

Dear Colleagues, Dear Chairman, Dear Clerk,

Information ref: NCC

Where are we now?

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NCC Stabilisation Plan:

This plan shows how the council intends to move towards stabilising its budget and make sure public services are more financially sustainable in the longer term.

It outlines the approach and possible options for addressing the £35m unfunded deficit from the 2017/18, together with a detailed plan to balance this year's budget and how this will assist in making the budget more stable in future years. The commissioners are currently in consultation with us on how to reduce or eliminate the previously reported potential unfunded deficit of 2017/18 caused by the external auditor challenges around the use of ring fenced funds and transformational spend.

The commissioners are also considering an application to the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government for Capitalisation Dispensation to help close the funding gap.

Further details of these measures will be announced in due course following publication of the final external audit report. The rest of the stabilisation plan concerns itself with closing the financial gap in the current financial year.

In 2018/19 there was a budget gap of £65m which includes £30.9m which had previously been incorrectly earmarked for flexible use of capital receipts.

The finance monitoring report also being presented to Cabinet shows that against this target the council is currently showing an overspend position of £20m, therefore this plan gives details on how the council, working alongside its commissioners and specialist support, proposes to address this.

The plan includes the assumption that the council is on course to save £24.2m of the current planned £35m savings.

In addition to this it goes on to identify further in-year savings of almost £20m and a further £48m savings for the next financial year.

Northampton North West Relief Road:

The Northampton North West Relief Road will link the A428 Harlestone Road with the A5199 Welford Road. The road will improve the highway network and help to address traffic problems in northern Northampton and surrounding villages. By providing additional capacity, the road will help to enable development including the major Sustainable Urban Extensions at Buckton Fields, Dallington Grange and Northampton West.

The section from the A428 to a roundabout near Grange Farm, just south of the railway line, will be constructed by the developers of Dallington Grange as a single carriageway, and the first part of this section has already been constructed as part of the Harlestone Gate development. The County Council will be responsible for building the section of road across the railway line to reach the A5199 Welford Road.

A preferred route for what then formed part of the Northampton North West Bypass was agreed in 1988, but the scheme was abandoned in 1998. However, following the designation of additional growth sites, the need for the scheme was identified in the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, and Cabinet decided in January 2016 that the scheme should be one of the County Council's next priorities for major road schemes

Northampton Northern Orbital Route:

This report updates Cabinet on the progress with the Northampton Northern Orbital Route and agree the next steps in terms of scheme delivery, following consultation undertaken in 2017.

The Northampton Northern Orbital Route will continue the northern ring road for Northampton from the end of the Northampton North West Relief Road at the A5199 Welford Road through to the A43 Kettering Road, with a spur to Moulton Park.

The first consultation, which presented four route options, was undertaken in 2016. While this demonstrated strong (64%) support for the scheme in principle, none of the route options generated more than 32% support.

On the basis of the consultation responses received, it is not considered appropriate to recommend a preferred route for the Northampton Northern Orbital Route to Cabinet at this time.

Further work needs to be undertaken in terms of considering the engineering design and environmental impacts of the scheme, and it is expected that this will involve the consideration of further route options to address concerns expressed in the consultation. While it will be for the local planning authorities to allocate further development sites, it is considered that it would be appropriate to test scenarios for development beyond those contained in current Local Plans in order to future-proof the scheme and determine when and if a dual carriageway and/or grade-separated junctions would be required.

Winter Gritting Service Review 2018-2019:

As part of the County Council's budget proposals for the financial year 2018-2019 a review of the winter gritting service in order to save £475k, was proposed.

The proposals include:

- A reduction in gritting of roads from the current 45% of the network;
- A review of the timescale taken to complete the gritting of the network from the current 3 hour limit;
- Review the provision of grit bins.

In order to achieve this reduction the policy for the maximum time taken to undertake gritting actions requires to be changed from 3 hours to 3.5 hours.

The reduction in the precautionary gritting network together with the increase in the maximum time to undertake this gritting has resulted in the reduction of the number of gritting vehicles from 26 to 19.

We previously treated approximately 45% of the road network as part of the precautionary gritting operation. This comprised all the "A" class roads, all strategic roads, traffic sensitive roads and main distributors together with certain secondary distributors and some other roads, including at least one road to each village community. This report proposes that this is reduced to 34% of the total road network.

The revised gritting regime meets the County Council's statutory duty to maintain the highway in accordance with Section 41(1A) of the Highways Act 1980

Consultation on Hearing Impaired Services and Visually Impaired Services:

Northamptonshire County Council currently commission advice and support services for people with hearing impairment and/or visual impairment. The services are commissioned via two independent contracts. Both contracts were transferred following the end of Supporting People commissioning and are for all aged people (birth to end of life) across the county..

The Council's Cabinet decision in May 2018 allowed in the short term for the contracts to be extended whilst investigating the potential decommissioning i.e. ending, of the contracts. The current providers are Northamptonshire Association for the Blind (NAB) and 'DeafConnect'.

This consultation seeks to gather feedback and evidence from customers and key stakeholders about the impact of ending the Council's current funding arrangements only for the adults support service (Children's First will look separately at its funding arrangements). The Council wish to understand the way in which the services are being used, any other support services people with hearing and/ or visual impairment in the county may access, and if the service were to be decommissioned, how could it be improved.

The consultation outcomes will help to inform the development of decisions which could result in decommissioning the council funded elements of the services.

The results of the consultation will be brought back to December Cabinet for consideration.

Ending the NCC funded contract will not end the totality of funding to these services (both have other funding sources at present).

If you have got any questions or would like to make specific enquiries – please contact me on:

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you can also follow updates through my Cllr Blog:

<https://cllradilsadygov.wordpress.com/>

With regards,

Councillor Adil Sadygov