

Cabinet

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 5 December 2022 in the Council Chamber, County Hall, at 10am

Present:

Cllr Andrew Proctor	Chairman. Leader & Cabinet Member for Strategy and Governance
Cllr Graham Plant	Vice-Chairman. Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy
Cllr Margaret Dewsbury	Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships
Cllr John Fisher	Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Cllr Tom FitzPatrick	Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance
Cllr Andrew Jamieson	Cabinet Member for Finance
Cllr Greg Peck	Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management
Cllr Eric Vardy	Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste
Cllr Martin Wilby	Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport

Executive Directors Present:

James Bullion	Executive Director of Adult Social Services
Paul Cracknell	Executive Director of Transformation and Strategy
Simon George	Executive Director of Finance & Commercial Services
Kat Hulatt	Assistant Director of Governance
Tom McCabe	Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services
Sara Tough	Executive Director of Children's Services

Cabinet Members and Executive Directors introduced themselves.

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies were received from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention and the Deputy Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention.

2 Minutes from the meeting held on Monday 7 November 2022.

- 2.1 Cabinet agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 2022 as an accurate record.

3 Declaration of Interests

- 3.1 No interests were declared.

4 Matters referred to Cabinet by the Scrutiny Committee, Select Committees or by full Council.

- 4.1 None.

5 Update from the Chairman/Cabinet Members

- 5.1 No updates were given.

6 Public Question Time

- 6.1 The list of public questions and the responses is attached to these minutes at Appendix A.
- 6.2.1 Laura Godfrey asked a supplementary question:
- She stated that Aclé called on the Council to give families the security they deserve by extending the food voucher scheme to prevent families starving at this time of year and to make a commitment in writing to do so beyond April 2023.
- 6.2.2 The Chairman replied that the scheme in place by the council would help families until April 2023; Government had put in further money for authorities for the household support fund which would be dealt with when it came through in April 2023.

7 Local Member Questions/Issues

- 7.1 The list of Local Member questions and the responses is attached to these minutes at Appendix B.
- 7.2.1 Cllr Paul Neale asked a supplementary question:
- Cllr Neale asked, in the response to his supplementary question when it stated that Norfolk County Council commissioners were exploring all options for care services whether the administration had an ambition to bring more services in-house or through an arms length company, with possibly more powers being available through devolutionary plans.
- 6.2.2 The Chairman replied that this was something being looked at on a constant basis regarding all services when reviewing how services were provided by the Council.
- 6.3.1 Cllr Brenda Jones asked a supplementary question:
- Cllr Jones asked if the Cabinet Member could guarantee that additional funding for announced by Government for adult social services in Norfolk would be allocated to Adult Social Care and not used for other purposes or to meet savings targets,
- 6.3.2 The Cabinet Member for Finance replied that he could confirm that the Adult Social Care precept, if it was required to be put in place, would be used for social care services.

8. CES Compliance and Enforcement Policy – Annual Review

- 8.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out the Community and Environmental Services Compliance and Enforcement Policy which had been reviewed and updated to reflect recent changes to legislation and guidance.
- 8.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships introduced the report to

Cabinet:

- Community and Environmental Services Compliance and Enforcement Policy provided a framework for services within the department to ensure they worked in a practical and consistent manner.
- Regulatory services were committed to protecting and supporting residents, visitors and businesses in the County and its environment.
- The policy had been updated to meet changes to legislation and guidance and these changes were highlighted in the attached appendix.
- This policy ensured that the responses were proportionate to the offence in question and that there was a consistent and transparent approach.
- The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

8.1.3 The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste introduced the report to Cabinet:

- The Development Plan for the County comprises the Norfolk Core Strategy, Minerals and Waste Development Management Policies and Development Plan Document. There were two elements to the plan which were periodic inspections and investigation and enforcement of planning breaches.
- The council carried out proactive monitoring of mineral extraction sites including in restoration and extraction. Once sites had been restored, inspections would be annual until restoration was fully established, after which time reactive inspections would be carried out in cases of non-compliance
- Supplemental guidelines were given to Community and Environmental Services regulatory services relating to water courses, with Norfolk County Council being the lead local flood authority. The Council could take action to remedy contraventions in this area.

8.1.4 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport introduced the report to Cabinet:

- This report set out the annual review of the Community and Environmental Services Compliance and Enforcement Policy which was the compliance policy reviewed by Community and Environmental Services and updated to reflect changes to legislation and guidance.
- The changes made were mostly for clarification and were highlighted in the explanatory notes.

8.2 The Chairman commended the work done by the regulatory services especially Trading Standards

8.3 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to approve the revised CES Compliance and Enforcement Policy at Appendix A of the report, including its annex documents.

8.4 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

The Policy provides a framework to ensure that we work in an equitable, practical, and consistent manner in the way we deliver regulatory activities and law enforcement. Norfolk County Council is committed to the principles of better regulation, reducing burdens on business with proportionate responses and ensuring we act to protect and support residents, visitors, businesses, and the environment. A range of enforcement approaches is available to the Council

but there is a need to discharge these in a consistent, fair, and transparent way, as well as ensuring that the public or environment is adequately protected.

Appendix B of the report provides enforcement performance information in relation to those regulatory functions covered by the Policy.

8.5 **Alternative Options**

A CES wide Compliance and Enforcement Policy is considered to be the most effective way to demonstrate how CES intends to fulfil its regulatory/legal responsibilities. An alternative option would be for each service area within CES to produce its own policy. However as described in section 4.1 of the report there is need for consistency in overall approach. The format of the draft Policy provides for additional (detailed) protocols where necessary or appropriate.

