

Cabinet
5 June 2023
Public & Local Member Questions

	Public Question Time
6.1	<p>Question from Anthony Cain Have the department considered purchasing or leasing a JCB Profile Pro machine, so that it could speed up Pothole repairs. I ask this question as the number of potholes increase by the day on Norfolk roads and potholes that are repaired are done to a very low standard.</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport We are aware of the JCB Pothole Pro system and we do maintain a careful eye on emerging technology. We have not engaged with JCB to explore this further at this stage. Our maintenance teams have been utilising alternative innovative methods for pothole hole repairs such as spray injection patching. This alternative has been operating in Norfolk for several years and is a proven, quick, effective and reliable method to repair potholes, and complements the existing patching resource utilised routinely via our supply chain.</p> <p>In addition to spray injection patching, we are also trialling an alternative thermal method for surface patching which if it proves advantageous could also be deployed to repair potholes.</p>
6.2	<p>Question from Paul Hill Why is the council going ahead with LTNs? Having just heard on the local news that Norfolk County Council are planning to trial LTNs.</p> <p>I must strongly protest over this decision, it is an attack on public freedoms and has no place in this country.</p> <p>These schemes are being forced onto people up and down the country and they are undemocratic.</p> <p>It seems that the council has forgotten that they work for the people not the other way round. We tell you what we want you to do and we do not want LTNs, 20 minute neighborhoods, 15 minute cities, ULEZ or anything else that has come from the WEF.</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport There are currently no plans to introduce any Low Traffic Neighbourhoods in Norfolk. The future development of a scheme like this anywhere in Norfolk, would follow full consultation with locally elected representatives, the local community and other key stakeholders.</p> <p>We are currently reviewing the evidence for, and potential benefits and disbenefits of low traffic neighbourhoods - based on experience and feedback from across the country. However, this work is at a very early stage and there are no plans at the current time to undertake preliminary design or consultation on any scheme.</p>
6.3	<p>Question from Eleanor Laming Cabinet agreed the Norfolk County Council Climate Strategy on 10 May 2023. How do the priorities outlined for decarbonisation of Norfolk's transport sector align with</p>

the closure of the Postwick Park and Ride, which if reinstated using a suitable business case and sufficient advertising would contribute to reduction of carbon emissions?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste / Highways Infrastructure and Transport

We fully recognise the role that the Park & Ride service, including that from Postwick, can fulfill for our Climate Strategy. This must be measured against the comparatively low patronage that Park and Ride has experienced post-pandemic and re-opening the site and service would add up to £200k to the subsidy that Norfolk County Council have had to find since the pandemic to open and run the other sites. We have every intention of re-opening the site once passenger numbers on the P&R service as a whole have recovered to 75% of pre-covid levels, which will ensure that we have sufficient funds to run all the sites.

Supplementary Question from Eleanor Laming

Why did the bid for Bus Service Improvement Plan Funding in 2022 not include a funding request to help reinstate Postwick Park and Ride?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport

A key criteria for Bus Service Improvement Plan funding, set by the DfT was that it could not be used to subsidise services that had been commercially viable and were now struggling and at risk of withdrawal. As the P&R service was commercially run by the bus operator before the pandemic, the funding and therefore the Plan could not be used to reinstate the Postwick P&R service.

6.4

Question from Benedict Gallagher

This question particularly affects Norfolk because it relates to excess deaths amongst Norfolk residents that requires explanation.

In response to a recent parliamentary question the government has declined to investigate the cause of excess deaths, see <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-05-22/186120>. This government response is attracting scathing criticism from healthcare experts.

With central government failing dying Norfolk residents will the council commission independent research to investigate, without fear or favour, the reasons for excess deaths to help prevent them?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing

Thank you for your question.

The Council regularly reviews death rates and the causes behind deaths – you can find information on our JSNA eg [PowerPoint Presentation \(norfolkinsight.org.uk\)](https://www.norfolkinsight.org.uk/powerpoint-presentation) and [State of Norfolk and Waveney health report 2022 \(norfolkinsight.org.uk\)](https://www.norfolkinsight.org.uk/state-of-norfolk-and-waveney-health-report-2022). The former of these two will be updated in the coming months as the data becomes available.

