

Environment, Transport & Development Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Date: **Wednesday 13 July 2011**

Time: **10.30am**

Venue: **Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

Persons attending the meeting are requested to turn off mobile phones.

Membership

Mr A Adams
Dr A Boswell (Green Spokesperson)
Mr A Byrne
Mrs M Chapman-Allen
Mr N Dixon
Mr P Duigan
Mr T East (Liberal Democratic Spokesperson)
Mr M Hemsley
Mr B Iles
Mr J Joyce
Mr M Langwade
Mr B Stone
Dr M Strong
Mr J Ward
Mr A White
Mr R Wright

Non Voting Cabinet Members

Mr B Borrett	Environment and Waste
Mr H Humphrey	Community Protection
Mr G Plant	Planning and Transportation
Mrs A Steward	Economic Development

Non Voting Deputy Cabinet Member

Mr J Mooney	Sustainable Development
Mr B Spratt	Roads

**For further details and general enquiries about this Agenda
please contact the Committee Administrator:**

Vanessa Dobson on 01603 223029
or email committees@norfolk.gov.uk

A g e n d a

1. To receive apologies and details of any substitute members attending

2. Election of Chairman

3. Election of Vice-Chairman

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2011

(Page **1**)

To confirm the minutes of the Environment Transport and Development Overview & Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 16 March 2011

5. Members to Declare any Interests

Please indicate whether the interest is a personal one only or one which is prejudicial. A declaration of a personal interest should indicate the nature of the interest and the agenda item to which it relates. In the case of a personal interest, the member may speak and vote on the matter. Please note that if you are exempt from declaring a personal interest because it arises solely from your position on a body to which you were nominated by the County Council or a body exercising functions of a public nature (e.g. another local authority), you need only declare your interest if and when you intend to speak on a matter. If a prejudicial interest is declared, the member should withdraw from the room whilst the matter is discussed unless members of the public are allowed to make representations, give evidence or answer questions about the matter, in which case you may attend the meeting for that purpose. You must immediately leave the room when you have finished or the meeting decides you have finished, if earlier.

These declarations apply to all those members present, whether the member is part of the meeting, attending to speak as a local member on an item or simply observing the meeting from the public seating area.

6. To receive any items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency

7. Public Question Time

15 minutes for questions from members of the public of which due notice has been given.

Please submit your question(s) to the person named on the front of this agenda by 5pm on Friday 8 July 2011. For guidance on submitting public questions, please refer to the Council Constitution Appendix 10, Council Procedure Rules or [Norfolk County Council - Overview and Scrutiny Panel Public Question Time and How to attend Meetings](#)

8. Local Member Issues/Member Questions

15 minutes for local members to raise issues of concern of which due notice has been given.

Please submit your question(s) to the person named on the front of this

- 9. Scrutiny: Forward Work Programme** (Page **9**)
Members are asked to review and develop the programme for scrutiny
- 10. Scrutiny: Independent Panel on Forestry – Call for Views** (Page **15**)
Report by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development
- 11. Review: Norfolk Trails: Re-focussed, more targeted Countryside Access and Public Rights of Way Service** (Page **39**)
Report by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development
- 12. Scrutiny: Winter Service Review 2010/2011** (Page **66**)
Report by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development
- 13. Review: New Funding Streams for Infrastructure** (Page **73**)
Report by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development
- 14. Review: Norfolk's Strategy for Economic Growth** (Page **82**)
Report by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development
- 15. Review: Update on Shared Transport Provision in Norfolk** Report (Page **101**)
by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development
- 16. Review: Highways Asset Performance** (Page **110**)
Report by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development
- 17. Review: Integrated Performance and Finance Monitoring Report 2010/11** (Page **123**)
Report by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development
- 18. Review: Service Planning 2011-2014** (Page **141**)
Report by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development

Conservative	Group Meetings	
Liberal Democrats	9.30am	Colman Room
	9.30am	Room 504

Chris Walton
Head of Democratic Services
County Hall
Martineau Lane
Norwich NR1 2DH

Date Agenda Published: Tuesday 5 July 2011



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Environment Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 16 March 2011

Present:

Mr A Byrne (Chairman)

Mr A D Adams

Mr A P Boswell

Mrs M Chapman-Allen

Mr N D Dixon

Mr P Duigan

Mr T East

Mr M Hemsley

Mr B Illes

Mr J Joyce

Mr M Langwade

Mr B Long

Dr M Strong

Mr J Ward

Mr A M White

Mr R J Wright (Vice-Chairman)

Substitute Member:

Mrs D Irving for Mr P G Cook

Non-Voting Cabinet Members:

Mr G Plant

Travel and Transport

Mrs A Steward

Sustainable Development

Non-Voting Deputy Cabinet Member:

Mr B H A Spratt

Travel and Transport

Mr J Mooney

Sustainable Development

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr P G Cook (Mrs D Irving substituted).

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the Panel Meeting held on 12 January 2011 were confirmed by the Panel and signed by the Chairman.

3. Declarations of Interest

Mr A Byrne declared a personal interest in item 13 concerning events on the highway because he was a Member of the Police Authority.

Dr M Strong declared a personal interest in the presentation given at item 8 concerning the Floodline Direct Warning System because she was a Flood Warden.

4. Matters of Urgent Business

There were none.

5. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

6. Local Member Issues/Member Questions

There were no local issues/member questions.

7. Cabinet Member Feedback

The annexed joint note (7) by the Cabinet Member for Travel and Transport and the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development was received and noted.

Scrutiny Items

8. Forward Work Programme: Scrutiny

The annexed report (8) by the Director of Environment Transport and Development was received.

The Panel considered the Outline Scrutiny Programme (at Appendix A to the report) and agreed the scrutiny topics listed and the reporting dates.

The Panel then went on to receive a presentation about the Environment Agency Floodline Warning Direct Service from Guy Cooper and Carol Mayston of the Environment Agency located at Ipswich. This team covered the Norfolk Coast between Old Hunstanton and Great Yarmouth, and Broadland. The coast of West Norfolk was covered from Brampton. Mr John Ellis, Resilience Manager, also attended the meeting for this item.

During the presentation and the ensuing discussion the following key points were made:

- The Environment Agency aimed to provide 24 hours prior notice of flooding from main rivers and from the sea.
- Flood guidance was provided up to five days in advance.
- The Environment Agency can give 10 hours warning of a high tide.
- The Floodline Warning Direct System was a national system that had the ability to distinguish between separate communities on the Norfolk Coast and the ability to be customised to individual requirements.
- Panel Members heard the Floodline Warning Direct telephone messages that were available on 0845 9881188.

- The Floodline Warning Direct Service warned the following users of the service:
 - Those who were registered for the service (it was possible to be registered to receive warnings for more than one locality).
 - Members of the public within the flood plain.
 - Property owners within the flood plain.
 - Professional partners that included: the County Council, District Councils, Blue Light Services, Flood Wardens and the Media.
 - The principal method of warning people was by telephone messages directly to landline numbers via Floodline Warnings Direct. Approximately 90% of those people who were registered had registered a landline number. Faxes, e mails and texts were also used. Along the Norfolk coast (Eastern Area) there were 10,665 properties at risk of flooding of which 8,478 (79%) received Floodline Warnings Direct messages. All calls were monitored for the time that they took to go out. In the 2007 surge, 27,000 messages were issued. The Environment Agency was able to follow up any telephone numbers that failed.
 - Leaflets and booklets that explained the new flood warning icons were made available for Members to take away from the meeting. In reply to questions it was pointed out that the booklets were available from the Environment Agency in four different languages.
 - The Extended Direct Warnings (EDW) were only used in the largest of flood warning areas. All information on EDW customers was protected.
 - Some of the disadvantages of the Floodline Warnings Direct System that Members pointed out in the meeting included:
 - Not everyone was prepared to listen to the full recorded Floodline Warning direct message, or had the ability to comprehend what it meant. Some tourists and second home owners were not prepared to familiarise themselves with the system and were more likely to hang up the phone in the early stages of the message after mistaking it as an unwanted call. Some members of the public did not have English as their first language. Some members of the public were not prepared to listen to messages delivered by a robotic sounding voice. It was noted, however, that the voice used to deliver the messages was subject to review.
 - A failure in the electrical supply meant that cordless telephones did not work.
 - It was pointed out that the Floodline Incident Management Team actively went into local communities to share information. The Team encouraged people to sign up to the Floodline Warnings Direct System and advised on Community Emergency Plans where flooding was a major hazard.

Members asked to be kept informed of developments in the Floodline Warnings Direct System.

Thanks were placed on record to Guy Cooper and Carol Mayston from the Environment Agency's Flood Incident Management Team in Ipswich for attending the meeting and explaining the system to Members.

(Mr R J Wright, Vice Chairman, took the Chair for the following item)

9. Broadband and Mobile Phone Coverage for Rural and Urban Areas in Norfolk – Scrutiny Progress Update

The annexed report (9) by the Chairman of the Scrutiny Working Group was received.

The Panel received an update from Phillip Duigan, Chairman of the Scrutiny Working Group, and Karen O'Kane, the Head of ICT, on progress made by the Scrutiny Working Group since the last report in September 2010.

During the course of discussion the following key points were made:

- Some disadvantaged areas of the country had benefited from European funding for broadband and mobile phone services. This funding was not available to Norfolk
- At the end of 2010 the Government had launched a Broadband Strategy aimed at the rapid roll-out of superfast broadband across the country. The County Council has until 18 April 2011 to submit a bid for funding from Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK).
- The Working Group was focussing its work on the provision of broadband services rather than the wider digital network.
- A number of important lessons had been learnt from the pilot of local Wi-Fi technology that had been carried out in Hilgay and further pilots of long-range Wi-Fi technology were being planned at Hilgay and West Dereham.

The Panel noted the useful work that had been successfully carried out by the Working Group, with the support of Karen O'Kane, the Head of ICT, including a high level of lobbying to Government and to BT, and that this work would continue.

(Mr A Byrne, Chairman, in the Chair)

Items for Review

10. Service and Budget Planning 2011/14

The annexed report (10) by the Director of Environment Transport and Development was received. The Panel received an update on the Revenue Budget, and Capital Programme for Environment, Transport and Development Service agreed by full Council as well as details of the specific grants relevant to the Panel.

In the course of discussion the following key points were made:

- A number of phase 2 transport schemes, including a transport scheme that would be of particular long-term benefit to those living in Costessey, had been delayed due to a lack of funding. The Cabinet Member for Travel and Transport said that the County Council had not lost sight of the importance of such schemes and that they could continue to be supported when funding became available.
- The Director was questioned about the withdrawal of the use of concessionary bus passes by the blind before 9.30am. In reply, the Director said that passes were not being withdrawn, and that the statutory minimum scheme was being introduced, which the Panel supported. He also confirmed that an Equality Impact assessment on the proposal had been carried out and was included as an appendix to the paper presented to cabinet on 24 January.
- It was noted that plans for organisational changes in the day-to-day management of permanent sites for gypsies and travellers were due to be implemented over a 2 year period.
- Some concern was expressed about how the ending of the County Council's support of asbestos disposals at waste sites could lead to increased levels of fly-tipping, if in the future these sites were to stop taking asbestos. The Assistant Director Environmental and Waste, Mark Allen, confirmed that the sites would continue to accept asbestos but individuals would not be able to reclaim the cost of doing this from the Council
- There was also concern expressed about how the review of historic buildings work could result in the loss of significant levels of support to Norfolk's medieval churches. These churches were a national treasure and their importance to the historic Norfolk landscape must continue to be recognised. This budget change had been approved by full Council

The increase in the budget for Climate Change related to the new duties under the Flood and Water Management.

The Panel noted the revenue budget and capital programme for Environment, Transport and Development Services for 2011/14 and the development for 2011/14 Service Plans.

11. Integrated Performance and Finance Monitoring 2010/11

The annexed report (11) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development was received. The Panel noted that the report provided an update of the latest progress made against the 2011/13 Service Plan actions, risks and finances for Environment, Transport and Development.

It was pointed out that the figures included in Appendix A to the report (the Highways Capital Programme) needed to be updated, and that an amended version would be sent to Members shortly.

12. Regional Permit Scheme Update

The annexed report (12) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development was received.

The Panel noted that it was proposed not to take part in the Anglian Sub-Regional Permit Scheme for the reasons set out in the report. The Panel supported the work being done by Officers in developing a scheme more appropriate to Norfolk's needs and that the preferred solution at this time was based on the county's Traffic Sensitive Network plus the Priority 1 and 2 gritting routes. It was pointed out that when the revenue implications of the preferred permit scheme had been fully assessed, and Officers had an idea of how many other Local Authorities might want to take part, a further report would be submitted to the Panel.

13. Events on the Highway

The annexed report (13) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development was received.

The Panel received a report that set out options for simplifying the processes required for communities and the County Council to be involved in dealing with requests for events on the highway. It was noted that the proposed changes did not require a change in the County Council's Constitution.

The Panel carefully considered which of the reported options for formal road closure orders should be taken forward for approval. Some of the options minimised the financial burden on the County Council by seeking to recover all the costs incurred, and other options retained the current approach, which shared the financial burden between the County Council and the event organiser.

The Panel supported the approach set out as Variant D (suggested in paragraph 4.4 of the report) with Fee Regime A (as set out in paragraph 5.1).

The Panel did not recommend any changes to the range or nature of events that are exempt from paying the Council's fees.

The proposals set out in paragraph 6.5 of the report to relax the requirement in respect of public indemnity insurance and allow organisers of local neighbourhood events to decide for themselves whether or not to take out such insurance was supported by Panel.

The Panel also supported the Cabinet Member for Travel and Transport in making representations to Government on changes to legislation, as set out in paragraph 6.7 of the report, to further ease the burden on Local Authorities in administering the Highway approvals required to enable events on the highway to take place.

14. EPIC Performance Update

The annexed report (14) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development was received.

In reply to questions, it was noted that EPIC's studio and editing facilities were able to work with high definition recording material. The Centre's Advisory Board closely monitored EPIC's business plan and risk register and updates were taking place to progress the development to the next stage.

The Panel noted progress and developments that had taken place in 2010/11.

15. The Future Role of the Forestry Commission Estate in Norfolk

The annexed report (15) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development was received.

It was noted that the Government intended to set up an independent panel to examine forestry policy, the role of the Forestry Commission and the future of the Public Forest Estate.

Members discussed the important role that the Forestry Commission had in the economy and well-being of Norfolk. It was pointed out that public access to Forestry Commission land was particularly important in a County that relied on tourism. In addition most of the holdings north of Norwich were leasehold and were likely to be sold off.

The Forestry Commission did much to support the timber industry, by using its 'selling power' to help support the market. Most of the Public Forest Estate was designated as open access and while access rights were unlikely to alter, in practice, a new land owner could do quite a lot to discourage access, whereas the Forestry Commission was effectively encouraging it.

Officers agreed to come back to the Panel with further details when the Government's intentions became known, and in the meantime the Panel placed on record its opposition to the sale of any Forestry Commission land in Norfolk.

16. Exclusion of the Public

The Director of Environment, Transport and Development presented the following reasoning for exclusion of the public and conclusion in respect of the public interest test.

The appendix to the minutes contained sensitive business and financial information that could impact on the Authority obtaining best value in future negotiations.

Resolved

That the public be excluded from the meeting under section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 for the following item of Business on the grounds that it involves a likely disclosure of the exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

17. Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 January 2011

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2011 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

The meeting concluded at 12.35pm.

Chairman



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Forward Work Programme: Scrutiny

Report by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development

Summary

This report asks Members to review and develop the programme for scrutiny.

Action required

Members are asked to:

- i) consider the attached Outline Programme (Appendix A) and agree the scrutiny topics listed and reporting dates.
- ii) consider new topics for inclusion on the scrutiny programme in line with the criteria at para 1.2.

1. The Programme

1.1. An Outline Programme for Scrutiny is included at Appendix A.

1.2 Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel can add new topics to the scrutiny programme in line with the criteria below: -

(i) High profile – as identified by:

- Members (through constituents, surgeries, etc)
- Public (through surveys, Citizen's Panel, etc)
- Media
- External inspection (Audit Commission, Ombudsman, Internal Audit, Inspection Bodies)

(ii) Impact – this might be significant because of:

- The scale of the issue
- The budget that it has
- The impact that it has on members of the public (this could be either a small issue that affects a large number of people or a big issue that affects a small number of people)

(iii) Quality – for instance, is it:

- Significantly under performing
- An example of good practice
- Overspending

(iv) It is a Corporate Priority

1.3 Appendix B shows a list of the scrutiny projects relating to Environment, Transport and Development services completed in the last 12 months.

2. **Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act**

2.1. The crime and disorder implications of the various scrutiny topics will be considered when the scrutiny takes place.

3 **Equality Impact Assessment**

3.1 This report is not directly relevant to equality, in that it is not making proposals that will have a direct impact on equality of access or outcomes for diverse groups.

Action Required

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is asked to:

- (i) consider the attached Outline Programme (Appendix A) and agree the scrutiny topics listed and reporting dates.
- (ii) consider new topics for inclusion on the scrutiny programme in line with the criteria at para 1.2.

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please get in touch with:

Name

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Outline Programme for Scrutiny

Standing Item for the Environment, Transport and Development O & S Panel: Update for 13 July 2011

This is only an outline programme and will be amended as issues arise or priorities change

Scrutiny is normally a two-stage process:

- Stage 1 of the process is the scoping stage. Draft terms of reference and intended outcomes will be developed as part of this stage.
- The Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Panel or a Member Group will carry out the detailed scrutiny but other approaches can be considered, as appropriate (e.g. 'select committee' style by whole O&S Panel).
- On the basis that the detailed scrutiny is carried out by a Member Group, Stage 2 is reporting back to the O&S Panel by the Group.

This Panel welcomes the strategic ambitions for Norfolk. These are:

- A vibrant, strong and sustainable economy
- Aspirational people with high levels of achievement and skills
- An inspirational place with a clear sense of identity

These ambitions inform the NCC Objectives from which scrutiny topics for this Panel will develop, as well as using the outlined criteria at para 1.2 above.

Changes to Programme from that previously submitted to the Panel on 16 March 2011

Added

- The Future Role of the Forestry Commission Estate in Norfolk (discussed at the 16 March Panel meeting).

Deleted

- Environment Agency Floodline Warning Direct Service – at the March 2011 meeting the Panel received a presentation from the Environment Agency about their Floodline Warning Direct Service, which included a demonstration of the telephone messages used, and provided comments to the Environment Agency on the Service.
- The recession - an item about ensuring SME's remain viable during the economic downturn was included on the work programme as a possible future scrutiny item, but no work had been carried out on it. The Cabinet Scrutiny Committee had a similar item on their programme (called 'Banks lending to businesses in Norfolk'). These two items have now been combined into one item looking at support from the financial sector for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and will be taken forward by Cabinet Scrutiny Committee.

Topic	Outline Objective	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Stage 1 (scoping report)	Stage 2 (report back to Panel by Working Group)	Requested by	Comment
Scrutiny Items - Ongoing						
1. Broadband and Telecom provision in Norfolk	Provision of fully effective Broadband and mobile phone coverage for rural and urban areas in Norfolk.	Sustainable Development		19 May 2010, 22 September 2010 and 16 March 2011	1 September 2009 (by a Scrutiny Task & Finish Group set up by the former ED&CS O&S Panel).	Being progressed by a Member Working Group, Chaired by Cllr Duigan. Regular meetings of Working Group being held. The next progress report will be at the September Panel meeting.
2. New funding streams for Infrastructure (note, this item was previously titled Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)' on this programme).	To review the new funding streams for infrastructure	Travel and Transport & Sustainable Development	Report to be discussed at July 2011 Panel meeting		14 May 2008 (at the former PTEW O&S Panel)	An update report on this is included separately on the agenda for this meeting.
3. The Future Role of the Forestry Commission Estate in Norfolk	To identify the potential implications for Norfolk if land currently managed by the Forestry Commission was sold.	Sustainable Development	Initial report considered at March 2011 Panel meeting		ETD O&S Panel – March 2011 meeting	An update report on this is included separately on the agenda for this meeting.

Continued.../

Topic	Outline Objective	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Stage 1 (scoping report)	Stage 2 (report back to Panel by Working Group)	Requested by	Comment
Scrutiny Items – Ongoing/identified for possible future scrutiny						
4. The recession	To keep communities and individuals supported and economically engaged during the latter half of the economic downturn.	Sustainable Development	TBC	TBC		
5. Developing confident young consumers	Reviewing initiatives and supporting our approach to 'growing' successful consumers for the future.	Sustainable Development	TBC	TBC	12 January 2010 (by working group set up by the F&CP O&S Panel)	

Appendix B

Completed Scrutiny Items – last 12 months

List of scrutiny projects completed by the Panel in the last 12 months, date of final report presented to the Panel and method of scrutiny:-

Date completed	Topic	Panel/Method
22 July 2010	Use of civilian traffic marshals	ETD/Full Panel
16 March 2011	Environment Agency Floodline Warning Direct	ETD/Full Panel

Independent Panel on Forestry – Call for Views

Report by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development

Summary

A paper was brought to Overview and Scrutiny Panel on the 16 March 2011 about the Future role of the Forestry Commission Estate in Norfolk. This paper had been prompted by the announcement by the Coalition Government that 15% of land managed by the Forestry Commission England would be sold over the four year period 2014-15. At the same time, Defra launched a consultation on the future of the Public Forest Estate in England. This consultation was withdrawn in February 2011 and the 15% sale was also temporarily suspended.

The government has, instead, set up an Independent Panel on Forestry, chaired by the Bishop of Liverpool. This panel has now called for views, and this paper sets out a draft response to the five questions that are posed. The deadline for responses is 31 July 2011.

Action Required

Members are invited to consider and comment on the draft answers set out and to respond to the call for views from the Independent Panel on Forestry.

1. Background

- 1.1. The Independent Panel on Forestry has been set up to advise government on the future of England's forests and woods by April 2012. The terms of reference states that it should advise on the future direction of forestry and woodland policy in England. This includes, but is not limited to, the work of the Forestry Commission, public and private forests estates, the economics of forestry, public benefits such as well being, access for leisure pursuits and the role of forests and woods, and related open habitat, in the wider environment.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel visited Thetford Forest as guests of the Forestry Commission on 8th June 2011 and many of the issues set out in this paper were discussed there.

2 Panel Questions and Draft Answers

- 2.1 The Independent Panel on Forestry has set the following list of questions in order to help frame responses.

Questions:

1. What do forests and woods mean to you?
2. What is your vision for the future of England's forests and woods?
3. What do you feel the benefits of forests and woods to be?
- 4 We would like to hear about your suggestions of practical solutions and good

practice which can be replicated more widely.

5. What do you see as the priorities and challenges for policy about England's forests and woods?

2.2 1. What do forests and woods mean to you? - Draft Response

When the consultation on the future of the public forests estate was announced, the Leader of Norfolk County Council wrote to Parish, Town and district Councils seeking their views. The letter and the views are set out in Annexe 1. It is clear that people are very passionate about the forests and woodlands of Norfolk. Every woodland matters to someone and there is a particularly strong emotional tie to the Forestry Commission Estate.

Norfolk County Council has worked closely with the Forestry Commission over many years to secure economic benefits for the county, and examples of these are set out in the response below.

In addition, Norfolk County Council has worked closely with its County Farms estate and with local communities and volunteers to develop a national exemplar for community woodland establishment and management.

2.3 2. What is your vision for the future of England's forests and woods? – Draft Response

The Forestry Commission manages 18% of woodland in the East of England, but produces approximately 70% of the timber supply. Three of the larger sawmills in England are based in Hevingham near Norwich. They have all invested heavily in recent years, and they have been able to do this because the Forestry Commission have in effect underwritten this investment by guaranteeing timber supplies for many years ahead. This may not be possible under divested ownership.

The Forestry Commission has a total commitment to the concept of certified woodland, with 100% of its estate being audited as meeting the requirements of the United Kingdom Woodland Assurance Standard and thus the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). This standard ensures the highest levels of responsible forest management. Disposal of the Forest Commission estate could lead to a reduction in this commitment. This auditing process is entirely voluntary.

Approximately half of the remaining woodland in Norfolk is unmanaged. Our vision is to see these woods being brought into management, and to create a dynamic woodland industry creating employment and benefiting the biodiversity of these many neglected woodlands. A start has already been made with Norfolk County Council working in partnership with the Forestry Commission to develop :

- Woodfuel East, which Norfolk County Council helped develop and now delivers sustainable woodfuel heating schemes to public and private buildings across Norfolk.
- County Wildlife Sites for which the Forestry Commission gives 80% externally funded grants only to Norfolk woodland owners and a wet woodland project targeting this National priority habitat for advice.

- The Forestry Commission and the Deer Initiative are working in Norfolk to manage wild deer populations to reduce damage to woodlands and provide venison, offering grants and advice.
- Proactive management of the historic environment in their care.

2.4 3. What do you feel the benefits of forests and woods to be - Draft Response

a): you personally; and b): society as a whole

The response to the letter sent by the Leader of the County Council – set out in Annex 1, clearly demonstrates the strong feelings people have about trees, woodlands and forests.

c): the natural environment :

Publicly owned woodlands are important green space resources allowing the public to walk, cycle, horse ride, orienteer, watch wildlife, visit archaeological sites, etc. All Forestry Commission freehold sites are dedicated in perpetuity for access on foot under Section 16 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, and these rights will be maintained on divestment. “Higher” rights, such as cycling or horse riding are not currently protected. In addition, many Forestry Commission sites in Norfolk are leasehold and access cannot be guaranteed here if they are sold. All Forestry Commission land is managed not only for its timber resource, but also for wildlife, archaeology, access and to mitigate climate change. The concern is that new owners would be more single issue and that access would be restricted.

Bringing more woodlands into management will greatly improve biodiversity. England is one of the least wooded countries in Europe, and a sustained programme of careful woodland planting will improve the environment and generate sustainable employment in a dynamic woodland industry. At the same time, the development of the Norfolk Community Woodland Programme would improve appropriate access and increase the benefits of a Big Society approach to environmental work.

Woodland and forests are significant elements of Norfolk’s historic landscape. They also contain important historic environment features, including prehistoric burial monuments, deserted villages, rabbit warrens, wood banks and prehistoric and post medieval flint quarries. The Forestry Commission currently follows best practice in their management of historic environment features.

d) the economy :

The Forestry Commission estate in Norfolk is of particular interest because of its proximity to the growth areas around Norwich and Thetford, and there is a great potential for increased partnership work between Norfolk County Council and the Forestry Commission to develop this. Recent work has included green infrastructure planning around the proposed ecotown at Rackheath, and green bridge links to improve access between Thetford Forest and the expanding town.

The importance of sound woodland management and a vibrant timber sector to the

Norfolk economy has already been highlighted. The scale of the timber industry in Norfolk is substantial. Three of the largest sawmills in the south of England are situated just north of Norwich. These sawmills have been able to invest heavily in new plant because the Forestry Commission have been able to guarantee long term supply. The current uncertainty has resulted in the investment programme being suspended.

2.5 4 We would like to hear about your suggestions of practical solutions and good practice which can be replicated more widely – Draft Response

Norfolk County Council works closely with the Forestry Commission on a number of projects, several of which are national exemplars. These include:

- The Norfolk Community Woodland Scheme which has seen communities develop their own community woodlands and establish their own trusts. Norfolk County Council recently won the Sylva Cup in recognition of the outstanding silvicultural work and work with communities in Burlingham Woodlands. The judges were particularly taken with the passion with which the work was undertaken.
- Woodfuel East, which Norfolk County Council helped develop and now delivers sustainable woodfuel heating schemes to public buildings across Norfolk.
- County Wildlife Sites for which the FC gives 80% externally funded grants only to Norfolk woodland owners and a wet woodland project targeting this National priority habitat for advice.
- The setting up of Forest Schools, where curriculum learning takes place in “outdoor classrooms” has been supported with grants from the Forestry Commission and has resulted in a number of exemplar sites in Norfolk.
- Norfolk County Council has worked closely with other Local Authorities and the Forestry Commission on the East of England Woodland Strategy, prioritising delivery of public benefits through trees and woodland.
- The Forestry Commission and the Deer Initiative are working in Norfolk to manage wild deer populations to reduce damage to woodlands and provide venison, offering grants and advice.
- The management of the historic environment, through an annual liaison meeting and partnership working.

Norfolk and the UEA has been the focus for a project on providing low carbon building materials using locally produced timber.

In addition, the ‘Woodland For Life’ website www.woodlandforlife.net lists a number of exemplar projects-many of them from Norfolk County Council and shows that woods and forests in the East of England contribute £1.3 billion annually to the economy.

The Environment Section has worked closely with the Forest Regulation Task Force, tackling such difficult issues as gang-master licensing and reducing bureaucracy.

2.6 5. What do you see as the priorities and challenges for policy about England's forests and woods – Draft Response

- The close partnership working between The Forestry Commission and Norfolk County Council has delivered a wide range of benefits and this partnership approach should be enhanced.
- More management of existing woodland in order to develop a vibrant timber industry and to provide other public benefits such as improved biodiversity.
- There is considerable concern about tree diseases at present. For example, Red Band Needle Blight on pines could have a considerable economic impact on commercial woodlands. Acute Oak Decline is causing considerable concern in the East of England and there are fears that it could run through the oak population in a similar way to how Dutch Elm Disease affected elms. Research and dissemination of best practice in disease control is lead by the Forestry Commission's Forest Research agency, which is also experiencing a 25% reduction in funding.
- One of the key issues for Norfolk is the distinction between leasehold and freehold land currently managed by the Forestry Commission. If the 15% sale is to go ahead it is likely to have a particularly significant impact on Norfolk. Many of the holdings north of Norwich are leasehold and they are likely to be sold as part of the 15%. The few freehold sites in this area would then not be viable and would probably be sold at the same time. Access and other benefits may not be protected on leasehold sites and it is difficult to foresee what increased legal or contractual protection could be given to these sites.
- Creation of additional woodland in the "right areas". For example developing Green Infrastructure as part of the growth around Norwich and other market towns.
- Develop partnerships such as Woodfuel East to help strengthen the Norfolk economy and produce a vibrant woodland industry.
- Remove uncertainty on the future of the Forestry Commission to allow key investment by the private sector to take place.
- There are a large number of undesignated nationally significant archaeological monuments within the Norfolk Forest estate. These sites need to be appropriately managed.

3 **Resource Implications**

3.1 **Finance** : None

3.2 **Staff** : None

3.3 **Property** : None

3.4 **IT** : None

4. **Other Implications**

4.1 **Legal Implications** : None

4.2 **Human Rights** : None

4.3 **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)** :

This report is not directly relevant to equality in that it is not making proposals which may have a direct impact on equality of access or outcome.

Access and other benefits may not be protected on leasehold sites. Reduced accessibility, for example reduced maintenance, may reduce the overall accessibility of sites for all people, particularly older people, wheelchair users, people with walking aids or pushing prams.

4.4 **Communications** : None

4.5 **Health and safety implications** : None

4.6 **Any other implications** : Officers have considered all the implications which members should be aware of. Apart from those listed in the report (above), there are no other implications to take into account.

5. **Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act**

No implications

Action Required

- (i) Members are invited to consider and comment on the draft answers set out and to respond to the call for views from the Independent Panel on Forestry.

Background Papers www.woodlandforlife.net

www.forestry.gov.uk/thecasefortrees

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please get in touch with:

Name	Telephone Number	Email address
Gerry Barnes	01603 222764	gerry.barnes@norfolk.gov.uk



If you need this report in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact 0344 800 8020 and ask for Gerry Barnes or textphone 0344 800 8011 and we will do our best to help.

Annex 1

Summary of Residents' responses to future forest proposals

We have invited residents to feedback their views on forest proposals.

- People can email their comments to haveyoursay@norfolk.gov.uk
- People can call into our customer service centre
- People can email / write to Cllr Derrick Murphy directly
- Written to town and parish councils and other key stakeholders
- Information on our website
- Info released to the media

Response

- We have received over 80 responses on the issue.
- Only one of the responses is favourable to the proposals.
- All the other responses are against the proposals, expressing some very strong concerns.
- People are very passionate about our forests in Norfolk and identify very strongly that woodlands are part of our local cultural heritage. In particular the community has a strong emotional tie to Thetford forest. However, every small wood matters to someone.
- Many comments stress the desire to keep the forests in 'public' ownership. People feel that currently the forests belong to them.
- People are seeking a great deal of reassurance about future public access.
- There is also a feeling that there are other priorities that the Government should be tackling first.
- Some of the key concerns / feelings are
 - People don't see the need to change the current situation
 - Worried who will come forward with the time and commitment to care for the forests and about private companies motivation
 - The proposals would result in higher costs, rather than efficiencies
 - Losing woodland, which is already seen to be in decline
 - Forestry Commission are perceived as doing a good job
 - Heritage forests are irreplaceable once they have been lost
 - Feels like it is 'selling off the family silver'
 - Forests are a national asset
 - Concerns that some providers would not provide equal access to all current users and that conflicts of interest and access might occur – eg conservation charity might not allow dogs etc
 - Our forests are a tourist attraction so need to remain open access

Annex 1

Derrick Murphy,
Leader of the Council,
County Hall,
Martineau Lane,
Norwich,
NR1 2DH.
Tel: (01603) 222936
Fax: (01603) 222977
Email: derrick.murphy@norfolk.gov.uk

Your Ref: **Please ask for:** Derrick Murphy

My Ref: DM/KLN

3 February 2011

Dear Colleague,

As you will know, DEFRA and the Forestry Commission have recently launched a detailed consultation about reforming the future ownership and management of government owned forests. The consultation seeks views on alternative models of ownership and operation and how best to safeguard continued public access.

Norfolk is lucky to have within its boundaries large tracts of the Thetford forest and other very important woodlands elsewhere, in three of the four DEFRA key categories, namely:

- Small commercial
- Multipurpose
- Heritage

Norfolk residents value such assets highly, and collectively, they represent a very significant contribution to the county's wonderful environment.

