

Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Wednesday 22 November 2023**

Time: **10 am**

Venue: **Council Chamber, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich NR1 2DH**

Supplementary Agenda

2. Minutes

To confirm the minutes of the meetings held on:

- 18 October 2023
- 31 October 2023

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Tom McCabe
Chief Executive
County Hall
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Date Supplementary Agenda published: 20 November 2023



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Scrutiny Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting Held on 18 October 2023
at 10am at County Hall Norwich**

Present:

Cllr Steve Morpew (Chair)
Cllr Daniel Elmer (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Carl Annison
Cllr Lesley Bambridge
Cllr Philip Duigan
Cllr John Fisher
Cllr Tom FitzPatrick
Cllr Keith Kiddie
Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris
Cllr Jamie Osborn
Cllr Brian Watkins

Also Present:

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Hollie Adams | Committee Officer |
| Debbie Bartlett | Interim Executive Director of Adult Social Services |
| Harvey Bullen | Director of Strategic Finance |
| Grahame Bygrave | Interim Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services |
| Cllr Margaret Dewsbury | Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships |
| Kat Hulatt | Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer |
| Cllr Andrew Jamieson | Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance |
| Cllr Kay Mason Billig | Leader of the Council |
| Tom McCabe | Chief Executive Officer |
| Cllr Greg Peck | Deputy Cabinet Member for Finance |
| Cllr Graham Plant | Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy |
| Peter Randall | Democratic Support and Scrutiny Manager |
| Cllr Alison Thomas | Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care |
| Laine Tisdall | Committee Officer |
| Sara Tough | Executive Director of Children's Services |
| Cllr Eric Vardy | Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste |

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Ed Maxfield and Cllr Brian Long.

2 Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 July 2023 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

3. Declarations of Interest

- 3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. Public Question Time

- 4.1 There was one public question received, from a Mr Richard Adcock. A written response was supplied by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport. The question and the response are attached to these minutes at appendix A. Mr Adcock was in attendance and asked a supplementary question to the committee.
- 4.1.1 Mr Adcock asked if it was possible for Norfolk County Council to make it easier for members of the public to ask questions on matters of public spending, highlighting implementation of bus lanes, Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs), and decisions relating to adult and children care.
- 4.1.2 The Chair thanked Mr Adcock for his question and advised that the Council's constitution was currently being reviewed, with public engagement likely to be looked at in further detail. A report from Governance and Scrutiny looking into the Council's scrutiny mechanisms was also awaited.

5. Local Member Issues/Questions

- 5.1 There were no local Member issues/questions.

6 Call In

- 6.1 The Committee noted that there were no call-in items at this meeting, however the Chair commented that a supplementary meeting of the Scrutiny Committee would need to be arranged soon as call-ins had been received very recently.

7 Strategic and Financial Planning 2024-25

- 7.1 The Committee received the annexed report (7).
- 7.1.1 The Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report to the Scrutiny Committee, which supported the Committee's scrutiny of the Council's process to develop the 2024-25 Budget, and provided an opportunity to consider savings proposals, the approach to public consultation, and the activity required to deliver a balanced budget. The Cabinet Member for Finance noted that the report considered the financial implications of the Council's Strategic Review, a briefing of the Council's current and future financial position, along with an overview of the Council's statutory and non-statutory obligations.

7.2 The following points were discussed and noted.

- The Chair asked the Cabinet Member if he could clarify the differences between statutory and non-statutory services. The Cabinet Member stated that although statutory services such as household waste and libraries were mentioned in the report, the requirements for statutory provision were not always precisely defined. The Libraries and Museums Act 1964 included a statutory duty for the Council to provide a comprehensive library service for all constituents in the area. The Council was duty-bound to ensure children and adults made full use of the library service, while ensuring that books and printed material were lent free of charge. The Cabinet Member remarked that the Council had made a commitment not to close any libraries within Norfolk.
- The Cabinet Member mentioned that the Council was obliged to improve public health provision in Norfolk, under Section 12 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012. This could take the form of healthy eating guidance, facilities for the treatment or prevention of illnesses caused by smoking, or incentives to encourage a healthy lifestyle. In all examples of statutory services, there was an element of discretion as to how this would be provided in practice.
- The Cabinet Member stated that his comment relating to the Strategic Review at a recent Cabinet Meeting was within the context of the County Deal. The money unlocked by devolution would form a large part of the Council's infrastructure planning and provision of non-statutory services, as no further European Union funds would be forthcoming.
- A Committee Member thanked the Cabinet Member for Finance for his presentation to the Committee and queried about the Council's current financial position. The report mentioned £26m of savings had been identified, however there appeared to be a budget gap of £46m for 2024/25, which represented a large shortfall of £20m to be closed. The Committee Member asked the Cabinet Member to outline the process as to how the £20m gap could be closed, and whether this would involve the identification of further savings through the Internal Strategic Review for savings, the usage of the Council's reserves, or money from outside sources. The Committee Member also asked if the Council was identifying a long-term funding settlement through the Local Government Association (LGA), and whether any good news was forthcoming from the government's Local Government funding review in December 2023. The Cabinet Member for Finance responded that 95% of the planned savings for the 2023/24 financial year were expected to be achieved, a figure of £15.5m against the £17m in the budget. The remaining £1.5m savings was due to come from Adult Social Care, however a delay in the transformation of physical disability services meant that this saving was not expected this year. A budget target of £10m in savings through continued efficiencies and better working practices had been set for the next financial year. The £10m in efficiency savings was considered part of filling the £46m budget gap. A working group was currently looking at ideas to

balance the Council's budget. Various budget challenges were recorded in the report, with Budget Challenge 3 due for consideration in December 2023 once the County Deal decision has been taken. There were several tests outlined in the finance monitoring report, which was reported to Cabinet each month regarding the Council's financial position and revenue, along with the delivery of savings for the current financial year. Further detail about the budget would be reported in January as part of the Council's future planning. The Cabinet Member stressed that the Council was on a sound financial footing with a robust budget. Difficult decisions about savings and council tax levels had been made. The Council had safeguarded its financial resilience and known risks could be managed adequately through this budget. The Cabinet Member commented that the recent spate of Section 114 notices from other local authorities illustrated a lack of resilience in local government. It would only take a few external shocks to cause problems. The Council had increased direct contact with Secretaries of State, however the likelihood of receiving a long-term funding settlement within the lifetime of the current Parliament had diminished. The Cabinet Member stated that there is little need to make inroads into reserves at present. The Adult Social Services department was commended for their work towards a long-term strategy.