Supplementary question from Benedict Gallagher

Does the council acknowledge that during the pandemic central government announced daily death rates for people who died within 28 days of a positive covid test, but does not do the same for excess deaths today, despite them often being at comparable levels?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing

Thank you for your question.

The Government currently announces daily death rates for people who died within 28 days of a Covid 19 test on a weekly basis.

Cabinet
5 June 2023
Local Member Questions

	Member Question Time
7.1	<p>Question from Cllr Brian Watkins Back in January last year, the Conservative administration approved a decision to spend £6 million on Newton Europe consultants to transform Norfolk's adult social care services, and to save up to £50 million over five years. The move was criticised by Liberal Democrats and other opposition groups at the time. What evidence can you currently provide that the use of expensive consultants is being vindicated, and is proving to be money well spent by the Council?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Thank you for your question</p> <p>The programme called Connecting Communities, which brought on board Newton Europe, has begun to deliver real change through a new model of care and a refocus on early help and prevention. For example, the impact can be seen in the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better response times for people calling us through our 'front door'. Our lines are always open and our practitioners are helping more people straight away, reducing pressure on our community care teams• More people are receiving reablement support in their homes from our Norfolk First Support Team. This has increased from around 5000 new starts a year when we began the programme to over 7300 a year.• Our changing approach – re-emphasising strengths based working – is showing early signs that more people are able to stay in their homes with alternative support, rather than residential care• Using our data differently, we are offering people at risk of a fall preventative services, through partnership with public health, the fire service, and voluntary sector <p>Staff have worked incredibly hard to embrace changes particularly over the pressured winter months.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• As reported to Cabinet in April, we delivered a near £1m savings in 22/23 against a plan of £2m. This short-fall against original planning reflected the later start time of the programme. In the current year, based on our latest delivery profiles we are expecting to catch up and have targeted £9.7m across all our changes this year. We are currently still on track to achieve the £18m recurrent saving in the future which will mean a cumulative c£55m benefit over the first five years of the Programme. Rigorous monitoring of performance is being undertaken to ensure new ways of working are embedded and are sustainable for the future. <p>Second question from Cllr Brian Watkins Norfolk continues to receive a raw deal from the Government's levelling up schemes, with its funding, delivery and allocation being heavily criticised in a recent</p>

cross party parliamentary report. There has been little or no feedback on why some bids for levelling up cash have been rejected, and there appears to be too much emphasis on one-off short term initiatives. Once again, the County is in danger of being left behind. What role does the Cabinet member think that the Council can play in trying to address these challenges and to secure a better deal for Norfolk in the longer term?

Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Governance

Norfolk continues to pursue every opportunity to secure much-needed funding for programmes and initiatives that will add value to the county and improve the lives of residents, communities and businesses. We have, and continue to lobby government to expand the criteria for projects and to take a longer term view of what will benefit a place. That said, we believe strongly that we should move from a position of having to bid for a broad range of funding opportunities at ongoing cost to us and no guarantee of success, to an allocation of growth funds for Norfolk. This is why we are pursuing a devolution deal for Norfolk, to secure more un-ringfenced and flexible funding, that could and should include Levelling up funds as others have done before us, and to strengthen Norfolk's voice and influence in Whitehall. And that is why colleagues from across the political spectrum should be supporting devolution and the County deal and the best possible deal for Norfolk.

7.2

Question from Cllr Lucy Shires

NHS England's 2015 Report, 'Future in Mind' set out a vision for improving support for children and young people with mental health problems. Since then efforts have been made to expand access to services, but the Covid-19 pandemic significantly slowed progress and there are growing concerns that funding is not reaching the frontline fast enough. Of particular concern is a lack of early intervention and prevention support. Can the Cabinet member outline the current picture across Norfolk and give an assurance that children and young people's mental health is not becoming a 'cinderella' service alongside the growing pressures on other important NHS services?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services

As a system we recognise the importance of working with partners across the system to ensure the emotional wellbeing and mental health needs of our children and young people are met holistically. Many of our services are developed and co-delivered with children, young people, families, Children's Services and VCSE partners. Despite the pandemic, Norfolk & Waveney ICB has continued to increase funding and improve access to children and young people's mental health services, increasing funding from £23m (2018/19) to a planned spend of just under £35m (23/24).