This is therefore a very important consultation in which the County Council will want to make the strongest possible contribution as part of its core role of speaking up for the interests of Norfolk wherever, and whenever, decisions that affect its future are concerned.

Before doing so, we very much want to listen to the views and ideas of others, including important partners such as your authority and our residents.

The government is clearly keen to hear views about its proposals and alternative options, including locally generated solutions, as are we. To this end, before we put together the County Council's formal response, we would very much welcome your own council's views on this important matter. We will be happy to meet with you to discuss the matter if this would be helpful, and indeed, explore the potential for joint/combined responses or options.

I have asked the County Council considers this matter at its meeting on 28 March to give all county councillors an opportunity to discuss this important issue and ensure the Council gets its response in to DEFRA by the consultation closing date of 21 April.

In addition, the County Council will be keeping open the 'have your say' option on its website, haveyoursay@norfolk.gov.uk so people can record their own views and ideas directly. Staff in our customer service centre will also be happy to take views from those who would prefer to telephone us on 0344 800 8020 and of course, people can write to us.

Should your authority wish to let us have its views, we will need to receive them by no later than **Friday 11 March** to give us time to digest them fully and take them to account before we produce the authority's formal response paper. I know this is tight, but as I am sure you will appreciate, we must work within the timetable set for us. So I thank you in advance for any contribution you wish to make.

If you have not seen the consultation documents, you can download them from www.forestry.gov.uk/england-woodlandsales.

Yours sincerely,



Derrick Murphy
Leader of the Council

To: All Parish and Town Councils in Norfolk, Leaders of City, District and Borough Councils in Norfolk

Below are the responses received to the letter as above sent out at the beginning of February 2011:

..... is very opposed to the whole scheme but is especially concerned about Bacton woods as she walks her dogs there. Please call her back as she has been told that due to the previous owners will, in which this was passed on to the forestry commission, that a condition of this was that they could not sell this off. Please also make sure that her opposition to the whole scheme is taken into account.
--

Please note that I am totally against the proposal to sell-off forests.

No, we do not think changing the ownership of the forests is a good idea. All our countryside needs the maximum protection in perpetuity – it is getting nibbled away at all the time and even special designations do not help. We need sustainable farming, sensible access and everything possible to help our wildlife, plants and trees. We need a coherent management of woodland so that climate change and tree diseases can be faced through best practice and latest research. It

cannot be done piece meal. Volunteers can only help they can't direct operations. Expertise is to be valued. And so on and so forth. Everyone is rehearsing all the arguments.

This government is just as much ideologically driven as economically driven and this particular proposal from what we hear will not save money – so it must be ideologically driven.

I would like to express my extreme disapproval of any disposal of Forestry Commission lands as being proposed for discussion by the Government . It may be good policy to try and render the Forestry Commission more efficient but there is no way that the land should pass out of public ownership. I cannot begin to describe to you the disaster a loss of access to Bacton Woods would be to the people of North East Norfolk .

Our wooded areas however big or small should be left as they are. We do not want commercial businesses ruining natural habitats and rights of way, putting profits before people and wildlife.

The Forestry commission has been in existence for nearly a hundred years it has served our country well, creating the huge and smaller national forests that we enjoy today , I see no reason to alter the way are forests are run which is to the benefit of us all ,I am sure if the system is changed , over the years public access will be curtailed . I have yet to speak with one person who is in favour of the proposed changes , I was disappointed that our MP voted against a rethink but hope she will alter her view on this very controversial proposal .

Sale of forests, I don't recall that in any manifesto! No and No again

I am ***strongly opposed*** to any kind of privatisation of Norfolk's Forests. Whilst I understand that assurances have been made to ensure continued free public access I am concerned that further down the line, when all the furore has died down, things may change giving private companies more control. This should never happen. Once the forests are in private hands it will be very difficult to get them back. Just look at the mess the rail network is in. Some things are meant to stay in public ownership.

The joint view from the Parish Council of is that we would not object to the proposal provided that Public Access was no less than that presently enjoyed.

I am writing to express my dismay at the governments proposal to sell off our forests and woodlands and to inform you of my opposition to the proposal. The forests and woodlands should stay as common land for everyone to experience and enjoy for generations to come. Britain would suffer a tragic loss if the motion went ahead and I question if the government is legally entitled to sell off our common land without a democratic vote from the public. Shame on the government for even considering such an action.

I am opposed to the sell-off forestry commission land. They have done an excellent job of managing access in Norfolk and I cannot see how a private body could improve on what has been achieved. I am also concerned that while in the short term you may be able to secure access in the longer term this could be in jeopardy.

No to government proposals which seem to offer no tangible improvement on the status quo.

I am very concerned about the proposals to sell off the forest estate. Currently I believe the Forestry Commission cost approx £18 million per annum to run and is effective in managing our woodlands, balancing commercial interest with leisure and conservation demands and engaging positively with stakeholders. Recent publicity has highlighted the possible curtailment of public access, should a sell off take place, but the government has promised that access will be maintained – this may be the case, but private owners will not maintain car-parks; cycle routes; footpaths as it will cost them too

much money; they are in business to make a profit and not to provide a public service. A private landowner will not have the same incentive at the FC to manage the woodland to improve biodiversity and I fear that we would end up with woodland managed purely for profit and the general public and wildlife will suffer. I also wonder how much public money could be spent taking woodland owners to court trying to enforce access clauses in leases?

I do also worry that selling our woodland could end up costing the taxpayer more money – a landowner can claim grant to manage woodland, therefore if FC woodland (which doesn't get a management grant) is bought by an individual, it will become eligible for grant. Woodland that wasn't grant aided now becomes grant aided – so the tax payers' money will go towards supporting private individuals through grant, rather than paying for the FC. I know how I would choose to spend my money – I'd rather it went to the FC who are good at what they do and deliver value for money. Another thing to consider locally is that Thetford Forest is a SSSI and the FC have a duty to manage it properly and they have worked very hard to improve SSSI sites; again they do not receive grant funding for this, however if sold, the new landowner would be eligible for grant.

Something else that should be considered is who will actually buy the woodland – I wonder if there will be a lot of interest from places like Germany where there is a restriction on the amount of land that an individual can own and where hunting/shooting rights are restrictive. There could be a danger that our forest is bought by wealthy people who are mainly interested in the sporting rights.

I understand that the government want local community groups to join together to buy and manage woodland, but why would they want to buy and manage what they own, as a taxpayer, already. If you consider Thetford Forest, there is already a group called 'Friends of Thetford Forest' who are heavily involved with what happens in the forest – they are a stakeholder and they have a strong influence on the management of the woodland. I don't believe that they would be interested in managing the forest themselves as they recognise the experience and knowledge of the FC and know that they are the best organisation to manage our woodland for everybody.

I don't believe that there should be no change – every organisation needs to be reviewed and the FC are currently beginning a programme of transformational change, which should increase efficiency and effectiveness and ensure that they offer even better value for money. It seems short-sighted to propose to dispose of the forest estate before the transformational change process has even begun.

The devolved parliaments seem to recognise the importance of our woodland and continue to support the FC as an effective organisation offering value for money – I do hope that the English Parliament comes to its senses.

Is anyone listening? I wish for all forests to stay within public ownership. I believe politician of all persuasions do not seem to understand this concept. The Government is only asked to see that public property are run and maintained efficiently. If you feel that such a large asset needs to be sold off then you need to take this to the public (who own it) and ask them to vote on it. This principle is called democracy. Leave our woodland alone until you have a mandate from the general public through the ballot box to to otherwise. Will you listen?

I would urge Members of Norfolk County Council to lobby the government to rethink its proposals to sell off Forestry Commission Land. The woods and forests owned and run

by the Forestry Commission are a public asset for this and future generations. Charities and the voluntary sector will not necessarily have the money or expertise to run these woodlands in the long term so there is not guarantee of sustainability; there might not be a next generation of activists for example.

Articles in the press last week also pointed out that the government's own documents show that the coalition will lose money in the sell-off plus the fact that groups taking on the management of woodland will have to be given financial incentives.

The Forestry Commission protects some of our most important national heritage. Those woods and forests have given pleasure and solace to many people in this country and it is now time for us, the people of this country to speak out to save them for the future.

As a father, grandfather and great grandfather I would like to raise my serious concerns over the privatisation proposals of some of our forest . is this not the thin edge of a massive corporation wedge which fuelled by the unseen brown envelopes will lead to vast tracts of wonderful woodland being gobbled up and lost forever and being replaced by tacky little boxes designed by dwarfs and serviced by the wonderful saviour of the commercial world TESCOS ENGLAND . My family and future generations need to be able to benefit from what the good Lord has given us and not to be swamped with bricks glass and mortar.

As a BCILr I strongly object to any of them being sold off and under the control of any other bodies.

Caller objects to the selling of the forests in principle. She feels that the current system is working fine - that they are managed for the community and managed by professionals, which may change with the involvement of the private sector.

The callers and her husbands opinion is that they are totally against the scheme. They love to walk in these areas a lot and believe that selling them off will hinder this for the public a great deal.

Caller wanted it known that she does not want the woodland sold.

..... is putting forward his deep displeasure at the fact that the woodlands are being sold off to private companies. He thinks this is absolutely terrible and is of the opinion that whenever the government make changes such as this it does not benefit the public and only benefits the MPs themselves. He would like to be kept up of the progress with this consultation by post.

..... is very unhappy about the selling off of forests. She believes that if the forests are privatised they will be fenced off and become inaccessible for the free public. She wanted to make sure the message was put forward that she is greatly opposed to this scheme.

Caller is against the idea of privatisation as her main concern is about the welfare of local wildlife. She is cynical that private owners may not have same outlook to wildlife as public.

North Norfolk will be contributing to this discussion as it is a matter of concern to many of our residents.

Caller is against the idea of privatisation as her main concern is about the welfare of local wildlife. She is cynical that private owners may not have same outlook to wildlife as public.

I am writing to express my opposition to the privatisation of the forests. Norfolk has many sites of natural interest populated by areas of woodland and forest, which prove an exceptional resource in terms of people's health and wellbeing in addition to a valuable resource in combating climate change.

Forests and woods are well known to help people's mental and physical health in terms of their natural resources and physical stimulation when walking and exercising. Should they be privatised then there would be no avoidance of interests driven by different criteria which may adversely effect the access to the woodlands and their sustainability as a public resource and their contribution to carbon reduction. This would be especially so should they be used as a timber resource in excess of their current limits of use. Please take these points into consideration and register my opposition to this Coalition government plan and its impact on Norfolk and its population.

As a member of Parish Council, I have today received a copy of the letter you have sent out from Derek Murphy re the future of Thetford Forest. Personally, and not as a councillor, I have already been in contact with out MP about this issue. She is supporting the idea of proposing that the forest become a Heritage Forest, and is I believe hoping to meet with the relevant minister to put that view. She asked for my opinion and views to include with the evidence she is putting together. The letter I sent her is enclosed. Please use the views I express there if you wish. This is an issue I personally feel very strongly about and I am totally opposed to the idea of such a wonderful place being put into private hands.

..... Parish Council resolved to oppose the proposals for the sale of Thetford Forest in the belief that forests are for the public good and not for private gain.
.....PC stated a similar view.

I do not believe it would be sensible to consider selling off forestry land for several reasons:

- 1) Apparently the potential to raise money is not the reason for the proposed sales, so why is it even being considered at a time when all our efforts, particularly those of central government, should be concentrated on really important matters that will make a difference to the economy.
- 2) I have a feeling the proposal is a diversionary tactic to take peoples minds away from the difficult decisions needed elsewhere in the economy. If the Forestry Commission is inefficient and costly then employ someone who can sort it out, preferably from outside the Civil Service. If it isn't broke, don't fix it.
- 3) Any sales of large tracts of (commercial) forest are almost inevitably going to attract corporate and/or foreign purchasers. There can't be many people left in the country unaware of the long term consequences and difficulties of sales to these organisations. Ultimately, whatever legal framework is devised they will be able to circumvent the naïve niceties devised by legislators. If examples were needed, Utility companies and the railway network are just 2, demonstrating how the practice is so far from the original theory.
- 4) To suggest that public access will be legally enshrined in the sale contracts flies in the face of all we know. There is no such thing unless the enabling Act of Parliament identifies that the land carries inalienable rights of access. As the National Trust knows to its cost, there is no such thing nowadays as inalienable rights. The courts have brushed them aside in the recent past and will do again. Once sold, the land will be gone forever from the public domain.
- 5) How any member of Parliament can make a promise that current access, rights of way, etc., will be maintained is beyond belief. Are we, the general public, now expected to believe and trust them?

The only possible option worth pursuing if the forests have to be sold would be to bequeath the whole lot to the National Trust and allow them to manage the estates as they do with the farms and properties they currently own/manage. At least a largish number of people, the 1 million plus members of the National Trust, would have the opportunity to have a say in the future management of the forests. The snag is, would the National Trust want it?

If the plan for the new Power Station goes ahead on the A143 at Thetford it will establish a planning precedent on the adjoining forestry if it is sold off. The forestry is SSSI and SPA. It seems ludicrous to site a power station on prime agricultural land – which produces vegetables for the local supermarkets – and next to the wildlife haven of the forestry. I hope the planners will see the bigger picture on this one – if they don't, this particular area of forestry will be an easy target for commercial takeover. It doesn't take much imagination to see how the face of the Thetford Forest will change in one generation. Green energy by all means, but don't do away with a valuable food source, amenity land, and a wildlife haven in so doing. Existing industrial sites only are suitable.

Even if the sale of public forests were to make any significant amount of money - and it's not going to - it would still be obscene. Please don't sell our woodlands. Please. If money is really such an issue, perhaps big companies could not be allowed to dodge tax like they currently can? Maybe?

Forests are important to all people!

They take years to grow.

They provide oxygen so we can be healthy.

They provide places of adventure for walking, riding and discovering and learning about the wild life who have made their homes there.

They should be owned by us all.

If they are privatised, there is the risk that, in time, they may become housing estates.

If they are privatised, there will be fences and "Keep out" signs. We will not have a say in their usage or mis-usage.

If our forests are destroyed, we can never change our minds and bring them back!

The caller doesn't want charities to be in charge of Thetford forest as they don't look after everyone's interests, just their agenda. The RSPB, for example, won't allow dog walking, even if the dog is on a lead.

I understand the government have u turned on this but in case they change their minds back, I should like to register strong protest to publicly owned forests being sold off to the private sector .green spaces are important and should be available to us all.

We should like to express our concern at the proposed privatisation of the forests countrywide. Public benefit is very important not just now but in the future. The Forestry Commission is a respected body with great expertise and this should be utilised to the full. There has been too much "selling off of the family silver" by governments. With increasing urbanisation the forest should remain a national asset.

I am a member of Parish Council and am completely against the sell-off of Forests and woodland by the Government. I believe that the Forestry Commission are the best organisation to manage and own them.

Selling more of the country's silver. Once these forests are sold into private hands, whatever safeguards are set up they can always be revoked, we need to hang on to all our assets.

I have never written to the council before but I feel so strongly about this I decided to send an email. I think it is outrageous that the government is proposing to sell our forest. They insist access will be maintained but I know from my own experience of walking in the countryside that landowners make it hard to walk public footpaths with brambles,

barbed wire, animals and the like. With the council cutting footpath wardens – even if the paths in the forest are supposed to be publicly accessible who will patrol this and make sure they stay open. Also they will be used for commercial logging purposes and landowners will do everything they can to keep people off the land while trees are being felled. The govt says legislation will be in place to keep public access but in practice we all know this won't happen because it is impossible to police. It is no accident that although the forestry commission owns less than 20 per cent of forest – it owns half of that open to the public. Let's keep it that way. This proposal is outrageous – these forests belong to the people. They are our forests and we have not given a mandate for them to be sold. Everybody I talk to feels outraged. I totally oppose this.

I oppose the proposal by the government to change the ownership or method of management of our forests. I don't care how many assurances are given concerning future public access, I have learned that such assurances are good for only a few years, after which time all manner of excuses are invented to relax the conditions which were imposed at the time of sale. In other words I don't trust any government promises. This is governments' own fault, brought about by so many broken promises in the past.

I notice that Caroline Spelman refers to the 36 million pounds cost of "Government Money" to maintain the forests. She needs to be told there is no such thing as "government money", it's all public money, not government money, and if keeping the forests in public ownership is how we want to spend some of our money, then that's up to the public, not government. I notice that Norfolk County Council refers in their website to "forests in government ownership" – they are not in government ownership, they are in the public's ownership. I own them, you own them, not the government. As with many things in life, get the language right, then the correct attitude follows. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Please accept this as confirmation that Parish Council is firmly opposed to the policy proposed in the consultation documents.

Please protect the woodlands of Norfolk by not allowing them to be sold off.

I believe that if they are sold off it is unlikely that they will be preserved for future generations in the way they are now. No one would invest in woodland and forest areas and not look for a fat profit either in the short term or long term.

Our visitors come from far and wide to enjoy our unique county for it's beauty and wildlife. The EDP vote is overwhelming in favour of not allowing the Government to sell off our forests. We need a voice and if the current government has to make savings they need to continue to look at the highly paid officers in local government and not selling the jewel in the crown.

I am wholeheartedly against the Government's plans to sell-off our forests and have already completed the public consultation response to that effect. There seems to be no good reason why the land cannot continue to be managed by the Forestry Commission. I do not understand the need to change things, especially as the Government has admitted that no money will be made from the sell-off. In fact, this whole consultation exercise seems to be a waste of time and money. There are a number of issues which do not seem to have been given proper consideration:

- where does the Government expect all of these charitable organisations / groups or companies to come from?
- if numerous groups begin to manage the forests, how will similar standards be

maintained and administered?

- what will happen to any group / company not fulfilling any obligations the Government sets?
- what will happen if any group / company begins to struggle financially?
- who will ensure that public access and amenities are maintained to the current degree and not restricted?
- who will ensure that forests are not sold on to private investors by these groups / companies?

It seems that the administration nightmare caused by the Government's proposals would result in a group such as the Forestry Commission being necessary to oversee the whole process. Surely this would all result in a higher costs rather than any efficiencies? In short, when the Government have so many other issues to deal with, this proposal is hardly a priority and not wanted by the majority.

I am against the selling off of government owned forests. These are an asset for the present generation and the future's. They provide leisure activities and nature reserves for thousands of people to enjoy whilst providing valuable resources for industry. They need to be managed sensitively - with nature as the main concern and NOT profit!. No privatisation project of any government has seen an improvement of services for the general population only an increase in profits for share holders. The forests may be a tax burden but I am happy to have my taxes spent on this worthwhile facility.

Too much of our natural land has been commercialised and ruined. Our environment is under serious threat - our eco systems have reached a critical state of decline - we must do all we can to preserve what we currently have and put resources in to increase and improve things.

Wildlife trusts around the UK are working hard to restore our damaged eco systems - buying up land to provide ribbons of wildlife habitats that are in a fragile state.

Privatisation of our forests is not appropriate at this moment in time - we need to do all we can to preserve what is left of our natural environment. Encourage farmers to farm in only environmentally ways - restore our commons and increase their size - stopping their decimation by the ever increasing number of vagabonds with horses who set up illegal encampments on the few pockets of wildlife areas left in our communities.

We need to look to nature and NOT the pockets of private investors who will look to make as much money as quickly as possible and if that means destroying the forest then they will. Whatever legislation the government puts in place will never be enough.

Once a tree has been cut down it cannot be restored. We must preserve our forests.

The Government should look to set up Forestry trusts - managed by the wildlife trusts - funded by government.

I wish to add my name to the fight against the privatisation of our Forests. These forests belong to us. Please do not let the government do this. I have been a lifelong conservative but am appalled at what is proposed. The Forestry Commission do an excellent job as they have done for years. Why change. I saw recently on TV where a woodland somewhere in the country had been sold to a private company. Lo and behold it has now been advertised for sale having been split into smaller parcels of woodland. Once our forests have gone we will never get them back. Thetford Forest in particular has so much to offer - the public enjoy the facilities there and timber production is also a large part of the operation.

Objections

1. In private ownership the general public will not have the freedom to roam and ride

either on bike or horseback as they do now, despite the environmental minister's reassurances. The forest will be governed by business—felling and selling trees for profit or for private enterprise e. g. shooting parties, 4x4 tracks, theme parks or music concerts for the better-off people in our society. As it is now, one particular forest—Bacton woods, a small wood in North Norfolk is a perfect haven for family outings, there families can walk with pushchairs, ride mountain bikes, orienteer and jog with very little restrictions. The Forestry Commission's workforce regularly hold affordable 'fun' and special-interest days which are great for families and children. These are popular and well attended events. Leisure facilities for families in North Norfolk are few and far between and far too expensive for the majority of families living in the rural, mainly agricultural area. Families relying on an agricultural worker's wages cannot afford to attend the likes of 'Bewilderwood', a previously mentioned, private wooded theme park except, perhaps on a school trip or an annual treat. For example, to take 2 adults and 2 children to the swimming pool it costs about £10 and for a family outing to Bewilderwood costs are around £50. Children need fun-filled activities to get them exercising and away from their computer and T. V. screens. Bacton woods is easily accessed, it is open constantly, car parking is provided and paths are sympathetically maintained to suit the environment. The area helps children to appreciate the countryside and respect nature. Our countryside is rapidly disappearing under concrete, we need to pledge to keep Bacton woods in its entirety as it is now with the Forestry Commission as its trustees and protectors for the sake of 'today's children and for future generations. My opinions expressed in this passage, taking Bacton Woods as an example, reflect my concerns regarding privatisation of our forests for all Forestry Commission maintained land.

I am writing concerning the proposed sell off of our forests. I am totally against it, the forests are our heritage and for the future of the next generations. How can a short term Government be allowed to sell off what does not belong to them. This needs a public referendum. These woodlands have been managed with people, wildlife etc in mind and been protected all these years. They bring thousands of visitors to our area. I am worried that the same thing will happen as happened with the waterways. We now have limited access and great swatches of riverbank are for private use only. This must not be allowed to happen with our forests. We as a county have got to stand against this before it becomes too late to do anything and they are lost forever. What would the future generations think of us if we did nothing?

Firstly may I say that if the government pass this thru I will never vote conservative again. Both my husband and I walk our dogs in Thetford Forest twice a day. Unlike London (and I am an ex Londoner) who moved to Suffolk for a better way of life over 30 years ago we don't have miles of parks to run our animals, we don't have pots of spare cash to go for holidays and with the ever increasing costs of petrol our only form of recreation is the forest, we and several thousands of people walk Thetford Forest every day of the year. My husband keeps an eye out for anything untoward and has successfully called in two fires that could have destroyed several acres. We local people who know the forest well, keep an eye on things, we pick up litter and bring it home, we speak to the horse riders, the husky racing folk. We have friends who are game wardens and who live in the forest.

How is it we can find x millions of pounds in a so called broke economy to support the Olympics which will be over in a flash but cannot find the funds to retain this green and pleasant land for the people who pay taxes time and time again. Governments have eroded the family, they have taxed us to the hilt, soon people won't be able to afford the

petrol to put in their cars to get to work, never mind the industries that will go to the wall because they won't be able to pay for transport to transport their goods.

Isn't it about time that the government started to give back to the backbone people of this country, i.e. the local people who keep local government in power. I haven't had a payrise for almost 5 years and there are a lot like me. The only recreation is being torn away from us whilst the government spend on unnecessary pap.

Our forests are not for sale, what next would you like to sell off after all there isn't much less, Come on make a stand for the local people a change SAVE OUR FOREST AND ALL THE ANIMALS WHO LIVE THERE WHO WILL LOOK AFTER THEM, WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE LOCAL PONY CLUBS WHEN THEY HAVE NOWHERE TO RIDE, DO YOU SUGGEST WE SHOOT THE LOT OF THEM. Where will we walk our dogs ride our bikes see wild flowers and the magnificent deer.

Get real Stand up for England the originators of the Magna Carta must be turning in their graves.

I feel very strongly that England's forests are part of our heritage and should not be sold off to the highest bidder who undoubtedly would be commercial bidders rather than cash strapped communities and charities that keep getting mentioned by Government spin doctors. As a Norfolk resident I urge Norfolk CC to oppose the sell off, the Forestry commission and national park authority do a fine job preserving the forest and woods for future generations to discover and enjoy. When the oil runs out we need to ensure that there is a sustainable source of fuel in public hands and not private enterprise.

The Forestry Commission has a good track record in managing sympathetically the woodland and forest in its care, with approved guidance. Let's find a way to keep the expertise in managing these sensitive and bio-diverse areas. Tourism relies on it. Health relies on it. People rely on it. Let's not see a return to fragmented approaches and policy because of multiple owners, potential poor management, neglect or abuse of "private" woodland spaces, access restrictions or abuse through profiteering. This is too important an issue for our land, people and economy to leave in the hands of financially driven owners/entrepreneurs.

The Woodland Trust take the view:

"The Forestry Commission owns hundreds of ancient woods. The future of the forests themselves, especially the ancient woods, and how to protect their value for wildlife and for people is the critical issue. The Government says they will be protected - we have grave doubts about this in practice. The threat created by possible sales of these ancient woods is twofold: some ancient woods may slip through the net of protection, while many others may go unrestored or neglected".

I agree with their view and would also have concerns about access for the public. I hope that the wider benefits of maintaining, managing and renewing our forest and woodland space, and managing green corridors to join up and strengthen habitat in these areas, will be seen as of high priority and concern for every one of us. Without proper protection of this island's green and wooded heritage, the whole ecology and local economy of the Auk as we know it could be irreparably damaged.

AH

May I begin by saying how disappointed I am that I am having to write this e-mail. The proposed sale of the Forest Estate is an absolute disgrace and smacks of Conservative Party Ideology over any economic benefits that may come from this sale. It is almost a

return to the enclosures act which a good old boy of Norfolk, Robert Kett, fought and died to oppose.

This Conservative/Lib Dem coalition have no mandate from the electorate to carry forward this piece ill thought out and spiteful legislation. Neither is there any economic benefit to be gained by the sell off, in fact it could cost the taxpayers more money, which I suspect will be handed to private estate owners and corporate business when they buy up the forests.

What, I believe we will end up with is a hotch-potch arrangement where the best and most profitable forests are sold to corporate businesses, who will use them to reduce their tax burden, while at the same time filching as much grant money from the tax payer as possible and leaving the rest to be foisted off onto local charities who will struggle to manage them through lack of funds.

There are already plans to make employees of the forestry commission redundant, thus losing tax revenue and having to pay out on benefits.

This system has run well for the past hundred years while in public ownership and if left alone from government interference will continue to flourish. The forests are well managed, balancing the commercial aspects with the needs of public access, wildlife conservation and the maintenance of bio-diversity.

I, and many people in Norfolk are vehemently opposed to this sale and would appreciate Norfolk County Council to relay this strength of feeling to the Government in Whitehall.

My concerns about this sell-off are that the people who are buying would not do so unless they, understandably, have financial gain. History tells me that such gain will always be at someone's expense - in this case ordinary woodland lovers who will lose much of what they have and love now. The proposals will be 'dressed up' in nice words but the effect will be the same. I'm always suspicious of someone wanting to change something that appears to be working well enough, although I do now understand that some areas of the Forestry Commission are in need of change. Another thought - surely the Coalition has more important things to do!!

.....Parish Council are unanimously opposed to the selling of Britain's Forests. We are in West Norfolk close to Thetford Forest, an area much cherished.

As a Parish Council we see ourselves as elected custodians of our village and surrounding areas. We most sincerely wish to pass on to our village children an environment that has been well cared for on their behalf, with free access to all. The value of natural environments in our country must not be underestimated, and should never be sold. This Country has lost so much over the past two decades and we now find it outrageous that Government would consider such a proposal in order to shed the responsibility of care and reduction of costs.

An important government role is to produce an environment that provides its citizens with a feeling of well being, the selling of this country's natural forests will detract from this responsibility.

I strongly disagree with the proposed sell off of UK woodlands. There are very few trees left in the UK and they need to be given maximum protection. I do not believe this will not occur if public woodlands are privatised. The UK is largely deforested (and needs

reforestation) so we have little credibility when trying to convince other countries not to cut down their rainforests. We will have even less if we can't control a few hectares.

.....Parish Council is keen to retain the ownership and management of these Government owned forests on behalf of the **public** and find it a deplorable action for them to be sold into private hands.

These public assets are extremely important to the local communities and to the members of the public who visit.

The Forestry Commission must retain and manage these forests on our behalf.

On the whole Parish Council believe that these assets should be held in public ownership despite the costs incurred to manage our forests by the Forestry Commission.

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..... Parish Council is keen to retain the ownership and management of these Government owned forests on behalf of the **public** and not sold off. These public assets are extremely important to the local communities and to the members of the public who visit. The Forestry Commission should retain and manage these forests on our behalf.

If it is deemed that the forests should be sold off to private ownership then, extremely stringent regulations as to the management and access for the public need to be put in place. There must be a structure which controls the private owner from locking people out of sections for more than a few days/weeks for logging and other ancillary reasons.

The land and trees should be maintained to the level that they are currently and replanting must be undertaken continuously. To ensure that the private owners were managing the forests to a high standard a structure for assessment must be agreed prior to the sale. There should also be clauses and penalties for non-compliance and unsatisfactory assessments.

On the whole Parish Council would prefer that these assets should remain in the public ownership despite the costs incurred to manage our forests by the Forestry Commission.

I wish to register my strong objection to the Governments proposals to privatise Forestry Commission land. Access to the forests in East Anglia is something that countless people enjoy (witness the popularity of High Lodge with families - my own included).

The health benefits are obvious and could have a positive effect on reducing NHS spending in the long term. I am a walker and a birdwatcher and together with friends in U3A walking groups, regularly enjoy using the forest trails. Cyclists too can safely ride in the forests. Wildlife, including some rare birds, thrives in Thetford Forest. There are

many long - distance trails that traverse the forest:

- Peddars Way
- Icknield Way
- Harling Drove
- Little Ouse Path
- Icen Way
- Gt. Eastern Pingo Trail

What is their future? If the woodland is sold off to private buyers - despite assurances - I fear that access will be restricted and wildlife will be disturbed through a concentration on timber production.

I am very strongly opposed to the proposed sale of woodlands.

I am totally opposed to the proposed sale, not only for the reasons already expressed as to access, maintenance of tracks, protection of wildlife and other environmental reasons but principally as to future ownership. Having seen public utilities ending up in the ownership of the French, Germans and Spanish, as far as I can ascertain, there will be nothing in the legislation to keep English woodlands and forest in English. I do not want Bacton Woods in continental ownership nor the Chinese for that matter. None of the other objectors seem to have woken up to the risk.

Here in Norfolk, trees - whether in large forests or country parks or small copses - are a major factor in making our county an area of outstanding natural beauty. We don't have hills or mountains to add splendour to our landscape but thanks to our abundance of trees we have views to marvel at, at any time of the year.

Defra's consultation document opens by agreeing that our trees are to be treasured - soothing words to assure us that all will be well. And Caroline Spelman writes of the importance to her own family of the "immortal" Arden Forest. But the fact is that no forest is immortal; to survive, it needs careful conservation and protection, and ideally not in isolation but as part of a regional or national plan. Despite all the promises of protections and regulations, once the public forest estate passes into private hands there can be no absolute guarantees that the woodlands will be cared for - now and in the future - as we would want. Governments and laws can and will change and future lobbying by private owners could sweep away safeguards. And UK citizens have already had plenty of evidence of regulatory failures in other areas of our lives - notably our finances - that makes us extremely wary of such promises in any case.

Once the Forestry Commission ceases to be owner of a sizeable amount of woodland itself, its powers to regulate privately-owned tracts effectively will inevitably be diluted over time. And the greater the number of private owners, the more difficult it will be to apply sensible cohesive regional or national policies on management, tree disease response, commercial timber exploitation and public access.

We are right to be nervous about and resistant to this proposal. Despite all the emollient words about the beneficial nature of existing private ownership of the great majority of England's woodlands and how selling off the public forest estate might therefore be a jolly good thing, Defra's consultation document itself provides a key pointer as to why the proposal should be ditched. On page 6 it notes that the public forest estate is only 18% of England's total woodland; in the next sentence it mentions that that holding is the largest provider of countryside leisure activity. So that means existing private owners - despite holding 82% of England's woodlands - don't come close to matching the

provision afforded to us through the Forestry Commission with its radically smaller tracts. What makes anyone think that that private ownership mindset will dramatically change in the future, whatever promises the government holds out to us now?

Please, let's fight this.

The Government's plan to sell off the Forestry Commission is disgraceful. They have no remit from the People who voted them into idea that the Big Society will manage the Forests is completely unfounded. Any "Big Money" will come from investors who will not welcome the Public and they will well be interested in mineral extraction or other development in the longer term.

- World timber supply is rapidly dwindling which will result in future higher value which will not benefit the people of this country. Timber could well be lost by being exported..
- There is no evidence that Naturalist Trusts have the finance or expertise to manage large woodlands.

The Forestry Commission is the best organisation to manage our woods for timber production, conservation and recreation and it will be criminal if it is destroyed.

As a keen horse rider I am very concerned that forest sell offs by Forestry Commission will mean further reductions in safe, sustainable access. **What horse riders need for their trailers and boxes are well-maintained, off road, free car parks with no height restrictions. Even if forest is sold to conservation and preservation trusts our access can be limited.** About 10 years ago NWT bought and fenced large areas of Thompson Common, all gates are pad locked. More recently areas of Hockham Forest near the picnic site have been fenced and grazed with a herd of Highland cattle. Gates are not locked there but effectively exclude riders and most walkers because the cattle have very large horns and can be aggressive. More highland cattle have recently been introduced at Thompson. I am very surprised that conservation projects in Norfolk should involve the use of an alien species such as this. Why should part of our heritage be sold to the market? These decisions go beyond politics and short-term financial management; they are major rights issues for Norfolk residents and go to the heart of the rural deprivation that most people feel in our county.