- Committee Members commented on the County Deal settlement, which was reported as £600m over 30 years, asking if the fund would be ring-fenced for big capital projects or to plug gaps in the Council's budget. The Cabinet Member for Finance confirmed the fund would be ring-fenced. The Council would have discretion on how money would be spent. It could be used on infrastructure projects such as transport improvements, broadband installation, coastal defences, and economic development. Business cases would need to be drawn up and presented to government. The Cabinet Member stressed that the £20m per year had to be taken in context of the wider Council budget of £1.2bn once essential spending was considered.
- A Committee Member asked if Net Zero was taken into consideration within the report. The Council has an obligation to set carbon reduction targets in the local transport plan with resources set aside to deliver the reduction, however this did not appear to feature within the report. The Committee Member commented that they expected to see climate change mitigations within the longer-term budget expectations, particularly within the transport sector. The Cabinet Member for Finance responded and confirmed there was a grey area between non-statutory and statutory spending. The Council had set its own Net Zero commitment before the government's 2050 target, with work due to continue towards this achievement. The Council had set aside £25m in its budget over next two years towards achieving Net Zero and had a responsibility to ensure required finance is in place to make said commitments. The Committee Member clarified the Council had a quantifiable need to set carbon reduction targets in the local transport section and expressed concern that the Council did not have the resources in place to reach these targets. The Cabinet Member for Finance stated that the situation

was fluid. The Council was awaiting guidance from the Department of Transport towards drawing up a Local Transport Plan and confirmed that Net Zero targets in the transport sector within Norfolk were funded. The Committee Member expressed concern this was not reflected in the report, and asked how the Council would meet and work towards its obligations. The Cabinet Member for Finance stated that he could not confirm with certainty how this would be funded, as detailed guidance from the government was still awaited. The Chair responded that this line of questioning would be better answered at a future Scrutiny Meeting which was scheduled to cover matters related to Infrastructure.

- Committee Members asked the Cabinet Member for Finance if he could identify and expand on budget pressures identified since the budget was set. The Cabinet Member responded to say that the Council had experienced considerable additional pressures, such as pay inflation. A new pay offer had been made, consisting of a fixed increase of £1,925 per annum for all grades up to Level L, and 3.88% increase for grades above Level L. However, every 1% in pay inflation equated to further cost pressures of £3m pressure. The inflation rate nationally remained above expectations and would need to be addressed in budget plans. The latest inflation figure which was released earlier that day confirmed the inflation rate remained at 6.7%. The funding of programmes towards special education needs and disabilities had previously caused issues for local authorities. The Council successfully negotiated with the Department of Education to implement a solution known as “Safety Valve” towards this. Ultimately Children’s Services would be subject to triannual reporting to the Department of Education to see if targets set by government were being met. The Cabinet Member for Finance remarked that he did not foresee any changes to the local funding formula taking place before the next General Election. Several corporate finance options were identified to act as a counterbalance to rising costs since the Council’s budget was set, such as flexible use of capital receipts, however the options would likely only offset the additional costs rather than help bridge the £46m budget gap. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services stated that any policy changes expected from the government had been subject to further delays. There was an element of concern that Adult Services may only receive small amounts of funding which would be received late and spent immediately. A long-term funding solution for Adult Services was not expected until after the next General Election. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Leader of the Council had previously lobbied the government for clarity on this issue.
- The Chair shared the frustration regarding the dearth of long-term financial planning and asked if demand was outstripping supply regarding Adult Social Care’s prevention strategy. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services mentioned the balancing act in Adult Social Care was a day-to-day issue and took priority for the department. The Cabinet Member for Finance commended Adult Social Services for their work over several years regarding their strategy towards prevention of outcomes. An officer mentioned an

increase in reablement had a real effect on outcomes and care for people, stating that Adult Social Care is not always a reactive department.

- The Vice-Chair noted that the report mentioned an assumed 4% rise in pay in 2023/34, however nationally there had been an average pay rise of 7.8%, while the public sector had recently seen pay rise by 6.7%; he asked for assurance that the 4% figure would hold, or if it could be removed from the report to improve clarity. The Cabinet Member for Finance stated he could not confirm for certain that the 4% figure would hold, and that the report had been completed prior to the 6.7% public sector rise. An officer mentioned the 4% figure was the projected inflation rate for 2024/25 and would be reviewed later in the budget process to ensure it was still appropriate. There was an expectation inflation would continue to fall, but uncertainty remained as to what level it would eventually settle at. Local government pay offers tended to be set at a lower level than other public bodies and the private sector, as offers were put forward based on what authorities could afford. The officer confirmed figures would continue to be reviewed until the final budget decision was taken at Cabinet and County Council meetings in January/February 2024.
- The Vice-Chair mentioned the report included a council tax assumption of 4.99% and asked if lower or higher rates had been modelled. The Cabinet Member for Finance stated that every 1% increase in council tax brought in an extra £5m. The 4.99% figure was felt what the Council required to continue delivering services at the current level of provision. The Cabinet Member remarked that he would prefer to keep that figure in use as a ceiling to help officers and departments plan their budgets. The Chair mentioned that during the previous consultation on council tax increases there was a 10% option, and asked if this option would be included again. The Cabinet Member for Finance stated it was preferable to have a large range of options in the consultation, but that he believed the range would not go further than 4.99% this time around.
- A Committee Member asked if there were any savings which required consultation and if this may delay the budget setting process. The Cabinet Member for Finance stated that the previous winter there had been issues which had been consulted on over the Christmas and New Year period which ultimately did not delay the process. The Cabinet Member outlined his belief that if there were any items brought to Cabinet which identified reasonable savings but required consultations, that this would not change the agreed timetable. The Chair asked what criteria would determine savings being put out for consultation. The Monitoring Officer clarified that the impact on individuals or definable groups would be considered, and that the Council would consult to identify impacts and report findings back to Cabinet before a decision was ultimately taken.
- A Committee Member expressed concern that a large proportion of spending cuts in the report appeared to fall on Adult Social Care. There had been an announcement a short while ago of £6.3m extra funding in 2023/24 and

£3.4m in 2024/25, which was welcome but did not address the longer-term uncertainty within this department. The Committee Member mentioned there was a growing need for the Council to increase capacity within Adult Social Care to meet demand and asked whether the Council was retaining carers in the system and what was being done to address the shortfall. The Cabinet Member for Finance responded to say Adult Social Care was the largest department in terms of spending in Norfolk. The Council spent £900m on Procurement per year, of which a substantial proportion was devoted towards Adult Social Care. The focus was towards the transformation of services rather than cessation. The Cabinet Member noted the importance of highlighting the benefits of a career in social care. The Interim Executive Director of Adult Social Services stated Adult Social Care targeted money towards recruitment and retention. Norfolk County Council vacancies had improved however there were still issues in the social work department. The apprenticeship scheme was highly effective in bringing in people to the department and technological solutions were being considered to see how it could free up carers to provide more care.