9. **Better Care Fund 2022/23**

- 9.1.1 Cabinet received the report proposing that Cabinet delegate the completion and execution of the Better Care Fund section 75 agreement to the Executive Director of Adult Social Services. This would allow the agreement to be finalise within timelines as required by the Better Care Fund Planning Requirements.
- 9.1.2 The Executive Director for Adult Social Services introduced the report to Cabinet:
- This report sought delegation to The Executive Director for Adult Social Services for completion and execution of the Better Care Fund section 75 agreement.
 - Agreement was gained from the Health and Wellbeing Board and Cabinet for implementation of the funding and included funding for winter plans as set out in the report at item 10, "Winter Capacity Planning".
- 9.1.3 The Chairman introduced the report to Cabinet:
- The Better Care Fund was placed into a pool fund, governed under an agreement under Section 75 of the NHS Act 2006 under the agreement of the Health and Wellbeing Board, and jointly agreed by the County Council and NHS.
 - It was required to be agreed by the Health and Wellbeing Board as part of the national conditions; as such it was agreed at the meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board on the 9 November 2022.
- 9.2 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships stated that given the tight timescales involved she endorsed the delegation.
- 9.3 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance noted that the use of funding would encourage people to manage their own health and live independently, which he supported.
- 9.4 The Cabinet Member for Finance pointed out that while this funding consisted of over £21m, there was no financial implication to the council; the report ensured good governance of the funding.
- 9.5 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to delegate the authority to complete and execute the Better Care Fund (BCF) section 75 (s75) agreement to James The Executive Director for Adult Social Services, Executive Director Adult Social Services.

9.6 Evidence and Reasons for Decision

Given the tight timelines that exist to seal the Better Care Fund Section 75, it is difficult to do this by coming to Cabinet for final approval. By delegating this task to the Executive Director of Adult Social Services this means the Better Care Fund Section 75 can be finalised within these timelines. We have been advised that Executive Director is an appropriate level for this decision to be delegated to.

9.7 Alternative Options

An alternative option would be to bring the draft Better Care Fund Section 75 to Cabinet to be agreed. For 2022/23 this would mean sealing and finalising the Better Care Fund Section 75 after the required date. For future years we would be able to bring a draft of the Better Care Fund Section 75 to be agreed by Cabinet, and then sealed once assurance by NHS England has been completed.

10. Winter Capacity Planning

- 10.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out a Winter Framework of key activity planned across Adult Social Care and linking with other partners in our Integrated Care System, to support system resilience over the coming months to meet the needs of support our population live as healthy life as possible during winter through working.
- 10.1.2 The Executive Director for Adult Social Services noted the pressure in the health service at that time, as seen in recent news reports. This report set out the importance of working together with the NHS and colleagues in housing to protect people in the community from the cold, pressures of recovering from Covid-19 and the increase in cost-of-living. The Council paid an important role in meeting peoples needs and protecting people.
- 10.1.3 The Chairman introduced the report to Cabinet:
 - The report outlined pressures on the care market and system and known national issues such as workforce shortages, rising demand in referrals and pressures on community healthcare from the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - The report followed on from the integrated winter plan presented to the Integrated Care Partnership focussing on Adult Social Care to respond to demand with actions to meet need, develop resilient communities and care systems and support the wider care market.
 - The pressures on the health and care system had been in place through the summer and in the upcoming winter there was uncertainty around flu, respiratory illness and covid-19 outbreaks and new Covid-19 variants, as well as the impact of the cost-of-living.
 - Modelling by Royal College London suggested similar levels of hospital admissions as last year, 2021, however it was possible that an acute resurgence may be seen if Covid-19 and flu peaked at the same time.
 - The winter plan provided focus on proactive steps being taken to respond to demand on services over the coming months, building on collaborative working developed during the Covid-19 pandemic. The impact of the proposals supported the organisation at system and place level to maintain safe levels of service to prepare to face the strain of the winter.
 - The winter plan was a dynamic plan where activity could be adapted to

meet needs. Activity would be monitored regularly at internal capacity meetings.

- Planning began in September 2022 and was joint with the NHS. The Health and Wellbeing Board would receive regular updates on plans.
- This winter there were extra pressures from increased healthcare needs, post Covid needs, and shortages of healthcare workers and services. The pressures had been evidenced in the recent news of high ambulance wait times.
- Norfolk County Council and the NHS would dedicate spending from grants to winter pressures, with £7m going to social care and £14m to the NHS including £5m national allocation. The Council and NHS were using shared resources as shown by the use of beds in the Norse extra housing scheme.
- The Chairman thanked carers for the work they did supporting family and friends. The council planned to provide care support and financial support for food and heating. There were also plans to make better use of the voluntary sector and the Chairman commended the work they did.
- It was important for families and communities to do their part looking out for neighbours and family members.
- The Executive Director for Adult Social Services was the lead on the National Discharge Task Force and would help the council to stay up to date on best practice. The winter plan had been developed with evidence of best practice from previous years and during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The Chairman moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

10.2 The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste welcomed the plan which showed that the council was proactive in dealing with potential issues.

10.3 The Vice-Chairman noted that there were core objectives to increase. It was important for all people to play their part in looking after people in their communities and contacting services to provide support for them when appropriate.

10.4 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance noted that working together was important and that managing risk to support people to stay at home was key, including the use of assistive technology.

10.5 The Cabinet Member for Finance was encouraged that the report showed there was provision to scale up activity if required.

10.6 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to approve the Winter Capacity Plan and work being carried out with our partners across the social care and health system to support our residents during the coming months.

10.7 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

The winter plan has been developed based on the evidence of effective working during previous winters and the covid pandemic. It offers a responsive way forward based on the available evidence of how demand may rise over the winter period. Cabinet are asked to endorse the activity taking place across adult social care in response to the demand being placed on social care.

10.8 **Alternative Options**

The proposals presented have been developed over time and are seen as the most appropriate solution to respond to the pressures within the social care and health system, within the current financial envelope.

11. Terms of Reference for Transport for Norwich Advisory Committee

11.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out the updated terms of reference of the Transport for Norwich Advisory Committee, agreed at their meeting of the 29 September 2022.

11.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport introduced the report to Cabinet

- At the Norwich Advisory Committee's meeting of 29 September 2022 it was agreed that the updated terms of reference should be recommended to Cabinet for agreement
- The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

11.2 Cabinet **RESOLVED** that the Terms of Reference agreed by the Transport for Norwich Advisory Committee should be endorsed by the Cabinet.