In 2019 NHS England published the Long-Term Plan, and there were a number of commitments made in relation to improving children and young people's mental health services which was supported by a significant increase in funding. Key areas of focus within the NHS Long Term Plan for improvement were: Increasing access through early intervention, Eating Disorder Services and Crisis Services. Locally this has resulted in:

Mental Health Support Teams in Schools (MHSTs) (£3,055K + £800k (April 24) - N&W has mobilised 8 MHSTs across N&W with another 2 planned for January 2024. Each MHST supports around 20 schools and 500 children, providing early

intervention for mild to moderate needs, promotes a whole school approach supporting mental health champions in schools and identifies children and young people who require more specialist support. By January 2024, 50% of schools across N&W will have access to an MHST, and there is an ambition to increase this to 100% coverage.

Increasing funding to VCSE organisations (£4852K) - N&W is committed to working with a range of VCSE partners and recognises the important role they play, particularly in addressing the holistic needs of children, young people, and their families. Key funded partners include MAP, Ormiston Families, YMCA, MIND, LGBTQ+, NANSA and Fresh Start New Beginnings. Our VCSE partners are funded to see approximately 4000 children and young people each year

Integrated Front Door (£800K) - N&W is in the process of developing an Integrated Front Door (IFD) for all emotional wellbeing and mental health support. We have currently mobilised phase 1 which enables children, young people, families, and professionals to request support through Just One Norfolk or Just One Number. The model provides a stepped approach of self-help, advice & guidance, and therapeutic support, building resilience into the system and ensuring everyone gets the right support the first time.

Eating Disorders (£3478K) - It is recognised that early intervention for individuals presenting with an eating disorder is critical to delivering positive outcomes and a full recovery. As a result, NHSE published an Access and Waiting Time Standard to ensure 95% of all children and young people were in treatment within 1 week for urgent presentations and 4 weeks for routine. The pandemic had a significant impact on children and young people, and in particular those presenting with an eating disorder. Presentations and acuity increased dramatically, both locally and nationally. N&W focussed on developing an all age eating disorder strategy to ensure we had the right services and capacity to meet the demand. Over the last four years the ICB has invested an additional £2.4m into children and young people's eating disorder services and the teams are now delivering an exceptional service

Funding has:

- Increased capacity within the team
- Developed a new Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID) service which accounts for about 1/3 of all eating disorder presentations
- Developed an Intensive Day Service "The Lighthouse" which provides an alternative to admission and intensive support so children and young people who are very unwell.
- Embedded mental health practitioners on acute paediatric wards to support children and young people if they are admitted for medical stabilisation.
- Trained and upskilled teams and the wider system
- Commissioned a disordered eating service, where eating is a primary concern, but there isn't a diagnosable eating disorder.

Crisis Services - A key commitment within the NHS Long Term Plan is to ensure all children and young people have access to 24/7 crisis provision. N&W ICB has invested an additional £500K into the CYP Crisis team, £300K into embedding mental health practitioners onto acute paediatric wards, £200K into an expediated pathway for CYP presenting in A&E with self-harm.