- A Committee Member praised the approach taken by Adult Social Care and remarked that the reablement service was very good, citing recent personal use. The latest Vital Signs report was released in September 2023 stating an overall target of 80% for the quality of Norfolk's care market, however the current figure was 56.6%. There was a recent report from the Health Foundation stating a 6% increase in real terms spending on care was required to cover future demand. The Committee Member asked whether Norfolk's care market was sustainable and what was being done to address the challenges. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services gave reassurance that many care homes were in a better place than their ratings suggest. The department had visited several care homes to challenge and help leadership, along with suggestions to improve provision of services. It was understood the Care Quality Commission (CQC) had a backlog of reassessments, which meant that the care home's ratings could not change until their reassessment had been conducted. The Chair expressed disappointment that the Council could not check Parent Assessment Manual (PAMS) ratings against CQC reassessments. An officer stated the Vital Signs report had been adjusted recently due to these factors not giving a full picture of the care market situation. Ways to improve briefing were being looked at.
- Committee Members asked about the effect of inflation on financing the capital programme, and what the impact would be. The Cabinet Member for Finance responded to say the Council was previously able to borrow at historically low rates of 1.8% for 50 years, however this was no longer applicable. The Cabinet Member stated that the Council was right to take advantage of the low interest rates to borrow towards capital projects, but that levels of borrowing would have to be restricted going forward. An additional borrowing figure of £50m was included in the report, additional to the Council's approximate external borrowing figure of £850m. Capital could be

raised through receiving grants or via selling assets. A Committee Member mentioned the external borrowing figure of £850m was different to the one reported earlier of over £900m.

- The Chair stated that capital spending would be looked at in detail at a future Scrutiny Committee meeting. The Cabinet Member for Finance stated the external borrowing figure was expected to rise to £1bn, and confirmed the funding was at a fixed rate for 50 years. A Committee Member mentioned there would be an impact on the Council's revenues due to the current inflation rate and financing of the capital program, and what this impact may look like. The Cabinet Member for Finance stated that the impact between borrowing at 6% per year rather than 2% as previous was very clear, and that Cabinet and departments had been briefed accordingly about their capital spending requests.
- The Chair remarked that the report contained a list of proposals, but did not appear to show impact assessments, which could be scrutinised in further detail at a future Scrutiny Committee meeting. The proposals included a Children's Services travel programme along with the decision to wind up the Transport for Norwich Advisory Committee. The Chair asked officers to look further into this.
- A Committee Member queried mentions of grant funding replacing Council funding within the report and asked what this may consist of. The Chair responded to say this would be looked at and clarified for a future meeting.

7.3 **RESOLVED**

1. The Scrutiny Committee **considered and commented** on the Strategic and Financial Planning 2024-25 report to Cabinet on the 2 October 2023, including:
 - Budget proposals identified to date.
 - The proposed approach to public consultation.
 - Service and budget related pressures identified to date.
 - Key areas of risk and uncertainty related to development of the 2024-25 budget.
2. The Scrutiny Committee **considered** implications for scrutiny of the overall NCC budget setting process.

8 **Update on Norfolk County Council owned companies**

- 8.1.1 The Scrutiny Committee received the report, which was produced in response to the Committee's request for details about the governance of Norfolk County Council's owned companies. The report intended to provide a high-level overview of performance and governance arrangements of the companies, background information, and an opportunity for the Committee to consider which additional information may be picked for scrutiny in the future.

8.1.2 An officer commented that the report related to current companies, and that several Council owned companies had been dissolved in the past three or four years. The Council only wished to have companies as when it benefited the needs of the Council in terms of service delivery or if it was a legal requirement.

8.2 The following points were discussed and noted:

- A Committee Member commented that the report appeared to show NP Law as dormant. The Monitoring Officer clarified that NP Law was a shared service and not a company. It was registered as a company to safeguard the NP Law name and ensure it could not be used as a company. A change of direction was ongoing at NP Law, but it would remain a shared service and not an external law firm, with discussions taking place about whether to wind up the company or to trademark the NP Law name. The company listed in the report was simply a shell company, with no money or personnel involved. The Committee Member thanked the Monitoring Officer for their clarification, as he had a brief concern that there may have been a conflict of interest given the content of the report.
- A Committee Member asked if Norse could be looked at in detail in the future, relating to impacts, size of the company and subsidiaries, and how the company met targets relating to social value, emissions reduction, and service improvement. In addition, the Committee Member asked if there were any risks of other local authorities terminating their contracts with Norse, as Norwich City Council had recently ended an arrangement with NPS, a Norse subsidiary.
- A Committee Member commented that it was important to ensure that the companies were doing the job the Council had intended them to do, citing the recent news that Croydon Council and Thurrock Council had issued Section 114 notices. It was imperative that the Council's companies utilised decent investment strategies tailored from advice given by qualified experts.
- Committee Members stated the report was useful as a starting point, and **asked** if a more in-depth report about Norse could be brought before the Scrutiny Committee.
- A Committee Member asked about how the Council's commercial activities and method of operations could be changed to ensure the Council's services were made sustainable and more responsive to the local needs of people. The Deputy Cabinet Member for Finance stated that all Norfolk County Council owned companies had produced a shareholder letter detailing the expectations of the Council, not only in terms of profitability but also social good. As an example, Repton Homes had exceeded the Council's target of affordable homes on Norfolk sites. The remit of the companies considered environmental effects.
- The Vice-Chair confirmed it was important not to get too involved in the

operational details of the companies, as the role of shareholders was to ensure the companies were delivering for the council in the terms set out for them and meeting the expectations set out in the shareholder letter. The Vice-Chair stated it would be of interest to understand what the future financing requirements from the Council would likely be in terms of capital over the next 10 years, given the recent interest rate changes. Shareholders should focus on the finances rather than service delivery. The Chair stated it would be worth exploring this at a future meeting.