11.3 Evidence and Reasons for Decision

Comments relating to the legal status of this Committee has led to governance issues previously, therefore it has been necessary to update the Terms of Reference and ensure that they are understood by all Members.

11.4 Alternative Options

Continuing with the existing terms of reference will result in confusion and future potential governance issues.

12. Mid-Year Treasury Management Monitoring Report 2022-23

12.1.1 Cabinet received the report providing details of the 2022-23 treasury activities and highlighting compliance with policy and strategy previously approved in relation to treasury management.

12.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report to Cabinet:

- The Report set out how council had performed up to 30 September 2022 against treasury management borrowing strategies 2022-23.
- The treasury management panel reviewed and accepted the mid-year review which had been brought for ratification and would ensure the council was on track to deliver what had been presented to Full Council.
- It was important to maintain cash borrowing and investment levels within the levels set out within the investment paper 2022-23.
- Of £80m new borrowing budgeted for in 2022-23, by mid-year the amount borrowed was £0.
- It was not possible to borrow now at the rates available last year, at less than 2%, however the public works loan board rates had fallen since

September 2022. The period of coherent fiscal policy would allow the council to borrow at 3.6% when required.

- The forecast £895m level of total borrowing was less at mid-year than forecast in April 2022, and £7.45m had been repaid.
- The council was well under the various prudential borrowing limits required to operate within and it was forecast this would still be the case by the end of the financial year.
- Cash levels were £275m at the end of September 2022 and if the forecast £80m was borrowed, this would be £340m by year end.

12.2 The Chairman noted the amount of borrowing set out in the report however was assured that there were means to repay the borrowing, and that the programme would benefit the residents of Norfolk. The Cabinet Member for Finance replied that the rates that the Council had been able to borrow at over the last years had allowed programmes to be put in place which would benefit people and the economy of Norfolk for years to come.

12.3 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to endorse and recommend to County Council the Mid-Year Treasury Management Monitoring Report 2022-23

12.4 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

One annex is attached to the report, giving details of treasury management activities and outcomes, including:

1. Investment activities
2. Borrowing strategy and outcomes
3. Capital Plan and non-treasury investments
4. Prudential indicators

12.5 **Alternative Options**

In order to achieve treasury management in accordance with the Council's treasury management strategy, no viable alternative options have been identified to the recommendation in the report.

13. **Finance Monitoring Report 2022-23 P7: October 2022**

13.1.1 Cabinet received the report providing a summary of the forecast financial position for the 2022-23 Revenue and Capital Budgets, General Balances, and the Council's Reserves at 31 March 2023, together with related financial information.

13.1.2 The Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services noted that the report exemplified the inflationary pressures Norfolk County Council would have to face in-year which would need to be considered when setting the budget.

13.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report to Cabinet:

- For some months there had been high concerns in demand led spending departments from a range of pressures leading to higher costs putting pressure on budgets.
- The forecast revenue outturn for period 7 saw an increased overspend in Children's Services where a £20m cost over-run had built up. This was

mitigated by use of departmental reserves to deliver a net departmental overspend of £14.479m

- Adult Social Services were seeing increased pressures leading to an overspend while savings in the finance department mitigated the overall overspend to £3m
- Since the start of the year Children's Services had highlighted rising costs in social care placements however new models to keep children out of care and reduce young people and children who were looked after had not been as successful as forecast mainly because the number of children requiring the most complex care had increased leading to an increased cost of care and fewer foster carers coming forward was increasing strain on the department.
- In addition to this, inflation and staff retention by external providers increased the overspend in home to school transport at £6m over budget. This was a huge month-on-month increase reflecting the new scheme put in place at the start of the academic year and dwarfing savings made in this area. As the financial year progressed, the council would look to departmental reserves to mitigate overspends and support the service in their transformation programme.
- Section 2.18 and 2.19 of the report showed that Adult Social Services anticipated higher demand lead pressures than forecast. Despite an investment of £18m in the care market, many care providers had closed, leading to higher placement costs as new homes were found for residents.
- The overspend in finance general was due to property costs such as utility and energy costs.
- Departments were expected to absorb the £6m current year pay inflation of 7%. This would be achieved via savings or use of departmental reserves.
- Finance general forecast an underspend of £13.737m. Apart from a one-off saving due to a change in minimum revenue contribution together with higher revenue on cash balances a £6m saving had been made from use of business rates reserve and flexible use of capital receipts.
- The use of reserves now would mean they were not available to use in next year's budget setting.
- Key passages from the autumn statement were set out in the report.
- Significant cost pressures were emerging across all departments driven by demand, inflation, the local government pay award and national living wage.
- The capital programme had increased by £40.826m in October 2022 due to a revised funding because of an increased budget associated with the Norwich Western Link, announced and agreed by Cabinet and Council in July 2022. If this was not needed it would not be drawn down and so had not been added to liabilities. The overall increase included an anticipated grant of £4.118m to fund the West Winch Bypass. Financing of the capital programme was shown in table 4 of the report.
- Of the total capital budgeted to be spend in 2022-23, £192m would come from grant funding and external contributions
- Item 3 of appendix 3 showed over £50m capital receipts for this financial year. Some of this had been used to support transformation costs. The remaining £30m could be used to support capital spending if needed.

