alternatively they could register to speak at the October meeting when the matter would be discussed. The speakers indicated that they would prefer to speak at the next

meeting. This deferral was fully supported by the leader of the opposition who considered that this was a good way forward.

RESOLVED that this item be deferred to the next meeting.

5. CHANGE TO THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

In accordance with 4.2.11 (c) of the constitution the chairman moved that the running order of the agenda be changed and that items 9 and 10 on the agenda be brought forward, unless there was any discussion on the exempt appendices.

RESOLVED that this be agreed.

6. TO AUTHORISE OFFICERS TO REPRESENT THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF WELLINGBOROUGH IN THE MAGISTRATES COURT

The annexed circulated report of the section 151 officer was received to authorise the following officers to represent the council in any proceedings in the Magistrates' Court:

Sophie Greenham, Technical Revenue Officer;
Cathy McKenzie, Court Officer;
Nigel Robinson, Principal Revenue and Benefit Manager;
Richard Watson, Senior Revenue Officer;
Victoria Williams, Technical Revenue Officer (Maternity cover).

RESOLVED that approval be given to the authorisation of Sophie Greenham, Cathy McKenzie, Nigel Robinson, Richard Watson and Victoria Williams to represent the Borough Council of Wellingborough in any proceedings in the Magistrates' Court.

7. IRRECOVERABLE COUNCIL TAX, HOUSING BENEFIT OVERPAYMENTS, NON-DOMESTIC RATES AND SUNDRY DEBTS

The annexed circulated report, along with exempt appendices, of the section 151 officer was received in relation to the write off, of irrecoverable debts as follows:

• Non-domestic rate cases	£2,881.80
• Council tax cases	£14,150.27
• Housing benefit overpayment cases	£11,157.13

Appended to the report were details of each case with further detail provided in the exempt appendices.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the sum of £28,189.20 of irrecoverable council tax, non-domestic rate and housing benefit overpayment balances be written off;
- (ii) It be noted that the sum of £39,715.39 had been written off under the delegated powers of the section 151 officer.

8. FINANCIAL MONITORING AND POSITION STATEMENT FOR 2019-20

The annexed circulated report of the section 151 officer was received in relation to the monitoring position for revenue expenditure against approved budget; this is the first monitoring report for 2019-20. Further financial forecasts will be reported to future committees to show the position as at 30 September 2019, 31 December 2019 and 31 March 2020. Appended to the report was the revenue monitoring position to 31 July 2019.

The Section 151 Officer, Mr Darcy, presented the report to committee.

The revenue operational budget had been set in February 2019 at £10.658m made up of £17.868m of gross expenditure and £7.210m of gross income. In June 2019 this was revised down to £10.617m and the business rates income was amended to reduce the reliance on general reserves, this was further summarised in the report.

The 2019-20 budget was funded by using £1.167 of general fund reserves (of which £0.438m was from general reserves and £0.729m from earmarked reserves) and other sources of external funding which were detailed in the report.

The report also contained details of service income and funding sources to show the overall financing of the total expenditure of £17.827m. Over 37% of financing was from internally generated fees and charges and property income and more than 24% from council tax. Less than 9% was from government grants, and a further 22.6% was from retained business rates.

The current forecast was showing a decrease in the need to use reserves of £311K, made up from a number of net pressures and efficiencies. The key contributing areas were listed in appendix 1 to the report.

RESOLVED that the position on the revenue monitoring and the reasons for the variances reported be noted.

9. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING

The annexed circulated report of the section 151 officer was received in relation to the capital programme monitoring to 31 July 2019.

Appended to the report were the following:

- Appendix 1 - capital outturn report to 31 July 2019;
- Appendix 2 - capital programme funding position.

The total capital budget for 2019-20 of £10.393m had been reported to committee in June. Subsequent updates and amendments to the budget were detailed in the report, with the revised capital budget for 2019-20 being £10.611m.

The report detailed the schemes that were expected to be completed within the financial year as follows:

- Wellingborough heritage and shop front grant initiative
- Private sector housing grant – homelessness;
- Project costs of CPO;
- Aggresso upgrade;
- PFP Leisure;
- Crematorium pathways;
- Crematorium garden infrastructure;
- Disabled Facilitates grant

The progress on each of these schemes was detailed further within the report.

There were two supplementary budget requests and particular reference was made to the request for the multi storey car park. The refurbishment of the Swansgate MSCP had been approved, with the original capital budget over two years being £2,727.236; a list of what was included was provided in the report.

Since the original budget had been agreed additional items had been costed for the consideration of the committee as follows:

- Installation of water sprinklers;
- Installation of access and ingress barriers;
- Installation of five charging points for electric vehicles;
- Security fencing to the first floor level;
- Cost of updated condition survey.

The cost of these items had been estimated at £541,900, resulting in a total cost of the scheme being £3,249.721, including 15% contingency, which the committee was asked to consider.

Before debating the request the chairman asked Mr Shoesmith, who had asked to speak, to address the committee.

The speaker considered that the supplementary budget request should be refused as he felt the agreed budget and list of works to be carried out were

sufficient. He explained why he felt there was no requirement for some of the additional items listed and considered there were other places that the money could be spent to improve the lives of residents which would be much more beneficial.

The chairman thanked him for his words. There were no questions of clarity and the chairman opened this item, for debate.