- A Committee Member asked if the County Farms portfolio fitted into this report. The Cabinet Member for Finance stated County Farms was not a limited companies and was considered part of Property Services. The Deputy Member for Finance confirmed that most of the land Repton had built on was originally County Farms land. There was a financial transaction between Repton and the Council, as the Council sold the land to Repton. The Chair stated he would like to see further scrutiny of Repton finances in the future. The Cabinet Member for Finance agreed to go through this in more detail at a future meeting.
- The Chair stated he would like to see Norse elements broken down more in a future report for scrutiny, as there were many different parts to Norse. The Committee **agreed** to scrutinise Norse and Repton Homes in further detail in the future.

8.3 **RESOLVED**

The Scrutiny Committee:

1. **Noted and commented** on the information contained in this report.
2. **Identified** any areas which the Committee wished to consider for future scrutiny:
 - A report to a future Scrutiny Committee meeting giving greater detail on Norse Group Ltd, setting out details including impacts, size of the company and its subsidiaries, how the company met targets relating to social value, emissions reduction, and service improvement
 - A report to a future Scrutiny Committee meeting giving greater detail on Repton Developments Ltd

9. **Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme**

- 9.1. The Scrutiny Committee received the report, which set out the current forward work plan for the Committee.
- 9.2. The following point was discussed and noted:

- A Committee Member asked if there was any update on planned scrutiny of the Norfolk Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (NIDAS). An officer confirmed there were meetings planned later today with officers about options, possibly including the terms of reference. The officer confirmed it would be a complex piece of work to conduct.

9.3 **RESOLVED**

The Scrutiny Committee **noted** the current forward work programme and **discussed** potential further items for future consideration.

The meeting concluded at 12:00

Cllr Steve Morphew, Chair

MEMBER/PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO Scrutiny Committee 18 October 2023

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Please Note: According to the NCC constitution, when a member of the public asks a question at the Scrutiny Committee or a Select Committee they receive an answer through the Chair of the committee. In circumstances where the Chair is unable to provide an answer, they may request that the relevant Cabinet Member or Officer provide a response.

4.1 Question from Richard Adcock

Why are the council spending our money on unnecessary projects like St Stevens at 6.1 million pounds when it's clearly not a priority as you have shown in reports in the evening news as you propose CUTS to much more important projects, which will effect the wellbeing & communities?

People should be first in any decisions NOT gardens on bus shelters.

Bus stops & Electric buses, if you look at the damage & dangers of production, materials, mining & running. Electric Buses/Vehicles these are doing much more damage to the environment & planet even if they don't catch alight when going into thermal runaway.

This is not a question that can be answered by the Chair on behalf of the Scrutiny Committee so he has asked that it be passed on to an appropriate cabinet member as the decisions referred to fall within the responsibility of cabinet

Response from the Cabinet Member/Officers

The works in St Stephens Street were funded by the Department for Transport's Transforming Cities fund. This was a specific grant that the county council received to invest in low carbon, sustainable transport options and improve access to employment and education opportunities. It was ringfenced to the scheme and the county council could not use that funding to spend on anything else. Using the government's own assessment tool the St Stephen's Street project represented very high value for money.

With regards to bus stops and electric buses, these have been fully funded by central government grants and private sector investment from the bus operators. We can confirm that none of the batteries used in the electric buses coming to Norfolk contain cobalt and that bus operators work with bus manufacturers to ensure all their supply chains are transparent, ethical and robust.



Norfolk County Council

Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 31 October 2023
at 10 am at County Hall Norwich

Present:

Cllr Steve Morphew (Chair)
Cllr Daniel Elmer (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Carl Annison
Cllr Lesley Bambridge
Cllr Phillip Duigan
Cllr John Fisher
Cllr Tom FitzPatrick
Cllr Keith Kiddie
Cllr Brian Long
Cllr Brian Watkins

Substitute Members Present:

Cllr Paul Neale for Cllr Jamie Osborn
Cllr Will Richmond for Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris

Also Present:

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Hollie Adams | Committee Officer |
| David Allfrey | Interim Director of Highways, Transport and Waste |
| Grahame Bygrave | Interim Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services |
| Joanne Deverick | Transforming Cities Manager |
| Kat Hulatt | Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer |
| Cllr Graham Plant | Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport |
| Cllr Ben Price | Local Member for Thorpe Hamlet |
| Peter Randall | Democratic Support and Scrutiny Manager |
| Cllr Catherine Rowett | Local Member for West Depwade |
| Cllr Chrissie Rumsby | Local Member for Mile Cross |
| Cllr Mike Sands | Local Member for Bowthorpe |
| Laine Tisdall | Committee Officer |
| Cllr Maxine Webb | Local Member for Wensum |
| Jeremy Wiggin | Head of Sustainable Transport |

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Ed Maxfield, Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris (Cllr Will Richmond substituted) and Cllr Jamie Osborn (Cllr Paul Neale substituted).

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3. Public Question Time

3.1 There were no public questions.

4. Local Member Issues/Questions

4.1 There were no local member questions.

5 Call In: Norwich City Centre Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs)

5.1 The Scrutiny Committee received the annexed report (5) setting out the reasons for call-in of Norwich City Centre Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) and the original delegated decision.

5.1.1 The Chair explained the way in which he would handle this item to best ensure a fair and balanced scrutiny process and to decide what (if any) issues the Committee would refer to the Cabinet. The options that were available to the Committee were set out in the report. The Chair stated that two separate call-ins had been received for the same delegated decision, and therefore there would be a slight change to procedure. Both call-ins would be heard one after the other, with the Scrutiny Committee considering both at the end of the meeting.

5.1.2 The Chair welcomed Cllr Paul Neale, Cllr Ben Price, and Cllr Catherine Rowett and asked them to outline the reasons for their call-in to the Committee.

5.2 The Councillors who had called in the item asked the Committee to consider their concerns which centred around the evidence used to justify the decision to reopen Exchange Street.