- 13.2 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services noted that there had been a tightening of the market, and increased inflation and increased staffing costs impacting on the costs levied to the council for home to school transport. The increase in number of schools for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and special resource bases would hopefully reduce these costs over time. Children's Services were looking to recruit foster carers; an advertising stand was in John Lewis in Norwich which had received positive feedback. The number of children in care showed that the transformation programme was having an impact as the figure was against the national trend where numbers were increasing. Costs in Norfolk were increasing as they were nationally and was due to the increase seen in support needs of young people in care. The Safety Valve work being carried out with the Department for Education would hopefully impact on the Children's Services budget.
- 13.3 The Chairman noted the cost on the council for looking after children in care. He pointed out that page 262 of the report highlighted the use for reserves.
- 13.4 Cabinet **RESOLVED**
1. To recommend to full Council the addition of **£40.921m** to the capital programme to address capital funding requirements funded mostly from various external sources as set out in detail in capital Appendix 3 of the report, paragraph 4.1 and 4.2 as follows:
 - £38.826m grant funding updates from the Department of Transport for various capital projects, including the West Winch Bypass £3.188m and the NWL £35.596m
 - £2m uplift to the Schools ICT Refresh budget for the rolling programme
 - £0.095m uplift to the Norwich Castle: Royal Palace Reborn project to fund monitoring and quality assurance measures (see Appendix 3 of the report: Note 4.2)
 2. Subject to full Council approval of recommendation 1 to delegate:
 - 2.1) To the Director of Procurement authority to undertake the necessary procurement processes including the determination of the minimum standards and selection criteria (if any) and the award criteria; to shortlist bidders; to make provisional award decisions (in consultation with the Chief Officer responsible for each scheme); to award contracts; to negotiate where the procurement procedure so permits; and to terminate award procedures if necessary.
 - 2.2) To the Director of Property authority (notwithstanding the limits set out at 5.13.6 and 5.13.7 of Financial Regulations) to negotiate or tender for or otherwise acquire the required land to deliver the schemes (including temporary land required for delivery of the works) and to dispose of land so acquired that is no longer required upon completion of the scheme;
 - 2.3) To each responsible chief officer authority to:
 - (in the case of two-stage design and build contracts) agree the price for the works upon completion of the design stage and direct that the works proceed; or alternatively direct that the works be recompeted
 - approve purchase orders, employer's instructions, compensation events or other contractual instructions necessary to effect changes in contracts that are necessitated by discoveries, unexpected ground conditions, planning conditions, requirements arising from detailed design or minor changes in scope

- subject always to the forecast cost including works, land, fees and disbursements remaining within the agreed scheme or programme budget.
 - That the officers exercising the delegated authorities set out above shall do so in accordance with the council's Policy Framework, with the approach to Social Value in Procurement endorsed by Cabinet at its meeting of 6 July 2020, and with the approach set out in the paper entitled "Sourcing strategy for council services" approved by Policy & Resources Committee at its meeting of 16 July 2018.
3. To recognise the period 7 general fund revenue forecast of a £3.011m overspend (0.65% of net budget), noting also that Executive Directors will take measures to reduce or eliminate potential over-spends where these occur within services;
 4. To recognise the period 7 forecast of 92% savings delivery in 2022-23, noting also that Executive Directors will continue to take measures to mitigate potential savings shortfalls through alternative savings or underspends;
 5. To note the forecast General Balances at 31 March 2023 of **£23.840m**, assuming the Council will mitigate the overspends reported in P7.
 6. To note the expenditure and funding of the revised current and future 2021-26 capital programmes.
 7. To note the update on the Autumn Statement and that implications of Government announcements will be reflected in the Council's 2023-24 budget planning and further informed by the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement expected later in December.

13.5 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

Three appendices are attached to the report giving details of the forecast revenue and capital financial outturn positions:

Appendix 1 of the report summarises the revenue outturn position, including:

- Forecast over and under spends
- Changes to the approved budget
- Reserves
- Savings

Appendix 2 of the report summarises the key working capital position, including:

- Treasury management
- Payment performance and debt recovery.

Appendix 3 of the report summarises the capital outturn position, and includes:

- Current and future capital programmes
- Capital programme funding
- Income from property sales and other capital receipts.

Additional capital funds will enable services to invest in assets and infrastructure as described in Appendix 3 of the report, section 4.

13.6 **Alternative Options**

To deliver a balanced budget, no viable alternative options have been identified to the recommendations in this report. In terms of financing the proposed capital expenditure, no further grant or revenue funding has been identified to fund the expenditure, apart from the funding noted in Appendix 3 of the report.

14 **Reports of the Cabinet Member and Officer Delegated Decisions made since the last Cabinet meeting**

- 14.1 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to **note** the Delegated Decisions made since the last Cabinet meeting

The meeting ended at 10:51

Chairman of Cabinet

Cabinet
5 December 2022
Public & Local Member Questions

	Public Question Time
6.1	<p>Question from John Killett</p> <p>As a business owner supplying goods to hospitality in Norwich and Norfolk the recent closing of Exchange street to all vehicles between 10pm to 4pm is causing myself and other companies a logistical nightmare. Many of my customers don't open until after 10am. Trying to access Norwich city centre with the constant traffic delays to deliver goods, now means my vehicles and staff are having to leave our Lenwade warehouse at 7am, to try to do our 20 plus Norwich deliveries a day. Couldn't there be a permit system introduced for delivery vehicles allowing them to access exchange street to deliver. This would prevent the current chaos being caused.</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>Traffic restrictions on Exchange Street were first introduced in 2020 with the road being closed to general traffic at all times of the day, with the exception to this being that loading and unloading could take place between 5pm and 10am.</p> <p>Following feedback received during public consultations the permitted times for loading and unloading were changed to between 4pm and 10am. In addition, in response to feedback received, a 3.5t maximum weight loading loop was implemented close to Exchange Street which vehicles can use throughout the day to load and unload. This route is via Pottergate, Lobtser Lane, Bedford Street, Little London Street, London Street and exiting via Gaol Hill.</p> <p>The restrictions in Exchange Street are consistent with other areas of the city centre such as Gentlemans Walk, Castle Street and Haymarket.</p> <p>Exchange Street is an area dominated by people walking around the city, making it an unsuitable route for the levels of traffic that previously used the road. This restriction makes it safer and easier to get around on foot, supports outdoor hospitality and the local economy, and improves air quality. The feedback we have received has been broadly supportive and people are keen to see the pedestrian zone free of traffic.</p> <p>The Exchange Street restriction is covered by an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order and any objections and representations relating to this Order can be made in writing and sent to the office of nplaw, Norfolk County Council, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2DH, marked for the attention of Ms A L Wilton by 17th May 2023. They may also be emailed to trafficorders@norfolk.gov.uk.</p>
6.2	<p>Question from Laura Godfrey</p> <p>The effects of food poverty, from low energy to serious malnutrition, fall hardest on the young. There is nothing children can do to feed themselves. Thousands of parents are facing the choice between starving themselves or avoiding bills and feeding their kids. With inflation soaring, more families are struggling than ever before. Norfolk County Council should stand with families on the brink of disaster by providing fair, consistent and accessible support. Will you, as the leaders of Norfolk County Council, extend the cost of living vouchers beyond April and make them permanent?</p>

Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy

We recognise the challenges that Norfolk families are facing. Alongside a multi-million pound package of wider support for communities, we are already providing cost of living vouchers to around 30,000 children in the county who are eligible for free school meals. We recently committed a further £3.6m to enable this support to continue until the end of April 2023. This provides £15 per child per month with an additional £30 at Christmas for free school meals eligible children.

As part of the Autumn statement, the Government announced that the Household Support Fund will be extended over 2023/24. This decision is very much welcomed and we hope this will enable this support to continue, subject to the government rules on the use of the fund.

**Cabinet
5 December 2022
Local Member Questions**

	Local Member Issues/Questions
7.1	<p>Question from Cllr Alexandra Kemp Can Cabinet take collective responsibility and stop putting highways officers at risk of public complaints about the dangerous state of the cycle lanes along the A10? Insufficient resource and inadequate intervention criteria along the A10 Growth Corridor, make residents less confident to walk or cycle. Only 6-weekly inspections, mean weedy overgrowth leaves the Hardwick to Setchey path, insufficient width for pedestrian safety from oncoming cyclists, or for two wheelchairs to pass.</p> <p>A resident writes This path is no longer fit for purpose and dangerous particularly if you meet a cyclist. Covered in places by about three feet at least of undergrowth.</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways Infrastructure and Transport We have been notified of issues on this stretch of highway and our Highways Teams are currently arranging a meeting on site to walk the route to view what remedial action is required.</p>
7.2	<p>Question from Cllr Rhodri Oliver The cabinet member will agree with me on the need to protect Norfolk taxpayers at this difficult time. Can he confirm that despite the announced increase in the referendum limit, he will not be supporting a combined rise in council tax and ASC that is greater than 2.99% as stated in the MTFS in October's cabinet papers.</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Finance I am acutely aware of the pressures facing tax payers and the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on Norfolk residents. However, I do not believe it is appropriate to prejudge the level of council tax that will be required to set a balanced budget for 2023-24, particularly when we await detail of funding allocations in the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement later in December, and the feedback from the public consultation which is currently underway. The level of council tax for 2023-24 remains a matter for Full Council to decide on, taking into account all elements of the budget including pressures, proposed savings, and the Chief Finance Officer's advice about the robustness of the overall budget. At this point in the budget-setting process, there are significant cost pressures emerging across all services, driven by demand levels, inflation, the local government pay award, and the level of the national living wage to name but a few. It is therefore critical that we maintain maximum flexibility when considering council tax increases in the coming years, particularly when Government has set out a clear expectation for local authorities to address inflationary pressures via locally raised council tax. I would add that Council Tax funding on this basis is unsustainable over the long term.</p>

	<p>Second Question from Cllr Rhodri Oliver</p> <p>I commend Cllr Jamieson's ongoing efforts to keep members informed of important budget considerations. Section 9 of his MTFS report in the October Cabinet meeting referenced risks to the council's budget position which might increase the gap from the previous £60m total for 23-24. Please can he confirm the total savings that have now been identified to date for the 23-24 period and the concomitant size of any remaining gap including the quantification of those aforementioned risks?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Finance</p> <p>Thank you for your question. I am very conscious of the need to keep Members informed of progress in the development of the Council's budget. However, as we speak, work is underway to continue to drive out robust and deliverable saving proposals across the organisation, with further internal sessions scheduled for the week commencing 12 December. The timetable was set out in the paper that you reference. In addition, as referenced in my previous response, there are further emerging pressures being quantified, and there is material uncertainty around funding levels which are due to be announced in the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement. In this context, I do not think it helpful to give a public running commentary on the overall quantum of proposals or the size of the budget gap. However, based on the information currently available, I am assured that it will be possible for a robust and balanced Budget to be proposed to Full Council by the Cabinet in January 2023.</p>
7.3	<p>Question from Cllr Rob Colwell</p> <p>What reassurances can be provided to the residents of Norfolk in relation to the refugee and asylum seekers being placed in Norfolk hotels? This follows criticism from the Head of Paid Service of a 'rush job' and the short lead-in time councils have had to ensure support services, together with reports of diphtheria from a centre in Kent from where the asylum seekers may have arrived.</p> <p>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy</p> <p>We have made our point to the Home office that any plans to locate further refugees in Hotels' in Norfolk must be in negotiation and agreement with Local Authorities so that local support services can be put in place. Any additional funding implications must be provided by the Home Office.</p>
7.4	<p>Question from Cllr Lucy Shires</p> <p>What is the current average waiting time for an initial adult social service assessment, and from that point what is the average waiting time for the financial assessment?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention</p> <p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>People on the Council's holding list are waiting for a range of different reasons only one of which is assessments. Given the way that the data is recorded it is not possible to give the average waiting time for an assessment. The list changes on a daily basis, as the front-line managers rigorously review and</p>