I am saying no to the above so that I can say I have done my bit, but as with most things with this Conservative Government I would expect it will count for nothing. My wife and myself are long distance walkers and we use forests and woodland on most of our walks and I can tell you exactly what the situation will be when the woodlands are sold off as we see it on nearly every walk that we undertake all over the country and that is as follows, we come to a bit of wood or a path that some person deems to be theirs, it is barricaded off with barbed wire or similar and has a threatening notice attached on a pole and this is what the situation will be everywhere, unless of course money will be required to pass which is more likely what will happen. See how far I will be off of the answer.

I am totally opposed to the government's plans, it ain't broke so why fix it.

I am also very frustrated that I have written/phoned my MP, Richard Bacon, who has failed to listen to my views.

I am encouraged to read in the EDP that County Council Leader, Derrick Murphy is taking an active interest in the Government's Consultation on the sell off of its Forestry Commission land. I am a keen rambler, dog walker and cyclist and as I approach later

life, I know how precious these activities are for health, peace of mind and enjoying the beauty of our green and pleasant County. I am also deeply concerned that this heritage will be lost to our children and grandchildren. With growing concern about children's physical and mental health, surely we must protect the outdoors for access and enjoyment of nature. I know that the Forestry Commission was set up originally as a supplier to the mining industry but its legacy has been to provide spaces to enjoy in what otherwise can often be a gratingly, noisy world - in contrast to the uplifting woodland birdsong as Spring approaches. The Government's Consultaion document is all sweetness and light but the bottom line is that the commercial interests that takeover the land will seek to maximise profitability which is likely to lead to development or agri industrialisation. There do not appear to be any inalienable legal rights in the document to protect general access or the natural environment.

There are provisions for charities to take over the management at no acquisition cost, yet although other groups are given first option - this is at market value - which may be unaffordable - why cannot other responsible groups not to given the land free of charge to manage - is it possible that a branch of local government can take them over as a safeguard?

I have also found it difficult to find a list and map of the Forestry Commission's portfolio of land in the County - where is there a map and list? Forests such as Thetford are dear and must be protected but even small woods can be places of importance.

There are few issues that would get me out in the streets in protest, but this is one. I understand that in the 1930's the Ministry of Defence (or its predecessor) tried to cut off access to Kinder Scout but a mass trespass thwarted its plans - the threat to these woodlands and forests could provoke a similar reaction - I'm sure I am not alone in the depth of my feeling about this issue.

I wish to register my strong objection to the Governments proposals to privatise Forestry Commision land. Access to the forests in East Anglia is something that countless people enjoy (witness the popularity of High Lodge with families - my own included. The health benefits are obvious and could have a positive effect on reducing NHS spending in the long term. I am a walker and a bridwatcher and together with friends in U3A walking groups, regularly enjoy using the forest trails. Cyclists too can safely ride in the forests. Wildlife, including some rare birds, thrives in Thetford Forest. There are many long - distance trails that traverse the forest:

Peddars Way
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What is their future?

If the woodland is sold off to private buyers - despite assurances - I fear that access will be restricted and wildlife will be disturbed through a concentration on timber production.

..... is concerned about Thetford Forest and its access. There are many public paths used and he is worried that they will be closed. Please could you call him to discuss what the possibilities would be for the access.

Norfolk Trails: Refocused, more targeted Countryside Access and Public Rights of Way Service

Report by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development

Summary

This report sets out the plans for service transformation and revised policies for access to the countryside in Norfolk, following on from the Big Conversation consultation.

We will be building on the success of the National Trails in Norfolk and focusing on a network of "Norfolk Trails". This will be based on Norfolk's existing long distance paths and associated circular routes.

Elsewhere, in accordance with the "localism" agenda, we will encourage parishes and voluntary groups to take on a greater role in maintaining footpaths, where they are willing to do so. This new approach has been discussed and endorsed at a special meeting of the Local access Forum.

Overall, we will have a more efficient and focussed public rights of way and access service- in line with the Council's budget decision, and we are adjusting our approach to enforcement and service standards accordingly.

The Statutory Duties of Norfolk County Council are set out in Appendix 1.

Action Required

Members are invited to note and comment on this report. In particular the proposed way forward for service delivery standards.

1. Background

- 1.1. Norfolk has 2355 miles (3790km) of Public Rights of Way (PRoW). In addition the County Council manages 12 long distance paths. As well as providing access the health benefit of this network/resource, along with the visitor spend potential, is obviously large.

To make the most of Norfolk's diverse landscape and amazing biodiversity these tracks and pathways need to be packaged and promoted to would be users.

Creating a walking (and cycling) product from all of Norfolk's paths would be a mammoth task and beyond the resources available. We therefore need to take a targeted approach that maximises benefits, while meeting our statutory duties.

Information and promotion

The intention is to concentrate on what is best and copy the model of management created by National Trails over the years. A selection process audited Norfolk's existing twelve key long distance routes and applied criteria based on the

publication: *Quality Standards for National Trails*. See Appendix 4 and 5 for information on the selection criteria and the Norfolk Trails selected.

- 1.2. A package of long distance routes and associated circular routes, is to be supported by accommodation and other leisure and tourism businesses and where feasible public transport. The aim is to manage and promote to specific target markets, primarily short distance users - local and visitor, but also provide information for long distance users.
- 1.3. The total length of path involved, approximately 400 miles, will represent some 17% of the full network. Importantly the routes link key economic drivers in Norfolk; namely the Coast, Broads, Brecks and Norwich.
- 1.4. **Partnership**
There also exists several non NCC cycling routes. There is no strategic management of these routes within the county and most of the publicity is carried out by Sustrans and commercial guides. Working with Sustrans and other providers to including these routes will deliver a very exciting package.
- 1.5. **Management**
The model of management created by National Trails has shown itself to be forward looking, customer focused and successful. The track record speaks for itself. In Norfolk and north Suffolk along the corridor of the Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path we have seen an increase in business activity, such as accommodation, national package holiday companies selling holidays – seven at the last count, a baggage carrier, horse accommodation and pubs and cafes selling to walkers and cyclists alongside a huge growth in public transport use. The many businesses alert to opportunities provided by the increased market of walkers and cyclist actively use the National Trail to sell their business. A prime example of such a business is the Deepdale Farm complex, which started on the back of the Norfolk Coast Path.
- 1.6. During 2009 (April to October) 86,000 walks were taken on the National Trail. This activity helped to generate £2.5m of visitor spend and re-spend within the local economy, supporting 102 FTE jobs¹. For every £1 invested in route management there is a return into the local economy of almost £21² (2009 figures).
- 1.7. Key to the success of National Trails is the website where the information identified above is placed. Evidence of the worth of this information is provided by the web statistics from the Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path website which shows that between Jan and October 2010 there were almost 11,000 (10,900) downloads of this information.
- 1.8. This model is to be applied to a selection of Norfolk's long distance routes to benefit the health of residents, stimulate the rural economy and raise awareness of our biodiversity.

¹ *Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path User Survey 2006*, with additional extrapolated data provided by counter data 2009. 2006 visitor spend calculated using the Cambridge model.

² £20.8333

1.9. Headline drivers

- Trend across UK is for physical activity levels to decline
- Illness as an outcome of physical activity has been put at £1.08Billion per annum in direct costs to the NHS alone (2007 prices)³
- Indirect costs estimated at £8.2Billion (2002 prices)⁴
- In Norfolk the cost of physical inactivity to the PCT has been estimated at £13m⁵
- Almost all Cost-Benefit studies carried out in the UK report economic benefits of walking and cycling interventions which are highly significant and averaging 19:1⁶
- Data collected by Norfolk's National Trail (Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path) indicates that between April and October 2009 the route was part of a package contributing £2.5Million to the local economy, supporting 102 FTE jobs.
- 2012 Olympics.

1.10. Headline Outcomes

- To create a walking and cycling package in partnership with stakeholder both NGO, private business and other Authorities, based on Norfolk's existing long distance walking and cycling routes, including the National Trail, and associated circular routes.
- To work with stakeholders/partners to develop a package of information via a new website but supported by other media linked to VisitNorfolk.
- To create a management structure that combines day to day maintenance, substantial volunteer input and strategic management with the needs of business.
- To work with the voluntary and community sector at the strategic, consultative and delivery levels.
- To promote the Norfolk Trails Package to local short distance users, whether residence or visitors and also long distance users.
- To encourage and enable links with public and community transport and corridor communities.
- To integrate the emerging coastal access route within the overall package
- To use the model to rationalise, where appropriate, existing long distance routes to ensure efficient use of NCC resources.

³ Allender, S., Foster, C., Scarborough, P., Rayner, M. 2007 The burden of physical activity-related ill health in the UK, *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 61: 344-348.

⁴ Department of Culture Media and Sport Strategy Unit, 2002 *Game Plan: a strategy for delivery Government's sport and physical activity objectives*, London: Cabinet Office.

⁵ *Detailed local area costs of physical inactivity by disease category*. www.erpho.org.uk

⁶ Value for Money: An Economic Assessment of Investment in Walking and Cycling. Dr Adrian Davis, Bristol City Council and NHS Bristol.

- Good practice amongst National Trails (in England and Wales) and Long Distance Routes (in Scotland) has shown that providing some key types of information is a winner.
 - A map showing the route and its location within the UK
 - Route map
 - Information on pubs,
 - Cafes and restaurants,
 - Village services,
 - Specific walking, cycling and horse riding info,
 - Info on maps and guides,
 - Distance charts,
 - Public transport links
 - Associated circular walks.
- Routes selected provide an opportunity to make productive links with rural deprivation.

2. **Review of Service Standards, Levels and Delivery Methods**

- 2.1. Concentrating on this core network, coupled with the reduced funding and staff resource for Rights of Way will mean targeting our work and managing expectations for work on the wider Public Rights of Way network.
- 2.2. The proposed new standards for this statutory work will address the following :
- 2.2.1 Enforcement

This will be an important area of change and will apply to all landowners, both in the public and private sectors. The new regime will be introduced to make sure identified cost savings are met.

As part of this it is proposed to explore outsourcing re-instatement/ clearance works/removal of obstructions and recovery of costs. A Best Value assessment is to be undertaken as to whether this work should be dealt with in-house or outsourced.

- 2.2.2 Enforcement falls into two main categories :

- a) non-reinstatement of public rights of way (i.e line obliterated by growing crops/ploughing out)
- b) un-authorised structures and deliberate obstruction, commonly issues such as fences, walls, hedges, barbed wire, locked gates and any barriers or other objects capable of causing an obstruction.

- 2.2.3 For both areas the County Council formerly sought to resolve any issue by goodwill and co-operation and had some success but also opened itself up to allegations of undue delays and procrastination. It is proposed to change the existing Enforcement policy in accordance with the Tables below. This will mean a quicker and more responsive regime, better able to produce effective results.

Non Reinstatement

Existing	Complaint received. Officers carry out site inspection	Issue Offence Notice A requiring action within 14 days	Inspection after 14 days. If no action taken move to next stage	Issue Enforcement Notice B requiring action within 7 days	Inspection If no action proceed to next stage	Action by CC. Recover costs from land owner
Proposed	Complaint received. Issue RD letter with ticked checklist & section 297 HA 1980 notice. Response required within 14 days of service.	Consider response. If further action required/another complaint rec'd proceed to issue Enforcement Notice 'B' requiring action within 14 days	Inspection. If no action taken NCC to take required action and recover costs from land owner.	.		

Unauthorised Structures

Existing	Complaint received, Check whether structure authorised or registered. Site Visit	Contact land owner to find out why structure has been put in place/ capable of authorisation for livestock control	Negotiate with land owner for removal	Issue Enforcement action
Proposed	Complaint received. Check DM&S. Issue RD letter with ticked checklist & section 297 HA 1980 notice. Response required within 14 days of service.	Consider response/no response -issue section 143 Notice requiring removal within one month of service of the Notice	Inspect. If still in place NCC to remove structure/recover costs from person having control or possession of the structure.	.

2.3. Service Standards

We will make the changes set out in Appendix 2 which contains a summary of the new service standards as compared to those previously contained in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan Strategy Processes and Practices.

- 2.3.1 We will change the current prioritisation categories to a hierarchy based on four levels of response, 1 being urgent matters, to 4 being 'no action'. It is advisable to be aware of the potential for litigation and to balance this against the budget available. Clearly, emergency situations must be dealt with as soon as possible and it is imperative that budgetary constraints do not expose the Authority to litigation. The prioritisation categories have been included in the Service Standards table in Appendix 2.
- 2.4. The proactive cutting contract, let in 2007, allowed for up to three cuts a year and covered approximately 875 miles (1408km)-(2010 figure) which is 37% of the 2355

miles (3790km) total PROW. Additionally, for the maintenance of the National Trail, a further 93 miles (150km)- (2010 figure) was and is still cut with financial support from Natural England. In the new contract, let this year, the coverage is 797km which is 21% of the network and the cutting regime will be reduced to a single cut for the 2011 growing season, then none at all in 2012 and onwards.

2.4.1 The majority of rights of way covered by these contracts were cut either twice or three times a year depending on weather and associated vegetation growth. Part of this process involved the rights of way being inspected by the local contractor who would then advise the relevant officer of any problems which were observed or encountered. Once the contracts have come to an end, rights of way located outside the core network are unlikely to be subject to the same level of inspection by the remaining Countryside Officers. The Council needs to be able to show that it has a reasonable and workable system of inspection and repair. If it does not, then it will need to balance the risk of claims being received and upheld against the cost savings achieved from non renewal of the cutting contracts.

2.4.2 The current inspection regime relies on random sample survey, contractor feedback and reaction to complaints. Clearly, after 2011 there will be no feedback from contractors. It has been made clear from the comments of a District Judge in a very recent case involving this Authority, that a different standard of inspection and maintenance is required for urban sealed surface PROW to those which are urban unsealed and those which are rural. It is therefore proposed to implement a different management regime for these three categories and the best means of delivering this are currently being examined. Initially however, it is recommended that urban sealed PROW are inspected once a year, unsealed urban PROW every two or three years and rural PROW every five years (the latter being the same as that which operates for unclassified county roads). This regime would be supported by the random sample (albeit reduced) and reaction to complaints.

2.5. Devolved Delivery

2.5.1 Norfolk County Council, led by the Policy and Performance and Partnership's Team is working closely with Parish Councils, Community Groups and volunteers to develop volunteer work – including vegetation cutting for PROW. As part of this exercise information is being gathered on those services, and their cost, currently delivered by Norfolk County Council, to allow Local Councils to make informed choices about their future level of involvement and the best means of deploying resources locally.

2.5.2 In parallel with this exercise a Community Directory of voluntary activity is being gathered in partnership with the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV). The Directory is needed for a number of reasons:

2.5.3 1. So that we can map the extent and scope of community based access and countryside projects in Norfolk. Their outputs could be added to the appropriate NIs if required. It will provide a ready -made mailing list to get information, news and technical advice directly to the grassroots groups in the County eg for the Awards, events promotion, appeal for volunteers, either for Ranger tasks or specific projects.

2. So that community groups can network with each other to learn and share good practice, help spread experience and news.
3. So that individuals can find the nearest group to join or one that works in their particular field of interest
4. So that individuals or proto groups considering starting a project can access an existing group for advice and encouragement

2.5.4 The Directory will help to assess more accurately the current levels and scope of activity for county reports, and help gather information about the access network and the state of the countryside. It will also make practical action more accessible to individuals wishing to make their contribution or start a local project. It will provide the link between county and local action and ease the communication of important information.

2.6. This new approach to Access management has been discussed and endorsed at a special meeting of the Norfolk Local Access Forum and user groups on the 13 April 2011. The meeting was well attended and was organised as a workshop which considered three key themes:

- Ideas about prioritisation for practical action
- Ways of working in partnership
- Ways of encouraging and supporting community involvement

See Appendix 7 for a summary of the workshop outcomes. For a full account of the event a copy of the Workshop Report: "The Right Way Forward" can be made available on request.

2.7. Customer Service and Access

The changes outlined in this report will require a review of customer service issues, including access to the service and how customer contacts are handled by both the Customer Service Centre and the back office. In line with the Council's approach, we will need to look at ways of making access easier (particularly online information) and increasing the proportion of customer contacts which are self-service. The current webform for public reporting of highway defects may be a model which could be adapted for use in this context. Appendix 3 contains a pro-forma list charting a call from receipt to hand over to the relevant officer/nominated cover officer.

3. **Resource Implications**

3.1. **Finance :**

The Strategic Review of PROW has resulted in a reduction of £578,000 making a percentage saving on this budget of about 55%.

3.2. **Staff :**

Staffing adjustments have already been made as part of the Strategic Review.

3.3. **Property :** Norfolk County Council is a landowner, with Public Rights of Way, over this land, and the service and enforcement standards mentioned in this report will

apply equally to it.

3.4. **IT** : None

4. **Other Implications**

4.1. **Legal Implications :**

Public Rights of Way are part of the Highway network and the County Council has a duty to maintain the Highway. A Court must decide whether or not a Public Rights of Way is reasonably safe and will apply the test of reasonable foreseeability of danger. Details concerning legal implications are set out in Appendix 8.

4.2. **Human Rights** : No implications.

4.3. **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)** : This report contains proposals aimed at enabling communities and the wider public more control and greater opportunity to help direct and get involved with delivering countryside access and the public rights of way service in Norfolk, in line with the Big Conversation and the localism agenda.

Proposals for a re-focussed, more targeted public rights of way service were subject to consultation as part of the Council's Big Conversation earlier this year. An equality impact assessment on the proposals was completed, a copy of which is available to view as an Appendix to the 24 January Cabinet report.

The assessment identified that reduced maintenance, for example reducing grass cutting, may reduce the overall accessibility of routes for all people, particularly older people, wheelchair users, people with walking aids or pushing prams. It also identified that there are opportunities for volunteers to take on some work to help maintain or improve accessibility, for example parish councils taking on maintenance work (see para 2.5 above), and that this could help ensure that previous levels of provision could be maintained, or exceeded.

4.4. **Communications** : This matter was consulted on through the Big Conversation and, as part of this exercise, Town and Parish Councils have been written to with regard to maintaining the street scene and Public Rights of Way – “could your Council and community play a bigger part”?

For Public Rights of Way, specifically on the following:

1. Vegetation cutting on Public Rights of Way
2. Installation and maintenance of way markers on Public Rights of Way
3. Acting as a warden for Public Rights of Way

As indicated in paragraph 2.5 above, this process of engagement is still ongoing

4.5. **Health and safety implications :**

This matter is addressed in the main body of the report.

4.6. **Any other implications** : Officers have considered all the implications which members should be aware of. Apart from those listed in the report (above), there are no other implications to take into account.

5. **Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act**

5.1. No implications.

6. **Risk Implications/Assessment**

6.1. As advised in 4.1 above, unless the Authority can provide evidence of a structured inspection and maintenance regime it will be vulnerable to litigation. It will not be enough to say that one exists – evidence will be required that the inspections have actually been carried out and that any required maintenance has been logged and undertaken. This will apply across the entire network of PRow. Given the loss of the cutting contracts for the future and lack of resources in this area, Members will need to balance the risk of claims for damages and the associated legal costs against the cost of providing and operating an adequate inspection and maintenance regime.

Public paths will not require a particularly high standard of maintenance although the surface should be kept reasonably passable for users of the footpath at all seasons of the year. If the cutting contracts are being phased out this may give rise to third party claims against the Council to enforce the Council's liability to maintain under Section 56(2) of the Highways Act 1980.

7. **Alternative Options**

7.1. This report describes the detailed implications and measures associated with implementing previously agreed budget decisions.

Action Required

- (i) Members are invited to note and comment on this report. In particular the proposed way forward for service delivery standards.

Background Papers

None

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please get in touch with:

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If you need this report in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact 0344 800 8020 and ask for _____ or textphone 0344 800 8011 and we will do our best to help.

Appendix 1 Principle Statutory Duties

Principle Statutory Duties of Norfolk County Council acting as Highway Authority (body responsible for maintaining public rights of way and keeping them free from obstruction)

- To assert and protect the rights of the public to the use and enjoyment of, and to prevent so far as possible the stopping up or obstruction of, all their highways (Highways Act 1980 s 130)
- To maintain publicly maintainable footpaths, bridleways and restricted byways (Highways Act 1980 ss 41 and 42)
- To enforce the restoration of footpaths and bridleways lawfully ploughed or disturbed (Highways Act 1980 s134)
- To take action if the ploughing or disturbance of a highway was unlawful (Highways Act 1980 s131A)
- To enforce the duty of an occupier to ensure that crops do not inconvenience users of footpaths, bridleways and unmetalled carriageways (Highways Act 1980 s137A)
- To signpost and waymark footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic where they leave metalled roads (Countryside Act 1968 s27)
- To prosecute anyone responsible for a misleading notice on or near a footpath, bridleway or restricted byway shown on a definitive map (National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 s57)
- To prepare a rights of way improvement plan (Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 s60)

Principle Statutory Duties of Norfolk County Council acting as Surveying Authority (body responsible for the preparation and upkeep of the definitive map of public rights of way)

- To keep the definitive map under continuous review (Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 s53)
- To make modification orders to take account of events requiring the map to be modified (WCA 1981 s 53)
- To prepare definitive maps for any areas not previously surveyed (WCA 1981 s55)
- To keep copies of the definitive map and statement, together with copies of any subsequent modification and reclassification orders, available for public inspection in every district (WCA 1981 s57)
- To keep a register of applications for modification orders (WCA 1981 s53B)
- To draw the attention of the public to the availability of definitive maps for inspection and to the right to apply for modification orders to be made (WCA 1981 s 57)

Appendix 2 Enforcement Policy

A significantly high number of complaints from the public concern non re-instatement of public rights of way following planting of crops and ploughing. The Council rectified the situation by appointing 2 temporary Enforcement Officers to tackle this widespread problem. These Officers employed a rigorous policy of inspection and statutory notice issue. This policy was extremely successful with the majority of offending land owners re-instating the paths and ways in accordance with their statutory duties.

However, due to budget and staff reductions, it is now necessary to revisit this policy to make it more streamlined and time efficient. Set out below in this Appendix is a table detailing the steps for the existing and proposed enforcement policies.

It is anticipated that this amendment to the policy will reduce the time taken to achieve re-instatement and send a message to offending land owners, both private and public, that the County Council, once a complaint is justified, will take action to ensure that public rights of way, if disturbed, are re-instated in accordance with the governing legislation.

It should be remembered that if interference with a highway is only temporary or trifling it is unlikely to constitute an obstruction

In dealing with unauthorised structures, it is suggested that a similar model is now adopted again as detailed in this Appendix.

The governing legislation relating to the Highways Act section 143 Notices requires that the highway authority waits for at least a month after service of the Notice before taking action itself. The authority has a common law right to remove anything that it believes constitutes an obstruction, danger or encroachment without consultation with any other party. It can also prosecute for obstruction for subsequent offences.

The service has noticed a recent increase in members of the public now using the facility contained in section 130A of the Highways Act 1980 whereby a person can serve Notice on the highway authority requiring it to secure the removal of certain classes of obstruction from the highway (this usually happens where a person perceives there to be undue delay on the part of a highway authority to take action against obstructions). If a highway authority then fails to take steps to secure removal of that obstruction it is then open for the person complaining about the obstruction to apply to the Magistrates Court for an Order requiring the highway authority to remove it. If an Order is made it will not take effect until 21 days have passed during which time it is possible for an appeal to be lodged. The making of such applications would automatically trigger the appointment of an advocate to represent the Council in Court.

In addition to the use of section 130 notices it is open to any individual who believes that a right of way is 'out of repair' to issue a Notice on the Highway Authority under section 56 of the same Act. This requires the Council to admit, within one month of service of this notice, whether the way is a highway and whether it is liable to maintain it. The Council must reply within one month and state whether it agrees that it is a highway repairable at public expense. Upon receipt of this notice, the Complainant has 6 months to apply to a Magistrates Court for an order requiring the highway to be repaired. The Magistrates will then decide whether the highway is out of repair. If it is out of repair, the court will stipulate a time within which the repairs should be done. If those repairs are not carried out, the Magistrates may

extend the period or authorise the Complainant to do the work. The Complainant can then recover the expenses of putting the way back into repair as a civil debt from the highway authority. The making of such applications would automatically trigger the appointment of an advocate to represent the Council in Court.

It is anticipated that taking swift enforcement action, as recommended above, under section 143 will curtail to a certain extent the issue of these Notices as it will be clear that action is being pursued, rather than time being taken to discuss the issue with the land owner with no progress being immediately apparent.

For these reasons it is now intended, following referral of a complaint from CSC, for a letter to be sent by recorded delivery to the perceived landowner, enclosing a copy of the checklist advising of the nature of the complaint, and offence, requiring comments/resolution and the completion and return of a notice advising of their interest in the land/any other persons interest within 14 days. If nothing is heard at the expiration of that period/ a further complaint received, the Council will proceed to issue an Enforcement Notice and then take action itself if no action is taken by the land owner. Costs can then be recovered from the land owner.

These proposals seek to introduce a less complicated approach to obstruction cases. Currently, in clear cases (with no doubt as to the exact location and line of the public right of way in relation to the obstruction) the authority can expend officer time and money discussing the extent of an obstruction and whether some or all of it can remain, with the land owner. The authority should now take the view that it has no effective choice in the matter. The duty under section 130 of the Highways Act 1980 is to assert and protect the public right of way. If obstructions are placed in whole or in part over a right of way and are allowed to remain, local users will be entitled to ask the Magistrates Court to make an order requiring the authority to take steps to remove the entire obstruction under section 130(B) (2). In view of this, it is in authorities and land owners interests to take steps to remove any obstruction straight away.

Non Reinstatement

Existing	Complaint received. Officers carry out site inspection	Issue Offence Notice A requiring action within 14 days	Inspection after 14 days. If no action taken move to next stage	Issue Enforcement Notice B requiring action within 7 days	Inspection If no action proceed to next stage	Action by CC. Recover costs from land owner
Proposed	Complaint received. Issue RD letter with ticked checklist & section 297 HA 1980 notice. Response required within 14 days of service.	Consider response. If further action required/another complaint rec'd proceed to issue Enforcement Notice 'B' requiring action within 14 days	Inspection. If no action taken NCC to take required action and recover costs from land owner.	.		

Unauthorised Structures

Existing	Complaint	Contact land	Negotiate with land	Issue
-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------	-------

	received, Check whether structure authorised or registered. Site Visit	owner to find out why structure has been put in place/ capable of authorisation for livestock control	owner for removal	Enforcement action
<u>Proposed</u>	Complaint received. Check DM&S. Issue RD letter with ticked checklist & section 297 HA 1980 notice. Response required within 14 days of service.	Consider response/no response -issue section 143 Notice requiring removal within one month of service of the Notice	Inspect. If still in place NCC to remove structure/recover costs from person having control or possession of the structure.	.

Examples of issues dealt with under Enforcement – generally Highways Act 1980 as amended by Rights of Way Act 1990

1) Ploughing

- a) surface of field-edge footpath/bridleway or restricted byway or byway open to all traffic has been disturbed and rendered inconvenient for the exercise of the public right of way (sec 131 A)
- b) surface of cross field footpath or bridleway has not been re-instated to at least its minimum width so as to make it reasonably convenient to exercise the public right of way (sec 134(3) (a))
- c) the line of the cross field footpath or bridleway has not been indicated on the ground so that it is apparent to members of the public wishing to use it (sec134(3) (b))

2) Crops

- d) The crop has not been removed from the line of the public right of way to its minimum width so as to be available to members of the public wishing to use it (sec 137A (1)(a))
- e) The crop has not been prevented from encroaching on to the public right of way so rendering it inconvenient for members of the public wishing to use it (sec137A (1)(b))

•

3) Unauthorised structures

- any structure (other than a building or other structure for human habitation) (sec 143)
- anything deposited (rocks, stones, animal waste matter, barrows, wood) on the highway that constitutes a nuisance (sec 149 & 149(2) for emergency powers)
- vegetation in the form of a tree, hedge or shrub or other vegetation that overhangs a highway so as to endanger or obstruct the passage of vehicles, pedestrians or horseriders (sec 154) `
- barbed wire blocking a public right of way/running alongside (sec 164)
- electric fences blocking a public right of way (sec 164)

4) Other possible problem areas/nuisances

- Damage (other than ploughing) to the surface of the highway (s 131)
- Overgrown path surfaces
- Bulls in a field crossed by a public right of way (unless under 10 months old and which are not of a recognised dairy breed and which are at large with heifers or cows) (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 sec 59)

- Dogs which effectively prevent use of a public right of way for example by standing in the middle of a path facing approaching users with snarls and bared teeth or barking in a threatening manner (sec 137 plus Dangerous Dogs Act 1989 sec 1)
- Notices containing false or misleading information (National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 sec 57)
- Unauthorised signs (sec 132)
- Obliterated signs (sec 131(2))
- Intimidation (sec 130)
- Firearms and Fires (sec 161(2))
- Non compliance by land owner of the duty to maintain stiles, gates or other similar structures on footpaths, bridleways and restricted byways (section 146 (2)/(3))
- Unauthorised vehicles (Road Traffic Act 1988 s 34)

(Service Standards/Health and Safety)

Prioritisation category	Dangerous situations on the network	Problems preventing use of a Public Right of Way	Ploughing Problems	Cropping Problems	Other Problems (e.g. fingerpost, waymarking, Path cutting)
	1	2	3	3	4
Previous standard of Inspection within x working days	Within 1 working day	Within 10 working days	Within 10 working days	Within 15 working days	Within 3 months
Proposed standard of Inspection for Promoted routes	Within 3 working days	Within 20 working days	Within 20 working days	Within 20 working days	Within 4 months
Proposed standard of Inspection for other PROW	Within 3 working days	Within 30 working days	Within 30 working days	Within 30 working days	No action

Appendix 3

Checklist for responding to access enquiries.

Date of enquiry :

Parish:

Path type:

(Footpath, Bridleway, Restricted Byway, Byway)

Definitive Map number :

Location description :

Date logged on CAMS :

Grid Reference (8 figure) :

Landowner/ Occupier if known

Description of issue:

- Cross reference above information with interactive map to determine whether a PRoW.
- Cross reference PRoW number with route hierarchy list to determine which CO/TO to pass information to.
- For priority 4 categories outside promoted route hierarchy, inform enquirer that issue will be logged but no action taken.

For description of actions see foot of table,

		✓	Priority	Action required
1.	Is it on a Public Right of Way? YES : Go to 4			
2.	NO : Is it Footway/pavement?			B
3.	Is it a used route without legal status? E.g Permissive/Stewardship/Other		4	C
4.	Is it a dangerous situation? (Badly damaged stile/bridge, damaged tree overhanging path, collapse of path surface, unsafe structures adjacent to path)		1	A
	Problems preventing use of PROW			
	Ploughing			
5.	Surface of any field-edge path has been disturbed and rendered inconvenient for the exercise of the public right of way. Surface of cross field Byway or Restricted Byway disturbed by ploughing. (Ploughed up or narrowed permanent paths)		3	C
6.	Surface of cross field footpath or bridleway has not been re-instated to at least its minimum width so as to make it reasonably convenient to exercise the public right of way. (Ploughed cross field paths)		3	C
7.	The line of the cross field footpath or bridleway has not been indicated on the ground so that it is apparent to members of the public wishing to use it (No visible path across cultivated field)		3	C
	Crops			

8.	The crop has not been removed from the line of the public right of way to its minimum width so as to be available to members of the public wishing to use it (No visible path through crops)		3	C
9.	The crop has not been prevented from encroaching on to the public right of way so rendering it inconvenient for members of the public wishing to use it (Crops falling in on path)		3	C
	Unauthorised structures preventing use of path			
10.	Any structure (other than a building or other structure for human habitation)		2	C
11.	anything deposited (rocks, stones, animal waste matter, barrows, wood) on the highway that constitutes a nuisance(sec 149 & 149(2) for emergency powers)		2	C
12.	vegetation in the form of a tree, hedge or shrub or other vegetation that <u>overhangs</u> a highway so as to obstruct the passage of vehicles, pedestrians or horseriders		2	C
13.	barbed wire blocking a public right of way/running alongside		2	C
14.	electric fences blocking a public right of way		2	C
15.	Other (give description)		2	C
	Other possible problem areas/nuisances			
16.	Damage (other than ploughing) to the surface of the highway. (Removal or churning surface, vehicle damage)		2	C
17.	Bulls in a field crossed by a public right of way (unless under 10 months old and which are not of a recognised dairy breed and which are at large with heifers or cows) (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981)		1	A
18.	Dogs which effectively prevent use of a public right of way (eg: standing in the middle of a path facing approaching users with snarls and bared teeth or barking in a threatening manner (potential to escalate to priority 1 if injury involved)		2	C
19.	Notices containing false or misleading information		4	C
20.	Unauthorised signs		4	C
21.	Damaged/ missing PRow signs		4	C
22.	Intimidation (potential to escalate to Priority 1 if threat of violence)		2	C

23.	Firearms and Fires interrupting or endangering use Unauthorised vehicular use Overgrown paths (path surface)		2	C
24.	Unauthorised vehicular use		4	C
25.	Overgrown path surfaces (field edge)		4	C

ACTIONS

- A. Take as much detail as possible, using this checklist and call appropriate CO/TO.
- B. If surfaced highway/footway connect to Highways Maintenance 0344 800 8009
- C. Pass to CO/TO at scheduled time or pass to HT (if Trails) or SB (if PROW) for CAMS logging.
- D. Refer applications for registration of PROWs/Village Greens to Def Map Team

Appendix 4

Norfolk Trails selection process

The population reach of the routes suggested for inclusion in phase 1 of Norfolk Trails is 56% of Norfolk's total population. There is the potential for an additional 34% (total 90%) if we are active in the Growth Areas.