- Cllr Neale felt the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport had made the decision based on insufficient evidence, stating that the decision seemed to go against the views of pedestrians and businesses in Norwich city centre.
- Cllr Neale stated that the removal of traffic from city centre streets improved air quality and benefited the environment.
- Concern was expressed that the Cabinet Member had taken a unilateral decision with stakeholders not being consulted beforehand. Cllr Neale mentioned that one of the reasons given for the decision was a lack of enforcement of the restrictions in Exchange Street, which in his view seemed to be an unusual basis to rescind the traffic order. In addition, Cllr Neale stated that the Council had announced they had received funding from the government to introduce vehicle infringement cameras, along with powers to identify those who had flouted the restrictions. On this basis it would appear to make sense to install a camera at the beginning of the restricted area to enforce the closure of Exchange Street.
- Cllr Neale mentioned that London Street was the first street in the UK to be pedestrianised and that it had helped usher in a new way of how city centres could be improved, via the provision of safe and pleasant environments for shoppers to go about their business unhindered by traffic. Several other city centre streets had been pedestrianised following London Street, and Cllr Neale stated that the addition of Exchange Street to this list had enhanced the environment and quality of the city centre.
- Cllr Rowett stated the Council had recently prepared and approved several documents relating to its Climate Strategy, which highlighted targets related

to the reduction of emissions across Norfolk, including the Council's own activities. Cllr Rowett shared the view that the Council's timeline was admirably ambitious, and that the Council had scored highly in a recent climate emergency scorecard. Cllr Rowett stated that a strategy to deliver a safe environment for pedestrians, cyclists and wheelchair users had recently been approved by the Council, with a target to ensure 50% of urban journeys were conducted on foot by 2030. Cllr Rowett gave the view that the decision to reopen Exchange Street to traffic did not appear to make sense considering these strategies.

- Cllr Rowett stated that private motorists being allowed to use Exchange Street would undermine plans to reduce car journeys in the city centre. Exchange Street was considered the main walking route from St. Andrews car park to Norwich Market, and those with limited mobility would now face a cramped uphill walk to the market.
- Cllr Rowett expressed concern that the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport had undermined the Council's strategies towards emissions reduction in the transport section, the promotion of an active and healthy lifestyle in Norfolk, and the promotion of Norwich as a tourist destination.
- Cllr Price stated that the decision had been taken based on limited evidence. A 12-month consultation had taken place with only 42 respondents, which was a very low number. Cllr Price stated that the credibility of such a decision was undermined by this consultation.
- Cllr Price mentioned the top response to the consultation highlighted a lack of enforcement of the Exchange Street restrictions. The report made mention of an unsuccessful bid for government funding towards a redesigned road layout in this area to resolve safety concerns between vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists. Cllr Price stated that enforcement was a valid issue, however it did not support the conclusion that the closure was failing to deliver on Council policy.
- Cllr Price remarked that the report suggested compliance could be enforced through the introduction of better signage and cameras.
- Cllr Price expressed concern that Norfolk Constabulary had not been consulted on the decision, as enforcement was a responsibility for the police.
- Cllr Price stated that there was strong evidence the Exchange Street Experimental TRO had delivered against objectives listed in the Local Transport Plan. The closure was in line with the objective to deliver a sustainable Norfolk and worked towards reducing the dominance of motor vehicles in this part of the city centre. The closure had improved quality of life by enabling local businesses to provide outdoor seating in this area. Three pavement licences had been granted. Accessibility of historical streets in the city centre had also been improved, as both St. Benedict's Street and Exchange Street were not designed wide enough to take modern levels of pedestrians and motor vehicles at the same time.
- Cllr Price summed up that the closure of Exchange Street supported Council policy. The decision to rescind restrictions would make the street unsafe for pedestrians, wheelchairs, and buggies. Cllr Price remarked that the report stated the arrangements on St. Benedict's Street had been assessed and deemed to be meeting the aims of the Local Transport Plan. The report suggested that Exchange Street was not meeting these aims due to low levels of compliance; however, it suggested that the closure did have the

potential to meet the Local Transport Plan aims if appropriate measures to enforce compliance were introduced. Cllr Price expressed concern that no options to enforce compliance were explored within the report, nor any alternative proposals.

- Cllr Price stated that the report was unclear on the impacts on local businesses in this area.

5.2.1 The Chair requested clarification from Cllr Neale regarding the nature of the call-in and the desired outcome, as it appeared the entire decision including the St. Benedict's scheme had been called in. Cllr Price confirmed this would be made clear to the Scrutiny Committee later in the meeting.

5.3 The Chair welcomed Cllr Mike Sands, Cllr Chrissie Rumsby and Cllr Maxine Webb, and asked them to outline the reasoning for their call-in to the Scrutiny Committee.

5.3.1 The Councillors who had called in the item asked the Committee to consider their concerns which centred around the timetable of the Experimental TRO and what other options were available to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport.

- Cllr Sands remarked that the decision to use an Experimental TRO in the Exchange Street area had proven controversial in some respects. The expiry date of the measures had always been known. The evidence used to make the decision dated back to the start of 2023, which meant there was plenty of time for the Cabinet Member to investigate other options and seek a consensus with stakeholders.
- Cllr Sands stated that the restrictions could have been enforced using cameras, and that there had been media reports that cameras were to be installed in other city centre areas.
- Cllr Sands acknowledged that congestion problems in the area had diminished over the last few months, but that enforcement was still an option that was open to the Cabinet Member.
- Cllr Sands asked who the Cabinet Member had consulted. The Local Member Protocol required the Cabinet Member to consult with the Local Member for the affected area, along with Norwich City Council. This appeared not to have happened. There had been media reports that local businesses affected by the reopening of Exchange Street had not been consulted. In addition, cycling and walking groups had protested the decision. Cllr Sands remarked the decision had seemingly not gone through the Transport for Norwich Steering Group. A petition from taxi drivers was not referenced in the report either.
- Cllr Sands expressed concern that the Experimental TRO expired in the next three weeks and that the decision had been taken so late in the lifetime of the Experimental TRO.
- Cllr Sands outlined a compromise to the Scrutiny Committee, which would see Exchange Street reopened for taxis only and cameras installed to enforce restrictions on private motorists. This would contribute to a reduction in congestion and pressure on Bethel Street and would enable local businesses who have installed outside seating on Exchange Street to continue to prosper.

