

Cabinet

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 6 September 2021 in the Council Chamber, County Hall, at 10am

Present:

Cllr Andrew Proctor	Chairman. Leader & Cabinet Member for Strategy & Governance.
Cllr Graham Plant	Vice-Chairman and Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy.
Cllr Bill Borrett	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention.
Cllr Margaret Dewsbury	Cabinet Member for Communities & Partnerships.
Cllr Andy Grant	Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste
Cllr John Fisher	Cabinet Member for Children's Services.
Cllr Tom FitzPatrick	Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation & Performance.
Cllr Andrew Jamieson	Cabinet Member for Finance.
Cllr Greg Peck	Cabinet Member for Commercial Services & Asset Management.
Cllr Martin Wilby	Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport.

Executive Directors Present:

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

Cabinet Members and Executive Directors formally introduced themselves.

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Helen Edwards, Director of Governance (Kat Hulatt substituting).

2 Minutes from the meeting held on Monday 2 August 2021.

- 2.1 Cabinet agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 2 August 2021 as an accurate record of the meeting.

3 Declaration of Interests

- 3.1 The Chairman declared an interest in relation to item 16, "Disposal, Acquisition and Exploitation of property" as he was a Council appointed director of Repton Properties Ltd.

- 3.2 The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management declared an interest in relation to item 16, "Disposal, Acquisition and Exploitation of property" as he was a Council appointed director of Repton Properties Ltd.

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

- 4.1 No matters were referred to Cabinet.

5 Items of Urgent Business

- 5.1 The Chairman invited the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport to discuss the Council's approach for moving forward with dualling of the A47, noting that the County Council had been instrumental in campaigning for this and the importance of this for Norfolk's economy.
- 5.2 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport gave a briefing on dualling of the A47:
- The A47 was a very important road for Norfolk, carrying traffic from the Midlands and north of England, catering for residents, visitors and businesses. It had not received enough investment in the past to bring it up to standard and was currently unfit for purpose. Improvements would help bring forward new housing and jobs and the Council had therefore made the case for Government to invest in the road.
 - Businesses were asked for their views and 95% said dualling the A47 would reduce inefficiencies and travel delays; 90% said it would attract more customers; and 88% said it would allow them to invest with confidence.
 - Norfolk County Council lead the A47 Alliance which brought together business representatives, local authorities and others across the region; the group had successfully lobbied Government to commit to over £300m of investment in the road in 2014.
 - National Highways, formerly Highways England, were bringing forward schemes, with dualling between Blofield and Burlingham and North Tuddenham and Easton and a major improvement at the A11 Thickthorn Junction due to be delivered by 2025. The Council were keen for Government to commit to further investment so the aspiration for full dualling with appropriate grade separation could be met and were disappointed by the lack of further announcement by Government when they announced the trunk road programme for 2020-25.
 - The Council had set out a strong business case for the priority schemes; the dualling of Peterborough to Wisbech, the Acle Straight and Tilney to East Winch would unlock 125,000 houses and 75,000 jobs, create more than £330m uplift in gross value added from new employment, generate over £200m benefits from enhanced productivity and reduce additional costs to businesses due to delay estimated at £27m for haulage companies.
 - The October spending review would provide an opportunity for Government to commit to infrastructure to Build Back Better and the Council would like to see the A47 included in Government plans.
 - The Council planned to launch a high-profile campaign for A47 improvements working with MPs, businesses, the media and the A47 Alliance to resurrect the Just Dual It campaign with an additional message

“Just Fund It”. As part of this campaign, the Council would ask Government to provide funding for dualling of the whole route in the comprehensive spending review phased over a number of years, and for National Highways to deliver each section promptly as approved.

5.3 The Vice-Chairman welcomed this initiative, noting that the schemes which received investment in 2014 had not yet been taken forward and benefits which would have been gained through development of these schemes had been lost. He felt Norfolk deserved to have these schemes built to improve the lives of people in Norfolk and to support with building the county’s economy.