	<20 miles	Transport hub/s	Urban links	Walking	Cycling	Horse riding	No. associated walks in	Total distance of walks (miles)	Less than 25% black top	Logical part of network	Suggested for first phase of Norfolk Trails
Angles Way	77	6	✓	✓	X	X	8	39 miles	✓	✓	✓
Fen Rivers Way	50	4	✓	✓	Some in Nfk	Some in Nfk	5	21.5 miles	✓	Note ⁱ	No
The Great Eastern Pingo Trail (circular route)	8	0	0	✓	X	X	X	X	✓	Note ⁱⁱ	✓
Kett's Country	17	2	✓	✓	X	X	2	4.5 miles	✓	Note ⁱⁱⁱ	No
Marriotts Way	26	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	3	15 miles	✓	✓	✓
Nar Valley Way	34	1	✓	✓	X	X	1	6 miles	✓		✓
Paston Way	20	2	✓	✓	X	X	5	24 miles	✓	✓	✓
Peddars Way & Norfolk Coast Path	93	6	✓	✓	✓	✓	12	87 miles	✓	✓	✓
Tas Valley Trail	30	2	✓	✓	X	X	2	8 miles	✓	Note ^{iv}	No
Weavers' Way	61	4	✓	✓	✓	✓	12	64.5 miles	X	✓	✓
Wherryman's Way	35	3	✓	✓	✓	X	12	53.5 miles	✓	✓	✓
Boudicca Way	36	3	✓	✓	X	X	Yes	?	?	✓	✓
Burlingham Woodland Walks	10	2 +	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	✓
Bittern Line Circular Walks	N/A	✓	✓	✓	X	X	10	56.5 miles	✓	✓	✓
Wherry Line Circular Walks	N/A	✓	✓	✓	X	X	9	48.5 miles	✓	✓	✓
Little Ouse	10	2.	✓	✓	X	X	X		✓	✓	No

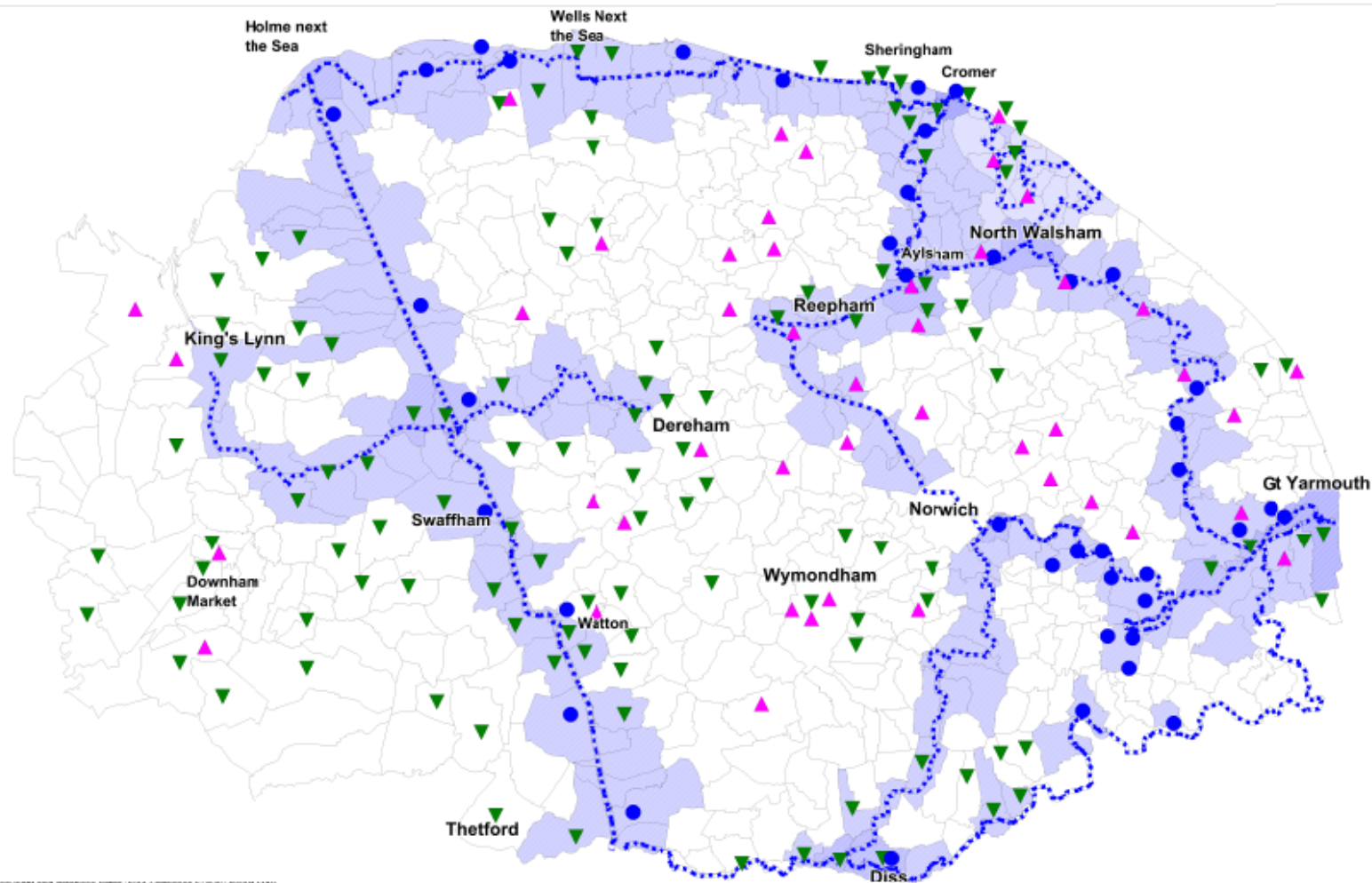
APPENDIX 5

Proposed Norfolk Trails and other Promoted Routes

Scale 1:319000 @ A3
Compiled by LL

- ⋯ Trail
- Trails circular walk
- Parish covered by Trail
- ▼ Health Walk
- ▲ Web-promoted Circular Walk

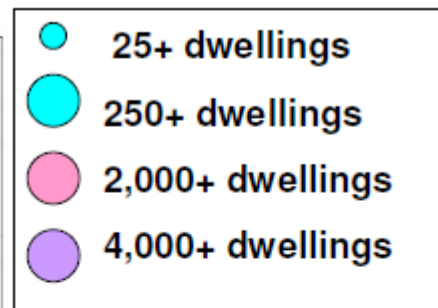
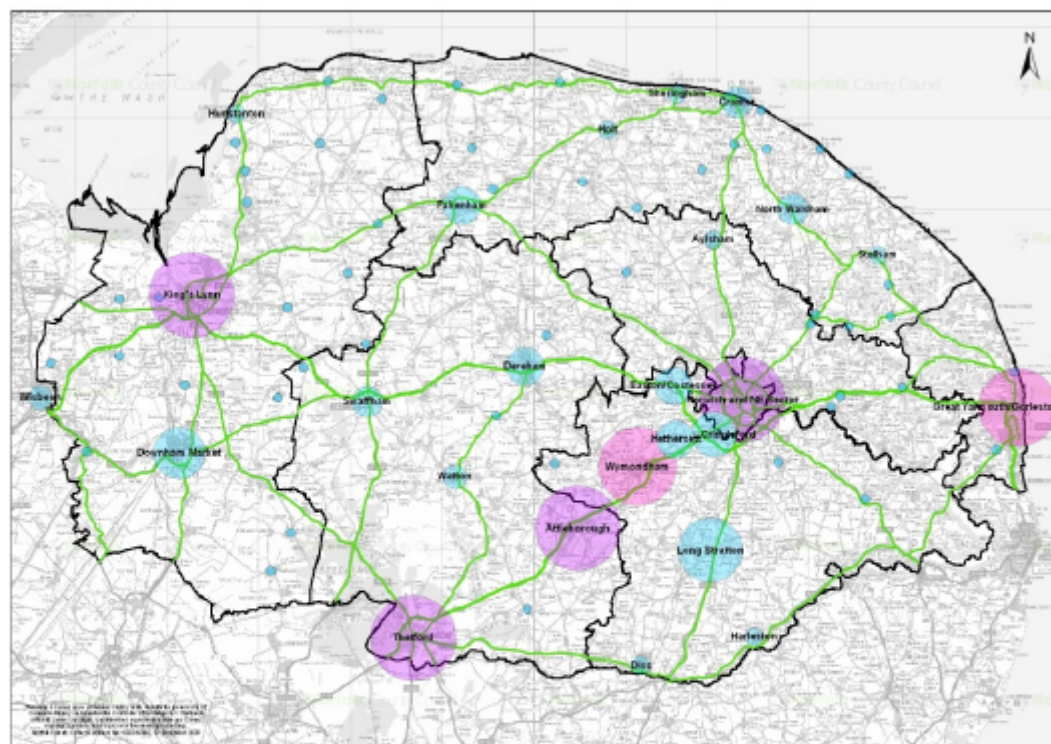
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Appendix 6

Growth Context for Norfolk



Target: 78,700 houses (2001-2021)

Built: 32,644

Residual: 46,056 (2010-2021)

Jobs: 55,000

(Source “Transport Strategy for Norfolk” PowerPoint Presentation May 2011)

Appendix 7

Norfolk Local Access Forum

Workshop Summary

“The Right Way Forward”

A workshop event held at County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich on 13th April 2011

Presentations were followed up by workshops whose objectives were to develop

- a vision for the future with ideas about prioritisation for practical action
- ways of working in partnership with others and ways of encouraging
- support for community involvement in maintaining and improving Norfolk’s public rights of way and access to the countryside.

The audience split into four workshop groups with a “themed” question. The groups were Business and Leisure; Community and Volunteering; Natural/Historical Environment: Engagement and Learning and Health and Well-Being.

Common issues for all groups included work to improve the:

- rural economy
- encourage business involvement
- access to the countryside
- community involvement
- quality of volunteer activity
- health and safety for users

Other issues included work to:

- Increase visitor numbers and spend
- Maintain level of service
- Educate people about the environment
- Raise awareness about opportunities
- Encourage volunteering
- Keep volunteers engaged and informed
- Provide support for volunteer groups
- Promote opportunities to volunteer groups

Ideas about prioritisation for practical action

The workshops considered matters which linked to priorities for action in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2007 – 2017 such as:

- Developing a well signed, maintained and easily accessible network
- Developing and maintain an integrated network that provides for the requirements of all users
- Improving promotion, understanding and use of the network

- Encouraging community involvement in improving and maintaining PROW
- Developing a safe network of local rights of way
- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity associated with the network of public rights of way

Key priorities for action across all the workshop sessions included:

- Maintaining an accessible network
- Developing effective support for Voluntary Community groups and involving volunteers in audit of the voluntary network to produce a 'state of the network' base line
- Identifying and promoting the biodiversity and historical interest of areas adjacent to paths and trails through guided walks and circular walks
- Linking with schools and other groups working with children, young people and families
- Developing good press and media coverage
- Using new technologies and promoting the network on websites as well as utilising social networking sites
- Providing good signs and interpretation

The Norfolk Trails concept was accepted as a good way forward to prioritise routes, but there was concern expressed about the gaps left in the map and how these areas would be looked after. The Rights of Way Improvement Plan is due to be reviewed in 2011/2012 and will address these issues.

Ways of working in partnership

Various organisations were identified as having an interest in the future of PROWs, including:

- User groups such as walkers, riders and cyclists
- BTCV, Norfolk Rural Community Council, Volunteer groups
- County, District and Parish Councils
- Farmers, landowners, stakeholders
- Schools, Colleges, other groups working with children and young people
- Statutory Organisations, Broads Authority, Forestry Commission, Natural England
- NHS Norfolk, GPs, NW Mental Health Trust
- Environment and Biodiversity Organisations
- Businesses and Leisure Industry
- Existing partnerships such as the Norfolk Coast Partnership, the Local Enterprise Partnership, Planning Partnerships and others

It was agreed to support the Norfolk County Council proposal for the Local Access Forum to set up a Trails Partnership with three area access groups, and to include representatives from the above organisations. Key organisations/interests that should be on each group consist of :

- PROW Users
- Landowners
- Businesses
- Environmental Organisations
- Parish Councils

- Local Authorities
- LAF representatives
- Community/Volunteer Groups

The aim of the access groups would be to advise on local plans for managing PRoW and to guide and oversee the distribution of a small grant scheme to encourage local access projects and schemes.

It may be that a separate working group on specific areas of interest such as Tourism /Business and Leisure could be set up, or it may be more practical to link in to existing organisations such as the Norfolk Chamber of Commerce or Visit Norfolk.

Ways of encouraging and supporting community involvement

Objective 4 of the ROWIP is to increase community involvement in the protection and maintenance of the network. Aims include greater Parish involvement, increasing the involvement and understanding of land managers in the management of PRoW and working with user groups to identify ways in which they can contribute to the future development of access. The workshop took this objective one stage further and started to look at involving and supporting wider groups of volunteers

Developing support for voluntary groups working on PRoW was recognised as a key priority with ideas such as training and support, coordination, providing the right tools, and acknowledgement of pre-learnt skills. There is guidance and good practice available which includes ensuring that defined opportunities are accessible – a sensible area size, allows for travel times and takes into account commitment levels; giving positive examples of projects where volunteers were involved; providing follow up e.g. on a website or newsletter; allowing for 'occasional' volunteers as well as regular members; training local leaders; ensuring that volunteers feel valued and promoting the activity as a way of discovering new places and meeting new people.

They recommended a clear division of roles between the public and voluntary sectors such as:

- Public Sector - Management/coordination of activities; Support for groups; Development of quality standards for work; Support for insurance and legal aspects of the work
- Community - Local interest and knowledge; Ownership and development of local activities and projects; Expertise which could be shared; Take on training and personal development; Social and community benefit

The outcome of the workshops was agreement that it is essential to maintain an accessible and safe PRoW network for residents and visitors so they can enjoy the countryside in Norfolk. It is important that they are well managed and promoted to enhance the rural economy, the health and well-being of residents, the understanding of natural environment and for community engagement. This reinforces the goal of the Norfolk Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2007 – 2017 (ROWIP) to “continuously review and improve efficient management of both Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and Access, as well as cycle tracks and

permissive access in Norfolk, promoting national and regional routes and parish networks” as well as supporting the aims of the ROWIP to :

- Maintain the network so that it is better able to meet the varying demands placed upon it
- Increase public benefit
- Actively seek involvement of the public
- Develop a collaborative approach to responsibilities and resources

What's Next ?

It was recommended that Norfolk County Council work to develop the Norfolk Trails concept, but to ensure that the Parishes outside the priority areas get a consideration where possible.

And that the Norfolk LAF sets up a working group to develop the ideas discussed at the workshop. This group would aim to:

- 1 Study the information gathered at the workshop and make recommendations on priorities for future management of PROW to Norfolk County Council
- 2 Draft a strategy for developing the three Access Panels across Norfolk
- 3 Review the role and constitution of the Norfolk Local Access Forum
- 4 Work with Norfolk County Council on the review of the Norfolk ROWIP

The group may want to co-opt members from outside the LAF membership representing interests such as tourism and leisure to help with this.

ⁱ Strong reason for being with very good out of county links but limited in county links

ⁱⁱ Rather small as an LDR better as a strongly themed circular walk linked to the Peddars Way National Trail.

ⁱⁱⁱ Would be better with links to Angles or Nar Valley

^{iv} Would be better linked to Angles or Peddars Way?

Appendix 8

Legal Implications

Norfolk County Council is a statutory Highway Authority. By virtue of Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 a statutory duty is imposed upon Highways Authorities to maintain the highway. Section 41 reads as follows :-

"The Authority who are, for the time being, the Highway Authority for a highway maintainable at the public expense are under a duty ... to maintain the highway."

It is well established in law that if the Highway Authority fails in it's duty to maintain the highway and an accident results, damages may be payable.

For a Claimant to succeed in a claim against the Highway Authority, they have to prove that the part of the highway where the accident occurred was not reasonably safe and the accident was caused by the dangerous condition of the highway. The Court must therefore decide whether or not a highway is reasonably safe and will apply the test of **reasonable foreseeability of danger**. The question asked is could the Authority have known that the location was in a dangerous condition prior to the incident.

If the Claimant succeeds in establishing that the location was dangerous, the Highway Authority is provided with a statutory defence in Section 58 of the Highways Act. This provides that in an action against a Highways Authority in respect of damage resulting from their failure to maintain a highway :-

... it is a defence ... to prove that the Authority had taken such care as in all the circumstances was reasonably required to secure that the part of the highway to which the action relates was not dangerous for traffic.

PRoW are regarded as part of the maintainable highway network and therefore fall within the remit of the Act. Where the highway is a metalled surface the Authority undertakes regular inspections and subsequent repairs where necessary. In most cases the Courts accept that the audit trail of documentary evidence of inspections and maintenance provided by the EXOR system is reliable and provides the Authority with the statutory defence.

In the case of PRoW there is no such structured inspection regime. In a recent case brought against the Authority where injury resulted from a fall on a PROW the Court found that the location was not dangerous. However the Court did make reference to the statutory defence indicating that had the area been considered dangerous the Authority had not made out the statutory defence. The Court has indicated that to make out the defence a recorded system of inspection should be undertaken. The Court did not give guidance on the regime nor did it comment on any subsequent maintenance measures, however it did not consider that inspections and maintenance should be at the same level as that for metalled surfaces.

Winter Service Review 2010/2011

Report by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development

Summary

The strategic review of the Environment, Transport and Development (ETD) service in 2010 considered highway maintenance as one of its workstreams and identified some scope for savings. The review concluded that whilst the winter service element of highway maintenance did not offer any scope for any immediate savings it would be worth carrying out a more comprehensive review after the winter for consideration by the ETD Overview and Scrutiny Panel. In addition, there were a number of requests during the winter, for extra roads to be gritted.

Winter services currently cost just over £4m per year and benchmarking demonstrates our cost per km per action last season was just over £12 compared to regional average of over £20, which suggests that we are cost effective. Our innovative salt supply Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract has ensured the salt we use costs approximately £26 per tonne compared to a regional average of nearly £38 per tonne when comparing like for like. The service offers good value for money overall.

The review demonstrates that the proportion of the network gritted in Norfolk, (35%), is in line with other rural counties. If all the requested roads were added, the annual budget requirement would increase by £81k. However, it is important to have a criterion based approach to road gritting in order to demonstrate a consistent approach enabling a reasonable defence if challenged. To include all of the suggested roads and similar ones across the County would require changes to the policy which would increase the treated network by 1034km and the annual cost by £1.1m. Any increases in the priority network treatment would be at the expense of other highway maintenance activities.

Grit bins are a growing feature of Norfolk's approach to winter service. They allow self help treatment of local trouble spots and fit well with the approach of building community capacity. The Authority has encouraged Parishes to provide additional bins which we then fill with grit. The cost of filling grit bins has risen from some £30k in 2004/5 to £120k in 2010/11. However, although it is not without some problems, this approach is felt to represent good value for money and to be consistent with the Council's overall approach and its new core role. As part of The Big Conversation consultation with local communities to date three agreements are in place with Aylsham, Diss and Wells Town Councils so that they can carry out footway gritting.

The weather events of the last two years have clearly demonstrated the benefits of the PFI contract. In the winter of 2010/11, when some counties ran out of salt, Norfolk had sufficient for its needs. In addition, at a time when demand for salt greatly increased spot prices, the Norfolk PFI bulk discount contract arrangements cut in to reduce the cost per tonne of our salt. As part of the PFI contract we undertook a 5 year price benchmarking exercise. Which confirmed that we benefited from the cheapest salt rate in the eastern region during the 2010/11 season.

Action Required

Members are asked to comment on the contents of the report and the approach set out, in particular:

- (1) Confirm the current policy and priority network.
- (2) Retain the Salt PFI with its amendments until 2020
- (3) Confirm integration of Norwich City routes and service for 2011/12
- (4) Continue with the current grit bin policy to promote community self help
- (5) Continue with procurement of local farmers and ploughs to assist with network resilience in severe weather and ask officers to seek to increase the number of farmers involved where it is cost effective to do so.

1. Background

- 1.1. Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 places a statutory duty on Highway Authorities to maintain public highways. An amendment to Section 41, made in 2003, added the following sub section:

'In particular, a highway authority is under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow and ice'

Preventative gritting falls within this duty.

- 1.2. The County Council, in partnership with Norwich City Council, has responsibility for salting its published priority network. In the 2010/11 winter season we completed 102 gritting actions, each action resulting in the treatment of about 1900 miles of the network. Each standard action uses 175 tonnes of rock salt. The cost of a single action is almost £40k. The total cost of the winter operation for 2010/11 was £4.1m.

- 1.3. Farmers ploughs are a key element of overall winter highway resilience planning. They are used rarely but when required can be a key element of keeping local roads clear. Reducing in-house resources is likely to make the availability of this resource a more significant element of what we do. It is felt we should maintain the funding and coverage at the current level. In some areas it may be useful to encourage new farmers to come forward.

- 1.4. In recent seasons we have experienced severe winter weather with the heaviest snow fall in recent memory, at times resulting in disruption to travel across much of the county. Public transport was interrupted or unable to operate in several parts of the county and many roads became passable with care, affecting access to essential services. These events provided a reminder that it is critical for the economy and for the local community that local authorities prepare for winter conditions.

2. Percentage of Network Gritted

- 2.1 The Code of Practice suggests the network hierarchy should form the starting point for winter service treatment priorities subject to modification to accommodate wider transport and policy priorities.
- 2.2 Priorities in Norfolk have been established striking a balance between available resources, and associated costs needed to carry out operations within response and treatment times. The priority routes for treatment were approved by Cabinet on 31st January 2005. In 2005 we treated 32% of the network

Currently we treat 2009 miles (~3234km) or 35% of our total road network as priority (P1 and P2 routes). Increases are due to requests from members and changes to the road network.

Compared with:

- . Hertfordshire 40%
- . Cambridgeshire 41%
- . Essex 41%
- . Suffolk 40%¹
- . Northamptonshire 44%
- . Lincolnshire 33%

3. Request for Extra Roads to be Gritted

- 3.1 Each year we receive a number of requests from Members, parish councils, emergency services and members of the public, to add roads to the gritting schedule. In 2010/11 we received 53 such requests. The current prioritisation of roads treated is based on the County route hierarchy and also accords with the national code of practice; with the Department's Highway Maintenance Manager using local discretion to accommodate wider transport and other priorities. One route from a village to the strategic network is also treated where possible. Based on this approach and including the natural growth of the network the percentage of gritted roads has increased from 32% in 2005 to 35% in 2010. This year 35 requests totalling 56km will be added to the priority network and can be accommodated within the criteria and budget by adjusting existing routes .
- 3.2 If all the recently requested roads were added to the schedule the percentage treated would increase to 36% and the annual budget would increase by £81k. However, to maintain a criterion based approach to road gritting which would demonstrate consistency of approach and a reasonable defence if challenged would mean that not just the requested roads but all other similar roads across the county would need to be added. The percentage treated would increase to 46% and the annual budget would increase by £1.14m.
- 3.3 A reduction in the current treated network would produce savings. For example if we were to treat only the higher priority routes (P1's) as detailed in our Winter Service

¹ Suffolk only grit their highest priority P1 routes (29%) as pre treatment then treat P2 routes

Plan we would be treating 1625kms or 50% of the current winter priority network. The estimated annual savings would be in the region of £1.7m. This would however see the Authority treating significantly less than similar rural authorities. This is not without its risks. Departing from our current policy, the code of practice and national best practice could lead to increased traffic disruption, more accidents on roads that are currently treated and more claims from the travelling public and businesses. There would also be significant reputational risks for the County Council.

4. Norwich City

- 4.1 As part of the current Agency project review, a change of contractor and Norwich City's proposed closure of the Mile Cross Depot an opportunity has arisen to re optimise the priority network in Norwich. The benefits are estimated at £200k per season have been identified and form part of the savings required from the ETD Strategic Review.

5. Grit Bins

- 5.1 Norfolk County Council's Cabinet reaffirmed the current policy regarding grit bins on 31st January 2005. Norfolk County Council maintains a number of grit bins at known trouble spots such as problematic gradients, bends, footbridges etc for use by highway users when ice and snow conditions prevail. If a parish, town or district council requests additional grit bins on the network they should initially discuss it with the Area Manager to clarify both the need and the location. They purchase and site the bin which is then filled by Norfolk County Council (NCC) and added to the grit bin inventory. If the bin is vandalised or damaged there is no obligation on NCC to replace the bin.
- 5.2 This policy has allowed the number of grit bins in Norfolk to rise from 205 in 1995 to over 1100 in 2011. A considerable number of town and parish councils have funded the provision of bins allowing this growth in service provision. Generally we would anticipate re-filling the grit bins 2 or 3 times per season, the cost of this activity has risen from £30k in 2004/05 to £120k in 2010/11.
- 5.3 Though the policy does allow the authority to charge in exceptional circumstances to date this has not been the case. With the recent more severe winters and snow events and promotion by Central Government; the principle of self help is currently supported by the policy.

6 Snow Ploughs used by Farmers

- 6.1 Farmers ploughs are a key element of overall winter resilience planning. To maintain service resilience during periods of snow, we are able to utilise contracted farmers, using ploughs to primarily (but not exclusively) attend to issues on local roads under the direction of the County Council. We currently have 53 farmers contracted to provide assistance using either owned or NCC maintained ploughs. There are some areas of the County where coverage is limited. The annual cost of maintaining this function is £6k per year.

- 6.2 Some farmers ploughs were deployed in certain areas last year but they have been rarely deployed on a county wide basis in recent years. It is felt that we should maintain the funding and coverage at the current level. In some areas it may be beneficial to encourage new farmers to come forward.

7 **Salt Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Contact**

- 7.1 The weather events of the last two years have clearly demonstrated the benefits of the PFI contract. In the winter of 2010/11, when some counties ran out of salt, Norfolk had sufficient for its needs. In addition, at a time when demand for salt greatly increased spot prices, the Norfolk PFI bulk discount contract arrangements cut in to reduce the cost per tonne of our salt. It was only the creation and intervention of the DfT's Salt Cell (by which Government directs salt supplies to the areas of greatest need) that inhibited Norfolk from passing through a difficult period without issue. During this period the Minister of Transport was moved to inform the media that Norfolk had sorted their salt supply situation and advised other councils to do the same. The authority did increase its stockholdings over the past two seasons by 4,500t by negotiating with Salt Union and at no additional cost to NCC. Last season the DfT procured regional strategic stocks available at a cost of £65/t plus transport estimated at £18/t, significantly more expensive than the PFI.
- 7.2 During 2011 as part of the PFI contract we undertook a 5 year price benchmarking exercise. It does confirm that we benefited from the cheapest salt rate at £25.50 / tonne in the eastern region during the 2010/11 season, the average price was £37.54/t and the highest £47.66/t. Based on our seasonal usage of 20,000t, this equates to a saving of £241k for 2010/11.

8 **Resource Implications**

- 9 **Finance:** As detailed in the report. Any increase in the treated routes would require additional funding including potential capital expenditure, i.e. additional salt storage, labour resources bulk gritters etc. Reductions in the routes treated and efficiencies resulting from incorporating the routes in Norwich City will result in savings.

10 **Other Implications**

10.1 **Legal Implications :**

A legal view was sought. The advice was as follows:

In deciding what level of gritting should be undertaken the test of what is reasonably practicable must be applied. The degree of risk (essentially vehicular, pedestrian and cyclist accidents) posed by untreated roads must be weighed against the cost, time and trouble in averting the risk. It cannot ever have been envisaged by Parliament that all roads would be gritted in winter and kept clear at all times of snow and ice. If that had been Parliament's intention, the duty would have been an absolute one. Parliament, however, limited the duty by using the term "reasonably practicable".

No gritting at all will clearly amount to a breach of the duty. Conversely, the gritting of every single highway in the County on a daily basis between October and March would far exceed the duty. To ascertain what is reasonably practicable one must -

1. Consider the national guidance.
2. Follow a risk assessment approach.
3. Take into account -(as a starting point)

the general maintenance hierarchy
Strategically important routes and traffic volumes
Results of consultations with the public and stakeholders

It will not be a breach of the duty if some routes are not gritted, nor will the duty be breached if highways are not kept free of snow and ice at all times. By publicising the policies adopted the chances of a claim for breach of duty will be less likely to be successful. I think it is also relevant in deciding what is reasonably practicable to consider what other local authorities do with regard to gritting. Providing our policy does not result in an approach materially different to similar authorities, again it is unlikely that a claim for breach of duty will be successful.

An ad hoc approach risks undermining the integrity of the policy.

It is difficult to say with certainty that one level of winter service will fulfil the statutory duty, whereas another will not. Provided a risk assessment approach is followed, consultations take place, results are publicised and we are not too far out of line with similar authorities, we will be able to defend any policy successfully.

10.2 **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) :**

An equality impact assessment on the County's existing winter maintenance policy has been carried out. This highlighted a possibility inequality for older or disabled people, particularly those with mobility problems, because of the low priority given to treating footways (the Council does not normally treat footways, although some main shopping areas in Market Towns are treated during prolonged bad weather, as resources permit). The current policy of providing grit bins and treating footways on a cost benefit/resource analysis basis is thought to be appropriate in terms of helping to mitigate this issue, bearing in mind that this problem is infrequent and has a temporary impact. In implementing the policy, the Area Manager is also able to use his discretion to provide additional service in areas where there are accessibility dependencies. In addition, the Council has also worked with some local councils and communities to enable them to carry out gritting of footways in their local area; so far three local councils have taken on this work, and we are in discussions with others may be interested.

If any changes to the existing policy were proposed, a new equality impact assessment would need to be carried out to determine the potential impact. The extent to which a new policy, and different criteria, would impact on equality would depend on the changes being considered.

10.3 **Communications :**

Any changes to the delivery of winter service; especially a reduction, will have to be explicitly and sensitively explained to the public.

- 10.4 **Any other implications :** Officers have considered all the implications which members should be aware of. Apart from those listed in the report (above), there are no other implications to take into account.

11 **Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act**

- 11.1 Not applicable

Action Required

Members are asked to comment on the contents of the report and the approach set out, in particular:

- (1) Confirm the current policy and priority network.
- (2) Retain the Salt PFI with its amendments until 2020
- (3) Confirm integration of Norwich City routes and service for 2011/12
- (4) Continue with the current grit bin policy to promote community self help
- (5) Continue with procurement of local farmers and ploughs to assist with network resilience in severe weather and ask officers to seek to increase the number of farmers involved where it is cost effective to do so.

Background Papers

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please get in touch with:

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If you need this report in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact 0344 800 8020 and ask for Nick Tupper or textphone 0344 800 8011 and we will do our best to help.

New funding Streams for Infrastructure

Report by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development

Summary

This report provides a brief overview of potential new funding streams for growth and infrastructure as referred to in the Strategy for Economic Growth, also on this agenda. Reductions in Government funding and reduced ability to borrow mean that it is essential to explore new sources of funding and to maximise opportunities to support growth.

Most importantly, we cannot do this alone and will need to work closely with district colleagues and other partners in order to secure the infrastructure funding and improvements the county needs to achieve this growth. Conclusions on the key new funding streams outlined in this report are set out below.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will produce significant funding for infrastructure but the County Council will not be a charging or collecting authority. It will be vital to ensure that the County Council works closely with districts to agree the CIL Charging Schedules and a protocol for delivering County Council services.

New Homes Bonus (NHB) could yield for the County Council about £5m per year after 6 years of the scheme. The first County Council bonus payment for 2011/12 is £799,055 which represents 20% of the overall Norfolk total.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) could provide an important mechanism for funding major infrastructure schemes but requires legislation and may not come on-stream until 2013-14. The County Council would have to work in partnership with districts and developers and undertake feasibility work to identify potential schemes.

Regional Growth Fund (RGF) has been made available to encourage private sector enterprise and new private sector jobs and to support the transition to private sector led growth and recovery. Councils cannot bid, but four Round 1 bids were submitted from Norfolk. These were unsuccessful and only one bid was approved for the whole of the South East. RGF is important but, as the results for Round 1 show, it will be a challenge to secure funding in the South East. Seven bids were endorsed by the LEP for Round 2 and the results will be known in the autumn.

CIL and **TIF** are the funding streams most likely to deliver significant infrastructure funding. Further initiatives to support job growth include the **Business Rates Review** and **Enterprise Zones**. An Enterprise Zone proposal, endorsed by the LEP was submitted for Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft and the outcome will be communicated by the end of July.

Action Required

Members are requested to endorse the conclusions on funding streams that the County Council:

- Works closely with District Councils to prepare CIL Charging Schedules and a Protocol for ensuring the appropriate support for services such as schools and transport.
- Engages with District Councils where they propose to investigate the potential for TIF to fund infrastructure that will unlock growth in order to better understand the opportunities and risks offered by this funding mechanism.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. It is clear that public funding will be constrained for some years to come. The Council will need to secure new sources of funding for core services, particularly capital investment in schools, transport and other infrastructure.
- 1.2. The County Council is also planning to do all it can to maintain and grow the Norfolk economy. The New Anglia and Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnerships will help drive business growth and new employment opportunities and there is agreement to produce a Norfolk Strategy for Economic Growth (see report elsewhere on this agenda).

The County has a core role to ensure that strategic infrastructure can be developed to support growth and recent achievements include:

- securing funding for the A11 dualling
- construction of East Port
- establishing the Norfolk Infrastructure Fund

Norfolk is facing high levels of growth at a time when the way infrastructure funding is distributed is changing. Reductions in Government funding, and reduced ability to borrow mean that it is essential to explore new sources of funding and to maximise those opportunities to support growth.

Most importantly, we cannot do this alone and will need to work closely with district colleagues and other partners in order to secure the infrastructure funding and improvements the county needs to achieve this growth.

This report outlines the key new funding sources including the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), the New Homes Bonus (NHB), Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and the Regional Growth Fund (RGF).

- 1.3. The terms of reference for the Local Government Resource Review have been published. The first phase of the Review which will report in July will consider the way in which local authorities are funded, with a view to giving local authorities greater financial autonomy and strengthening the incentives to support growth in the private sector and regeneration of local economies.

It will look at ways to reduce the reliance of local government on central government funding, increase local accountability and ensure that the benefits of economic growth are reflected in the resources authorities have.