5.4 The Chair invited the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport to respond.

- The Cabinet Member stated that the original Emergency TROs were introduced to ensure social distancing measures could be implemented during COVID. Funding was secured from the Department for Transport towards implementing this on St. Benedict's and Exchange Street. A consultation was held in 2021 about the future of the scheme, which also encompassed Duke Street and St. Andrews. It was decided to continue with emergency measures, with an 18-month Experimental TRO introduced while traffic levels recovered.
- The Experimental TRO was coming to the end of its 18-month lifespan and a decision on its future had to be taken, all views and issues were considered. The Cabinet Member confirmed the restrictions on St. Benedict's would become permanent. However, issues that had been identified with Exchange Street could not be resolved satisfactorily in time, which meant the restrictions in this area had to be withdrawn.
- The Cabinet Member explained that safety and compliance issues had been identified in this area. Exchange Street was closed between 1000 and 1600 each day with limited exceptions. There was a taxi rank located in Gaol Hill, and access to loading and disabled bays here required a reversing manoeuvre, which was considered unsafe. Funding was not available to redesign the road layout. There was a requirement to provide a safe environment for everyone in this area. The Cabinet Member remarked that residents had advised a U-turn was required for drivers to return away from Exchange Street, which was unsafe in a pedestrianised area.
- Several efforts had been made to improve compliance with traffic restrictions in the area, including more signage and the provision of traffic marshals. The only remaining option was to introduce enforcement cameras, but this could not happen in the necessary timescales. In addition, the road layout would need to be redesigned to eliminate reversing manoeuvres in this area.
- The Cabinet Member remarked the scheme was considered successful in 2021 due to lower levels of traffic during the pandemic. However, traffic had returned to pre-pandemic levels, increasing the potential for conflict between pedestrians and vehicles. Reopening Exchange Street would reduce pressure in this area in the run-up to Christmas and the New Year.
- The Cabinet Member stated that the Experimental TRO allowed for feedback to be received constantly during the 18-month lifespan. The decision was based on the feedback received.

5.5 Councillors calling-in the decision questioned the Cabinet Member and officers:

- Cllr Neale asked why all stakeholders had not been consulted before the decision had been taken. The Cabinet Member stated that 18 months of consultation had taken place, and the safety aspects of the scheme took priority in this case.
- Cllr Rowett stated the report mentioned the main reason for the decision was non-compliance with restrictions, but that the Cabinet Member was stating safety concerns to the Committee. Cllr Rowett asked what options for turning vehicles had been considered, and whether it was feasible for cars to turn at the bottom of Gaol Hill to return in forward gear. The Cabinet Member stated

that Norwich City Council had made a £3.5m application for a scheme to pedestrianise this area, resulting in taxis being moved to City Hall and the complete pedestrianisation of Gaol Hill. However, the costs were considered prohibitive for the Council to proceed and funding from the government and wider traffic studies would be required for the scheme to be revisited.

- Cllr Rowett stated there was only a small number of motorists making three-point turns in this area, and mostly for drop offs for disabled passengers. It appeared that motorists were confused by the signage currently in use. Cllr Rowett asked if improved signage in the city centre would help improve clarity for motorists regarding the Exchange Street restrictions. The Cabinet Member stated signs were in place at the top of Gaol Hill and the start of Exchange Street, which were frequently ignored. More signs could be installed but it was the responsibility of drivers to comply with restrictions. An officer confirmed signage in this area was reviewed and improved partway through the scheme. The signs in use were prescribed by the Department for Transport. Signs are installed as far away as the approach to Grapes Hill roundabout to provide advance warning for motorists.
- Cllr Rowett mentioned there was no dead-end sign at Gaol Hill. Surveys had been conducted in the area which suggested that many citizens did not understand the restrictions. The Cabinet Member stated that Gaol Hill was not a dead end as it was open to taxis, delivery vehicles and disabled users. Private vehicles were restricted from the area.
- Cllr Rowett stated that Exchange Street was a key cycling route in Norwich and asked if the numbers of cyclists had changed during the lifetime of the scheme. An officer stated the scheme was introduced as an emergency due to COVID, and as such data for the number of cyclists and pedestrians was not available prior to 2020. Data relating to air quality was also unavailable prior to 2020.
- Cllr Price stated it appeared the TRO was rushed due to COVID, which created a problem which was not previously present. Cllr Price noted the Transport for Norwich strategy highlighted the Exchange Street scheme as an achievement, and whether the Cabinet Member could explain why this view had changed. The Cabinet Member remarked that the TRO was introduced during COVID as an emergency measure to ensure social distancing could be achieved. It was initially an emergency measure which was then extended to ensure compliance. The Cabinet Member stated that cars making reversing manoeuvres around Exchange Street and Gaol Hill was dangerous, which was why the scheme could not continue. Traffic in the city centre had now increased to pre-pandemic levels.
- Cllr Rowett stated that an increase in traffic within the city centre to pre-pandemic levels would represent a failure of Transport for Norwich objectives. Cllr Rowett asked if the Cabinet Member believed increased traffic levels represented a success or a failure. The Cabinet Member stated there were several car parks in the area, and therefore a need for cars to access this part of the city centre was required. Any further pedestrianisation would close two car parks, and result in further dangerous reversing manoeuvres around pedestrian areas. If funding became available in the future for a wider scheme, the whole wider area could be reviewed and redesigned.
- Cllr Price stated that city centre car parks could be accessed from other directions, which would mean there was no need to use Exchange Street. A camera in this location would enforce compliance. Cllr Price asked if

pedestrian numbers had been monitored while the scheme was in effect. The Cabinet Member stressed that highway safety concerns were paramount.

- Cllr Neale asked why the installation of a camera at the start of Exchange Street had not been considered, as Gentleman's Walk was planned to receive one. An officer stated powers to install cameras had only recently been granted to the Council by the Department of Transport. However, a consultation exercise had to take place following Department for Transport requirements, with Norfolk Constabulary involved. Enforcement cameras could only be installed in locations where consultations had been held. It would not be possible to install an enforcement camera at Exchange Street at the current time for this reason.
- Cllr Neale asked if an enforcement camera on Exchange Street could be reviewed in the future. An officer confirmed proposals could be looked at as part of the 2025/26 budget process if it was deemed a priority site.
- Cllr Sands asked what other options the Cabinet Member had available other than making the scheme permanent or withdrawal. The Cabinet Member confirmed there were no other options available.
- Cllr Rumsby asked if the Transport for Norwich Steering Group was consulted regarding the decision. The Cabinet Member stated this had not happened. Cllr Rumsby expressed surprise and remarked that it seemed extraordinary that the Steering Group had not met, given that the end date for the Experimental TRO was known in advance. Cllr Rumsby asked why the Steering Group had not met. The Cabinet Member confirmed this was due to time constraints. An officer stated arrangements for the Transport for Norwich Steering Group were being made; however, confirmation of appointees from other districts were still awaited.
- Cllr Webb mentioned that the expiry date for the Experimental TRO was known in advance and asked why a decision or alternative options had not been investigated sooner. The Cabinet Member stated the Experimental TRO was due to elapse, and it was necessary to decide to make it permanent or withdraw the measures. Advice from officers and consultation responses were considered. The Cabinet Member stated safety and compliance issues meant that the withdrawal of the scheme was the only valid option he could take at this time, but if circumstances changed in the future, he would be open to revisit the measures. The Experimental TRO had a finite lifespan which was due to end and a judgement call had to be taken. The Chair intervened at this point and requested clarification between an Emergency TRO and an Experimental TRO. The Cabinet Member confirmed the scheme had begun as an Emergency TRO which had evolved into an Experimental TRO which was now due to expire.
- Cllr Webb asked if this decision was taken due to time constraints or whether there was anything in writing which stated the only options after the 18 months were to abandon the scheme or make it permanent. An officer stated modifications to an Experimental TRO could be made in the first six months of operation, but after the 18-month period elapses it would either become permanent or rescinded.
- Cllr Sands asked what aspects of the decision were consulted with Norwich City Council and local businesses. An officer stated the consultation process was continuous, with regular discussions taking place between officers. Meetings with those who were reluctant to see Exchange Street pedestrianised had also taken place. Officers were reliant on feedback being

received. Cllr Sands asked how local businesses and Norwich City Council were consulted. An officer stated the Council was reliant on affected parties giving feedback during the 18-month long consultation process.