	<p>ensure that the most urgent cases are dealt with as soon as is possible. With regards to financial assessments, waiting time is not specifically recorded, however from the record it is possible to extrapolate that the Council makes contact with individuals on average 9 days after the initial request comes through. This is the beginning of the financial assessment process, albeit a number of the assessments are very straight forward and may well be resolved almost immediately at that point.</p>
7.5	<p>Question from Cllr Brian Watkins I have previously criticised this Conservative administration for ‘chugging along in the slow lane’ when it comes to setting up new electric charging points across the county. What do you think the Chancellor’s recent imposition of excise duty on electric vehicles from 2025 will have on the Council’s ability to achieve its carbon net zero targets by 2030?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport Insofar as the impact the Chancellor’s announcement has on the uptake on electric vehicles, the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders does not see it impacting in the long-run, given that the government has a 2030 target whereby internal combustion engine vehicles will no longer be on sale from that year.</p> <p>Electric charging points installations in the county continue to be installed with or without the County Council’s intervention, including a major EV charging hub installed on the outskirts of Norwich at Postwick via the company Gridserve, as an expansion of their UK network. As far as the County Council is concerned, we have installed a number of charging points at County Hall which will be greatly increased in the new year, as well as a plan to install points across our estate. These are anticipated to be installed early next year. In addition to this some Members have chosen to use their allowance to support charging points in their community. We are also working with UK Power Networks to facilitate on-street charging points in Norwich, through their ‘Charge Point Collective’ initiative. This project is currently out to tender after finalising our locations, and we hope that this will result in charge point installation in the spring/summer of next year. We are also seeking funding for a separate programme to rollout charging points in rural locations for 2023, and are continuing to explore funding opportunities and collaborations with third parties going forward.</p> <p>Second question from Cllr Brian Watkins Over the years the Norfolk and Norwich economy has been boosted by international students studying at the county’s universities and colleges. Would you agree with the Liberal Democrats that any Government moves to clamp down on the number of students entering the UK to study would be an act of economic self-harm?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy The institutions that have the data on the number of international students studying at the county’s HEI’s or colleges and progression data for those students moving into employment would be better placed to answer that question.</p>

	We are unable to provide an evidence base for the statement so cannot answer the question.
7.6	<p>Question from Cllr Steffan Aquarone What do you think that the Chancellor's Autumn Statement means for the future of Norfolk's major capital infrastructure projects?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport We will continue to work with DfT to seek funding approvals for our projects. I was pleased to host the Roads Minister in the County last week and he is interested and impressed by the breadth of our roads, public transport and active travel programme.</p>
7.7	<p>Question from Cllr Sharon Blundell What message would you like to send out to the Norfolk public that they will receive better governance should the proposed County Deal come to fruition?</p> <p>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy The Governance change required to agree a level 3 Deal for Norfolk would see a Directly Elected Leader in place from May 2024. This will allow the residents of Norfolk to have a say on who will lead the Authority and provide a single point of contact for Government, allowing greater influence over national policy and a direct link to Westminster.</p>
7.8	<p>Question from Cllr Saul Penfold Disabled People against the Cuts (Norfolk) and UNISON has accused your administration of not doing enough to lobby government for more money to properly fund under pressure services such as adult social care. How do you answer this charge?</p> <p>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy Since the change in Government following the election of Rishi Sunak I have written to the Health Secretary and the Chancellor re-iterating the need for Fair Funding for local government and proper funding for Adult Social Care Reform. We have created joint lobbying documents with local Disability Groups and continue to engage with service users to represent their experiences to Government. We have scheduled meetings with Norfolk's MPs to emphasise to them the importance of this issue to us and our communities.</p>
7.9	<p>Question from Cllr Tim Adams It has been estimated that around 10,000 new homes have been delayed because of the adverse effects on wildlife habitat sites caused by phosphates and nitrates from wastewater generated by new developments. What role is Norfolk County Council playing in trying to unlock the standstill in the planning system resulting from the nutrient neutrality issue?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste Cllr Adams is referring to Natural England's Nutrient Neutrality catchment areas incorporating the Wensum and Broads catchments which affects all Norfolk's Local Planning Authority (LPAs) areas to some extent. LPAs are unable to</p>

	<p>determine housing related planning applications in affected areas until developers have assessed and brought forward appropriate mitigation measures to deal with increased phosphates and nitrates arising from proposed development that involves 'additional overnight accommodation'.</p> <p>The County Council has embarked on a number of actions to help bring forward solutions to unlock housing development, working closely with Norfolk's district councils. Consultants have been commissioned to build on the initial work by Natural England. This ensures that nutrient assessments of new developments in Norfolk can be accurate and properly targeted only to those developments that have an actual impact in the protected catchments. As a landowner we are also playing a leading role nationally along with partners and we are pioneering new land management practices through our Gressenhall Environment Hub and the Wendling Beck project. This project will not only develop our own land management practices, but those across the county and nationally, which will help ensure that new development can come forward in a way that also addresses the pollution issues that affect our rivers.</p> <p>We continue to work closely with our district colleagues and the water industry to progress the introduction of a credit-based system to fund mitigation measures following on from the completion of the commissioned modelling and local calculator to inform a locally derived evidence base.</p>
7.10	<p>Question from Cllr Jamie Osborn</p> <p>In 2019 Norfolk County Council agreed an environmental policy that stated it would work towards making the entire county carbon neutral by 2030. Over three years later, and Norfolk is on track to still be overshooting that target in 2050, let alone 2030.</p> <p>Does the Cabinet Member agree that the council's current and projected policies are utterly insufficient to reach carbon neutrality, and if he does not agree, please can he provide detailed evidence of how the council's policies will deliver carbon neutrality by 2030.</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</p> <p>We recognise that the targets in the Environmental Policy are a challenge, however as far as this affects meeting them on our own estate, we feel we are on track with building on reducing direct emissions by the target date of 2030.</p> <p>The County Council also remains focused on pursuing initiatives to support the transition to a carbon neutral economy across Norfolk working in partnership with others. We continue in supporting the 1 Million Trees for Norfolk target; the roll out of EV infrastructure, which will be instrumental in supporting the switch to zero carbon vehicles. In addition, supporting wider sustainable transportation initiatives, including low carbon public transport and many active travel initiatives to help increase opportunities for walking and cycling.</p> <p>The Council has also launched the Norfolk Infrastructure Framework (NIF) grant aided pilot programme this autumn. The NIF addresses four key challenges, one of which is climate change.</p>