The review will include consideration of changes to the business rates system, and focus in particular on the optimum model for incentivising local authorities to promote growth by retaining business rates, whilst ensuring that all authorities have adequate resources to meet the needs of their communities and to deliver the commitments set out in the Spending Review.

- 1.4. Clearly, any such government review will need to inform our investigations. The remainder of this report sets out in broad terms each of these new funding streams and how the County Council can engage in the various processes. It also highlights the potential benefits and risks associated with these funding streams and attempts to estimate the quantum of funding, which may be available.

2. **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**

- 2.1. **Background** - The CIL Regulations came into force in April 2010 and provide District Councils (Charging Authorities) with a new mechanism for collecting developer-funding for infrastructure needed to support growth. County Councils will not be responsible for preparing CIL, although they will need to be consulted under the Regulations. While CIL is an optional charge, the Regulations significantly limit the existing use of planning obligations (S106 agreements) particularly post April 2014. As such local authorities will need to develop their own CIL charging schedules, otherwise they will run the risk of losing valuable developer-funding for infrastructure.
- 2.2. The County Council's existing Planning Obligations Standards have yielded significant sums of money towards schools, libraries and fire hydrant provision (securing over £31 million over the last 11 years and a further £35 million for transport improvements). With the scaling-back on the use of planning obligations, it will be very important to encourage all District Councils as Charging Authorities to take forward CIL. CIL will provide the most significant source of funding for new infrastructure arising from planned growth.
- 2.3. **District Position** - The Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) authorities and Breckland District Council have already made progress in developing their approach to CIL. The GNDP has recently been selected to take part in the Government's 'Front Runners' project on CIL.
- For the remaining authorities (King's Lynn and West Norfolk; Great Yarmouth and North Norfolk), this is one of the areas for discussion between the district Leaders and the Cabinet Member for Economic Development at a series of meetings taking place during June and July.
- 2.4. **Levels of CIL contributions** - At this stage it is difficult to estimate the precise CIL revenue which might occur across Norfolk. However, work undertaken for the GNDP suggests that the CIL revenue in the plan period (up to 2026 – 15 years) could range from between £200 - £400 million. How much of this revenue would be available to fund strategic and local infrastructure (such as schools and transport) would be a matter for negotiation and would ultimately require a formal agreement/mechanism with the respective Charging Authority.
- Significant progress has been made with the agreement by the member level GNDP Policy Group to support, in principle, the use of a significant proportion of future CIL revenues to establish a shared investment fund to support delivery of key infrastructure projects (including up to £40m of local investment for the delivery of the NDR and related measures). The GNDP partners are also looking at future governance structures to ensure delivery through ongoing partnership working. The GNDP's CIL work is underpinned by a very extensive evidence base on infrastructure requirement which has been assembled, and continues to be updated in partnership with the relevant service departments and other providers.
- 2.5. CIL therefore has the potential to raise significantly higher levels of funding for infrastructure than the current planning obligations regime. At the same time it needs

to be recognised that the opportunities for using planning obligations post 2014 will be scaled back thus making CIL the only practical option for securing significant developer funding for infrastructure.

2.6. **Potential Way Forward** - It will be necessary for the County Council to:

- Continue to work closely in partnership through the GNDP (or its successor) with Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk on infrastructure delivery including all issues related to CIL. The County Council is fully engaged in the preparation of the CIL Charging Schedule for the GNDP area;
- In the remaining Districts encourage the preparation of a CIL Charging Schedule ensuring that it reflects infrastructure needs in the round including County Council services such as schools and transport. The County Council will need to develop a series of infrastructure requirement templates for each District, which can then be passed onto the District Councils to enable a partnership approach to developing a CIL;
- Produce a Protocol - this might involve agreeing timetables for monies to be transferred to the County Council and agreeing what evidence is needed to justify any claim on the CIL receipt. This could build on the County Council's existing Planning Obligations Protocol and Standards as well as the work undertaken several years ago on developing a Standard Transport Charge.

2.7. In the meantime ahead of any Charging Schedules being approved the County Council will need to continue working closely with the District Councils to obtain, where necessary, developer funding through S106 agreements. This will mean relying on the existing County-wide agreed Planning Obligations Protocol and applying the County Council's Planning Obligations Standards, which will need to be updated on a regular basis.

3. **New Homes Bonus (NHB)**

3.1. **Background**

The NHB is intended to provide local authorities with an incentive to deliver planned levels of new homes and will pay an unringfenced grant equivalent to the national average of the Council Tax band of each new home built. This will be paid for 6 years for each additional property and it is intended to be a permanent feature of the local government finance system. Initial funding will be from the abolished Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (paid to Districts in two tier areas) with future funding provided by top-slicing Formula Grant.

The grant is intended to be flexible so that Local Authorities can decide how to spend the funding in line with community wishes. The Government expects local councillors to work with communities and neighbourhoods most affected by growth to understand their priorities for investment. This may relate specifically to the new development or more widely to the local community, e.g. to offer council tax discounts, to support more bin collections or improve parks and playgrounds.

3.2. **County/District Position**

The Government has recently confirmed its decision to allocate 80% of the grant to districts and 20% to counties in two-tier areas, 'as a starting point for local negotiation'. The scope for local negotiation could be limited as the consultation

results showed lower tier local authorities all supported their 80% share. However, we are aware there are discussions regarding 'pooling' in Essex.

3.3. Levels of Funding

Initial calculations showed that gross NHB collected in Norfolk could be around £22m per year after 6 years. After applying the proposed 80:20 split to lower and upper tiers it would result in the County Council getting just under £5m per year after 6 years.

The allocation to Norfolk County Council for 2011/12 confirmed on 4 April is £799k which is close to our initial calculation. The announcement also confirmed that £250m has been allocated to fund the scheme in the next 3 years, (2012/13 - 2014/15) after which funding will come from Formula Grant. When the scheme becomes budget neutral there will be winners and losers among districts and it may be that the total net additional funding across Norfolk as a whole could be minimal. This grant is likely to provide modest funding for infrastructure, even if local negotiation optimised its use.

4. Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

4.1. Background

TIF is a mechanism that will allow local authorities to borrow against predicted growth in their locally raised business rates. The borrowing can be used to fund key infrastructure and other capital projects needed up-front to unlock the development potential. The money borrowed would be repaid from the increased business rate revenues generated by the development, e.g. by the increased rate paid because an area becomes more attractive as a result of the scheme.

The Department for Communities and Local Government has committed to developing and introducing proposals for TIF, but as it will require legislation it may not come on-stream until 2013-14. It may be the case that Government will seek a number of pilot schemes to this potential funding stream in the shorter term.

4.2. County Position

TIF has not been explored yet in any depth with District Councils, although officers have had some initial involvement with King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council in their early exploration of the potential to use TIF to fund infrastructure in their area. Feedback is being gained from district leaders at meetings in June and July to review the economic growth paper, covered elsewhere on this agenda.

4.3. Levels of Funding

The amount that may be raised through TIF will be dependent on the size and value of the proposed development. By way of example Edinburgh has studied the potential of TIF. The business case estimated that £84m of borrowing for upfront infrastructure could be repaid within 23 years by the business rates from the proposed development (540,000sq ft of new office/business space and 270,000sq ft of new retail space, 1,200 dwellings and 1,200 bed hotel space), plus the uplift from business rates in a wider surrounding area as a result of the redevelopment. The work found that TIF could finance up to £94m of borrowing over 25 years.

4.4. **Risks**

The main risks with this funding stream include that development does not come on-stream as quickly as anticipated or does not achieve the anticipated uplift in business rates, meaning that the funds secured through TIF are insufficient to repay the loan (or the interest payments), or that borrowing costs rise making the loan more costly.

4.5. **Potential Way Forward**

A lot more needs to be understood about TIF before any proposal could be given serious consideration. In the short-term the Government will announce more detail on TIF and we will need to consider the position following this. If legislation is passed, the County Council would have to work in partnership with districts and developers to consider cases on their individual merits. We could also consider whether we wished to be part of any pilot bid (if these are invited), but would need first to undertake feasibility work in partnership with others to identify potential areas to put forward.

5. **Regional Growth Fund (RGF)**

5.1. The fund is worth £1.4bn over three years, and has two main objectives:

- To encourage private sector enterprise by providing support for projects with significant potential for economic growth and create additional sustainable private sector employment.
- To support in particular those areas and communities that are currently dependent on the public sector make the transition to sustainable private sector led growth and recovery.

5.2. Norfolk submitted four bids for Round 1, all of which were unsuccessful. In fact, only one project was approved in the whole of the South East and East of England.

For Round 2, the LEP supported bids for:

- Business transformation and UK employment growth, submitted by Group Lotus
- Energy Skills (covering Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex), submitted by Federation of Small Businesses for Essex
Ipswich Employment Fund, submitted by Suffolk Chamber of Commerce
- Innovation and Enterprise Accelerator, submitted by IfM Education and Consultancy Services Ltd
- National Business Support Programme, submitted by Norfolk and Waveney Enterprise Services (NWES)
- Suffolk Business Park, submitted by The Churchmanor Estates Company Plc
- SnOasis, submitted by Haven Gateway Partnership

5.3. **Enterprise Zones**

21 Enterprise Zones (EZ) were announced in the Budget 2011, with 10 more to be submitted by LEPs, subject to competition and announced in summer 2011. To encourage private sector growth, these Zones will benefit from a business rate discount of up to £275k per business over 5 years; retention of all business rates growth in the zone for 25 years; simplified planning controls; and Government

support for superfast broadband.

An outline expression of interest was submitted by New Anglia to government, indicating that the LEP had identified a number of potential locations for an EZ within the two counties: Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft; King's Lynn; Bury St Edmunds; Northern Norwich; Norwich Research Park. Each location had identified the number of jobs that could be created directly in the EZ and in the wider LEP area.

New Anglia had to choose one proposal to support and submitted the bid for Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft. Announcements on successful bids are expected by the end of July. The Strategy for Economic Growth paper on this agenda contains more detail on Enterprise Zones.

6. Potential Funding Levels

- 6.1. The table below sets out the potential financial receipt arising from the above funding streams. At this stage these figures are only indicative and would require significant testing particularly in respect of the CIL levels. To give an idea of scale LTP funding has been added and for 2011/12 the capital grant for schools is £29.29m.

Stream	LTP	CIL	NHB	TIF	RGF
Potential Funding	2011/12 £27.5m 2012/13 £26.7m 2013/14 £25.9m 2014/15 £26.8m	£200 - £400 Million (GNDP Only)	£22M in total / year after 6 years but only £5m to NCC. NCC allocation in 2011/12 is £799k.	Depends on size of development. Circa £100m for large commercial development (repaid over 25 years)	Up to £1.4bn over 3 years.
Timescale	Indicative allocations up to 2014/15 as above	Up to 2021/26 (10-15 years)	Paid annually and cumulatively over 6 years		11/12 - 13/14. Round 1 bids unsuccessful. Round 2 bids submitted by 01/07/11.
Opportunities	Funding flexibility: Members prioritised maintenance funding in 11/12 Potential funding including Local Sustainable Transport Fund, winter damage funding	Fund infrastructure needed to deliver planned housing and employment growth e.g. Transport schemes and schools.	To be agreed with local community: e.g. parks, leisure facilities, council tax discounts. NCC share relatively small i.e. 20% of bonus.	Potential source of funding for infrastructure that will unlock development	Potential source of funding for infrastructure to unlock employment land, where private sector ready to step in.
Challenges	LTP allocations insufficient to cover maintenance & improvement needs Allocations do not allow larger schemes to be funded	Need to ensure that an appropriate proportion of CIL revenue collected is used to support strategic infrastructure	Local negotiation to secure NHB infrastructure likely to be difficult	Challenge of loan repayment in event of development taking longer to come to fruition or business rate uplift does not materialise as anticipated	Need to create volume private sector jobs in 3 yr fund period & gain significant private sector leverage – large % of funds. Norfolk not an assisted area – limits bid scope.

- 6.2. Within Norfolk the GNDP are the most advanced in developing and taking forward a CIL charge. Viability work undertaken by consultants for the GNDP has suggested that the total CIL revenue in the period up to 2026 (15 year period), based on the levels of housing and employment growth set out in the adopted Joint Core Strategy, could be in the order of between £200 and £400 million depending on economic factors and the levels of affordable housing provided (the lower figure is based on 40% affordable housing while the higher figure is based on 20% affordable housing). Affordable housing is exempt from paying CIL. Elsewhere across the county the level of CIL which may be achievable is difficult to quantify before any viability assessment is undertaken as part of the preparation of a District Council's Charging Schedule.

7. **Conclusion and Way Forward**

- 7.1. The funding streams outlined above show that there is potential to raise significant funding for infrastructure albeit with current uncertainties about TIF. The NHB share which would accrue to the County Council is relatively modest and in 3 years time the NHB might actually result in reduced net funding across Norfolk as a whole. The lack of success with round 1 RGF bids needs to be evaluated. Future bidding rounds may widen the scope of RGF but there is no guaranteed funding. CIL remains the most certain and reliable source of funding for infrastructure in the shorter term but the County Council will not be responsible for preparing a CIL or be a charging authority. Instead it will require the County Council to work closely in partnership with District Councils on a CIL charging schedule which reflects infrastructure needs in the round and produce a protocol for collecting funds.
- 7.2. It is considered that at this stage CIL is the most likely to bring forward significant infrastructure funding in the short term. CIL requires immediate action to work closely with districts on implementation. TIF, while also offering potentially significant funding, requires further investigation.

8. **Resource Implications**

- 8.1. **Finance** : All the funding streams outlined in the report have potential to raise additional funding for infrastructure. CIL is the most certain funding stream and the County Council needs to be in a position to access its strategic infrastructure share.
- 8.2. **Staff** : There are no immediate staff implications
- 8.3. **Property** : None
- 8.4. **IT** : None

9. **Other Implications**

- 9.1. **Legal Implications** : The County Council will be a statutory consultee in the preparation of any District CIL. However it is an optional charge and a matter for each District Council to decide whether to take forward.
- 9.2. **Human Rights** : None at this stage
- 9.3. **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)** : there is no equality impact arising directly from this report

- 9.4. **Communications** : None
- 9.5. **Health and safety implications** : None
- 9.6. **Any other implications** : Officers have considered all the implications which members should be aware of. Apart from those listed in the report (above), there are no other implications to take into account.
10. **Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act**
- 10.1. There are no immediate implications.
11. **Risk Implications/Assessment**
- 11.1. There would be significant financial risk if the County Council does not fully engage in developing the new funding streams. The scaling back of planning obligations post April 2010 means that CIL will be increasingly important as a means of securing developer funding for infrastructure and services.

Action Required

Members are requested to endorse the conclusions on funding streams that the County Council:

- Works closely with District Councils to prepare CIL Charging Schedules and a Protocol for ensuring the appropriate support for services such as schools and transport.
- Engages with District Councils where they propose to investigate the potential for TIF to fund infrastructure that will unlock growth in order to better understand the opportunities and risks offered by this funding mechanism.

Background Papers

CIL Regulations 2010, DCLG; NHB Consultation November 2010 and DCLG announcements in February, March and April 2011. Norfolk's Strategy for Economic Growth, elsewhere on this agenda.

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please get in touch with:

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If you need this report in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact 0344 800 8020 and ask for Alison McErlain or textphone 0344 800 8011 and we will do our best to help.

Norfolk's Strategy for Economic Growth

Report by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development

Summary

This report responds to the Leader's commitment in his budget speech to Council to bring forward an economic growth strategy for the Council. The Council has a strong track record of leadership on the economy. This includes strategic interventions, working with partners, on projects like the outer harbour in Great Yarmouth, the award winning Hethel Engineering Centre and the Nar Ouse Regeneration Route in King's Lynn. We have also led on wider initiatives to 'speak up for Norfolk', for example on the need to dual the A11 and secure decent broadband connections.

The policy changes ushered in by the Coalition Government, and the continued need to secure the economic recovery, mean that we need to refocus our activity on an economic growth strategy for Norfolk. In doing so, we need to identify those activities best undertaken at a county level, those where the LEP should lead and those which require a district-based approach, and work with partners accordingly.

The fundamental economic challenges for Norfolk remain unchanged; in particular the need to **improve transport and other infrastructure**, and to raise wages through an **increase in both the demand and supply of skills**. We can therefore build on our existing strategy, using the Norfolk Infrastructure Fund to assist with infrastructure priorities, and focusing on key growth sectors (energy, health and life sciences, media creative and financial business services).

On infrastructure, working with New Anglia, we need to continue to press for an early start date on the A11, and improvements to the county's rail infrastructure. The Northern Distributor Road remains critical to the continued economic success of the Greater Norwich area and we will continue to pursue this through the Department for Transport development pool, and with our Greater Norwich Development Partnership colleagues. We have led on a bid for broadband funding, and established the Norfolk Development Company to support regeneration across the county, beginning in Great Yarmouth.

Despite the major challenges remaining the same, the Government's policy changes and Budget announcements have nevertheless created new opportunities. The grant of £26m for development of Norwich Research Park is a major boost for what has long been one of the county's greatest economic assets. We have taken the opportunity to bid for Enterprise Zone status, submit further bids to the Regional Growth Fund and we aim to work with the prime providers in Norfolk of the government's Work Programme, getting people into jobs.

Action Required

Members are asked to note progress on the economic growth initiatives in this paper and to endorse the further development of an economic growth strategy for Norfolk, to include:

- securing funding for and improvement to the county's strategic infrastructure
- working with both LEPs covering Norfolk, and other partners, to promote infrastructure priorities and grow key sectors and skills
- greater support for business start-ups

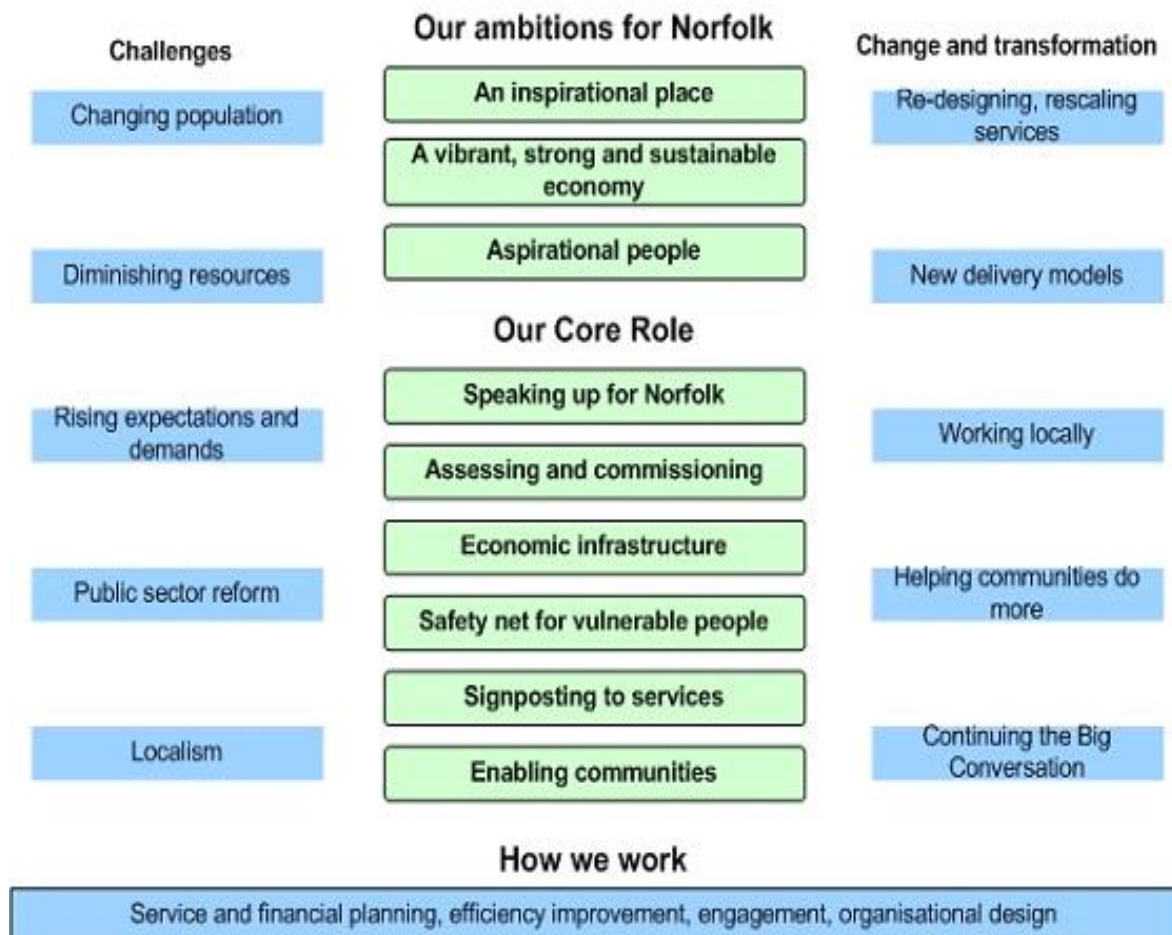
1. Background

- 1.1 Members will recall a series of reports last year describing the County Council's response to the recession and our support to businesses and individuals, in conjunction with partners. A summary of these actions is provided in Appendix A.

The purpose of this paper is to take that work on a stage further and responds to the Leader's commitment to bring forward an economic growth strategy for the Council.

The paper outlines the revised County Council core role, new central government policy context and current and proposed economic growth initiatives. It also makes clear the role of partners, particularly District Councils and Local Enterprise Partnership colleagues, in delivering that growth.

- 1.2 **Council objectives.** As members will be aware from 'Big Conversation' papers, the County Council is retaining its three strategic ambitions and replacing its nine corporate objectives with a 'core role', focussing on enabling delivery in conjunction with others. The key elements, and the challenges they respond to, are:



Each element of the core role has resonance for economic growth and these are the guiding principles for the activity outlined in this paper.

In addition, the Council's Economic Development and Strategy team's aim is to **lead on strategic economic development, including sustainable growth and regeneration**, and they will contribute significantly to the shaping and delivery, with

partners, of actions proposed.

1.4 In terms of recent achievements which underpin the actions proposed, the Council and partners have:

- Established Hethel Engineering Centre (HEC) as a regional advanced manufacturing and engineering hub, which, in March 2011, won the Local Government Chronicle's Economic Development and Regeneration Award.
- Successfully lobbied for the dualling of the A11
- Successfully bid to establish a LEP for Norfolk and Suffolk, focussed on growing key sectors and businesses, infrastructure, employment and skills. A key sectoral emphasis is offshore wind, with a Norfolk & Suffolk Energy Alliance delivering £200k of support.
- Produced the Local Economic Assessment for Norfolk – working collaboratively with all districts this is the evidence base for the LEP.
- Submitted Regional Growth Fund bids totalling £34.35m (plus £413m match funding), to support growth at Lotus, Hethel Engineering Centre, a green innovation centre in Norwich and a business park in King's Lynn.
- Delivered the Government's Future Jobs Fund programme in Norfolk, providing almost 1,300 jobs for people who had been unemployed for six months plus.
- Established a Norfolk Development Company, which will focus on regeneration, infrastructure and housing. The services of the company can be accessed by all districts, should they choose to. Initially its focus will be Great Yarmouth.
- Developed the Outer Harbour in Great Yarmouth, which now provides significant opportunities for the offshore wind energy sector.
- Coordinated delivery of policy for growth, including infrastructure, utilities and broadband, submitting a successful bid to the Government's BDUK fund (see 3.9).
- Helped secure the Joint Core Strategy for Greater Norwich, which will provide for some 37,000 homes and 27,000 jobs.
- Made sustainable growth a focus of the third Local Transport Plan for Norfolk.

1.5 **Local Economic Assessment (LEA).** Under the previous government, legislation was introduced that required upper tier authorities to carry out an economic assessment of their local area by April 2011 and this duty remains, under the Coalition. Norfolk's LEA was developed collaboratively with all districts and is, as a result, consistently used as the underpinning evidence base for the County. The key findings were not new, but the latest data reinforced the issues identified. They were fed into the LEP submission to government (see 4.1) and will be key themes of our economic growth strategy:

- The county is recognised for strengths in: offshore energy and engineering, financial/business services: creative/media industries; health and life sciences.
- Relatively low wage levels within the economy contribute to social and economic inequalities and there are pockets of rural and urban deprivation, especially in Great Yarmouth, King's Lynn, Thetford and Norwich.
- Business start up rates (particularly in North Norfolk) are below national levels and have been decreasing over time.

- Education and skills levels, although improving, are generally lower than regional and national levels and the gap is not narrowing.

The county has significant infrastructure deficits, including transport, water supply, energy and ICT (poor broadband coverage/speeds and poor mobile phone coverage). Failure to address these infrastructure deficits will seriously hamper business retention and delivery of housing and jobs growth.

2 Economic context and policy developments

The policy changes ushered in by the Coalition Government, and the continued need to secure the economic recovery, mean that we need to refocus our activity on an economic growth strategy for Norfolk.

2.1 **Cutting the deficit, sustaining the recovery.** Much has changed since the Coalition Government came to power. It has set itself the ambitious target of reducing the budget deficit within the lifetime of the current parliament and, following the Comprehensive Spending Review, there is less central and local government funding available. Responding to this, the Council undertook its 'Big Conversation' public consultation and agreed its budget on 14 February. This has involved a focus on reducing some of the services provided by the Council and exploring ways in which the private and voluntary sectors can take on delivery of others. Despite this, the Council has reaffirmed its commitment to its strategic ambition for the economy.

2.2 **Local action.** The Government's Localism Bill is currently making its way through the parliamentary process. In general terms the focus of the Bill is to devolve power to local communities where appropriate, which may include devolving budgets.

2.3 **Local government resource review.** The Coalition Government's Resource Review will consider the way in which local authorities are funded, with a view to giving them greater financial autonomy and strengthening the incentives to support growth in the private sector and regeneration of local economies.

It will look at ways to reduce the reliance of local government on central government funding, will include consideration of changes to the business rates system, and focus in particular on:

- the best model for incentivising local authorities to promote growth by retaining business rates
- how to deliver Tax Increment Financing proposals (see section 3.10)
- how various aspects of the business rate system, including business rate revaluation and reliefs, should be treated;
- examining the scope for further financial freedoms for local authorities

The first phase of the Review will conclude by July 2011, followed by the necessary steps to implement the resulting reforms.

2.4 **Budget economic growth proposals.** The Chancellor introduced his 2011 Budget as one to support economic growth and jobs. Key elements were:

- Simpler planning processes
- A cut in Corporation Tax (to 23% by 2014)
- A reduction in regulation on business, especially in their first three years
- Support for research and development through the tax system

- Tax breaks on investment in disadvantaged areas
- The establishment of 21 **Enterprise Zones (EZ)**, with a budget of £100m. EZ are described by Government as “allowing areas with real potential to create the new business and jobs they need”. The core offer is around simplified planning and business rates retention within the Zone. The budget named the 10 biggest cities plus London as the locations for the first 10 EZs. The Treasury has introduced a competitive process for the next 10, with LEPS invited to submit expressions of interest for an EZ within their area.

An outline expression of interest was submitted by New Anglia to Government at the end of April, indicating that the LEP had identified a number of potential locations for an EZ within the two counties: Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft; King's Lynn; Bury St Edmunds; Northern Norwich; Norwich Research Park. Each location had identified the number of jobs that could be created directly in the EZ and in the wider LEP area.

The LEP had to choose a preferred location to develop to a full business case for submission by the 1 July deadline and selected Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft, as having the best fit for both counties.

More details on the EZ criteria can be found in Appendix B.

- In addition, and of key interest to Norfolk, **the NRP was allocated £26m in the Budget to deliver innovation from bioscience.**

2.6 **Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).** During the summer of 2010 the government wrote to local authority and business leaders, inviting them to submit proposals for a LEP for their area. This is a key policy change for Norfolk and for the country as a whole. LEPs are designed to replace regional development agencies (RDAs) - in Norfolk's case, the East of England Development Agency - have equal business and private sector representation, including a private sector chair, and are expected to:

- Take on strategic leadership in their areas, developing a clear vision and set of economic priorities
- Create the right conditions for business and growth, tackling issues including: planning, housing, local transport and other infrastructure; employment; enterprise; transition to the low carbon economy; supporting small businesses and start ups.

Although they have no dedicated government funding, the Coalition has put in place a number of measures to enable LEPs to establish themselves:

- Partnerships are being invited to submit bids for a share of a £5m Start-Up Fund. The fund is a one-off pot of money to fund such things as office equipment and training. Partnerships will be expected to demonstrate, as part of their bid, how they will become self-sustaining in the future.
- New Anglia's bid for £184,300 included: development of an evidence-based strategy, action plan and sustainable funding approach; two major business engagement events; a website for New Anglia, as well as one for new business start ups; IT and office equipment, together with professional fees associated with starting up the LEP. The outcome of the bid should be known in the autumn.
- Partnerships also have access to an online Toolbox which provides

comprehensive information on economic development activity across government departments, and ideas for strong partnership/government working.

- LEPs can access information through the new BIS (Department for Business Innovation and Skills) Local network, which will be the first point of contact on any issues.

In addition, the Government is making available the residual funding from RDAs as a **Regional Growth Fund (RGF)** – also subject to competitive bidding. The RGF is **£1.4bn over three years** and is aimed at creating private sector jobs and growth, particularly in areas that are over-reliant on public sector employment. The higher the projected number of jobs to be created in the three year period, and the greater the amount of private sector match funding obtained, the greater the likelihood of a successful bid.

Business Growth Fund. An additional **£1.2bn** to support regional growth and the Big Society has also been made available. Of this, the banks will provide £200m over two years to set up the **Big Society Bank**. The remaining £1bn will be new capital. The Fund's objective is to increase equity investment in potentially high-growth small and medium enterprises, and to make it easier for these businesses to get access to funding. It will support growth through a dedicated network of regional offices, which will actively coordinate with the RGF to support its objectives.

All local authorities, alongside the local Business Support Alliance, will have a key role in ensuring that companies are aware of the support available and how to access it.

2.7 **Business growth policy.** In March 2011, the Government published The Plan for Growth with four ambitions:

- To create the most competitive tax system in the G20
- To make the UK one of the best places in Europe to start, finance and grow a business
- To encourage investment and exports as a route to a more balanced economy
- To create a more educated workforce, that is the most flexible in Europe

From Norfolk's perspective, we have key challenges in terms of poor business start up rates and low wages and our response to these is covered in 4.1 and 4.3.

We also have a number of key sectors – such as energy – that have the capacity to attract inward investment, generate wealth for the county and higher level jobs for its residents. Steps being taken in this area are covered in section 4.1.

2.8 **Employment growth policy.** The 'Work Programme' is the Coalition Government's flagship policy to tackle long term worklessness in Britain. It is built on a "presumption that work will always be more rewarding than benefits and that work is the primary sustainable route out of poverty". Replacing the previous government's Future Jobs Fund Programme (successfully managed in Norfolk by Norfolk County Council), it represents the biggest investment in long term worklessness for generations and will run from 2011-2016. In the county it is expected that:

- £172m investment will be made over the coming 5 years,
- Some 32,000 unemployed customers will be supported.
- Over 6,000 people will move into work during the life of the Work Programme.

In addition, a significant number of jobseekers will have received support and training to move directly into the work place, which will be attractive to new and existing businesses in the county.

2.9 **Planning policy.** The planning policy context is changing, with the Localism Bill going through parliament. This proposes removing the regional level of planning and allowing for decisions on growth to be taken locally. There will be a new duty to cooperate that will require local authorities and other public bodies to work constructively together on issues including planning for strategic infrastructure and cross-boundary growth.

2.10 **Young people.** In April 2012 the landscape for careers advice and targeted support for adults and young people will change. A national All Age Careers Service will become operational and schools will be given the responsibility for ensuring that their students have access to independent and impartial careers advice. However, raising participation through ensuring that all young people have access to appropriate learning pathways and provision, and reducing the number of young people not in education, employment and training (NEET) will continue to be a responsibility for the local authority.

The recent in-year reduction in the funding of Connexions highlights the need for enhanced capacity in schools, colleges and other education settings, as well as within third sector agencies, alongside external services to fulfil young people's information advice and guidance needs.

Over the past three years Norfolk has been successful in reducing NEET for 16 – 18 year olds - in the period November 2010 – January 2011 Norfolk achieved the government's NEET target of 5%. This is significant, against a back drop of national recession and funding cuts and it is essential not to lose the knowledge and expertise that has been accumulated. The NEET strategy priorities:

- Targeting resources by geographic hotspot or vulnerable groups
- Increasing employment opportunities
- Training and learning provision which meet identified needs

are being actively pursued through the 14-19 Local Operational Partnership groups.

The 14-19 Prospectus and Common Application Process is a good example of a partnership approach between the County Council, schools, colleges and web-based learning providers, which has resulted in a shared, web-based, information and application tool for all 14-19 provision (education, employment or other training).

Finally, the Apprenticeship Strategy Group, which reports to the 14-19 Strategy Board, is developing a strategic approach to increasing awareness and opportunities of apprenticeships.

3 Coordinating growth and infrastructure development

3.1 Housing and jobs growth

The East of England Plan (EEP) set the levels of growth for Norfolk up to 2021, which are currently being interpreted into Local Development Frameworks. Although the Localism Bill proposes to abolish regional strategies, local authorities in Norfolk are generally planning for the EEP levels of growth because it fits local evidence and delivers local need. **The Norfolk total is for 78,700 houses and 55,000 jobs to be developed up to 2021.** This includes about 35,000 homes in the Greater Norwich

Area, around, 7,000 in King's Lynn, up to 6,000 in Thetford and about 1,000 in Great Yarmouth. In spatial terms there will be a significant focus on the A11 corridor, with the planned developments at Attleborough (4,000), Wymondham (2,000), Hethersett (1,000), and Cringleford (1,000), in addition to the 5-6,000 at Thetford.