5.4 The meeting was adjourned for 5 minutes due to technical issues.

6 Public Question Time

6.1 No public questions were received.

7 Local Member Questions/Issues

7.1 The list of Local Member questions and the responses is attached to these minutes at Appendix A.

7.2.1 Cllr Alison Thomas asked a supplementary question

- Cllr Thomas was speaking on behalf of residents in her Division of Long Stratton.
- Cllr Thomas thanked the Cabinet Member for the response to her question. She welcomed that there was a possibility of enforcement as a last resort but queried when this point would be, noting that there had been flooding in 2020 and a report published into this, however thirteen months on, no action had been taken from the recommendations set out in the report and riparian owners had not taken the action needed.
- She asked when enforcement would be taken and how long a situation like this would be left before enforcement was undertaken.

7.2.2 The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste replied that he would have to look into the specific situation being discussed to see when it would hit the trigger points for enforcement; he shared Cllr Thomas’ frustration about the speed of enforcement however noted this was a problem with the law rather than enforcement by officers.

7.3.1 Cllr Brian Watkins asked a supplementary question

- Government had recently been told that measures such as a ventilation were important in school settings to reduce transmission of Covid-19.
- Cllr Watkins believed that this had been downplayed in favour of less effective methods such as washing hands and cleaning surfaces.
- Cllr Watkins asked if Cabinet was confident that the Government was putting in place ventilation measures to protect children in schools

7.3.2 The Chairman replied that the Council had done lots of work in the last 18 months with Children’s Services and throughout the pandemic had learned a lot; as a result of this they were ready if another emergency pandemic related situation occurred over the winter period.

8. Point of order

- 8.1 Cabinet agreed to start at agenda item 9, “NCC Apprenticeship Strategy 2020-2023 (and Action Plan)” then follow the running order of the agenda, returning to agenda item 8, “Norfolk County Council in an Integrated Care System”, at the end, after agenda item 16 “Disposal, Acquisition and Exploitation of Property”.

9. NCC Apprenticeship Strategy 2020-2023 (and Action Plan)

- 9.1.1 Cabinet received the report detailing the Norfolk County Council Strategy for Apprenticeships 2020-2023 and demonstrating the importance of Apprenticeships being at the core of our goal of supporting the Norfolk economy and people living in Norfolk to prosper.

- 9.1.2 The Vice-Chairman introduced the report:

- The strategy showed the strategic vision for apprenticeships across all areas of Norfolk County Council, bringing together the three strategic strands identified by the Local Government Association Review.
- The Vice-Chairman highlighted the vision for Children’s Services within the apprenticeship strategy as set out on page 68 of the report.
- The Recruit Retrain Reward incentive, as set out on page 71 of the report, had benefited from funding from the Norfolk Strategic Fund and would provide an opportunity to stimulate new apprenticeships. There was a target to achieve 437 incentive grants by July 2022.
- On page 76 of the report, the strategic aims for the apprenticeship action plan were set out for delivery of apprenticeships externally to employers and individuals, and internally to employees.
- A 4-year decline in apprenticeship starts had been seen in Norfolk, made worse by the Covid-19 pandemic. The age group worst affected had been those aged 16-19.
- The themes for work for each directorate were shown in the action plan set out in the report.
- Information and support sessions for young people and parents would be provided in schools, and support put in place for vulnerable young people and care leavers.
- Growth and Development had increased support for non-levy businesses to recruit new apprenticeships; this initiative would be extended in 2021 to also support travel expenses and cost of equipment.
- Increasing the digital presence was important to support with the promotion of vacancies and awareness of apprenticeships.
- Human Resources were focussing on increasing apprenticeship starts, monitoring quality of apprenticeships and apprenticeship completions.
- The Vice-Chairman moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

- 9.2 The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services supported the strategy, noting the many aspects in the action plan related to Children’s Services. The corporate parenting responsibility put more emphasis on the Council as corporate parents to ensure no children were left behind. Children’s Services would work with schools and SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises), and the improved website would help SMEs find information on apprenticeships and link apprentices and apprenticeships together.

- 9.3 The Cabinet Member for Finance welcomed the approach, especially strand two.

He agreed with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services that publicity was important to reach out to individuals. Item 6.4 in the report was something he would like to be budgeted for and therefore included in the ongoing budget analysis.