	<p>Key development priorities for the future include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing an All Age Urgent and Emergency Care Strategy• All Age mental health liaison service (assessments and support in A&E)• Integrated Practice Model between Children's Services and health, to risk assess and care plan children with complex needs presenting in crisis• Intensive Day Service• 72 short stay provision for children presenting in crisis• Parent / carer support• VCSE offer
7.3	<p>Question from Cllr Steffan Aquarone</p> <p>It was recently reported that Norfolk County Council is considering closing its reablement centres at Benjamin Court and Grays Fair Court. These centres provide a vital service for people who are well enough to come out of hospital, but who still need extra support before returning home. The closures could also result in the loss of 86 jobs. What assessment has been conducted to determine the effect these closures will have on local health and care provision and the effect on the residents who rely on such settings to recover fully?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care</p> <p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>The proposed change through our consultation with staff is about re-purposing our reablement service to be home-based rather than in-patient based.</p> <p>The staff at Grays Fair Court and Benjamin Court are highly skilled and highly valued and we are really keen to retain them and their expertise. There are a range of options available to them including some opportunities for promotions, or to remain working in housing with care, as well as posts working in home-based reablement. We are not proposing to make redundancies</p> <p>Since Covid, demand for home-based reablement has increased and this is why we are proposing tailoring our service to provide more support in this way, with the NHS focusing on in-patient support for people with higher medical needs. Our current bed based reablement is not set up to deal with such medical needs and this has led to falling occupancy levels at both sites. There have been many changes in health and social care, and particularly in the out of hospital care in recent years. The NHS has been able to increase its community based care for people with medical needs, leaving hospital for example through virtual wards and therapy-led recovery in community hospitals. Much of this provision wasn't there when we set up our beds in Grays Fair and Benjamin Court.</p> <p>Our role as adult social services is to concentrate on supporting people in their homes – which is why we have expanded our NFS service, as a result of these changes the service will be able to support 1,500 more people in 2023.</p>
7.4	<p>Question from Cllr Paul Neale</p> <p>The one million trees promise, commenced in November 2019, is so far behind with only 249,000 planted. This leaves 751,000 to be planted in the next 2 planting seasons. The recent announcement to create a new country park or parks with</p>

500,000 trees is welcome, but has only come about as it seems this Conservative administration has been asleep at the wheel and has just woken up at the final corner. Can the Cabinet member guarantee that land will be found and purchased, trees planted and access measures including public transport will be in place for these country parks?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

The current total of trees planted is now 276,293, a figure which shows very positive progress, despite losing two planting seasons due to the pandemic. In terms of the plan to create new country parks, this has been in development for some time. For such a significant project much research and due diligence is required to ensure that the case is strong enough to put to Cabinet, something which I hope to be able to do soon.

Officers are currently working to identify land in suitable locations that already have strong transport links including walking and cycling. We will ensure that the land will also be the correct grade and will not take land out of active agricultural production. In addition, we are exploring working in partnership with Forestry England through a lease option agreement. This would de-risk delivery as they have confirmed they have both the resource and capacity to deliver 500,000 trees planted by March 2025.

Supplementary question from Cllr Paul Neale

About a quarter of the trees and shrubs planted along the route of the Norwich Northern Distributor Road died resulting in 3,000 trees needing replanting and probably some of them have since died.

Could the cabinet member give me the number of the 249,000 that have been planted to date (out of the target of 1million) that have died and what is the management plan for history to not repeat itself?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

The trees planted by the 1 Million Trees project have been delivered through a wide range of initiatives. A significant proportion have been planted by groups and individuals outside of NCC either through partnership work or tree schemes where we have supplied trees to be planted on private or community-owned land. For these trees we ask that the parties commit to maintenance and to taking part in follow-up surveys so we can monitor success. This is a condition of receiving any trees through NCC.

We also provide much guidance regarding planting and maintenance to ensure that people have sufficient information for the trees to thrive. Regarding the planting on NCC-owned land, we take measures when planting to maximise success. Early feedback has suggested that this has been beneficial. However for the last season's planting, which accounts for at least 55,000 of the total, it is too early to report on success. We have a programme of monitoring previous years' planting which we will share later this year when complete. Whilst we endeavour for all our planting to survive and thrive, there is inevitably a degree of loss to external factors outside our control. Last year saw unprecedented hot weather and drought and we expect this to have had some effect on survival rates. We will know more after the monitoring data is gathered later this year.

7.5

Question from Cllr Jamie Osborn

Government research warns that one in ten childcare providers are facing closure, and more than half are struggling to cover their costs. Can the Cabinet Member tell me if there has been an assessment of the risks of childcare providers closing and the potential impacts on the Norfolk economy as well as developmental outcomes for children? I would like to stress that the additional Government funding announced in March will not necessarily help, and may even worsen the situation, as many childcare providers receive a rate for “funded” hours that is lower than what it costs them to provide the childcare.