	<p>The recent COP 27 has highlighted the need collectively to continue our efforts to reduce emissions, but equally the need to accept that our historic emissions legacy leaves us with the understanding that we must adapt to the inevitable changes that will happen.</p> <p>The Council remains committed to working collectively with others to proactively address these wider challenges facing Norfolk as a whole.</p> <p>Second question from Cllr Jamie Osborn Can the Cabinet Member for Highways guarantee that the project costs of the Norwich Western Link will not exceed £200 million? And if not, can he guarantee an upper limit for the NWL costs?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport The project costs for the NWL were set out in the report that was agreed by Cabinet in July this year. The report set out the overall budget and the allowances included for risk and inflation. Any changes to the agreed budget, if they occur, will be brought back to Cabinet for it to consider.</p>
7.11	<p>Question from Cllr Ben Price The Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance says that it needs £80m to complete its work keeping Norfolk residents and businesses safe. In the last decade, Anglian Water paid out £1.5bn in dividends to its shareholders. Does the Cabinet Member agree, as Cllr Greg Peck implied at Scrutiny on 23 November in response to a question from Cllr Osborn, that people's water bills should not be paying for private investors' profits while there is a need for investment to prevent leaks, sewage overflows and flooding in Norfolk?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste The privatisation of water companies is a longstanding and national approach. Locally, here in Norfolk, I can see Anglian Water's commitment to the funding and delivery of projects identified by the Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance and I expect that commitment to continue with Anglian Water being a key partner in the delivery of the objectives of the Alliance. And in relation to combined sewer overflows, this matter was considered recently by the County Council's Scrutiny Committee which decided further consideration should be given to this topic at a future meeting and with the involvement of Anglian Water and the Environment Agency.</p> <p>Second question from Cllr Ben Price There is growing demand from staff who have local government pensions for climate-friendly pension options. The pensions committee has previously resisted calls to divest from fossil fuels and invest instead in climate-friendly options. Does the Cabinet Member not agree that staff should at least have the option to invest their pension in funds that will help not damage our future, and investigate options such as the Hymans-Robertson Climate Impact Initiative?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Finance The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) is a defined benefit (DB) pension scheme. This means that members of the scheme earn pension benefits set out in statutory regulation. Employee contributions are made at a</p>

	<p>fixed level and the underwriting risk of the pension promise is retained by the employer. The Hymans Robertson Climate Change Initiative is made in relation to defined contribution (DC) schemes. Under a DC arrangement the ultimate pension received is based on the performance of the underlying investments i.e. the investment risk is retained by the member not the employer. Fund choice is generally relevant to DC but not DB pension arrangements. Under a DC arrangement the member has an individual “pot” of assets but in a DB scheme there is a collective asset pool to back the pension promise. Where member choices are provided the individual member “eats their own cooking” in terms of the impact on their own ultimate pension outcome.</p> <p>The pension promise made to around 100,000 members of the Norfolk Pension Fund is backed by a diversified investment portfolio of just under £5 billion. Responsibility for setting investment strategy and monitoring these assets is delegated to the Pensions Committee.</p> <p>The Pensions Committee regularly reviews investment and funding strategy. This includes monitoring and publishing climate risk metrics in its public equity (shares) portfolio and incorporating climate risk analysis as part of its formal valuation process. It is also a substantial investor in renewables and the energy transition within its infrastructure portfolios. The investments assets of the Fund are held and managed is to ensure the long term payment of pensions to its members.</p> <p>The Fund has developed cleared Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) policies in relation to its investment portfolio. These are published on its website www.norfolkpensionfund.org</p> <p>The Fund believes in responsible investment. Responsible investment is an approach to investing that aims to incorporate ESG factors into investment decisions, to better manage risk and generate the sustainable, long-term returns required to pay pensions. Responsible investment does not require ruling out investment in any sector or company but should frame the approach to making the decision to own and manage ownership of any specific assets.</p>
7.12	<p>Question from Cllr Paul Neale</p> <p>In 2020 the Jeasal Cawston Park residential care facility had 3 questionable deaths resulting in its closure. We now have a care facility for adults with severe autism in Bowthorpe facing imminent closure, resulting in some residents being placed with providers over 100 miles away. Surely we should look into bringing such vulnerable people into bespoke Council run facilities. Does the cabinet member agree that we should review creating such inhouse facilities and stop the current ambition of this administration to savagely cut next year's Adult Social Services budget by £25.1 million?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention</p> <p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>I am sure that you are already aware but Cawston Park Hospital provided a service directly to the NHS and was not commissioned by Norfolk County Council to provide any service nor was anyone in our care placed there.</p>

	<p>Lambert House is a residential home specialising in autism and Norfolk County Council funded 5 of its residents; of these, only 1 person has been placed out of county. This is due to a national shortage of specialist autism placements. The other NCC funded residents have been found alternative placements in Norfolk. NCC commissioners are exploring all options to encourage more provision in Norfolk.</p>
7.13	<p>Question from Cllr Matthew Reilly</p> <p>It is encouraging to see Swaffham trialling a 20mph speed limit across the town. Speeding is a significant issue in my area and a concern for residents across West Earlham. Will the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure and Transport agree to discussions with myself and community members on how we can move forward with a similar trial in my area?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>A review of the environment, nature of highway activity and quantity of vulnerable user in Swaffham has identified that a 20mph zone may be appropriate. As such the Town Council and Local Member have agreed to fund an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) which will establish the effectiveness of a reduced speed limit and whether a permanent Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) should be taken forward in the future.</p> <p>Similar schemes could be considered where they meet the requirements as defined in the Speed Management Strategy and officers would be pleased to discuss potential schemes with Members.</p>
7.14	<p>Question from Cllr Emma Corlett</p> <p>Lancashire County Council is the latest local authority to pause a significant infrastructure project, following the likes of Oxfordshire, Cumbria and Devon County Councils. The cost of the Norwich Western Link is spiralling out of control due to inflation even before it has obtained approval, with the project now likely to exceed £300 million.</p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport finally do the right thing, press the red button and end this reckless project before it bankrupts the Council?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>It is not agreed that the project costs for the Norwich Western Link are spiralling out of control. An update for the project was provided in the report agreed by Cabinet in July this year, which included details about the allowances for risk and inflation. It also set out the reasons why the project is important for Norfolk and the residents in communities suffering from increasing traffic impacts. Any changes to the agreed project budget, if they occur, will be brought back to Cabinet for it to consider.</p>
7.15	<p>Question from Cllr Julie Brociek-Coulton</p> <p>Families in my Division, Sewell, are concerned that because early years providers are not receiving enough funding to keep up with rising costs at the</p>