At the end of March 2010 (the latest period for which data is available) **some 32,700 homes had been built in the county since 2001, which is 45% of the plan period to 2021 and 42% of the target.**

Although the recession has seen an 18% decline in house building levels in 2009/10 across the county, it will be critical to ensure house building returns to target levels to help maintain economic growth. There are direct links to housing growth such as maintaining the construction sector and supporting retail but the indirect links are as important and include ensuring that young people can find suitable homes and that there is the right stock to attract skilled labour.

Data availability and quality makes jobs monitoring difficult. The best estimate available for job creation over time is the East of England Forecasting Model (EEFM). This estimates that **although job growth was running ahead of the EEP target by some 4,000 jobs in the pre-recession period 2001-2008, it has fallen behind between 2008 and 2011.** Total job growth in Norfolk from the EEFM is thought to have been 20,200 in the ten year period to 2011 compared with a pro-rata target of 27,500 for the same period.

This slow down in the rate of housing and job growth in the county will be a key issue to address – made all the more challenging by the cuts in funding to local authorities and other organisations.

Council officers provide lead support to the countywide **Strategic Services Coordination Group** (SSCG), which involves District Council officers and other partners, such as UK Power Networks (EDF), Anglian Water, NHS and RAF Marham, and covers all aspects of growth, eg broadband, utilities etc. The group seeks to develop and communicate a broad understanding of the infrastructure and utilities issues affecting the county and has produced a Norfolk Context which sets out the current framework for growth in the county, based on district development plans.

- 3.2 As a partner in the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP), Norfolk County Council has helped develop the Joint Core Strategy (JCS), and associated Economic Strategy, for the area. The JCS has now been judged sound by the independent inspectors and adopted by all partners. A legal challenge to the JCS has been lodged on a technical matter and will be dealt with through the courts. The implementation of the Strategy's commitment to a Community Infrastructure Levy will be a crucial requirement to help fund delivery of necessary supporting infrastructure.
- 3.3 Since 2007/8 the total Growth Area Funding spent or committed within the GNDP amounts to some £13.5m and has supported significant economic developments. These include the Genome Analysis Centre (which also received a County Council investment of £1m) and the Institute of Food Research Innovation Centre, as well as green infrastructure schemes and a number of transport improvements.
- 3.4 The Council has also supported growth plans for the other Growth Points at King's Lynn and Thetford and has played a major role in supporting regeneration in Great

Yarmouth.

3.5 **Norfolk Development Company (NDC)**

The NDC was considered by Cabinet on 7 March 2011 as a delivery vehicle to undertake development where the market is unable or unwilling to do so. The Company has since been registered and start-up commenced. The main areas of activity are around:

- Installation of infrastructure on site
- Regeneration
- Affordable housing

The Development Company is owned by the venture partners, who either contribute cash or assets in return for a share in the company. Proceeds from any development are re-invested to fund future projects.

The first area where the NDC is operating is Great Yarmouth, where it replaces the regeneration company, 1stEast, which ceased operating at end of March 2011.

The Area Board agrees priorities to bring forward through the NDC, and budget and any profit arising are ring-fenced to the borough area, unless transfer elsewhere is explicitly agreed by the Area Board. A first Board meeting took place on 24 May and identified part of the Beach Coach Station Car Park as a priority site for early action.

3.6 **Transport infrastructure development**

The County Council has played a key role, with local partners, in transport infrastructure development such as:

- Delivering Growth Point projects in Norwich, King's Lynn and Thetford
- Lobbying for the dualling of the A11, A47 improvements and a reduction to 90 minutes of the rail journey time between Norwich and London.

The County Council jointly managed the 'Norwich in 90' campaign with Shaping Norfolk's Future. In addition to reducing the rail journey time, the campaign is seeking to achieve: more train capacity; greater investment in track infrastructure to enhance capacity and line speeds; better quality travel experiences, including provision of wi-fi and improved carriage cleanliness; improved stations and facilities; longer term franchise stability.

Key opportunities to bring about these improvements are the two new Greater Anglia franchises – one for 18 months, covering the Olympic period, followed by one for 15 – 20 years.

- Proposals for a Northern Distributor Road (NDR) to the north of Norwich and Third River Crossing in Great Yarmouth, both of which would improve traffic congestion and businesses' competitiveness
- Leading the development of Norfolk's third LTP "Connecting Norfolk", which came into effect on 1 April 2011. Extensive consultation has led to a plan focused around six strategic aims: managing and maintaining the network, sustainable growth, strategic connections, transport emissions, road safety and accessibility.

In recognition of the current financial climate, Connecting Norfolk places a high priority in the short term on maintaining the highway network, however the plan

also acknowledges that we need to continue to support economic growth through investment in strategic interventions linked to growth and regeneration.

Working with the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (see section 4.1), we need to continue to press for an early start date on the A11. The NDR remains critical to the continued economic success of the Greater Norwich area and we will continue to pursue this through the DfT (Department for Transport) development pool, and with our GNDP partners.

In terms of rail, we will continue to push for improvements to the county's rail infrastructure, maximising the re-franchising opportunity. The New Anglia transport group, which is being formed and brings together a range of transport interest groups across Norfolk and Suffolk, has identified the improvements to the Norwich to London line as their top priority. In addition, the King's Lynn to London route is due to be improved and local MPs are lobbying to ensure the improvements extend beyond Cambridge, up to King's Lynn.

3.7 Sustainable Transport Fund bids

The Sustainable Transport Fund totals £560m (of which £58m is already committed) and covers the period 2011/12 to 2014/15. This money is open to all English transport authorities outside London to bid for. Both capital and revenue measures can be funded. Whilst single bids could be up to £50m, Government indicates they expect to fund around 80 transport authorities and therefore anticipate the majority of bids to be under £5m.

A Norfolk bid, focussing on transport developments to support economic growth, was submitted by the 18 April deadline and the outcome will be made public in July.

3.8 Norfolk Infrastructure Fund

The Norfolk Infrastructure Fund was set up in January 2010 to help fund infrastructure and support growth. Investments from the Norfolk Infrastructure Fund to date include

- £1m in a housing joint venture with King's Lynn on the NORA (Nar Ouse Regeneration Area) site
- £0.8m to meet blight costs associated with the third River crossing in Great Yarmouth
- £1.5m to enable the new technology block at the College of West Anglia.
- £5m to support broadband development

A significant element of the Norfolk Infrastructure Fund remains uncommitted and further opportunities for investment across Norfolk will be considered. A full report on the Norfolk Infrastructure Fund went to Cabinet in April.

3.9 Broadband infrastructure growth

It is recognised that high speed, universally available broadband is an essential ingredient to a thriving and growing economy. However, substantial areas of Norfolk – principally rural ones, but also some Norwich suburbs and other towns – are very poorly served and the prospects for improvement in the future are likely to leave as much as 50% of the county's population in the slow lane.

The County Council submitted a successful bid to the Government's £530m Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) Fund, which seeks to achieve large scale

improvements in provision.

The project aims to deliver broadband to the vast majority of Norfolk's residents and businesses. A Next Generation Access Plan for Norfolk forms the basis of the bid and demonstrates which additional exchanges could be upgraded with public sector support. A second element of the bid is a proposal to provide a service to the remaining 15%, using wireless broadband technology.

The Government agreed to match our £15m investment pound-for-pound and this will be further matched by private sector investment. More than 200 businesses came forward to identify how slow broadband was limiting their growth and the bid was endorsed by Norfolk's MPs and business organisations during a campaign run with the Eastern Daily Press. Our bid was one of three (of 18 submitted by councils across the country) to be given the go ahead and independent research commissioned by the County Council shows the project would create an additional 1,337 jobs and boost the county's economy by £401m over 10 years.

3.10 **Future funding streams to help achieve growth**

A number of funding streams are emerging and are being explored by officers – these are covered in a separate paper to this Panel. As outlined in that paper, we cannot do this alone and will need to work closely with district colleagues in order to secure funding and deliver the required infrastructure for growth. The main options being considered are:

- Under **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)** local authorities will be able to prudentially borrow to fund infrastructure projects. The borrowing is repaid from the anticipated uplift in business rates income expected to arise from the infrastructure and the growth it has released. It is unlikely to be available before 2013 and carries the risk of liabilities if the rates uplift does not occur.
- The **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** regulations came into force in April 2010 and provide District Councils with a new mechanism for collecting developer funding for infrastructure needed to support growth. County Councils will not be responsible for preparing a CIL but will be a consultee. CIL has the potential to raise very significant levels of funding for infrastructure. Work undertaken for the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) suggests that CIL revenue in the planning period up to 2026 could range between £200m and £400m. The County Council, and particularly Council members who sit on both local and district development boards, will need to strengthen partnership working with District Councils to ensure that strategic infrastructure such as schools and transport is included in a joined up approach to CIL proposals.
- The **New Homes Bonus (NHB)** provides local authorities with an incentive to grant planning permission for new homes and will pay an unringfenced grant equivalent to the national average of the Council Tax band of each new home built. This will be paid for six years for each additional property. The grant is intended to be flexible so that local authorities can decide how to spend the funding in line with community wishes. The Government has confirmed that the grant will be split 80% to districts and 20% to counties in two tier areas, as a starting point for local negotiation. Norfolk County Council's allocation for 2011/12 is £799k.
- **Retention of Business Rates.** The government is seeking the best model for incentivising local authorities to promote growth by retaining the business rates they generate. This is another potential funding stream which we will explore, once the details are published, after the public consultation.

3.11 **EU funds**

The authority was very successful in drawing down EU funds in the 2000 – 2006 EU programme period, not least because the Council and partners made the case for a notional allocation of regeneration funding for the more deprived wards of the county. During this period, a total investment of £11m by the Council delivered projects with a combined value of £114m and an EU funding contribution of £42m.

With the cuts to government grants and the loss of dedicated funds from RDAs, European funding is an increasingly important option to explore, to make local government funds go further. However, EU funding projects need to be embarked on with a full understanding of the resource requirements:

- They require an investment of officer time and some up-front costs that are only recoverable if the application is successful.
- Following approval, further investment of time and match funding, enabling the EU cash to be used for local delivery
- Projects generally run for 3 years, plus a year for development. It is therefore necessary to take a longer-term funding perspective than might be usual

More generally, the authority should take a council-wide strategic approach to EU funds and consider possible match-funding models.

4 Supporting business growth and enterprise

4.1 **Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)**

Following the government's request for proposals, 'New Anglia' a submission for a LEP for Norfolk and Suffolk was developed and approved on 13 December 2010, making it one of 28 approved partnerships at that date in the country. It's important to note that King's Lynn and West Norfolk are members of both New Anglia and the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership.

The priorities for New Anglia include:

- Enabling business start-up and growth
- Developing growth sectors, clusters and supply chains
- Championing infrastructure improvements, to aid business
- Gaining responsibilities and funding for high growth business support, innovation, supply chain development, trade promotion, inward investment and business finance
- Working with universities, colleges and other training providers to improve the employability skills of students, as well as meeting the skills need of businesses
- Increasing business involvement in local economic and community development

...underpinned by identifying, bidding for and securing external funding to deliver on these priorities.

Copies of the bid can be found at <http://www.newanglia.co.uk/>.

New Anglia's initial focus is to develop governance arrangements and a three year business plan. The business plan draws on the evidence provided by the LEAs carried out for Norfolk and Suffolk last year. For example, by developing the growth sectors that provide high value jobs and by working with training providers we will be

helping to address the low wage and skill levels identified in Norfolk's LEA.

A good example of sectoral / cluster development is the wind energy sector in Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft. Two recent reports commissioned by the County Council and Great Yarmouth Borough Council concluded that the offshore wind sector offered significant inward investment opportunities and that Great Yarmouth could benefit from 1400 new jobs from the sector, if enough action was taken to support the industry. Without intervention, there could ultimately be job losses.

To develop a strategic and joined up approach, the County and Borough Council set up the **Norfolk Energy Alliance**, including the Chamber of Commerce and EEEGr (East of England Energy Group). It was agreed that the Alliance would manage / direct the organisations' collective resources to support the agreed action plan. The project was paused following the advent of the New Anglia LEP and Suffolk and Waveney have each provided a member and support officer to join what is now the **Norfolk and Suffolk Energy Alliance**. Each authority is contributing £35k, with £40k cash and £20k in kind support from EEEGr – a £200k package.

The first action is to engage an inward investment specialist to develop high level relationships with the "energy majors" - those companies that could be the tier 1 or tier 2 contractors in the emerging supply chain. Other actions for the specialist are to manage projects designed to overcome obstacles in the locality; influence key decision makers at a national level; develop a close understanding of the local supply chain; work with local businesses to identify relationships that could be exploited and oversee marketing and promotional activity.

The Alliance is now turning its attention to issues such as land supply and skills.

4.2 **New Anglia Regional Growth Fund Bids**

New Anglia coordinated seven RGF bids across Norfolk and Suffolk (four for Norfolk) totalling £34.35m of RGF, matched by almost £413m from other sources, including the private sector. Unfortunately, only one project from the first bidding round was approved in the whole of the South East and East of England.

For Round 2, the LEP gave strong support to the following, as having the best fit with LEP priorities:

- Lotus Cars: Business transformation and UK employment growth, submitted by Group Lotus Ltd. This is an amended version of their unsuccessful Round 1 bid. They have actively engaged with the RGF team and Department for Business since their first submission, have addressed the issues highlighted, and have reduced the amount of funding requested, by bridging the gap.
- Energy Skills (covering Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex), submitted by Federation of Small Businesses for Essex

and also supported five more proposals:

- Ipswich Employment Fund, submitted by Suffolk Chamber of Commerce
- Innovation and Enterprise Accelerator, submitted by IfM Education and Consultancy Services Ltd
- National Business Support Programme, submitted by Norfolk and Waveney Enterprise Services (NWES)

- Suffolk Business Park, submitted by The Churchmanor Estates Company Plc
- SnOasis, submitted by Haven Gateway Partnership

4.3 **Business start ups and support**

As mentioned in 2.7, the Government has new ambitions around economic growth. The paragraphs below illustrate what the Council and partners are doing towards the achievement of these ambitions:

To make the UK one of the best places in Europe to start, finance and grow a business

To encourage investment and exports as a route to a more balanced economy

- Business start up rates in Norfolk are below regional and national rates and are declining: In 2008, there were 2,765 new business start-ups in Norfolk, a rate of 8.9%. This compares to a rate of 11.1% in the East of England and 11.8% in England as a whole. Relative to 2007 there has been a 17.5% decrease in the annual number of business start-ups in Norfolk. This compares to a decrease of 5.2% at regional level and 3.2% in England, ie the level of entrepreneurship in the county is not only lower than regional and national averages but that the gap is widening.
- The business support environment is changing radically. Business support is currently delivered or brokered via the national organisation, Business Link, but by November this support, including face to face contact with a business adviser, will no longer happen. A web-based service will be launched and there is also an expectation that the private sector will deliver more support directly.
- In light of these changes, Norfolk's Business Support Alliance is working with colleagues in Suffolk on a Business Support Strategy for the New Anglia area. Without any funding for direct delivery, the LEP is likely to focus on co-ordinating, promoting and quality assuring what is delivered. It will also look to identify gaps and how they may be filled.
- In 2010 the County Council has made coaching/mentoring of new start-ups its main focus for investment. 'Outset Norfolk' runs until September 2011 and uses match funding from the Investing in Communities Programme to deliver a £100k package designed to create at least 50 new businesses.

Areas for further work, which should be borne out by the Business Support Strategy, and where we would seek to deploy any funding that can be secured are:

- Growing existing businesses by encouraging more of them to explore overseas trade opportunities and helping those already exporting to expand into new markets. The latter can also be very helpful as exemplars to non-exporters, for example through the establishment of an export club.
- Helping to finance companies by exploring the establishment of a business loan programme, as it is still believed that access to finance remains a major obstacle to business growth. Several local authorities have set up loan programmes – either directly or through a third party – and appear to be having a positive impact on their local areas.
- Working with Trading Standards to develop a 'trusted professional' scheme to boost business to small and medium sized companies. This would be along the lines of the existing 'trusted tradesman' scheme, but would encompass professional services, such as accountants, lawyers and business advisers and would cover both consumer and business to business contacts.

To create a more educated workforce, that is the most flexible in Europe

- This is largely the remit of the countywide Employment and Skills Board, mentioned under 4.6. Part of this work will include the promotion of apprenticeship schemes. The sector groups will also play a key role in skills improvements for their sectors.

4.4 Other business support

In providing support to help generate growth and protect the consumers that feed the economy, the Council's Public Protection team targets rogue traders (who impact on legitimate ones), guides businesses through the regulatory framework and uses its Trusted Trader scheme to promote local companies.

- 4.5 The Council also supports the growth of the economy by maintaining the historic environment of Norfolk (historic environment tourism contributes £20.6bn to the UK economy) and helping businesses to minimise waste and take advantage of the growing environmental goods and services market.

4.6 Skills and employability

Norfolk's Skills Strategy. Norfolk has established an Employment and Skills Board (ESB), which is one of the structures delivering outcomes to the New Anglia Board. It includes representatives from business as well as all the major further and higher education providers. The ESB has developed a Skills Strategy for Norfolk, which addresses the challenges identified in Norfolk's LEA and, like business support colleagues above, the ESB is opening discussions with Suffolk to determine how Norfolk and Suffolk's ESBs can work together to deliver common priorities.

Work Programme. Delivery of the Government's programme will be through two or three "prime providers", selected within a framework contract in the East of England. The ESB will hold these prime providers to account, ensuring that job opportunities created match the needs of Norfolk's employers.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The fundamental economic challenges for Norfolk remain unchanged; in particular the need to improve transport and other infrastructure, and to raise wages through an increase in both the demand and supply of skills.

We can therefore build on our existing strategy, using the Norfolk Infrastructure Fund to assist with infrastructure priorities, and focusing on key growth sectors (energy, health and life sciences, media creative and financial business services).

In doing so, we need to identify those activities best undertaken at a county level, those where the LEP should lead and those which require a district-based approach, and work with partners accordingly.

It is proposed that the County Council focuses efforts under its 'vibrant economy' Strategic Ambition on further developing an integrated economic growth strategy for Norfolk. This would include:

- securing funding for and improvement to the county's strategic infrastructure
- working with both LEPs covering Norfolk, and other partners, to promote infrastructure priorities and grow key sectors and skills
- greater support for business start-ups

6 Resource Implications

6.1 **Finance:** The report does not make any specific financial proposals.

6.2 **Staff:** None

6.3 **Property:** None

6.4 **IT:** None

7 Other Implications

7.1 **Legal Implications:** While this report does not have any specific legal implications, projects contained within it, such as the Work Programme, the establishment of a Development Company and governance structure for New Anglia will have legal implications, which will be considered under separate papers.

7.2 **Human Rights:** None.

7.3 **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA):** The issues contained in this paper seek to ensure economic growth and prosperity for all parts of the county. The LEPs, for example, will target areas of deprivation in both urban and rural areas.

7.4 **Communications:** None.

7.5 **Health and safety implications:** None.

7.6 **Any other implications:** Officers have considered all the implications which members should be aware of. Apart from those listed in the report (above), there are no other implications to take into account.

7.7 **Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act implications:** None.

8 Risk Implications/Assessment

8.1 Each element of activity in this paper is subject to its own risk assessment.

9 Alternative Options

9.1 We could choose not to focus on the options chosen, and not to exploit existing and potential funding streams, but this would disadvantage Norfolk's economic growth.

10 Reason for Decision

10.1 Proposals put forward respond to the Council Leader's stated intention to develop an economic growth strategy and they seek to make best use for Norfolk of new government policy and funding streams.

Action Required

- (i) Members are asked to note progress on the economic growth initiatives in this paper and to endorse the further development of an economic growth strategy for Norfolk, to include:
- (ii)
 - securing funding for and improvement to the county's strategic infrastructure

- working with both LEPs covering Norfolk, and other partners, to promote infrastructure priorities and grow key sectors and skills
- greater support for business start-ups

Background Papers

New Funding Streams for Infrastructure paper, elsewhere on this agenda.

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please get in touch with:

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If you need this report in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact 0344 800 8020 and ask for Alix Pudwell or textphone 0344 800 8011 and we will do our best to help.

Appendix A: Supporting businesses and individuals in the recession

Debt advice. We created a web-portal showing all the debt advice support available, including family budgeting training delivered by Adult Education.

EDP Business Guide. The Council produced a guide to debt advice and making the most of opportunities in adversity, in association with the EDP, Norfolk Chamber and Business Link. It was widely distributed via the EDP, in libraries and other outlets.

Welfare rights advice. Due to the rapid rise in referrals, service users presenting with multiple debt issues and those facing home repossessions, an additional Welfare Rights Officer was recruited to the Welfare Rights Unit at County Hall, which handles referrals from all social work teams and the joint visiting team (which deals with benefit checks and financial assessments).

Loansharks and financial inclusion. The County Council, in partnership with Birmingham City Council, has a specialist team of Trading Standards Officers that identifies criminals who provide extortionate and illegal lending to vulnerable people. As part of this work, a Financial Inclusion Partnership Officer, employed by Birmingham City Council is now located in Norfolk County Council and covers Norfolk and Suffolk.

Credit Unions. Credit Unions are an important mechanism to help tackle financial exclusion. A range of schemes are available, including the Norfolk Credit Union (NCU), open to all residents. As well as promoting the NCU in 'Your Norfolk' magazine, the County Council provided £150k from the Strategic Ambitions Fund to assist the set up of the Norfolk Credit Union Current Account (CUCA). The CUCA is available to the thousands of people across Norfolk who are not able to open a high street current account, which leads to financial exclusion, such as needing to pay up front, and often in cash, for utilities instead by Direct Debit.

'Money Matters', a support guide to rural financial inclusion was launched at the Royal Norfolk Show and gives local authorities and partners the information and guidance to effectively promote financial inclusion in rural areas.

Future Jobs Fund. The government made available £1bn to help create jobs. NCC coordinated a successful bid for a programme delivering almost 1300 entry-level jobs for 18-24 year olds who have been unemployed for six months or more. This has been the most successful scheme in the region, with almost half of those going through the placements gaining full time jobs.

Business rates deferral. We wrote to Lord Mandelson on behalf of businesses, requesting that they be allowed to defer payment of their business rates payments to help with cash flow. This has now been offered to businesses nationally and promoted locally.

Bringing forward maintenance schemes. The County Council earmarked a £0.28m package of additional expenditure for property maintenance as a way of boosting the local economy. The authority currently spend about £12.6m per annum on maintenance and minor works, with over 350 local firms, via 19,000 separate orders. The average order value is £667, so the impact is very local and very immediate. The work was carried during summer/autumn 2009.

The 2009 **Shaping Norfolk's Future Conference** was themed 'From recession to recovery' and debated key issues to support economic growth in Norfolk, including broadband, Eastport, rail developments, as well as guidance for businesses recovering from the recession. A new guide to accessing bank finance / investment was launched at the event.

Appendix B: Enterprise Zone Criteria

- EZ should cover areas of between 50 and 150 hectares. However, some of the benefits may also be made available across a slightly broader area (notably those relating to planning).
- Single ownership of land is seen as positive.
- EZs will generally be on “clean” sites – previously developed or undeveloped land. Targeting clean sites will help attract additional growth. It will also reduce state aid risks of favouring incumbent businesses. It will enable the Government to put in place a clearer deal with the LEP about the retention of business rates.
- They will be able to offer benefits from a ‘menu’ that includes:
 - 100% business rate discount worth up to £275,000 for each business over five years
 - Simplified planning processes, eg using Local Development Order powers
 - Superfast broadband – through regulation or public funding if necessary
 - The retention of business rate growth within the Zone by the local areas for 25 years in order *‘to support the Partnership’s economic priorities and ensure that Enterprise Zone growth is reinvested locally’*, ie local business rate income from within the EZ will be considered as a resource for the LEP.

UKTI will promote Zones to inward investors and provide support to exporters located in the Zone.

Considerations for areas seeking to bid for Enterprise Zones

Those areas considering taking part in the competition to set up one of the next 10 Enterprise Zones are advised in the Prospectus to:

- Explain how their proposal will *‘deliver genuine economic growth and employment, additional to that which would have been achieved in the absence of an Enterprise Zone’*. In other words, they will need to explain:
 - what steps will be taken to minimise the risk of firms moving from within the LEP area in order to benefit from tax breaks
 - what steps will be taken to minimise the risk of offering benefits to firms that were already located in the designated area
- Set out the location and size of the area, along with how many new businesses and jobs the Zone is expected to generate within its boundaries and across the whole LEP area. This will require proposers to show how their proposals link to the vision and plans for the economy of the whole LEP area
- Map the barriers to growth and explain how they will be addressed. This may also require a statement on any additional actions the LEP can make over and above those benefits associated with an Enterprise Zone, e.g. tailored training provision to meet any skill shortages that have been identified as a barrier to growth
- Set out how best to use the Local Development Order (e.g. a focus on a particular sector)
- Ensure all local planning authorities in the LEP agree with the proposals
- Devise strategies to ensure that employment and business growth is sustainable over time.

Update on Shared Transport Provision in Norfolk

Report by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development

Summary

The Transformation and Efficiency Programme for shared transport is underway. This transformation programme takes forward the work of the ETD Strategic Review and implementation of the budget proposals agreed by Council in February. This programme will accelerate a shift towards demand responsive transport (DRT) in rural areas, to enable the required savings of £0.5m in 2011/12 and £1m in 2012/13 to be made from the local bus budget. Target savings for 2011/12 are on track.

There is a strong focus on working with the voluntary and community transport (CT) sector to build capacity and strengthen the services they offer. This aligns with government's views on rural transport provision and Norfolk was awarded £480k in a ring fenced grant to support the CT sector. A programme of activity is underway; the first Norfolk CT Provider Forum took place on 4 July and a volunteer driver recruitment campaign was launched at the Norfolk Show on 29 June. The work reflects a change in our partnering model with the CT sector, with this council shifting to an enabling and supporting role for the growing sector. CT organisations are keen for a Norfolk Community Transport Association (NCTA) to be established. This would act as an "umbrella" organisation and enable core skills such as HR, procurement and vehicle management to be pooled, as well as achieve economies of scale in procurement e.g. insurance and fleet management.

Proposals for saving £1m from the local bus budget in 2012/13 are being developed. These are being developed on a needs based assessment, current performance of the bus network and the potential for replacement DRT services. The changes will inevitably lead to some bus services being reduced or cut entirely. Where possible, and where there is an economic case to do so, we will develop alternate transport solutions based on DRT. The emphasis will be on maintaining access for the most vulnerable citizens, particularly for journeys to work and education, essential shopping and health related visits.

The programme also oversees changes in the Park and Ride network to remove the entire subsidy by 2012/13. Significant progress has been made to reduce the level of subsidy required to maintain the Park and Ride service, from £1.97m in 2010/11 to an estimated cost of £600k in 2011/12. The most substantive fixed costs remaining are business rates of £260k. Changes to achieve a more cost effective asset management model for Park and Ride, whereby site management is transferred to a not-for-profit organisation, are being taken forward.

Action Required

Overview and Scrutiny Panel are requested to note the report and make comments on the proposals and work underway to date.

1. **Background**

- 1.1. Following the Big Conversation and the budget planning process, changes to the local bus network and Norwich Park and Ride services were agreed, to deliver savings of £1.5m and £2m respectively over the next two years.
- 1.2. To achieve the saving in local bus and mitigate any impact on the travelling public, there will be an accelerated shift in delivery towards more demand responsive transport (DRT), especially in rural areas. This encompasses the award winning Flexibus services, community transport (CT) as well as carsharing and car clubs that also work on an on-demand basis. This builds on the council's existing policy of moving towards DRT, which has been confirmed in the recently adopted 3rd Local Transport Plan.
- 1.3. The transport team have a strong track record of mitigating rising costs in the transport network by working in close collaboration with our transport providers. The providers are a mix of commercial and not-for-profit operators, ranging from big bus, to minibuses, to small vehicles and taxi operators. Each type of provision has a vital part to play in a truly "mixed economy" supply chain that caters for every type of demand and transport need.

2. **Local Bus**

- 2.1 The savings of £0.45m for 2011/12 have already been achieved. This is mainly through a reduction in service frequencies, renegotiation of contract prices and shifting some services to commercial. As a result, the impact of changes on the travelling public in most cases has been small, with options remaining for most communities. Only three Saturday services were stopped (with an average of less than 5 passengers per day) following a review of almost 200 routes.
- 2.2 There is a limit to the savings that can be achieved in this way, as we have a regular and frequent review process in place. Thus, to make the further £1m reduction, around a third of the current budget, there will be significant changes to how services are delivered, and provision will reduce overall.
- 2.3 Proposals for service changes during 2012/13 are being developed. These are based on current patronage and subsidy levels as well as an assessment of community need. The rationale behind the review of contract funding is to consider:
 - Each service independently, but also as part of the wider network
 - Value for money, including the subsidy per passenger figure – which for the majority of contracts is less than £2 compared set against a maximum level of £3
 - The number of passengers that would be affected by potential changes and alternative services that effectively already compete, including rail and DRT
 - Options to increase the commercial element of contracts and reduce funding where revenues may support this
 - Proposals for a number of routes where demand can be shifted to DRT

Emphasis is on protecting daytime and journey to work services, with a reduction or withdrawal of funding for evening and Sunday services. In addition, we will look at increasing fares on school services provided for 'choice' pupils not attending their local designated school, with a view to eliminating subsidy. It is likely that market day shoppers would not be affected, with these services representing good value for

money and few other alternatives existing.

- 2.4 This rationale will be supported by the results of the needs assessment. This will ensure that the remaining network reflects social need and continues to offer travel options for the most vulnerable. This includes travel to work, essential shopping and health services.
- 2.5 DRT will help to mitigate the impact of service changes. There is a comprehensive programme of activity underway with the voluntary and community transport sector to achieve this, which is expanded on in section 3.
- 2.6 When our research has been concluded, and proposals about network changes have been more clearly identified, we plan to:
- Undertake full and transparent consultation of at least 8 weeks
 - Prepare thorough Equality Impact Assessment including specific consultation with representative groups, including those with disabilities, older people
 - Run the consultation on line and in hard copy (distributed through libraries) survey, and host some special meetings.
- 2.7 The timetable for consultation is provisionally set for the months of September and October 2011, allowing formal decisions to be taken in late November and implemented from December. This allows us to appropriate lead-in time to amend contracts or undertake procurement to deliver the required savings in the financial year 2012/13.
- 2.8 **Overview and Scrutiny Panel's views on the implementation proposals identified in 2.3 would be welcome.**

3. **Voluntary and Community Transport Sector**

- 3.1 Our work with the voluntary and CT sector will focus on building their capacity and increasing service availability, alongside raising the profile of this form of transport. Convincing the wider population that DRT is part of mainstream public transport is a key part of the transformation programme.
- 3.2 A programme of activity, overseen by a CT Steering Group, is underway. In the first instance this focuses on achieving positive outcomes for the sector and reinforcing their value and importance as a transport provider within the county. A CT Providers Forum has been established, with the first meeting on the 4 July, bringing all CT organisations in Norfolk together for the first time.
- 3.3 A volunteer driver recruitment campaign was launched at this year's Norfolk Show on 29 June. This will help tackle a common problem faced by the sector and address a key concern operators have when considering growing or expanding their business. It will also help begin to raise the profile of the work CT does within Norfolk. NCC will coordinate the campaign on behalf of the sector, with individual operators having responsibility for following up on and managing new volunteers.
- (Examples of the campaign literature are attached at Appendix A and will be available to view in the Marble Map area in advance of the Panel meeting.)
- 3.4 The work underway aligns well with government's thinking on rural transport delivery. Norfolk has been awarded £480k to help support the CT sector through a ring fenced CT Grant directly from Government.

- 3.5 There is enthusiasm from within the sector to use a small element of the CT Grant to establish a Norfolk Community Transport Association (NCTA), an umbrella body for operators. This would bring operators together, creating expertise for common functions like HR, procurement and business development, which could be provided via one contract rather than through many which is the case currently. It would also help achieve economies through fleet use, route planning and operational management, meaning that rather than journeys being planned to each operator individually, they could be planned together, more efficiently, to the best vehicle. It would enable CT operators to concentrate on delivering locally and on community engagement, helping inform and build networks that meet local demands.
- 3.6 Longer term, an NCTA could be beneficial in delivering jointly commissioned health, school, social care and wellbeing journeys with the County Council and NHS. This would build on the Council's Integrated Transport Project, which currently plans over 1 million journeys per annum for adult social care and non-emergency health appointments in partnership with the East of England Ambulance Trust.
- 3.7 We have been working on the best strategic delivery model for a NCTA and will be pursuing the option of creating a Community Interest Company (CIC), limited by guarantee. This gives us the best option of securing the delivery of existing services provided by the sector, but enables expansion and the opportunity to seek funding from other sources in the longer term, from outside the public sector.
- 3.8 Although the council will help set up and continue to support the NCTA, it is not the intention that the council is the lead partner. This would be contrary to the aims of building, enabling and sustainably developing the sector. It fits our new core role, and Norfolk Ambition, particularly around building capacity in the voluntary sector and improving accessibility.
- 3.9 Establishing the NCTA is a key step towards new partnership arrangements with the voluntary and community transport sector in Norfolk. Our intention is to become an enabler of transport delivery rather than the main deliverer, and the NCTA provides significant opportunity to achieve higher standards and engagement from the CT sector on this.
- 3.10 **Overview and Scrutiny Panel's views on the establishment of a Norfolk Community Transport Association and work underway to date with the sector would be welcome.**

4. **Norwich Park & Ride**

- 4.1. Significant progress has been made to reduce the level of subsidy required to maintain the Park and Ride service. Changes made since February will deliver £1.45m in savings in 2011/12. This reduced the level of subsidy required to maintain the Norwich Park and Ride service from £1.97m in 2010/11 to a forecast position of £600k in 2011/12.
- 4.2. Park and Ride services continue to operate from all six sites, with changes designed to minimise impact on users. Changes include:
- Slightly lower frequencies of 15 minutes rather than every 12
 - Removal of late night services on a Thursday, except from Airport and Thickthorn sites, with these extended hours funded by the Chapelfield Shopping Centre
 - Closure of Postwick and Costessey on Saturdays
 - Closure of toilet facilities and removal of site attendants

- A modest change to the start and finish times, with sites opening later and closing earlier
 - A 10-15% increase in fares, with all ticket sales now on bus or online
 - Introduction of a £1 flat fare for concessionary pass holders after 0930 Monday to Friday
- 4.3. We have allowed for some reduction in patronage as a result of changes. Early indicators suggest that patronage is holding up overall, but we are keeping a close eye on the business performance. Monthly analysis and customer insight will be used to help inform future decisions, including a further fares review later this year.
- 4.4. From April 2011 we introduced a £1 fare for concessionary pass holders. This is possible because the Park and Ride can be considered a 'special amenity', with the provision of a parking space, which means that a fare can be charged. This will generate additional income, forecast to be around £250k in 2011/12.
- 4.5. Work is underway to achieve a zero subsidy position by 2012/13. This includes consideration of how we can further reduce costs and secure longer-term contributions from bodies like the UEA, Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital (NNUH) and City Centre Partnership.
- 4.6. The Costessey site functions as a Park and Ride for the NNUH and UEA as well as to the city centre. Funding support of £100k has been given by both establishments to secure this service during 2011/12. There are ongoing discussions with the UEA and NNUH to secure continued investment over the longer term.
- 4.7. The most significant fixed cost remaining is the business rates, some £260k per annum and around two thirds of the ongoing subsidy requirement. There is very little opportunity to reduce these with the existing model of Park and Ride asset management.
- 4.8. Work to achieve a more cost effective model of asset management is underway. There are significant benefits to be had from transferring site management to a not-for-profit organisation. This will be progressed as a priority over the next period.
- 4.9. A major new publicity and marketing campaign for Summer 2011 will be launched on 11 July. Examples of the campaign literature are attached at Appendix B and Members will be available to view additional material in the Marble Map area in advance of the Panel meeting. A four week radio campaign will also start on "drive time" slots from Heart and Norwich 99.9FM.
- 4.10. Although costs are important to reduce, there is obvious benefit in continue to attract new users to the service and we aim to increase patronage as a result of the campaign. We will also be working with retailers and other partners to maximise awareness of the campaign.