- 9.4 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance noted that apprenticeships provided another route for young people into meaningful employment.
- 9.5 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships added that adult learning provided a range of apprenticeship courses, and courses had also been provided by the fire service.
- 9.6 The Chairman was pleased to see Cabinet Members' support for this project and noted that it would be important to see the action plan followed through. It was important to provide SMEs with as much help as possible to support economic recovery.
- 9.7 The Vice-Chairman gave detail of the support being provided across the county to help SMEs, such as the Chances Project, the youth pledge for employers, the Kickstart project and the employer training incentive project. A partnership was also being developed with offshore energy providers to provide apprenticeships.
- 9.8 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to agree the proposed Apprenticeship Strategy and Action Plan.

9.9 **Evidence and reasons for Decision**

The proposed NCC Strategy and Action Plan provides a cohesive and collaborative approach from three key directorates to provide an agile response to the ever-changing apprenticeship landscape. Regular monitoring of progress through the NCC Apprenticeship Board provides a robust and pragmatic mechanism to support achievement of the objectives set out within the Action Plan.

9.10 **Alternative Options**

N/A

10 £1m Road Safety Community Fund

- 10.1.1 Cabinet received the report proposing the introduction of a new Road Safety Community Fund (RSCF) which would aim to deliver 100 new road safety schemes in local communities over the next four years.
- 10.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport introduced the report to Cabinet:
- The report proposed the introduction of a new Road Safety Community Fund. This fund would deliver 100 new road safety schemes over the next four years, rolled out on a geographical basis.
 - The community focussed, capital schemes would be small scale, up to £10,000, such as speed limit changes or signing and lining changes to address local issues and concerns. Larger schemes would need to be

considered as part of the wider capital programme.

- Paragraph 2.6 of the report showed the identified geographic areas.
- This proposal would deliver on manifesto pledges.
- The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

10.2 The Cabinet Member for Finance endorsed the scheme and supported the community based, bottom-up approach to addressing problems in communities. He liked the proposal to batch schemes in geographic areas which would provide a financial benefit.

10.3 The Vice-Chairman endorsed the proposal; he noted that the Parish Partnership fund was a good scheme which worked well, however, in unparished areas this new scheme would help address issues.

10.4 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance endorsed the approach, noting that a geographic approach was the right route to take as it would allow results to easily be seen.

10.5 The Chairman felt this was a positive report, highlighting positive actions to be taken forward.

10.6 Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To agree to recommend to Full Council an increase in the capital programme to include the allocation of £1m capital funding to establish a new Road Safety Community Fund (RSCF) to enable delivery of 100 community identified local road safety schemes across Norfolk.
2. To agree that the RSCF will be delivered over four years and will focus on different geographical areas for each of these four years, as set out in paragraph 2.6 of the report.

10.7 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

The RSCF will help address local concerns and improve road safety for communities by enabling local schemes to be delivered which otherwise may not meet the criteria for funding.

10.8 **Alternative Options**

It is unlikely that capital funding of this amount (£1m) for a programme of county-wide local road safety schemes could be obtained from any alternative Council or local community source, particularly under the present economic climate.

Members could decide not to establish this fund. However, this means it is unlikely that issues and concerns identified by local communities would be able to be addressed.

11 £10m Highways Maintenance Pothole Fund

11.1.1 Cabinet received the report seeking approval to recommend the fund to Full Council and setting out the proposed distribution of the £10m Highways Maintenance Pothole Fund for 2021/22 (£2.5m allocated) and the proposed reporting process for future years.

- 11.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport introduced the report to Cabinet Members
- This fund would meet a manifesto pledge.
 - The highway network was crucial to keep businesses connected and support economic growth and recovery. It was relied on for walking, cycling, access to services and commuting.
 - One of the priorities of the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport was to keep the highways safe and reliable.
 - Appendix A of the report showed the allocation of this fund for this financial year, 2021-22. The rest of the spend would be rolled out in the following 3 years.
 - The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport moved the recommendations as set out in the report

11.2 The Vice-Chairman asked whether the Council would continue to apply for Government grants to fund pothole repairs. The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport replied that the Council had a good track record in relation to pothole funding and in the last financial year, 2020-21, received the highest amount in the East of England. The Council would continue to apply for this funding; the fund set out in the report would be in addition to Government funding.

11.3 The Cabinet Member for Finance agreed with the proposal for the £10m from capital funding for this purpose and noted it would be beneficial in addition to Government funding.