- Cllr Webb asked if there was any regret that some stakeholders were not actively consulted regarding the decision, and whether cycling and walking groups were contacted. An officer stated there had been regular dialogue with stakeholders across the city centre representing many different groups. Local businesses were concerned about access for deliveries at the start of the scheme, which meant a specific routing for delivery vehicles was implemented within the measures. This was welcomed by local businesses. The officer commented that there had been a consistent stream of feedback at the beginning of the scheme, but this had reduced as time went on. A point had been reached where a decision about the future of the scheme had to be taken, which is now. Cllr Webb asked if cycling or walking groups were consulted regarding the decision. The officer confirmed consultations from those groups had been ongoing, with regular meetings with representatives over the last 18 months.
- Cllr Rumsby stated that the Cabinet Member had mentioned the Local Member Protocol was not followed when making this decision and asked for clarification regarding this. The Cabinet Member stated that all views were considered when making the decision. It was considered an issue for the Highways department, and a decision had to be taken as the Experimental TRO was due to expire on 18 November. There was a consistent level of non-compliance with the restrictions, with only 3% of vehicles using Exchange Street legitimately. Significant efforts had been made to enforce the restrictions, but it had not worked. The Cabinet Member stated he was happy to discuss this with Cllrs and stakeholders outside the meeting, but the decision had to be taken based on advice from officers and feedback from consultations. If circumstances change in the future, the scheme would be revisited.
- Cllr Rumsby asked why cameras were not installed to enforce compliance. An officer stated that the Council had to follow requirements and guidance issued by the Department for Transport, which was why an enforcement camera could not be installed on Exchange Street at the current time.
- Cllr Sands asked what enforcement measures were to be taken against businesses who had installed outside seating on Exchange Street, and what precedents would this set. An officer stated that pavement licences were issued by Norwich City Council, and that Norfolk County Council would work closely with them. Discussions with affected business were due to take place. Officers confirmed appropriate enforcement or legal action would be taken if highway space was still being used for outside seating once pavement licences had been removed. Cllr Sands responded that this appeared to create conflict between the Highways Department of Norfolk County Council and the Licencing Department of Norwich City Council. An officer stated that safety was the main concern in this area.

5.6 Members and substitute Members of the Committee questioned the Cabinet Member and officers:

- A Committee Member remarked that he had experienced the current Exchange Street layout as he was a Blue Badge holder and that not all disabilities were visible or required the use of a wheelchair. The Committee

Member stated that the signage in this area was not clear for those who were unfamiliar with Norwich city centre, and asked the Cabinet Member if he agreed that the restrictions had to be withdrawn due to the potential of conflict between cyclists, pedestrians, and vehicles. The Cabinet Member confirmed this was the case.

- A Committee Member stated the decision did not appear to be based on fully informed data. Over £30m had been spent on Transport for Norwich initiatives, however funding to keep pedestrians safe did not seem forthcoming. The Committee Member expressed concern about the increased risk of conflict between pedestrians crossing road and increased numbers of vehicles using Exchange Street, and asked if there was any data pertaining to numbers of pedestrians in the area. An officer stated that specific pedestrian data was not available, but that an Equality Impact Assessment had taken place.
- A Committee Member asked if there was a greater perceived risk to pedestrians and shoppers by reverting to previous arrangements. The Cabinet Member stated the current arrangements were considered more dangerous due to the reversing manoeuvres required by drivers. Decisions were taken quickly to ensure a safe environment as the Experimental TRO was due to end on the 18 November.
- Committee Members asked about the effects on the local environment by reopening Exchange Street. The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste had previously stated the Council was committed to reaching Net Zero targets by 2030, and ambitious plans were included in this strategy. However, the withdrawal of this scheme appeared to go against cycling and walking ambitions, along with air quality targets. A Committee Member asked what leadership was being shown by the Highways Department to do its bit for the local environment. The Cabinet Member stated that Norfolk had been recognised as a leader in low carbon policies by the government. 70 electric buses were being introduced in Norwich over the next few months, with more bus lanes being introduced. The Cabinet Member stated these initiatives illustrated the Council's low carbon agenda and delivery against this. Most cars by 2030 would be electric, resulting in little or no emissions in certain areas. Further areas were to be identified and worked out between Norfolk County Council and Norwich City Council
- A Committee Member stated that most responses to consultations tended to be from those who were unhappy with the planned works, and that there was usually passive acceptance from the majority. A balance was required between what the Council wished to implement in town and city centres and the needs of businesses in the current economic climate, with disadvantages minimised as best possible. The Committee Member remarked that cameras would not stop people driving down Exchange Street, and asked if the Cabinet Member agreed a decision had to be made with the evidence available. The Cabinet Member agreed this was the case.
- The Vice-Chair asked about potential camera installations on Exchange Street, and whether a consultation would need to be held. The Vice-Chair asked what a realistic timescale for such a project would be. An officer stated that the locations to go live later in 2023, were consulted on in 2022. New locations would be consulted on next calendar year after a countywide review across Norfolk to determine priority locations. These could then potentially be implemented from 2025 onwards. The Council had to follow Department for Transport requirements for these moving traffic offences. In addition, following the recent publication of the government's Plan for Drivers, further guidance

was now awaited from the Department for Transport about camera enforcement. The Vice-Chair requested clarification regarding the minimum timeline for installation. The officer confirmed this would be at least a year including the consultation period.