5. **Resource Implications**

- 5.1. **Finance:** The transformation and efficiency programme for shared transport is required to deliver significant savings in local bus and Park and Ride. Savings for 2011/12 are on track. The programme seeks to achieve better value for money from council subsidy, and involves a comprehensive programme of work with the voluntary and community transport sector, to help build their financial sustainability. An application to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund has been submitted, which if successful, will provide around £3m to pump prime some of the shared transport

work.

5.2. **Staff:** none.

5.3. **Property:** None

5.4. **IT:** The programme seeks to improve the booking, ticketing and journey planning processes for DRT, which will involve consideration of smart card and journey booking technology and make it easier and more attractive for customers.

6. **Other Implications**

6.1. **Legal Implications:** Options for reducing the business rates payable for Norwich Park and Ride, some £260k pa, including changes to the asset management model are being reviewed. The legal implications of such are a key consideration and advice is being sought and followed from NP Law.

6.2. **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) :** An EqIA was undertaken on the ETD Strategic Review to which this programme is aligned. Further EIA will be required as proposals are developed for local bus services.

6.3. **Any other implications :** Officers have considered all the implications which members should be aware of. Apart from those listed in the report (above), there are no other implications to take into account.

7. **Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act**

7.1. None.

8. **Risk Implications/Assessment**

8.1. A risk register has been developed for the transformation and efficiency programme for shared transport which will continue to be monitored. Key risks exist around support from the voluntary and community transport sector and ability to influence parking charges in Norwich city centre which has an impact on the viability of the Park and Ride service. There is also a risk around whether our application to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund is successful as this will enable a further £3m to pump prime shared transport delivery. The outcome of this should be known late June 2011 and can be verbally updated at Panel.

Recommendation / Action Required

Overview and Scrutiny Panel are requested to note the report and make comments on the proposals and work underway to date.

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please get in touch with:

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If you need this report in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact 0344 800 8020 and ask for Louise Cornell or textphone 0344 800 8011 and we will do our best to help.

Appendix A: Visuals from the volunteer driver campaign

 **Norfolk** County Council
at your service

Go the Extra Miles



**And be a driving
force in your community...**

As a volunteer driver for Norfolk community transport you can make a real difference. For more information telephone

0344 800 8020 or visit

www.norfolk.gov.uk/volunteedriver

Appendix B: Park and Ride Campaign Visuals

You should Park and Ride dear!

Park and Ride Norwich

Every 15 minutes | £2.30 return | 15 minutes to centre



Blimey! I can park all day for £2.30

**Park and Ride is the
quicker, cheaper way
to get into the city
with buses leaving
every 15 minutes!**

www.parkandride.net

 **Norfolk** County Council



Highway Asset Performance

Report by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development

Summary

This report informs members of the performance of the significant highway assets and seeks comments on service levels and priorities for allocations for the 2012-13 budget round.

The findings of a recent Audit Commission report - Going the Distance: Achieving better value for money in road maintenance, indicate that we are generally following the good practice it suggests but there is scope to involve road users more in our decisions.

The condition of the roads are reported using condition surveys from the autumn of 2010 which do not reflect the damage cause by the worst winter experienced in 30 years. Overall the 'backlog' figure remains high at £82.7m; although this is lower than in previous years mainly due to better targeting, judicious use of low cost treatments and refinements to the calculation processes.

The report highlights deterioration in some of the assets. It suggests a 'budget need' referred to in Appendix 1 which is the sum of the backlog and the anticipated deterioration in the year from life cycle planning. The sum is likely to be unaffordable but is indicative of the overall need.

The report seeks comments on changes to service levels in the Transport Asset Management Plan, and suggests revised priorities for 2011 which remain the same as for previous years with the exception of:

- B & C roads – maintain current condition.
- Traffic signals – extend the traffic signal controller replacement programme to 5 years

Action Required

Members are requested to:

1. Comment on the report overall.
2. Comment on the revised priorities for 2011 in paragraph 13.4 at this stage, and the "Budget Need" for 2012/13.
3. Support the proposed changes to the Transport Asset Management Plan for 2011/12, in paragraphs 7.7.1 and 8.1, for approval by Cabinet and the County Council
4. Comment on options for working in partnership with parish councils, or other local funders, to deliver footways and other improvements.

1. **Background**

- 1.1. This report informs members of the performance of the significant highway assets and seeks comments on service levels and priorities for allocations for the 2012-13 budget round. This report considers only the planned capital funded structural maintenance of the assets, not the routine maintenance that is funded from the Highway Maintenance Fund.
- 1.2. The supporting documents in the Member's Room provide greater detail. At this stage however the figures indicated should be treated as indicative. Processes are being developed to analyse the asset condition data are developed then confidence and accuracy of the information will improve, in particular this year the changes below have resulted in reduced backlog figures for roads:
 - Life cycle plans have been improved, including the use of lower cost treatments at appropriate times.
 - The method of accounting for inflation in the calculation of the backlog has been amended.
 - The costs for surface dressing have been reduced following analysis of target cost information
- 1.3. For each asset the report gives a summary of information on the performance and budget needs to maintain service levels. Detailed information on each is provided in a supporting document deposited in the Members Room.
- 1.4. When defining levels of service and targets for condition, the assets fall into the following groups, those with:-
 - National Indicators (NI)
 - Former Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's) which are no longer included in the national set but used as local performance indicators.
 - Local performance indicators (LPI).

Some of these are contained within our Local Transport Plan (LTP).
- 1.5. At the meeting in September 2007 Members supported the view that the road and footway network were in a generally acceptable condition i.e. fit for purpose. The condition data for 2006/7 is, where available, being used as the baseline against which to assess and report changes.
- 1.6. Revised methods of calculating the backlog have been developed, where consistent condition data is available. Any shortfall in achieving 2006-07 service levels within 2009-10 is described as a backlog.
- 1.7. Budgets levels have been estimated in order to achieve and maintain the service levels within 2012-13.
2. **Audit Commission - Going the Distance: Achieving better value for money in road maintenance.**

- 2.1. In May 2011 the Audit Commission issued a report, *Going the Distance: Achieving better value for money in road maintenance*. The report advocates:
- Having an active Asset Management Plan – members approve Norfolk's Transport Asset Management Plan annually, it is still developing, and this report inform members of the condition of the highway assets and seeks views on priorities.
 - Using an asset management approach to road repairs, rather than a worst first approach to achieve value for money – we develop programmes of work for a number of years ahead on the A, B and C road network based of condition data and expected levels of deterioration.
 - Having planned maintenance programmes developed by a central team – we have a central team supported by local knowledge within the Area offices.
 - Having rigorous inspection regimes and resources to investigate and resolve compensation claims – we have this in place.
 - Regularly reviewing service levels – some changes were agreed earlier this year and this report includes further suggested changes.
 - Challenging prices for work, and considering working collaboratively to achieve better value for money – the Strategic Partnership negotiations have been successful in reducing costs, we are discussing collaborative working with Suffolk, and developing a framework contract for highway works within the Eastern Highways Alliance.
 - Involving road users in decisions to change standards, and explaining our approach to maintenance – whilst we do involve elected members and local communities, this is an area where there could be scope to improve.
- 2.2. Our approach to Highway Maintenance, is therefore, generally in line with the recommended good practice.
- 2.3. The report also indicates that road construction and maintenance costs have outstripped general price inflation. Over the last ten years they have increased by around 85% compared to general price inflation of 27% over the same period, confirming our local experience in Norfolk.

3. **Customer Satisfaction**

- 3.1. Two public satisfaction surveys were undertaken in 2010.
- 3.2. **Ipsos MORI**
- 3.2.1. This is part of the Citizens Panel survey undertaken for Norfolk County Council
- 3.2.2. This indicated that the percentage of respondents saying that road and pavement repairs had got worse had increased from 47% in the 2008 survey to 53% in 2010.
- 3.2.3. The percentage of respondents satisfied with the management and repair of highways has reduced from 35% in the 2008 survey to 27% in 2010.
- 3.3. **National Highways & Transport Network Public Satisfaction Survey 2010**
- 3.3.1. This was the third time the National survey had been undertaken, and the first time Norfolk had participated. 95 Local Authorities took part, 9 in Eastern Region and

overall 24 County Councils. Summarised finding are;-

- Biggest gap between importance and satisfaction both nationally and in Norfolk is condition of the roads.
- In Norfolk most people are dissatisfied with
 - Speed of repair, although we were ranked 4th out of the County Councils.
 - Condition of road surfaces, although we were ranked 3rd out of the County Councils.
- In contrast 57% were satisfied with the condition of footways, and we were ranked 4th out of the County Councils.

3.3.2. Overall the results are showing the importance that residents place on the condition of the highway network, and whilst their level of satisfaction is reducing our overall performance is good compared to other County Councils.

4. Whole Government Accounts

4.1. The Chancellor announced in Budget 2008 that a Whole of Government Account will be published for the first time for 2009-10. This includes the requirement to have a common set of accounting policies for the whole of the public sector. The intention is to track the value of the highway asset over time with assets valued on the basis of their Depreciated Replacement Cost (DRC).

4.2. Highways infrastructure assets will transition to a DRC basis in 2012-13, following the implementation of asset management plans for each local authority and a formal, fully audited dry run of the processes and accounting in 2011-12. The timing of this move reflects the size and complexity of the valuation exercise and the readiness of individual local authorities to implement the change.

4.3. We are currently compiling a DRC for 2010-11 which is a dry-run for 2011-12 which will establish a baseline.

4.4. Current funding and performance trends suggest we are generally managing decline of the value of the highway asset and therefore would expect annualised depreciation to be shown in our accounts for 2012-13.

5. Delivering schemes in partnership with parish councils.

5.1. The Deputy Cabinet Member has asked the Director to review the criteria for prioritising footways, to give much greater weight to schemes where parish or town councils are willing to make a major financial contribution.

5.2. This type of scheme has been prioritised according to a standard point scoring system which has been in use for over twenty years. This system assesses each request over a two hour period. During this time the number of pedestrians walking the route, the age profile, traffic flow, road width, verge width and its accessibility are all recorded. These, along with recorded accident data, enable an overall point score to be determined. Requests were previously prioritised based on their points score. However, in line with the current and previous Local Transport Plan, greater emphasis is given to schemes in Market Towns, with expected higher pedestrian

usage, and those providing improved access to schools (particularly if the request arises from a School Travel Plan), health services, community facilities, shops etc.

The points system does not in itself directly consider value for money, although officers do take it into account in finalising the programme.

- 5.3. It would be possible to give weight to local funding contributions, although there are some issues members may wish to consider:
- In many cases a feasibility study is required to identify deliverable options and their costs – who would pay for these if a scheme was not currently a priority?
 - Higher priority schemes could be delayed if County Council funds are diverted to locally funded schemes.
 - What percentage is a major contribution?
 - Should there be ‘cut-off’ criteria beyond which only those fully funded locally would be implemented and the funder be asked to contribute to maintenance costs? This is currently the situation regarding vehicle activated speed signs.
- 5.4. Whilst local contributions would enable more schemes to be implemented the issues above will need to be considered carefully. These issues would be similar for any type of improvement scheme. A suggested approach could be to set aside an allocation from the capital programme, and invite bids annually from parishes and towns to develop schemes in partnership with the County Council. The current budget for improvements is around £2m, so initially an allocation of around £100,000 may be appropriate, and contributions of at least 50% expected. Broadly the process could be:
- Announce the opportunity to bid in late summer, giving three to four months to develop bids which should all support the delivery of the Local Transport Plan – this would enable town and parish councils to consider the opportunity alongside developing their budgets for the following years.
 - Provide support through the Transport Programme Team to help bidders assess the likely costs, benefits and timescales for the delivery of potential schemes.
 - Bids would be reviewed by officers and priorities identified in consultation with the Cabinet Member for consideration by members..

6. Condition of Highway Assets

6.1. Roads

- 6.1.1. A, B and C roads all show some deterioration against the national indicators.

‘A’ roads have changed from 3.4% to 3.5% in need of attention and this marginal deterioration can be seen in the graph in Appendix 2.

‘B’ & ‘C’ class roads combined indicator has declined from 11% to 12% in need of attention. Our LTP2 target was 8%. Within the indicator the B roads have marginal improved from 8.3% to 7.8%, whilst the C roads have worsened from 11.2% to 13.2% in need of attention.

A, B & C roads all show a small decrease in the % of roads with no defects.

The respective backlogs shown in Appendix 1 however show a decrease. These changes are brought about by the improvements to the assessment processes, and are believed to be a more accurate figure than in previous years

- 6.1.2. The Audit Commission report endorses adjusting targets to reflect the available resources. In view of the comments above and likely budgets in future years the performance targets, based on national indicators, have been amended as indicated in the table below.

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
A roads	4%	4%	4%
B roads	8%	8%	8%
C roads	14%	14%	15%

- 6.1.3. Unclassified (U) road condition is reasonably stable. Our target of 32% for a 4-year average was achieved with 28%; however the in-year results did show a decline from 2009-10. The backlog is assessed by comparison to the condition survey results in 2004/05/6/07. Whilst the latest set shows an overall improvement on the headline service level, the balance between intermediate and structural treatment has changed creating a backlog. Due to the low traffic on these roads the presumption remains to use of structural treatments by exception.

6.2. **Bridges**

- 6.2.1. Bridge condition has deteriorated as measured by the bridge condition indices. The maintenance backlog has increased, although it has not increased to the extent suggested due to a calculation error under reporting previous years. Reversing the trend is likely to be difficult given the financial outlook. There will still be 2 bridges to be strengthened after 2011-12 out of nearly 1000 that have been assessed. It is anticipated that the programme will be concluded in 2012-13. Officers are seeking cost effective alternatives to strengthening wherever possible. Current budgetary levels will impact on the major maintenance programme; it will continue but at a slower rate in the future.

6.3. **Traffic Signals**

- 6.3.1. The programme to replace all the controllers which are over 15 years old continues. 50 of the 72, in need to replacement, have been updated in the first 3 years of a 5 year programme. These were fully funded at an average of £1m per annum. During 2011-12 9 sites will be treated on a reduced budget of £0.7m. An anticipated budget of £0.65m in 2012-13 would see a further 7 sites treated. This would leave 6 sites projected at risk beyond the current programme. The replacement programme should continue as many of the old, and often obsolete, controllers are at key junctions in the network.

6.4. Footways

- 6.4.1. Category 1 and 2 footways cover those most heavily used, often in town and village centres. Footway condition as measured by our survey has deteriorated. We have doubts about consistency of the survey and hence the extent of the change in the result. We have been discussing the results with the survey contractor and have reset the performance indicator.
- 6.4.2. Category 3 and 4 footways represent the majority of our footway network. These footways are not surveyed in a comprehensive or consistent way but we rely on regular inspections to identify defects. The list of required schemes has marginally increased suggesting there may be a small deterioration in condition. 94 footway maintenance schemes will be carried out in the County outside Norwich this year and others in the City.
- 6.4.3. To support the calculation of the DRC (see section 4) the CIPFA Code of practice for Transport Infrastructure Assets recommends a new condition survey on the entire footway network. We have carried out a 3% sample survey to test the data, and believe that we can satisfy the accounting requirements by surveying 25% of Category 3 and 4 footways and 50% of Category 1 and 2 each year. The data will also inform our understanding of the condition and deterioration of all footways, assisting with allocation funds to areas of most need. The cost of the surveys can be contained within existing budgets.

6.5. Drainage

- 6.5.1. There are not any formal condition surveys of highway drains. Overall condition is assessed from regular inspections. The identified schemes are a mixture of small scale local interventions and larger “catchment wide” projects. The drainage backlog has increased slightly.

6.6. Park & Ride Sites and Norwich Bus Station

- 6.6.1. The service level on these sites is, to fully fund any urgent, essential or necessary structural maintenance works identified by NPS in their annual inspection. In the past the requirements have been relatively small and all have been funded. It is anticipated that from 2014 there may be need for significant resurfacing of some of the first sites constructed. That could be in the region of £0.5m.

6.7. Vehicular Restraint Systems (VRS)

- 6.7.1. A new service level is proposed for vehicle restraint systems (crash barriers), based on an annual survey of 20% of the network. The target suggested is that less than 15% should be potentially out of specification or dangerous. The costs of the surveys and subsequent works are met from the Highways Maintenance Fund.

7. Transport Asset Management Plan

- 7.1. As indicated in paragraph 3 the Transport Asset Management Plan, and in particular service levels, are reviewed to identify potential to improve efficiency and reduce costs. Last year changes were made to the response time for a number of highway

defects, with more requiring a 24 hour response compared 2 hours previously. This change assists the programming of works to reduce costs. A further review has shown that the response time could be extended to 36 hours which would improve efficiency and reduce costs by better programming without putting the County Council at any significant additional risks. Details are provided in Appendix 3.

8. **Resource Implications**

8.1. **Finance** : There are no direct financial impacts of this report, but the report invites discussion of future budget needs and priorities.

8.2. **Staff** : None

8.3. **Property** : None

8.4. **IT** : None

9. **Other Implications**

9.1. **Legal Implications** : None

9.2. **Human Rights** : None

9.3. **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)** : A full programme of equality impact assessments has been carried out covering all Planning and Transportation activities. However, this report is not directly relevant to equality in that it is not making proposals which may have a direct impact on equality of access or outcome.

9.4. **Communications** : None

9.5. **Health and safety implications** : None

9.6. **Any other implications** : Officers have considered all the implications which members should be aware of. Apart from those listed in the report (above), there are no other implications to take into account.

10. **Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act**

10.1. None

11. **Risk Implications/Assessment**

11.1. Funding allocations may be changed by government or the Council.

11.2. Inflationary pressures may not be fully funded reducing relative buying power.

11.3. Our relative performance in the national indicators impacts on the formulae for the structural maintenance allocation. The funding allocation is partly needs based reflecting condition according to the national indicator.

11.4. The relative risk regarding the ability to meet service levels for each asset type is described in the supporting document.

12. **Alternative Options**

- 12.1. Members could seek additional funding to address the deterioration of the assets.
- 12.2. Members could consider reviewing the service levels in line with the budgets available.
- 12.3. Members could revise the suggested priorities.
- 12.4. Cheaper, short-term maintenance interventions could be employed to address the deterioration, but these are not suitable in all circumstances and are not likely to be value for money in the longer term.

13. **Conclusion**

- 13.1. The condition of the highway network, prior to the winter, was relatively stable. There was some deterioration in the national indicators, although this is not reflected in the backlog figures. The overall highway asset backlog at June 2011 has been calculated at £82.7m This has been summarised in Appendix 1, this compares with £86.3m reported in 2010. Better targeting and judicious use of lower cost treatments has helped mitigate the impact, and the refinement in the methodology for the backlog calculation has improved the position
- 13.2. The budget in 2010/11 was £36.7m due to additional contribution from the County Council and government to address the impacts of the severe winter. The budget has reduced to £32.4m this year including winter damage funds from government of £6.9m, and this will reduce to £24.727m In 2012/13.
- 13.3. The 'budget need' of £78m referred to in the table in Appendix1, is the sum of the current backlog and the anticipated deterioration in the year from life cycle modelling. It is probably unaffordable, but indicative of the overall need.
- 13.4. The current priorities agreed by Members in 2009 and 2010 were:
 - A roads – maintain current condition
 - B & C roads – give priority to the more heavily trafficked routes and try to recover service level
 - Bridges – give priority to bridges on the HGV network
 - Traffic signals – continue to fund the traffic signal controller programme at £1m for the next 4-years
 - Footways – maintain current condition
 - U roads – give priority to more heavily trafficked roads in village centres
 - Drainage –local maintenance schemes.

It is suggested that for 2011 these remain almost the same with the exception of:

- B&C roads – maintain current condition
- Traffic Signals – extend the traffic signal controller replacement programme to 5 years.

Action Required

Members are requested to:

- (i) Comment on the report overall.
- (ii) Comment on the revised priorities for 2011 at this stage in paragraph 13.4, and the “Budget Need” for 2012/13.
- (iii) Support the proposed changes to the Transport Asset Management Plan for 2011/12, in paragraphs 7.7.1 and 8.1, for approval by Cabinet and the County Council
- (iv) Comment on options for working in partnership with parish councils, or other local funders, to deliver footways and other improvements.

Background Papers

Highway Asset Performance Report - Environment, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel - July 2010

Highways Capital Programme for 2011/12/13 and Transport Asset Management Plan – Cabinet – 7 March 2011

Officer Contact

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Overall – Summary table

		Backlog 2009-10		Budget 2010-11	Backlog 2010-11		Budget 2011-12	Budget Need 2012- 13*
Asset type		£m		£m	£m		£m	£m
A roads		9.7		10.445	7.1		8.628	16.185
B roads		8.0		3.553	4.4		3.114	8.423
C roads		21.4		6.849*	12.5		6.522*	20.973
U roads		0		3.593*	3.9		4.693*	8.998
Winter Damage Patching and potholes				0.600			1.0	
Category 1 & 2 footways		0		0.629	3.1		0.45	4.03
Category 3 & 4 footways		3.3		3.209	3.4		2.748	3.352
Highway Drainage	Maintenance	2.0		2.869	2.1		1.6	2.13
	Improvement	33.0		0	34.3		0	0
Bridges	Maintenance	3.2		0.76	9.2		0.76	10.795
	Improvement	2.7		0.94	0.7		0.74	0.185
Traffic Signals		3		1	2		0.7	1
Park and Ride Sites		0		0.045	0		0.006	0.045
Area Manager Schemes		0		0.8	0		0.2	0.2
Traffic Management & Signs**		0		0.33	0		0	0
Contingencies		0		1.125	0		1.225	1.480
Total		86.3		36.747^	82.7		32.39 ^	77.796

Notes

These figures are based upon the price base for each year, not a common price base. 2010/11 Backlog based upon 1-4-11 prices.
The backlog figure refers to the end of year.

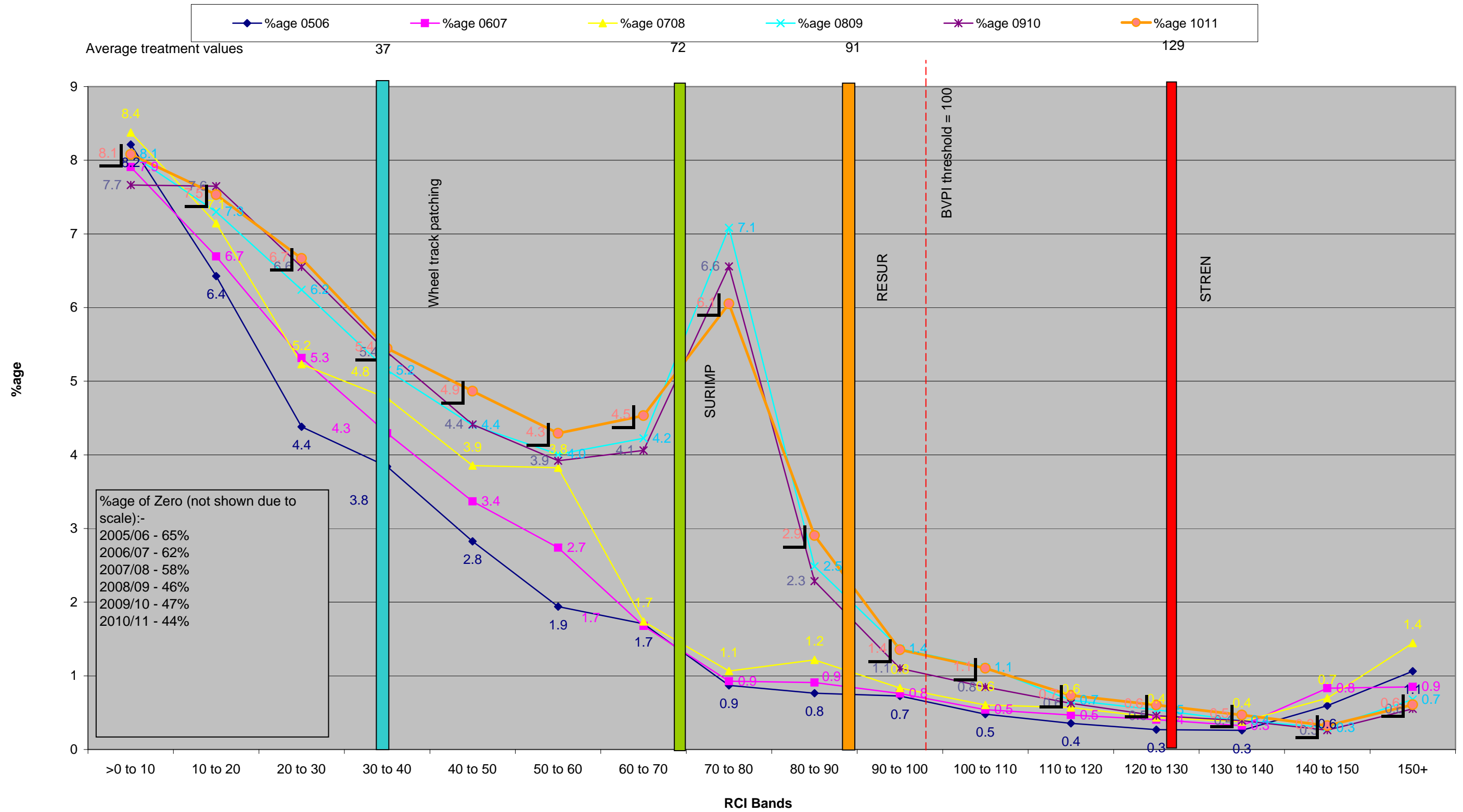
*Budget need is to recover service condition not just hold condition in year

^Budgets include winter damage grants

*These budgets have not been ring-fenced in but shared across

**No longer funded from Structural Maintenance

A rds Comparison of 2005/06, 2006/07, 2007/08, 2008/09, 2009/10 and 2010/11 Scanner results



TAMP Strategic Review - Highway Defect Risk Register

Summary of Changes

Response Arrangements timescales

Response	Existing Timescale	Proposed Timescale	Order	Existing Timescale	Proposed Timescale
Response A	2 hours	2 hours	Priority A	2 hours	2 hours
Response B	24 hours	36 hours	Priority B	24 hours	36 hours
Response C	Up to 14 days	Up to 14 days	Priority C	Up to 14 days	Up to 14 days
Response D	Up to 28 days	Up to 28 days	Priority D	Up to 21 days	Up to 21 days
Response E	More than 28 days (repair during next available programme, schedule a more detailed inspection or review condition at next inspection)	More than 28 days (repair during next available programme, schedule a more detailed inspection or review condition at next inspection)	Priority E	Up to 84 days (12 weeks)	Up to 84 days (12 weeks)

Environment, Transport and Development Department Integrated Performance and Finance Monitoring Report 2010/11

Report by Director of Environment, Transport and Development

Executive Summary

The progress information included is the most up to date available at the time of writing. However, it should be noted that further updates may have occurred prior to presentation to the Panel meeting. The financial information reflects the position at 'year end'. This report provides an update of progress made against the 2010-13 service plan actions, risks and finances for Environment, Transport and Development (ETD). The 2011 – 14 service plan is included elsewhere on the agenda.

- **Revenue Budget:** The Department achieved an underspend of £2.073M against its revenue budgets.
- **Capital Budget:** The underspend on the Highways capital programme was largely due to the NDR, where work on the scheme was reduced pending progress through the development pool. The Environment and Waste programme was underspent by £0.771M and Economic Development was underspent by £1.524M. These were due to slippage on programmes which will be completed in future years.
- **Service plan actions:** The year end position shows that 168 actions were 'on target', 22 actions were 'slightly off target' and 5 actions were 'off target'. The remaining 15 actions were either completed prior to their target completion date or an area of activity currently under review in terms of prioritisation of activity.
- **National indicators:** As part of the performance framework each Department has been asked to determine a 'suite' of key indicators to develop a dashboard to provide snapshots of the management of performance within the department. This dashboard approach will form part of the Integrated Performance and Finance report to be brought to Panel in September.
- **Risks:** Towards the end of the 2010-11 financial year a significant review of all key departmental risks was carried out. This has resulted in a continuing piece of work to fully refresh the Environment Transport and Development Risk Register combining the key risks from all of the groups.

Action Required:

- Members are asked to comment on the progress against ETD's service plan actions, risks and budget and consider whether any aspects should be identified for further scrutiny.

Background

- 1.1 In May Cabinet agreed to a revised performance framework which identifies progress against performance using four elements Delivering Norfolk Forward, Managing our resources, Outcomes for Norfolk People and Service performance in the form of a dashboard approach. In order to develop consistency across the authority all performance reporting will be based upon this principle building upon previous reporting to Overview and Scrutiny Panel which has been carried out on an exception basis – focusing on areas where progress is ‘off track’.
- 1.2 Due to re-prioritisation of activities throughout the year as a result of reduced budgets and the Coalition Government’s ‘Programme for Government’ some areas of activity identified within 2010/13 service plans were either ceased or completed earlier than the target date during the planning cycle. This means that service plans for 2011/14 start from a very different base.
- 1.3 A separate paper on the ETD Service Plan for 2011/14 is included elsewhere on this agenda. The paper includes a draft copy of the ETD service plan plus details of activities to be delivered by the Trading Standards service which form part of the Council’s Policy Framework.

Environment, Transport and Development (ETD) Transformation and Efficiency Programme

- 1.4 ETD’s transformation programme ‘Strategic Review’ has helped to shape services to become more streamlined and formed part of the initial groundwork to develop budget proposals as part of the ‘Big Conversation’. The Review was overseen by a cross-party Member Board, and encompassed a number of workstreams covering all aspects of departmental service delivery. Regular reports were considered by the ETD Overview and Scrutiny Panel. The ongoing Transformation and Efficiency programme has a total savings target of £7.5m being delivered by 9 projects.

2010/14 Service Plans Progress Summary

- 2.1 The following are some areas of key achievement and challenges over 2010/11. In summary out of the 208 actions monitored within the ‘suite’ of service plans relevant to this Panel, the year completed with 168 actions showing as ‘on target’, 22 actions shown as ‘slightly off target’ and 5 actions shown as ‘off target’. The remaining 15 actions were either completed prior to their target completion date or an area of activity currently under review in terms of prioritisation of activity. This reflects the shift in priorities over the past year. Actions that were shown as ‘off target’, closed early or re-prioritised that have not been reported previously includes:

- **Complex / Non Contentious planning applications dealt with within set timescales**

The Public Protection activity ‘all non complex and non contentious County Council Developments are dealt with within 8 weeks’ relates to a deadline set for processing planning applications by the Minerals and Waste team. At the end of the year this area of activity was ‘off target’ due to the quality of some

applications. In these situations, we have worked with the applicants to help them to reach a satisfactory conclusion. Wherever possible we have sought to address any issues through negotiation to overcome any obstacles to development. As a result, the time taken to determine has taken longer than our target 8 weeks, as this often means that we need to re consult. We believe this approach is more useful than a refusal on the basis that this would take longer to revise and resubmit the application.

However the Public Protection activity 'all non complex and non contentious Minerals and Waste planning applications are dealt with within 13 weeks' has been used to benchmark against our county planning peers. By determining 75% of mineral and waste planning applications within 13 weeks, Norfolk was one of the top performing planning Authority within the region. This was achieved with a lower than average net spend on Development Management (£560k) and one of the highest caseloads.

The timelines associated with processing both types of planning application have now been removed as they were enforced as part of the National Indicator set. This means that the authority is now able to set its own targets in order to be more flexible in aligning the timeline with the complexity of application. We have also been developing improvements to pre-application processes which have caused delays in the past in order to improve the service.

- **Establish a mechanism for benchmarking and measuring sustainability performance**

This action although reported as 'off target' was ceased mid year in order to enable officers to prioritise the Carbon and Energy Reduction Programme and an energy strategy. This action does however feature within the 2011/14 service plan.