11.4 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance noted that Norfolk's roads were kept in a good state of repair and endorsed the proposal set out in the report.

11.5 Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

- 1) To recommend to Full Council to increase the Capital programme by £10m to create a Pothole Maintenance Fund.
- 2) To approve the distribution of the £2.5m allocation for 2021/22 from the £10m Highway Maintenance Pothole Fund, as detailed in Appendix A of the report.
- 3) To agree that the future reporting arrangements for this fund should form part of the Annual Highways Capital Programme Report to Cabinet.

11.6 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

The funding allocated under the proposed £10m Highways Maintenance Pothole fund is capital funding, intended for the maintenance of highway infrastructure to extend the life of these assets.

The proactive use of intermediate treatments to seal the road surface is an integral part of our Asset Management Policy and Strategy and incorporated into the Transport Asset Management Plan which was approved by Cabinet on 13 January 2020.

11.7 **Alternative Options**

The funding could be used elsewhere and so Full Council may decide not to allocate

these monies. However, it is clear that the intended purpose of the allocation is the repair of and the prevention of potholes.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention arrived at 10:57

12 Flood Reserve Fund and Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance Update

- 12.1.1 Cabinet received the report detailing the vision and objectives of the Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance, the Alliance's progress in line with the overall strategy, progress towards delivering the top 16 priority flooding sites and the proposed distribution of the £1.5m Flood Reserve Fund.
- 12.1.2 The Executive Director for Community and Environmental Services discussed that Norfolk had experienced a number of flood events that had negatively impacted the lives of those affected and more were likely to be seen in future. The Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance coordinated the efforts of agencies with local people to address issues impacting on flooding.
- 12.1.3 The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste introduced the report to Cabinet:
- The Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance (NSFA) was established by Norfolk County Council in February 2021 and chaired by Lord Dannatt; it brought together agencies, organisations and councils who created the Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance Strategy. This multi-agency approach was the only way to deliver and improve flood resilience in Norfolk with the effects of climate change now being seen.
 - The floods of winter 2020 had a huge impact on people's homes and lives and it was hoped that the strategy would help to reduce the impact of future flooding events.
 - Norfolk County Council had committed a £1.5m flood reserve fund on top of £650,000 funding provided in January 2021.
 - The Council had helped deliver on improvements set out by the NSFA including a "one number for Norfolk", leaflets for all households, an improved website and better drainage for Council assets, and would continue to work with the NSFA to deliver the top 16 priorities for 2021 and seek improved funding from Government, Anglian Water, and other organisations.
 - The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste thanked all organisations and Lord Dannatt for the work carried out so far.
 - The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste moved the recommendations as set out in the report.
- 12.2 The Chairman noted that the NSFA were meeting in September and hoped that Norfolk County Council endorsing the strategy would help move things forward. The NSFA had brought organisations together and Lord Dannatt had done a good job chairing the alliance and working with organisations.
- 12.3 The Vice-Chairman discussed that it was important to react quickly to flooding events. Page 125 of the report showed the priority areas of work; issues had been recognised through the NSFA and organisations had worked together to take schemes forward. There were many organisations who had an important part to play in addressing these issues.

- 12.4 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services welcomed the strategy and noted the issues raised by Cllr Thomas about enforcement. He felt it was important that the council had influence over this to ensure work was undertaken by riparian owners and enforce action to reduce flood risk.
- 12.5 The Chairman hoped that NCC and Anglian Water putting forward money would encourage other partners to do the same.
- 12.6 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships reported that the fire service was working with Norfolk Association of Local Councils to provide training on preventative work, monitor areas which caused flooding in past years and put in place emergency plans for dealing with flooding in the future. A pilot scheme would be put in place in Saham Toney to help identify what further training might be needed by local councils.
- 12.7 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport welcomed the report and allocation of funding. One of the 16 priority tranche 1 sites set out in the report was Redenhall which was in his division; he had met with residents who told him about the devastating and dangerous flooding here. He noted the progress taken so far and thanked Lord Dannatt for his work
- 12.8 The Cabinet Member for Finance endorsed the strategy which he noted was coherent, forward looking and fast moving. Noting the £1.5m committed by the Council so far, he agreed that other organisations would need to provide assistance.
- 12.9 The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste reassured members and residents that this was a "living" strategy that would be revisited on a regular basis, with officers looking for issues and ways to address them, and action being taken on the owners of water courses.
- 12.10 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance noted the large number of organisations involved in this work as highlighted at paragraph 1.5 of the report, indicating the importance of the overarching alliance. The Chairman noted that the main challenge moving forward would be keeping all organisations together
- 12.11 Cabinet **RESOLVED:**
1. To endorse the Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance Strategy and action plan, asset out in Appendices A and B of the report.
 2. To agree the allocation of the £1.5m flood reserve fund for 2021/22, as set out in Appendix C of the report.
- 12.12 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