Members considered that the additional items listed were essential to avoid crime, vandalism and arson attacks of which there had been a number. As a council the safety of car park users had to be paramount and needed to be taken into account. There had already been a number of arson attacks and a fire in the multi storey could soon spread to other vehicles and compromise the integrity of the building, even extending to the Swansgate Centre which could be catastrophic. A sprinkler system was considered to be essential.

It was felt that with these added improvements the car park could remain open in the evening to serve the Castle Theatre and night time economy of the town.

A query over whether five charging points was sufficient was raised. It was considered that currently this was deemed to be adequate and more could be added in the future if required.

A comment was made about the items listed in the report which fell under the original budget and officers were asked to clarify that all the items were actually included in the original contract as it was thought that some had not originally been listed. The director confirmed that was the case.

The reduction of the number of lifts from six to four was also raised. This had previously been agreed and it was considered that four working lifts were more than adequate for users.

Members congratulated officers for bringing forward the original proposal and the additional items and considered that a refurbished, fit for purpose, car park for the town was a good legacy to leave the whole borough.

It was proposed by Councillor Bell and seconded by Councillor Partridge-Underwood that the supplementary budget request for the additional expenditure on the multi-storey car park be approved.

The report also referenced a virement of £75k from the BCW property renovation capital budget to the 43/44 High Street capital budget. The original capital sum for 43/44 High Street was £150k of which £75k was grant funding. Following changes to the scheme a revised scheme was developed, with an estimated price of £225k. This investment will bring the property back into use, reduce the council's costs by approximately £2k per year and generate an annual rental income of over £20k, with an additional £9k annual income for eight years from the grant. Some external work of approximately £11k is being funded by the Townscape Heritage Initiative scheme.

A retrospective request for capital funding had been received for a retaining wall at Senwick Drive which had needed urgent repairs totalling £32,692.00. This had been paid from revenue but could be capitalised if the committee agreed.

The report also updated the committee on the temporary accommodation mitigation fund. Ten properties had been acquired with a further offer having been accepted. The original budget allocation of £1.725m had been fully committed.

The capital community grants scheme had contributed to the following schemes:

- Play equipment in Grendon;
- Outdoor gym equipment in Wilby;
- The replacement of railings at Tainty Field, Finedon;
- Upgrade of lighting and heating system Wellingborough Rugby Football Club;
- Skate park at Earls Barton;
- Outdoor gym equipment, Wollaston;
- Traffic calming sign, Grendon.

Councillor Henley asked the director how much of the capital budget he considered would be spent in the financial year. The director confirmed that there may be some slippage on timescales for the bigger items, though it was priority to complete these as soon as possible. The 3G artificial turf pitch had recently been completed and it was hoped that other schemes would be dealt with quickly.

The chairman also confirmed that there was an opportunity, now that the pitch was completed, to make some improvements to Redwell Leisure Centre and that work would start on the multi storey car park during the autumn.

The proposals were put to the vote and declared carried.

RESOLVED to note:

- (I) the projected outturn and anticipated variances as at 31 July 2019 and as detailed in appendix 1;
- (II) the external funding as detailed in appendix 2;
- (III) the updates and amendments to the 2019-20 capital programme as detailed in the report;
- (IV) the release of funds approved in principal s detailed in the report;

R1 RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) approval be given to the supplementary budget requests as detailed in section 7 of the current 2019-20 capital programme;
- (ii) the request for capital funding of £32,692 be approved.

10. PROPERTY MATTERS

The annexed circulated report of the director was received to provide an update on ongoing approved projects, as per the list of current projects appended to the report.

Members asked for clarity on the following to which the assistant director responded:

PP032 – Property and Project relocation - –The director clarified that this was the rehousing of employees from Swanspool House and Annexe to the Tithe Barn Road offices.

PP020 – Digital High Street – there was a query on the acronym ‘WDYT campaign’ contained in the summary – it was clarified that this related to the ‘What do you think’ campaign.

It was noted that 20 Sheep Street had been boarded up this week and members asked why this had been done. The director confirmed that a decision had been taken to secure the building as there was evidence that the building had been broken into. It was intended to sell in the future.

High Street - a member asked if there was any update on whether this would be coming back to committee. The leader confirmed that a report would be presented to a future council meeting and it was hoped that this could be arranged within six to eight weeks to give an update on the scheme. Discussions were taking place with Keepmoat to bring this forward.

Members praised the officers for the positive work that had taken place with the Drill Hall, the townscape heritage shop fronts, the Queen’s Hall Day Centre, Hind Hotel, Tithe Barn Public Realm and the flats at 43/44 High Street.

Reference was also made to the work at the Crematorium with the opening of the memorial gardens and the completion of the canopy. The crematorium had had proved to be a great benefit for the people of the borough and the work of the board and senior officers at the council was commended.

RESOLVED that the progress made on the projects outlined within the appendix be noted.

11. NOTICE OF URGENT ACTION – FREE MARKET STALL FEES FOR DURATION OF THE BEACH EVENT

The annexed circulated report of the director of resources was received to inform the committee of the urgent action taken by the chairman of the resources committee on 17 June 2019 to approve the provision of free market

stall fees on the Market Square for the trading period between 27 July and 17 August 2019 as part of 'the beach' event.

RESOLVED that the urgent action taken be noted.

Chairman

The meeting concluded at 8.10pm.