Response from the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services

Working families will be supported through an extension of the funded childcare on offer, which doubles the support currently in place. The intention is to enable families to stay in work, make childcare more affordable and more accessible, reduce the barriers preventing some parents from going back to work and keep the economy growing. The budget also included confirmation that there will be £204m additional funding this year (from Autumn 2023), increasing to £288m by 2024-25. The actual amount each local authority will receive is yet to be disclosed. Current information from DfE suggests the average will be around £8.00 per hour for 2-year-olds and over £5.50 for 3- and 4-year-olds. Norfolk usually receives an amount below the national average. The current formula methodology is the outcome of annual consultations with providers offering the funded entitlement. The grant received via the Early Years Block from central government is allocated to maximise the base rates to all providers, apply supplements where certain criteria are met, retain a minimum contingency, and remain affordable to the council. The formula approach must also be compliant with statutory guidance issued and monitored by DfE.

Providers can access both a SEN Inclusion Fund (SENIF) and Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) to support children where their observations indicate that a child may benefit from additional support. The aim of SENIF is to support providers to secure better outcomes for children. The funding is available to all providers offering funded places and in 2022-23, £1.298m was paid to those that applied. EYPP aims to close the attainment gap between those that attract the funding and their peers. In 2022-23, £0.580m was paid directly to providers for children meeting the national criteria, and where they collected the necessary information for the local authority to complete eligibility checks. There is also funding for children with more complex / medical need or an agreed EHCP. This funding is also paid directly to providers and in 2022-23 £0.756m was passed to settings.

We monitor closures and risk of closures to ensure that we can meet our statutory requirement to secure sufficient funded early years provision for families. Timing of setting closures are often organised to enable governance, families, and staff to plan to minimise impact. Unexpected closure usually occurs because the business cannot legally operate, for a variety of reasons. Where closures happen, we can offer a brokerage service to help families in their search for alternative childcare. In addition, through our Early Years and finance teams we offer, grant opportunities to support sustainability, development, quality, and inclusion, provide communication on existing funding streams to ensure additional funding opportunities are not missed, provide subsidised training programme to assist with mandatory training and CPD and a recruitment website to enable them to advertise vacancies. We

	<p>always encourage settings to engage with the early years team as soon as possible to seek support when issues occur.</p> <p>Second question from Cllr Jamie Osborn In February, the NWL planning application was suspended indefinitely. Now it has been delayed again, with no explanation as to the reason. Please can the Cabinet Member provide a comprehensive list of the risks to the project associated with the delay in the planning application, and the associated cost impacts?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport The reporting of the NWL project and the associated planning application submission have been delayed as we are awaiting a decision from DfT approving the Outline Business Case. Risk is considered within the project risk register that is discussed at project board meetings, member group meetings, and is copied to you (Cllr Osborne). You will hopefully be aware from the forward plan that we plan to bring a report to the July meeting of Cabinet to provide a project update.</p>
7.6	<p>Question from Cllr Matt Reilly There are continuing concerns about the safety of students and incidence of harassment around the UEA. A petition has been started to reverse the part time street lighting so students and others can feel safer. Will the cabinet member agree to leave the street lights around the university on in future and join me in meeting students to discuss their concerns?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport Part Night Lighting was introduced in response to ongoing energy cost rises, our commitments to cut carbon and CO² emissions and to reduce our contribution to light pollution. More recently we have seen a steep increase in our energy and ongoing maintenance costs putting more emphasis on the need to introduce and maintain saving initiatives such as PNL. All our initiatives are fully assessed to ensure that they consider the safety and security of our residents.</p> <p>The process used to determine which roads were suitable at the time of implementation, and the mechanisms used to review such decisions, is balanced and justified. The process assesses the safety of users of the highway and implications to crime and disorder and at the time consultations were carried out with residents, the police and other emergency services in which we received little to no adverse comments which would lead us to retain lighting throughout the night in this area.</p> <p>If the residents feel strongly that the lighting in the area should no longer be on a part night light regime, it is recommended that these concerns are raised at their local Safer Neighbourhoods Action Panel or 'SNAP' meeting. Residents can ask for their concerns to be put on the meeting agenda and discussed and if Norfolk Police indicate that they believe crime has increased as a result of part night lighting, this can be reviewed by Norfolk County Council.</p>
7.7	<p>Question from Cllr Chrissie Rumsby</p>