	<p>moment that these will have to be met by providers putting up the cost of childcare, or they will go out of business entirely. Can the Cabinet Member for Childrens Services explain what actions the Council is taking to support providers and provide assurances to parents that their childcare costs won't be going up?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services The Department for Education provides funding to Norfolk County Council which is distributed to providers by a locally agreed formula. Norfolk is one of 44 local authorities who receive the lowest rate of funding under the national funding formula. We are awaiting details of our allocation from DfE for 23/24 and the outcome of the national consultation that took place during the summer. This information should be shared with LAs this month.</p> <p>We agree that current rates of funding are insufficient, and have been for some time. The current rises in costs mean that we are working with a larger number of providers than usual who are facing financial issues.</p> <p>Our support includes advice on business planning, provision and analysis of information on local sufficiency of places, financial advice and signposting, and short term grants for provision that is in an area where places are needed.</p> <p>We would ask any provider that is facing difficulties to contact the Local Authority through the Early Years Advice Line (01603 222300, opt 3) at the earliest opportunity so support can be provided.</p>
7.16	<p>Question from Cllr Alison Birmingham With over 100 current social worker/assistant practioner vacancies, can the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention confirm how soon he expects these vacancies to be filled and what new measures the Council is considering in order to increase the workforce and take pressure off our existing, hardworking social work staff?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention Thank you for your question.</p> <p>As you will already be aware from previous Full Council Meetings, Adult Social Services recognises the challenges that staff vacancies place on front-line services. Nationally the recruitment position for social care remains extremely challenging and in response to these pressures the Council has transformed its approach to recruitment to enable a strong data-led improvement methodology.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In August 2022 we introduced a Golden Hello of £2k for all social worker roles. • In September 2022 we launched a joint "We Care" multimedia marketing campaign with Childrens Services targeting 400 applications (40 roles.) This will run for 6 months. We also launched a County wide recruitment campaign for NFS vacancies targeting local residents. • In October 2022 we created a centralised recruitment admin function to minimise administrative burden on teams.

	<p>In November 2022 we launched our ASSD workforce strategy which sets out 7 key areas of focus to drive workforce improvement.</p> <p>The Council also introduced protected training time for Social Workers and OTs; centralised the tracking of vacancies and the performance of recruitment process; introduced a weekly DLT review of the recruitment position to drive targeted intervention and instigated weekly retention and recruitment workstream meetings to drive targeted improvements to the recruitment process.</p> <p>Further activities are also planned to include a new international recruitment approach and investing into our support offer for international staff; a focused resource to manage shortlisting and coordinate interviews for all social worker roles and from December 2022 it will be possible to offer advance payments on relocation expenses and mileage expenses to support the cost of living impact for new and existing staff.</p>
7.17	<p>Question from Cllr Brenda Jones</p> <p>Even with the additional capacity outlined in the Winter Capacity Plan report to Cabinet, it is still not enough to deal with existing need, let alone any surge in demand from Winter pressures on the health and social care system. Can the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention confirm what more he plans to do to tackle the care emergency and who he is expecting to carry out the additional care hours outlined in the report?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention</p> <p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>Norfolk's Adult Social Care Winter Plan forms part of a wider Winter Framework of key activity planned across Adult Social Care, NHS Norfolk and Waveney and the wider Integrated Care System partners. The system is acting as one to ensure resilience over the coming months to meet the needs of our population, to maintain high quality and safe service provision as we continue to deal with the increased demand due to the COVID pandemic as well as the additional strain that winter and cold weather inevitably bring. The plan is fully supported by the Integrated Care Partnership and includes capacity to address increased demand over the winter period across health and social care. Specific additional capacity is being delivered by Norfolk County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to home care providers across the care market, including enhanced hourly rates, and increased block commissioned capacity, • Additional resources to support provision of reablement over the winter, • Housing with Care flats to be used as innovative community step down beds to provide short term 24/7 home care support, • NCC supporting deployment of NHS intermediate care beds for hospital discharge.
7.18	<p>Question from Cllr Maxine Webb</p> <p>With over 1700 people across Norfolk waiting for an assessment of their care needs at the moment, can the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention confirm how long he expects it will take to deal with all</p>

current outstanding assessments and when he expects our hard-working staff will be able to clear this huge backlog?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention

Thank you for your question.

Staff are working extremely hard in a challenging environment as they work through the extra workload caused by the Covid pandemic. Each team is working to a plan and trajectory of reducing the numbers of people waiting for a complex assessment to 100 per locality by May 2023. This manageable level is regarded by senior operational managers as a base level for the intake and management of new referrals including prioritising those most in need. All holding lists have been stratified according to risk and those people most at risk of harm (safeguarding), carer breakdown or adverse impact on their health and wellbeing are being prioritised daily. The achievement of the holding list reduction is dependent on positively addressing staff vacancies, particularly in registered roles such as social worker and occupational therapists, where there is a national recruitment shortage. In addition, new ways of working are being introduced through the work in our Connecting Communities programme that will support the holding list reduction. The Director Leadership team oversee progress and address barriers to achievement through weekly governance meetings where the performance is reviewed, and further remedial actions taken.