- The Vice-Chair asked the Cabinet Member whether a year was too long given the public safety risks identified in this area. The Cabinet Member stressed that the Experimental TRO expired on the 18 November, so a decision had to be taken. Norfolk County Council would work closely with Norwich City Council on any future road schemes.
- The Vice-Chair requested clarification regarding the Transport for Norwich policy document. The Vice-Chair stated that point 9.6 mentioned support for growth areas regeneration areas, which highlighted several zones beyond the Norwich urban area where public transport was limited. Point 10.1 emphasised the different transport needs between urban and rural areas and point 10.3 referenced that car ownership around Norwich and surrounding areas differed greatly. The Vice-Chair asked the Cabinet Member if he agreed with these interpretations. The Cabinet Member stated that Norfolk comprised of large rural areas which were all linked to a market town or Norwich itself. The Council are attempting to implement different transport options to enable people to access urban areas, and the Transport for Norwich strategy was one of those options. The Cabinet Member remarked that Norfolk had received £50m from the government's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), which had been used to improve bus services across Norfolk. The Council is working closely with bus operators in Norfolk to best invest the BSIP funding.
- A Committee Member expressed their disappointment that the Transport for Norwich Steering Group had been delayed. The Committee Member remarked that he had supported Exchange Street closure as a pedestrian and cyclist, but that he also supported the Cabinet Member's decision to withdraw the scheme. The Committee Member asked for assurance that the proposal would remain on the books for consideration if funding was available to increase pedestrianisation in the city centre. The Cabinet Member stated the scheme would have to be reviewed on its own merits should the circumstances change.
- A Committee Member welcomed Cllr Sands' proposed compromise to reopen Exchange Street for taxis only, but expressed concern about the mix of taxis, pedestrians, and cyclists in this part of the city centre. The Committee Member asked officers what work was required to ensure a safe environment for pedestrians and cyclists. An officer responded stating that it would be unsafe to mix taxis with pedestrians and cyclists, as private motorists seeing the saloon type taxis or private hire vehicles using Exchange Street would increase non-compliance in this area.
- The Chair requested clarification regarding the differences between an Emergency TRO and Experimental TRO. An officer stated Emergency TROs were brought in by the government to enable immediate changes to road layouts to aid social distancing in the wake of the first COVID lockdown. Feedback from local businesses highlighted that deliveries were being hindered, resulting in a revised layout being devised, which formed the basis of the Experimental TRO. Officers wished to see how the revised layout worked in practice and whether it required tweaks to be implemented. A further change was that local businesses had requested a review of hours of operation. Initially the restrictions lasted until 5pm, which resulted in increased pressure on staff being asked to stay late to help with deliveries. This was changed to 4pm based on feedback from consultations. Those changes were

brought in as part of the Experimental TRO, with feedback received over the past 18 months.

- The Chair stated that it appeared a specific review after 6 months had not happened to see if further changes could be made. An officer stated the Council wanted to see the arrangement succeed, and that the Experimental TRO period would enable the road network to settle down following COVID. Traffic levels in city were changing. Most of the feedback relating to the scheme was received within the first 6 months of operation, no fundamental changes were made in this period. Officers were aware the Experimental TRO expired after 18 months, leaving 12 months to monitor its operation.
- The Chair stated the minutes for the January 2022 meeting of the Transport for Norwich Joint Committee made no mention of the Exchange Street scheme being an Experimental TRO. The minutes instead confirmed the continuation of the Emergency TRO order. The Chair requested clarification as to why the Exchange Street scheme had become an Experimental TRO as this appeared not to be the decision taken by the Joint Committee. The decision taken at that meeting was that the scheme should become permanent, with no mention of turning problems or safety issues. Officers confirmed the scheme was currently operated under an Experimental TRO and that they would look back at reports.
- The Chair asked officers if local businesses had been consulted regarding the extension of the St. Benedict's scheme. An officer stated there had been no specific consultation other than the ongoing Experimental TRO, but that general feedback from businesses and residents regarding St. Benedict's was largely positive over the past 18 months. The Chair asked where this feedback could be found. Officers stated the data could be made available if requested.
- The Chair asked the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport for their opinion on Cllr Sands' compromise proposal. The Cabinet Member replied that he felt the proposal was unacceptable on highway safety grounds due to the continued need for reversing manoeuvres at the bottom of Gaol Hill

5.7 The Chair invited Cllr Neale and Cllr Sands to sum up their call-ins.

5.7.1 Cllr Neale summed up his call-in, clarifying that it related to Pt. 4 and 5 of his recommendation in his decision.

- The decision suggested that motorists who currently attempted to enter Exchange Street would make a U-turn in a pedestrian area, however if better compliance measures were introduced at Gaol Hill this would prevent motorists from accessing the area entirely.
- Cllr Neale expressed surprise that no data had been collected during the 18-month operation of the scheme.
- If the Experimental TRO was due to finish at a fixed date, plans could have been made to implement a new Experimental TRO which remedied any issues which had arisen, rather than withdrawing the scheme entirely.
- Concern was expressed that the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport had not engaged with stakeholders, and that the decision contradicted the Council's policies towards Net Zero with limited evidence to support it.

5.7.2 Cllr Sands summed up the reasons for the call-in

- Cllr Sands extended an invitation to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport to use the opportunity for a compromise. There was a recognised need to make change to the Exchange Street scheme, but to abandon the measures entirely would be a missed opportunity.
- The compromise would address many of the issues highlighted. Restricting traffic flows would reduce danger to pedestrians and other highway users.
- Small and medium businesses represented a large employment sector in Norwich city centre and withdrawing the scheme would threaten their future.
- Although the timescale for changing the measures was limited, Cllr Sands stated that enough groundwork was in place for a viable compromise to be reached. A turnaround spot for drivers who drove down Gaol Hill in error could be implemented at a low cost, as space was available in this area. A drop off for people with disabilities could also be installed, following the precedent of the drop-off zone outside the Assembly House.

5.7.3 Cllr Neale recommended that the decision be referred back to full council as it went against objectives in the Local Transport Plan. The Monitoring Officer stated this would not be appropriate in the circumstances, as this was an Executive decision that did not appear to go against objectives in the Local Transport Plan.

5.8 The Chair asked Committee Members to consider both call-ins.

5.8.1 The Scrutiny Committee took a vote on Cllr Neale's proposal to refer the decision back to the Cabinet Member. With three votes for and nine against, the proposal was **lost**.

5.8.2 The Scrutiny Committee took a vote on Cllr Sands' proposal to refer the decision back to the Cabinet Member. With three votes for and nine against, the proposal was **lost**.

5.8.3 The Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to **note** both call-ins but take no further action.

The meeting concluded at 12:06 pm

Cllr Steve Morphew, Chair