	<p>Will the cabinet member explain her intended approach to using rapidly developing AI in the light of the increasing debate over its use and efficacy?'</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Innovation We see the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a complementary technology to assist our staff with administrative activities and decision making rather than as a replacement. We will continue to proactively evaluate all available AI opportunities to improve the quality and efficiency of our services, building on the intelligent automation approaches which are already well established across the Council. We will risk assess any new approaches to ensure risks to data security or decision making accuracy are fully understood</p>
7.8	<p>Question from Cllr Mike Smith-Clare The message from across Norfolk is our roads are in a poor state and the county council is not listening to local residents. Residents increasingly report they feel the county council takes little notice of their views and makes remote top down decisions only changed through dispute rather than discussion. Councillors close to communities affected by decisions and elected to reflect local views don't have a structure through which they can properly influence decisions. Doesn't the cabinet member for highways agree it is time there were joint arrangements involving district and county councillors at district level so local views and priorities can be properly taken into account in future?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport The County Council maintains the highway in accordance with the Transport Asset management Plan (TAMP) and is the Council's strategic approach that identifies the required allocation of resources for the management, operation, and maintenance of the highway infrastructure for future needs. This method has served Norfolk well with the County performing highly in the annual national road maintenance survey.</p> <p>To help deliver the objectives of TAMP, there are a number of ways that residents can report issues with county roads which are directed to the relevant maintenance teams for inspection and ordering of remedial works. The best way to do this is via the website report a problem page.</p> <p>With regard to larger scale highway projects, the County Council works closely with stakeholders to consider local views and encourages responses as part of individual consultation processes.</p>
7.9	<p>Question from Cllr Brenda Jones Can the cabinet member outline future plans for Benjamin Court and Gray Fairs court?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Thank you for your question.</p> <p>As set out above in the answer to the question from Cllr Stefan Aquarone, we are proposing to re-purpose our reablement services to be home-based rather than in-patient services.</p>

	<p>Both Grays Fair and Benjamin Court have other services on site which will continue. Both sites offer potential for alternative health and social care uses so it is our intention to work with partners to explore other opportunities.</p>
7.10	<p>Question from Cllr Terry Jermy A young 15 year-old Thetford resident tragically lost his life recently following a collision with a car. This follows the death of another resident just a few years ago on the Mundford Road and other incidents locally that have resulted in cyclists and pedestrians being injured.</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member confirm what he is doing to address road safety issues in areas such as Thetford where members of the public are now obviously very concerned?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport? It is distressing to hear of this recent tragic incident and of other traffic crashes which occur on the highway network. Norfolk County Council receives accident data from the police where an injury has occurred and routinely reviews the number, severity and causation of accidents across the county to determine whether engineering intervention is required. I will arrange for you to be contacted directly with regards to concerns in Thetford.</p> <p>You will also be contacted shortly concerning the ongoing programme of Road Safety Community Fund schemes which will be delivered in South Norfolk and Breckland in 2024/25, requesting your input on where funding could be directed within your division.</p>
7.11	<p>Question from Cllr Emma Corlett What advice has the cabinet member received about the risk of putting in a planning application for the Norwich Western Link before the funding and OBC for the NWL have been approved and has accepting that advice led to the item being slipped another month on the cabinet forward plan?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport The advice from the officers involved in the delivery of the NWL is very clear and has informed our decision making regarding the timing of reporting to Cabinet. Until a funding decision is confirmed by DfT (ie approval of our Outline Business Case), and therefore without being able to demonstrate that funding has been established, it would not be prudent to commence with formal statutory approval processes (that includes the planning application, compulsory purchase orders and side road orders). As set out in the response to Cllr Osborne's question, you will hopefully also be aware from the forward plan that we plan to bring a report to the July meeting of Cabinet to provide a project update.</p>
7.12	<p>Question from Cllr Maxine Webb Whilst it is welcome that the cabinet is considering imposing a levy on developers for SEND school places, how does using the number of children with EHCPs as the measure for determining developer contributions align with the DfE Safety Valve</p>