- **Ensuring that the Council is administratively prepared for the Carbon Reduction Commitment (Carbon Trading)**

Systems were put in place in order to track and record information against our Carbon commitment by the end of January 2011. However this was followed by a Government change to a levy based approach instead of the Carbon Trading system that was originally envisaged. However work did continue to determine ways in which the Council can reduce its Carbon Footprint and become more efficient. Actions within the 2011/14 service plan will continue this work. Work is also ongoing in partnership with NPS in order to establish reliable and accessible information in order to establish energy usage within our assets.

2.2 The following information identifies some of what was delivered from activities within 2010/13 service plans.

Environment and Waste

2.3 The Household Waste Recycling Centres are performing very well recycling over 70% of the waste taken there (Q3 unaudited figure 73.96%). Norfolk continues to have low levels of Household Waste collected per household compared to other authorities (531.72 kg/household estimated figure). Across Norfolk as a whole the percentage of Household Waste recycled has increased slightly (44.21% unaudited December figure).

- 2.4 In order to achieve the budget constraints it has been necessary to reduce opening hours for recycling centres. Monitoring the customer impact of this will be carried out.
- 2.5 In June 2010 the planning application for a Household Waste Recycling Centre at Dereham was approved and construction commenced on the 21st March 2011. Opening of the centre is planned for late November 2011. Work is also underway to develop another new Centre at Thetford. Both centres will address a current lack of service provision in the Dereham area and provide a significantly improved level of service in the Thetford area.
- 2.6 On 07 March Cabinet made a decision to award a Waste PFI contract to Cory Wheelabrator to secure a service to treat around 170,000 tonnes of residual municipal solid waste each year during a 25 year period expected to start in 2014/15. The contract is expected to reduce the cost of the waste service for Norfolk taxpayers from 2015 by more than £8 million each year.

Planning and Transportation

- 2.7 The County Council has worked in partnership with a number of public, private and third sector organisations to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) on Norfolk's roads. A national 10 year target was set to reduce road casualties by 40% by the end of 2010 (from a 1994-1998 average baseline). In Norfolk, as part of the Local Area Agreement, this was 'stretched' further to a 50% reduction by 2010. At the end of December 2010 the twelve month KSI figure was 353, representing a reduction of 509 KSIs (59%) from the 1994-98 baseline.
- 2.8 'Connecting Norfolk', our third Local Transport Plan, sets a new 2020 target for Norfolk of achieving a 33% reduction in the number of KSIs from a 2004-2008 baseline. At the end of March 2011 the KSI figure had further reduced to 341 and we are on track to achieve our new target.
- 2.9 Cabinet agreed to amend the Norfolk Safety Camera Partnership agreement to a cost neutral model, with the Council maintaining fixed highway assets and other partners being responsible for funding and running other activities of the partnership. Cabinet also delegated responsibility to the Cabinet Member for Travel and Transport for concluding an agreement with the Police to establish a new arrangement with a maximum cost of £50K each year for maintaining physical assets in the highway (eg signs, roadmarkings).
- 2.10 Year end results suggest that there has been some degree of deterioration to the highway asset. NI168 (Principal roads where maintenance should be considered) has shown a deterioration from 3% to 4%. This reflects a marginal change to condition, however, this is partially due to a change in methodology for the indicator rather than reflecting a real 'shift' on the ground. NI169 (non principal classified roads where maintenance should be considered) has also shown an overall deterioration from 11% to 12%. However the information on which this indicator is based would normally be collected via survey work carried out from September to November but due to machinery break downs the surveys were not carried out until much later following the bad winter weather and are therefore not directly comparable. We shall continue to monitor the highway condition despite the cessation of the NI set.
- 2.11 The Joint Core Strategy (JCS) which sets out required growth in housing and employment planned for the Norwich area has completed its Examination in

Public and the Inspector's report has been published. The JCS has been found to be sound and was adopted on 22 March 2011. The JCS is significant for the Norwich Northern Distributor Route (NNDR) and Postwick as it sets out at a strategic planning level the need for both schemes and establishes their location on an adopted plan. This is because the NNDR and Postwick are essential to be able to deliver the growth in housing (up to 10,000 houses) and employment in the north and east of Norwich. A legal challenge to the JCS has been received and the NNDR team are also now supporting the gathering of details in response to this.

- 2.12 Following the DfT decision to place the Northern Norwich Distributor Route (NNDR) on hold the Transport Secretary announced that the scheme had been included within a 'Development Pool' in October. The 'pool' is for projects that had demonstrated good value for money prior to the emergency budget. The County Council issued an Expression of Interest (EoI) to DfT on 30 December 2010 for the NNDR to continue as part of DfT's 'Development Pool'. Further work is now in progress with DfT following the initial workshop in February and an initiation meeting with DfT on 11 March 2011. The Best and Final Bidding process will end at noon on 9 September 2011, followed by a decision from DfT anticipated in December 2011.
- 2.13 The Norwich Area Transport Strategy (NATS) was approved by Cabinet in April 2010. Key achievements of the plan include:
- Completion of Bus corridor improvements on Newmarket Road, building towards completing the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route
 - The completion of the St Augustines gyratory
 - Development of and consultation on proposals for enhanced bus facilities on Dereham Road (as part of BRT development)
 - Developing bus walking and cycling facilities associated with the Rackheath programme of development (working with Broadland DC)
 - Developing improvements in the City Centre, particularly for buses on Chapelfield North (to significantly improve journey times/reliability)
- 2.14 Following two successive winters of prolonged frost and snow a more comprehensive review of winter service activities is underway. This is reported elsewhere on this agenda. At the end of 2010/11 we reported 102 actions had been carried out over the winter season and salt stocks remained near to capacity at 15,000t.

Community Safety

- 2.15 Business satisfaction with Trading Standards shows a slight decrease from 'very satisfied' to 'satisfied'. The results are gathered through a survey. Results in January showed that out of 137 responses the overall satisfaction rate was 76%.
- 2.16 Achievements in meeting standards for the control system for animal health continue to be met. Following an audit of data the authority improved upon its 2009/10 score of 2.3 to the maximum score of 3, demonstrating full compliance with DEFRA standards.

- 2.17 Following an extensive investigation and trial brought by Trading Standards, 3 salesmen and the Director of Business Telecom Ltd have all been convicted for conspiracy to defraud small businesses, voluntary organisations and schools in Norfolk and across the region. In all 138 witness statements were obtained with 51 victims giving evidence during the 10 week trial. The result of this trial has been widely reported in the local media and Trading Standards will now focus its attention supporting victims where possible in any claim for compensation.
- 2.18 Trading Standards have been working with volunteers to help enable communities and protect vulnerable people from scams and poor consumer practice. A Consumer Champions project was piloted in December which resulted in 14 'champions' being recruited, including Trusted Traders, Sheltered Housing Managers and Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators. They are alerting Trading Standards to possible incidents of illegal activity happening in their areas so that our officers can investigate and take action as needed. The Norfolk Community Law Service have also put forward a number of law students at the University of East Anglia who would be interested in voluntary work helping local consumers. The project will be taken forward in conjunction with Suffolk Trading Standards so that the champions can operate effectively across both counties.

Economic Development and Strategy

- 2.19 Actions within the 2010/14 service plan for Economic Development have achieved a great deal within the current difficult economic climate. The success has also required a great deal of flexibility in terms of approach due to changes caused by the Coalition government's programme.
- 2.20 Our commitment to supporting the county's economic infrastructure was recognised by the Local Government Chronicle Economic Development and Regeneration Award being awarded to Hethel Engineering Centre (HEC), for its development and progress to date. The Centre has recently completed two phases of expansion including the building of a 30,000 sq ft enterprise hub with office, workshops, engineering services, training and conferencing facilities.
- 2.21 On 7 March 2011 Cabinet agreed to set up the Norfolk Development Company as a delivery vehicle to undertake development where the market is unable or unwilling to do so. The company has since been registered and start-up commenced. The main areas of activity are; installation of infrastructure, regeneration and affordable housing. The first area where the NDC will operate is Great Yarmouth, where it will replace the regeneration company 1st East. The Local Enterprise Partnership 'New Anglia' in partnership with Suffolk also appointed a Board in early March to take forward economic development in both counties. The partnership which involves the Private as well as Public sector will be a major part of economic development activity within the 2011/14 service plan reported elsewhere on this agenda.
- 2.22 In our role to speak up for Norfolk, the County Council – in partnership with the Eastern Daily Press bid against other local authorities across the UK for a share of a £530 million Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) funding pot to invest in making superfast broadband available in areas with no or poor access. Large parts of Norfolk have been identified as broadband 'not spots', where

households and businesses either have no broadband coverage at all or cannot receive a standard level of broadband service of 2 megabits per second. Although outside of the scope of this report Panel members will be aware that at the time of reporting this bid had been successful as Government have agreed to match the £15m fund being put forward by NCC.

3 Performance Measures

- 3.1 The authority has taken part in a consultation on the proposals for a single data list following the abolishment of the National Indicator set in October 2010. Data collections have now been agreed and a list published, however a secondary consultation on data required by so called 'arms length' bodies is now underway (due to finish in June) which will add to the data requirements placed upon the authority. Work will continue to determine what this will mean for the authority as some definitions and questions remain unanswered.
- 3.2 As part of the revised performance framework agreed by Cabinet in May each Department has been asked to determine a 'suite' of key indicators to develop a dashboard to provide snapshots of the management of performance within the department. This dashboard approach will form part of the Integrated Performance and Finance reports brought to Panel to give an overview of progress against key priorities for the Department.
- 3.3 The dashboard for ETD is at an early stage of its development and measures are being determined to enable representation of performance against key activity within the department. This will be used to illustrate our performance to Overview and Scrutiny Panel in September.

4 Revenue budget

Division of service	Approved budget £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Forecast +Over/- Underspend £m	Forecast +Over/- Underspend as % of budget	Variance in forecast since last report £m
Environment, Transport & Development	114.341	112.341	-2.073	-1.81%	-1.733
Total	114.341	112.341	-2.073	-1.81%	-1.733

A breakdown of the revenue budget is available in Appendix A.

5 Capital programme

- 5.1 A summary of all underspends are highlighted in Appendix B, further detail is available on request.
- 5.2 The underspend on the Highways capital programme was largely due to the NDR, where work on the scheme was reduced pending progress through the development pool.

- 5.3 The Environment and Waste programme was underspent by £0.771M and Economic Development was underspent by £1.524M. These were due to slippage on a number of programmes which will be completed in future years.

6 Other financial information Reserves and Partnerships

- 6.1 The balance of reserves as at 31 March was £23.168M.

	£m
Travel & Transport	£0.804
Highways	£17.163
Environment & Waste	£1.122
Economic development & Strategy	£1.482
Public Protection	£0.188
Service Development and support	£2.409
	£23.168

- 6.2 Highways includes Street lighting PFI reserve that is required to fund the scheme over the lifetime of the contract, commuted sums from developers for future maintenance costs and funding for replacement highways vehicles.

7 Risk update

- 7.1 Towards the end of the 2010-11 financial year a significant review of all key departmental risks was carried out. This has resulted in a continuing piece of work to fully refresh the Environment Transport and Development Risk Register combining the key risks from all of the groups.
- 7.2 A number of previous risks have either been reworded and rescored to bring them up to date, others have been removed from the registers due to them reaching their mitigation targets or the risk has not materialised and therefore no longer relevant.
- 7.3 A summary of the risk register is at Appendix C. The risks here are the current key departmental risks identified against the new departmental objectives for 11/12. The new register contains 8 risks, all of which are designated as high. Three risks have corporate significance and also appear on the Corporate Risk Register, these are marked 'Corp' under the risk number and have the Prism ref recorded against them.
- 7.4 Appendix D provides full details of key risks from the register that have risk scores of 10 and above and are deemed to have some or serious concerns i.e. red or amber flags, regarding them reaching their mitigation target scores.

8 Resource implications

- 8.1 All financial implications have been outlined in the report.

9 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

- 9.1 A full programme of equality impact assessments has been carried out covering all Environment, Transport and Development activities, which will include those whose progress is reported here as appropriate. However, this report is not directly relevant to equality in that it is not making proposals which may have a direct impact on equality of access or outcome.

10 Any other implications

- 10.1 Officers have considered all the implications which members should be aware of. Apart from those listed in the report (above), there are no other implications to take into account.

11 Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act

- 11.1 None

12 Risk implications / assessment

- 12.1 Progress against the mitigation of risk is detailed within the report. All risks will be subject to review as part of a larger NCC wide exercise to review risk in light of the changed environment and reduction in budgets.

13 Conclusion

- 13.1 The Department is forecasting an underspend of £-2.073 against its revenue budgets. The underspend on the Highways capital programme was largely due to the NDR, where work on the scheme was reduced pending progress through the development pool.

14 Action required

- 14.1 Members are asked to comment on the progress against ETD's service plan actions, risks and budget and consider whether any aspects should be identified for further scrutiny.

Background Papers

None

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please get in touch with:

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If you need this report in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact 0344 800 8020 and ask for Bev Herron or textphone 0344 800 8011 and we will do our best to help.

Environment, Transport & Development £+/-m over/underspend (budget £+/-m)				
Area/ Section	Variance		Variance as % of approved budget	Reason for movement since last report
	Total £m	Movement £m		
Highways	-0.345	-0.345	-0.66%	Underspend due to fewer than Anticipated winter gritting actions undertaken, which was not known until the final out-turn.
Travel and Transport Services	-0.190	-0.190	-2.05%	Underspends in Public Transport and Park and Ride due to the implementation of recommendations in the Big Conversation.
Business Development & support	-0.678	-0.638	-14.05%	Savings on staff costs relating to departmental restructurings, and general savings in overheads.
Environment & Waste	-0.588	-0.288	1.61%	Savings due to lower tonnages than forecast for residual waste and savings on PROW maintenance.
Economic Development & Strategy	-0.130	-0.130	2.5%	Underspensing on transport planning activities
Public Protection	-0.142	-0.142	-2.76%	Underspend due to the delays in a number of core planning applications.
Total	-2.073	-1.733	-1.81%	

MAIN REASONS FOR (SLIPPAGE) AND OVER/(UNDER) SPENDING IN 2010/11

Name of scheme with detailed reason(s) for (slippage) and/or over/(under) spend	(Slippage) £'000	(Under)/ Over Spend £'000	Total £'000
HIGHWAYS			
Bridge Strengthening Accrual for Bryants Bridge reversed	(269)		(269)
Bus Infrastructure Schemes Some stop improvements put on hold and delayed due to consultation issues.	(184)		(184)
Bus Priority Schemes Overspend due to shortfall in King's Lynn CIF funding	464		464
Cycling MTF Thetford Haling path scheme still under construction at year end therefore no MTF funding applied to 10/11 financial year.	477		477
Local Road Schemes Small underspends on several schemes	(165)		(165)
Local Safety Small underspends on several schemes	(253)		(253)
Other Schemes	1		1
Park & Ride Thickthorn Part 1 land claim still unresolved, therefore more costs incurred.	21		21
Public Transport Interchanges Watlington slipped due to ongoing land negotiations	(66)		(66)
Road Crossings	87		87
Safer & Healthier Journeys to School Watlington cycling scheme costs increased due to legal and land issues.	23		23
Structural Maintenance Underspend required to accommodate shortfall in Great Yarmouth Third River Crossing spend	(1,662)		(1,662)
Traffic Management & Calming Small overspend on Traffic Signals Replacement programme. Also an additional scheme has been included in Weston Longville	112		112
Walking Schemes Contribution to West Runton Bridge Strengthening and pedestrian improvements. Salhouse scheme rolled over to 10/11 due to overhead cabling issues.	191		191
Northern Distributor Road		(1,661)	(1,661)
Norwich - A47 Postwick Hub Great Yarmouth Third River Crossing More blighted properties bought in 2010/11 year than first anticipated.	1,083		1,083
	(140)	(1,661)	(1,801)

Note: Highways actively manage their capital programme to ensure delivery of the overall programme. Schemes are planned at the start of the year but may be delayed for a variety of reasons e.g. planning consent or public consultation. When it is identified that a scheme may be delayed then other scheme will be planned and progressed to ensure delivery of the programme and the original schemes will be planned to be included at a later date. Over/(under)spends and slippage will be carried forward to 2011-12, and managed in line with the above policy

CAPITAL PROGRAMME**MAIN REASONS FOR (SLIPPAGE) AND OVER/(UNDER) SPENDING
IN 2010/11**

Name of scheme with detailed reason(s) for (slippage) and/or over/(under) spend	(Slippage)	(Under)/ Over Spend	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000
ETD Other			
Closed Landfill Sites-Capping & Restoration Ongoing long-term project.	(480)		(480)
Drainage Improvements Reprogrammed work and reduction in programme due to efficiencies.	(284)		(284)
Corporate Minor Works Programme 1011 Underspend on six complete projects, slippage on one project	(1)	(6)	(7)
	(765)	(6)	(771)

CAPITAL PROGRAMME**MAIN REASONS FOR (SLIPPAGE) AND OVER/(UNDER) SPENDING
IN 2010/11**

Name of scheme with detailed reason(s) for (slippage) and/or over/(under) spend	(Slippage)	(Under)/ Over Spend	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT			
Industrial Sites Unallocated Residual spend delayed to 11-12	(2)		(2)
Industrial Sites/Hethel Engineering Centre Residual spend delayed to 11-12	(6)		(6)
Great Yarmouth Rail Sidings Residual spend delayed to 11-12	(30)		(30)
Rural Internet Mobility Project Residual spend delayed to 11-12	(4)		(4)
Growth Point - Catton Park Residual spend delayed to 11-12	(2)		(2)
Growth Point Catton Park Educ Bldg Residual spend delayed to 11-12	(75)		(75)
NE & SW Econets Residual spend delayed to 11-12	(22)		(22)
Lakenham Common & Yare Valley Connections Residual spend delayed to 11-12	(7)		(7)
Genome Analysis Centre Spend reprofiled, last instalment to be paid in 11-12	(375)		(375)
Hethel Engineering Centre - Phase II Residual spend delayed to 11-12	(1)		(1)
NORA Spend delayed to 11-12	(1,000)		(1,000)
	(1,524)		(1,524)

Risk Register Summary

Risk No.	Risk Description	Risk Score	Prospect	Risk Owner
1 Dept Risk	Failure to achieve desired outcomes from the Greater Norwich Development Partnership project.	15 (3x5) Medium	Some Concerns	F McDiarmid
2 Dept Risk	Insufficient funding to improve the transport Infrastructure	12 (3x4) Medium	Serious Concerns	A Carruthers
3 Corp Risk (ref. 0201)	Failure to implement the NDR	12 (3x4) Medium	Some Concerns	M Jackson
4 Corp Risk (ref. 13917)	Loss of core infrastructure or resources for a significant period could impact on delivery of critical services	12 (3x4) Medium	On Schedule	M Jackson
5 Dept Risk	Failure to improve the energy efficiency of NCC operations or prepare for CRC.	12 (3x4) Medium	On Schedule	P Bennett-Lloyd
6 Dept Risk	Failure by any contractor to provide contracted services for disposal or treatment of waste	9 (3x3) Medium	On Schedule	J Hull
8 Corp Risk (ref. 0199)	Failure to divert biodegradable municipal waste	8 (2x4) Medium	On Schedule	M Jackson

Footnote: See below definitions for prospects

Met Target

On Schedule (Green)

Some Concerns (Amber)

Serious Concerns (Red)

Target risk score has been achieved

Risk Score is on schedule to be managed to target score by the target date

There are some concerns that the risk score will not be reduced to the target score by the target date

There are serious concerns that the risk score will not be reduced to the target score by the target date.

Risk Name & Description				
Risk No. 1 Dept Risk– Failure to achieve desired outcomes from the Greater Norwich Development Partnership project.				
Risk Owner	Risk Score	Aspiration Score	Aspiration Date	Prospects
Fiona McDiarmid	15 Medium (3x5)	10 Medium (2x5)	2011	Some Concerns
Overview and Scrutiny Panel		Date Entered on Register		
Environment, Transportation and Development		February 2008		
Risk Progress				
<p>The Joint Core Strategy was agreed by the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) and submitted to the Inspector on 5 March 2010. The Inspector held an Exploratory Meeting on 13 May and issued a statement setting out a number of matters that require clarification. Consultation with respondents on 'Focussed Changes' to the JCS is took place over six weeks ending on 30 August 2010. The results of the consultation and all additional evidence was submitted to the Inspector October 2010 in advance of the Examination in Public. The EIP ran 8 November 2010 for 3 weeks with one final hearing day to take place 9 December. Consultation on the Inspectors proposed changes finished early Feb. The JCS was subsequently found to be sound and adopted by each Council during March. A legal challenge on the JCS process has been submitted during the formal deposit period. Legal advice is being taken on responding to this. The biggest current risks to the GNDP are cuts in government funding to support major infrastructure requirements to support housing and job growth. The possibility of including the GNDP within the framework of the proposed Local Enterprise Partnership is being considered. Work ongoing to develop CIL mechanism for GNDP which could potentially bring forward up to £300m to fund infrastructure.</p>				
Tasks to mitigate the risk				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Partnership risk register to be maintained and monitored to ensure the approach to development remains consistent and the partnership and funding issues are addressed in a timely and efficient manner.Partnership Manager to provide highlight reports to ETD's Executive Management Team every 2 months to inform on progress.Directors meet regularly.Procuring legal advice on dealing with legal challenge on JCS process.				

Risk Name & Description				
Risk No. 2 Dept Risk—Insufficient funding to improve the transport Infrastructure.				
Risk Owner	Risk Score	Aspiration Score	Aspiration Date	Prospects
Ann Carruthers	12 Medium (3x4)	8 Medium (2x4)	2011	Serious Concerns
Overview and Scrutiny Panel		Date Entered on Register		
Environment, Transportation and Development		September 2008		
Risk Progress				
Delivery of LTP2 going well. LTP3 now adopted. Comprehensive spending review announcements confirmed funding for All dualling. NDR in government 'Development Pool' with final bid to be submitted Autumn 2011. Future major scheme funding may come under LEP arrangement and therefore will depend on investment priorities of the New Anglia LEP. Bid for Local Sustainable Transport Fund has been submitted and awaiting result by end June. Work ongoing to investigate alternative sources of transport funding with report being prepared for Members consideration.				
Tasks to mitigate the risk				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliver Local Transport Plan.• Engagement and lobbying of key organisations to develop more cross sector/partnership working e.g. NHS, HCA to position Norfolk to take advantage of ad hoc funding streams e.g. Local Sustainable Transport Fund.• Develop Community Infrastructure Levy and investigate other potential sources of funding e.g. TiF, workplace parking levy				

Risk Name & Description				
Risk No.3 Corp Risk (ref. 0201) –Failure to implement the NDR				
Risk Owner	Risk Score	Aspiration Score	Aspiration Date	Prospects
Mike Jackson	12 Medium (3x4)	8 Medium (2x4)	2015	Some Concerns
Overview and Scrutiny Panel		Date Entered on Register		
Environment, Transportation and Development		June 2007		
Risk Progress				
<p>Future funding decisions for all Department for Transport (Dft) funded schemes were placed on hold as part of the Emergency Budget on 22 June 2010. The Transport Secretary announced on the 26 October that the NDR has been included in a 'Development Pool' of schemes acknowledging the good value for money the scheme offered.</p> <p>Further discussions will take place with DfT following the submission of an Expression of Interest document on 29 Dec 2010. DfT has indicated that it will decide which projects within the Development Pool will be funded by Dec 2011.</p> <p>Further work is now in progress with DfT following the initial workshop in February and an initiation meeting with DfT on 11 March 2011.</p> <p>The Best and Final Bidding process ends at noon on 9 September 2011.</p> <p>The Joint Core Strategy has completed its Examination in Public and the Inspector's report has been published and the JCS has been found to be sound and has been adopted by all Councils on 22 March 2011.</p> <p>A legal challenge to the JCS has been received and the NDR team are also now supporting the gathering of details in response to this.</p>				
Tasks to mitigate the risk				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop NATS implementation package (to Cabinet April 2010).• Further develop NDR i.e. detailed design, traffic modelling and environmental surveys to inform the environmental statement and planning application.• Review programme for Planning Application in light of current funding / economic situation and following CSR announcement• Following the latest DfT announcement, complete work required as part of the Development Pool process to reconfirm funding.				

Service Planning 2011-14

Report by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development

Executive Summary

Overview and Scrutiny Panel members will recall that reports in January gave an initial view of service and budget planning for 2010/13 through responses to the Big Conversation and Environment, Transport and Development's Transformation and Efficiency programme 'Strategic Review'. A further report was delivered in March outlining draft service objectives including key challenges and budgetary issues facing each service in response to Big Conversation proposals. This report covers the next stage of delivery through the draft 2011/14 ETD service plan, a copy of which is available within the Members room and on Members Insight or in hard copy by request.

Overview and Scrutiny Panel members will be aware that in previous years the service plans within ETD have followed the departmental structure comprising of separate plans for each service area under an Assistant Director. For the 2011/14 service plan ETD have developed a single over-arching strategic service plan representing service delivery throughout the department as part of the ongoing development of the service planning process. Below this Operational Service plans have been developed according to the Group structure, containing a higher level of detail.

As part of Organisational Review Trading Standards became part of the Public Protection service, bringing together Trading Standards activities with Emergency Planning and Minerals and Waste. Trading Standards activities form part of the Council's Policy Framework. Overview and Scrutiny Panel members are asked to consider and comment on this element of the ETD draft service plan (pages 98 – 101) and appendices 2 and 3 which cover statutory duties under 'The Food Law Enforcement Plan (Appendix 2)' and 'The Enforcement of Age Restricted Sales Plan (Appendix 3)' and recommend it to Cabinet prior to full Council.

Service plans also reflect a stronger link between financial and service activity information by showing where actions are being resourced from. This represents the first step towards greater financial transparency and will form an aspect of future monitoring with respect to the budget savings put forward as part of the Big Conversation.

Action required

Overview and Scrutiny Panel members are invited to review the ETD Service Plan and to consider any service areas for further scrutiny and monitoring.

Overview and Scrutiny Panel members are asked as a key decision to consider and comment on pages 98 to 101 and appendices 2 and 3 of the ETD draft service plan which cover Trading Standards activities and recommend these to Cabinet prior to Full Council.

1. Background

- 1.1. Overview and Scrutiny Panel Members will recall that reports in January gave an initial view of service and budget planning for 2010/13 through responses to the Big Conversation and Environment, Transport and Development's Transformation and Efficiency programme 'Strategic Review'. A further report was delivered in March outlining draft service objectives including key challenges and budgetary issues facing each service in response to Big Conversation proposals. This report covers the next stage of delivery through the draft 2011/14 ETD service plan, a copy of which is available within the Members room and on Members Insight or in hard copy by request.

2. Changes for 2011/14

- 2.1. Overview and Scrutiny members were asked to review proposed 2011/14 service objectives for ETD in March. The ETD service plan demonstrates activities aligned to these objectives reflecting the priorities for services moving forward. The removal of the nine corporate objectives means that the planning framework of the service plans begins at the service objective level.
- 2.2. Service plans for 2011/14 follow an amended version of the corporate template introduced in 2008. Overview and Scrutiny Panel members will be aware that in previous years the service plans within ETD have followed the departmental structure comprising of separate plans for each service area under an Assistant Director. For the 2011/14 service plan ETD have developed a single over-arching strategic service plan representing service delivery throughout the department as part of the ongoing development of the service planning process. Below this Operational Service plans have been developed according to the Group structure, containing a higher level of detail.
- 2.3. Although an expectation has existed that service planning has been carried out using a three year 'medium term' horizon, this has not always been clear when reviewing plans. In order to address this the template has been amended for 2011/14 to give greater clarity to this approach detailing actions and budget planning in a year one, year two and year three format. Given the level of change being experienced by the authority it has not been possible to detail activity to take place in Year 2 and Year 3 of the plans in all cases.
- 2.4. Clearer links are also being established between actions and budgets through services being asked to list where actions have been resourced from. Overview and Scrutiny Members will note that linking resources to actions has not been possible in all cases, however, this approach will be developed further and should be seen as the first step towards greater financial transparency.
- 2.5. Service plans also now include a separate section for activity being carried out as part of Norfolk Forward Transformation and Efficiency workstreams. The activities contained within the service plan are high level activity underpinned by detailed project plans and in many cases reflect changes to service delivery as a result of the Big Conversation. In some cases areas of activity within Year 1 are included for the cessation or reduction of services.

- 2.6. A new requirement for all services is to set out how they intend to contribute to the County Council's Carbon Reduction Programme. We are aware that the programme is being reviewed and these may need to be revised. Further work will need to be undertaken to integrate service planning and portfolio management for 2012/15.
- 2.7. The demise of the National Indicator set and emerging Single Data List have left some services with uncertainty as to which measures should be taken forward in order to enable effective performance monitoring. Work is underway to establish a performance framework both through the Single Data List which should come in to effect at the start of April and on a local basis. Where possible services may wish to amend the indicators depicted in their plans as the framework becomes clearer and in some cases this may be reliant upon the wider context of partnership working in order to establish benchmarkable information.
- 2.8. **Key Decision - Trading Standards Activities**
- 2.9. As part of Organisational Review Trading Standards became part of the Public Protection service, bringing together Trading Standards activities with Emergency Planning and Minerals and Waste.
- 2.10. The Public Protection element of the ETD draft service plan, incorporating Trading Standards, has been developed using analysis of information that reflects the issues and problems people and business face, ensuring that the service is unique and focused on the needs of Norfolk citizens. This includes providing part of the 'national shield' addressing both national issues that affect Norfolk and the impact of Norfolk businesses nationally.
- 2.11. Trading Standards statutory duties are identified under the constitution, and must therefore be reported to Full Council. In order to fulfil these requirements under the constitution Overview and Scrutiny Panel member's attention is drawn to:
- The control strategy for the delivery of the Council's statutory responsibilities with regard to Trading Standards activities (pages 98 – 101 within the ETD draft service plan)
 - The Food Law Enforcement Plan (Appendix 2)
 - The Enforcement of Age Restricted Sales Plan (Appendix 3)

The Food Law Enforcement Plan is a statutory plan required by the Food Standards Agency; the Enforcement of Age Restricted Sales Plan enables the County Council to discharge its statutory duty to consider and review annually its enforcement of the Children and Young Persons (Protection from Tobacco) Act 1991.

Overview and Scrutiny Panel members are asked to consider and comment on Trading Standards activities held within the ETD draft service plan and recommend it to Cabinet prior to full Council.

2.12. **Value for Money**

- 2.13. Work carried out as part of ETD's Transformation and Efficiency programme Strategic Review included an assessment of value for money for each service but excluded elements of the current Public Protection service which at the time of the review were not part of the department's jurisdiction. Work is ongoing to look at progression of VFM across the department. Further information is included within the ETD Service Plan for 2011/14.

2.14. **Risks / Pressures**

- 2.15. Risks against achieving service objectives have been identified within the appropriate service plan. Some of the risks identified are carried forward from the 2010/13 service plans where applicable. A review of risk is currently being carried out across the authority in order to ensure a more consistent approach by the central Risk and Insurance team.

2.16. **Single Impact Assessments**

- 2.17. A review of the contents of Single Impact Assessments has been carried out to ensure their relevancy to ongoing service delivery. The Single Impact Assessment looks at cross-cutting issues such as accessibility, community cohesion, environmental and economic sustainability. Where appropriate actions have been included within operational service plans in order to address significant issues. The Single Impact Assessment reflects an overview assessment across all areas of service delivery, greater detail is included within the operational service plans.

3. **Resource Implications**

- 3.1. **Finance** : Issues are addressed within the Service Plan and were reported to November and January Overview and Scrutiny Panels.
- 3.2. **Staff** : Issues are addressed within Service Plan
- 3.3. **Property** : Issues are addressed within Service Plan
- 3.4. **IT** : Issues are addressed within Service Plan

4. **Other Implications**

- 4.1. **Legal Implications** : None

- 4.2. **Human Rights** : None

4.3. **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) :**

A full programme of equality impact assessments has been carried out covering all Environment, Transport and Development activities, and these have been reviewed during the service planning process to ensure that they are up to date and reflect any changes to service delivery practices. A review has also been carried out as part of work undertaken in the Big Conversation. Where appropriate actions from Equality Impact Assessments have been

carried forward into service plans. Work will be carried out, as part of day to day service delivery and development, to ensure that any potential inequalities in access or outcome can be addressed.

4.4. **Communications** : Covered within the Service Plan

5. **Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act**

5.1. Issues are addressed within the single impact assessments.

5.2. The implications of Trading Standards activities within the Public Protection Operational Plan in relation to their impact on crime and disorder reduction have been considered. The Trading Standards service has an important core role in dealing with crime and disorder. The continued improvement to the Trading Standards service, in a way that meets both local and national priorities, is key to ensuring the continued positive impact the service has.

6. **Risk Implications/Assessment**

6.1. Relevant risks and opportunities have been identified within the Service Plan.

7. **Alternative Options**

7.1. None

8. **Conclusion**

8.1. Service plans for 2011/14 follow an amended version of the corporate template introduced in 2008. The format of the plan for ETD has changed to reflect a drive towards having a single service plan per Chief Officer. This move has been made corporately in order to provide consistency of approach. Underneath this each service have developed a more detailed 'operational' plan following the departmental 'group' format following Organisational Review. Further development of the approach will be required in order to develop this further.

Action Required

- (i) Overview and Scrutiny Panel members are invited to review the Environment, Transport and Development plan and to consider any service areas for further scrutiny and monitoring.
- (ii) Trading Standards activities form part of the Council's Policy Framework. Overview and Scrutiny Panel members are asked to consider and comment on this element of the ETD draft service plan (pages 98 – 101) and appendices 2 and 3 which cover statutory duties under 'The Food Law Enforcement Plan (Appendix 2)' and 'The Enforcement of Age Restricted Sales Plan (Appendix 3)' and recommend it to Cabinet prior to full Council.

Background Papers

None

Officer Contact

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