agreement and Local First Inclusion which is underpinned by the council's ambition to reduce the numbers of EHCPs?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Whilst it is welcome that the cabinet is considering imposing a levy on developers for SEND school places, how does using the number of children with EHCPs as the measure for determining developer contributions align with the DfE Safety Valve agreement and Local First Inclusion which is underpinned by the council's ambition to reduce the numbers of EHCPs?

There is a technical aspect to this which requires us to use EHCP data in a specific way now. However, this measure has recently been introduced and we do expect it to evolve over time as the 'real world' application of it develops and, in this way, we believe that there will be ways to ensure that it assists rather than works against our Local First Inclusion programme in the context of the DfE 'safety valve' investment.

Therefore, the technical aspect is as follows. The levy being proposed is based on the overall pupil population and determines those with EHCP for SEND in order to comply with the LA's statutory duty to respond to sufficiency needs, noting in particular that EHCP is required for admission to special school. This measure will be reviewed annually to adapt to the possible changing landscape but will also reflect the level of need and therefore the proportion of need amongst the pupil population.

We will assess the pupil needs from data sources and apply a measure against the proportion of housing, which is in line with how we apply measures for other phases of education in the mainstream sector. Developing this measure will ensure the LA keeps pace with the changing SEND landscape overtime.

Regarding implications for Local First Inclusion, we will determine the use of the funds received to support our plans for increased specialist provision. We will review the commissioning requirement when allocating funds to any project and in time these funds will be reported within the capital SEND spending planning as the demand grows.

7.13

Question from Cllr Ben Price

Last week's Climate Change Committee report showed that 9% of the UK workforce are in sectors that are expected to grow in the transition to net zero, and most notably the retrofit sector is expected to grow significantly. But this is dependent on strong signals, at regional as well as national level, of policy commitment to growing supply chains and ensuring skilled workers are in the right place. Can the Cabinet Member provide details on how training programmes for the retrofit sector are being reinforced with policy and economic strategy commitments to invest in retrofitting to provide certainty to that sector?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

Our climate strategy sets out seven key themes, one of which is *promoting a green economy*. In Norfolk this will include not just retrofit but benefitting from green tourism, from electric vehicle sales and maintenance, and from the offshore wind energy being generated off our coastline.

I am pleased that Norfolk is already substantially ahead of the national average in the number of MCS-certified renewable energy installations being undertaken in homes, which is a sign of market confidence in retrofit, especially for households that are not on the gas grid. We and partners aim to further improve confidence through a number of measures, including:

- Our own programme of retrofit, which will include in the contractual arrangements a requirement for the prime contractor to work with both its supply chain and skills providers on skills and apprenticeships
- The £350,000 *Fast Followers* funding awarded to the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership by Innovate UK to support public awareness of low carbon adaptation opportunities and stimulate the supply chain
- The Norfolk Investment Framework funding of a retrofit skills programme

Second question from Cllr Ben Price

Located within the night-time economy area, the SOS bus helps reduce A&E visits, provides onsite sanctuary to vulnerable users of the night-time economy and is estimated to save the ambulance service around £270,000 annually. Does the Cabinet Member agree with me that if this service is lost it will lead to more cost pressures at the N&N hospital, also potentially putting lives at risk and will they represent those concerns to the CCG?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing

Thank you for your question.

Norfolk County Council do not run this service but our Public Health Team does make a contribution to its cost and has committed funding until March 2025. Norfolk CCG's were abolished a while ago with responsibility being transferred to the Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board (ICB) and I will happily forward your comments on to their Chief Executive.