In the last 3 years, Norfolk County Council has received over 10,000 flooding related enquiries and 215 flooding related complaints (63 formal complaints and 152 Member representations). There have also been numerous media publications on the subject of flooding. The council has also experienced a number of flooding events (see section 1 above). There is a clear need for a more collaborative approach for dealing with the challenge of flooding. Further investment in the service over the next 4 years is required to both protect and reassure Norfolk communities.

12.13 **Alternative Options**

The NSFA strategy details the goals, approach, and vision and identifies the requirement for a collaborative and coherent approach across Norfolk with a view of making maximum use of public sector cooperation. A 'do nothing' approach is not considered appropriate.

13 **Corporately Significant Vital Signs**

13.1.1 Cabinet received the new style report providing Cabinet with an update on the Council's performance towards achieving its strategic outcomes set out in Together, For Norfolk.

13.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance introduced the report to Cabinet Members:

- This new-style report gave an update on the Council's performance towards achieving strategic outcomes set out in Together, For Norfolk.
- It allowed Cabinet Members to validate actions being taken to address performance deviation and identify opportunities.
- Norfolk County Council set ambitious targets often exceeding national targets. Further restriction imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic had affected some of the performance results, as shown in the report.
- The report did not only show good performance but showed performance across the board so that areas for improvements could be seen.
- The vital signs aligned to the 4 principals in Together, For Norfolk, as set out in the report.
- The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

13.2 The Chairman noted that paragraph 1.9 of the report referred to people indicators which were within targets at that time but highlighted in the report as needing to be "viewed with caution" as this "may not be reflected in future trends". Page 173 onwards included commentary about strategy and transformation and showed that measures had varied results of red, amber and green. The Chairman highlighted the three red rated results in Strategy and Transformation: "% of employees with written and agreed goals"; "absence due to mental health as a % of all absence"; and "Children's Social Worker Vacancies - % establishment filled (Grade I - L)".

13.3 The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management reported that "Capital receipts for land sold, that will be counted as part of overall capital receipts" on page 172 of the report was shown as £816,150. Since the report was published, further capital receipts had come in, making this figure £3.5m; most of this was from the sale of land at Hopton. It was hoped that the sale of Carrow House would complete that week, bringing the total under target, and with other disposals due to be delivered it was hoped that the target would be met or exceeded.

13.4 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services discussed the indicators related to Looked After Children, set out on page 169 of the report. There had been a knock-on effect from the Covid-19 pandemic meaning courts had been slow to act. A meeting had been held with the Family Justice Board to try to address this and now that the country was moving out of pandemic restriction it was hoped

that the courts would increase speed and start to operate fully again.

13.5 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

1. Review the end of quarter performance data.
2. Review the considerations and next steps.
3. Agree the planned actions as set out in the report.

13.6 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

N/A

13.7 **Alternative Options**

N/A

14 Risk Management

14.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out key messages and the latest corporate risks.

14.1.2 The Chairman introduced the report to Cabinet:

- The report set out key messages and corporate risks. Paragraph 2.1 and appendix A of the report set out the key changes to risks, closing of risk RM028, "Risk of any failure to monitor and manage health and safety standards of third party providers of services", reducing the risk score for RM010, "The risk of the loss of key ICT systems" and introduction of a new corporate risk RM033, "failure to receive the necessary funding or statutory approvals to enable the Norwich Western Link (NWL) project (at £198m) to be delivered to the agreed timescales (target opening by late 2025)", which was set out on page 212.
- Appendix C of the report set out corporate risks; these were well managed with key risks identified and mitigations set out. Some of these were red rated but leading towards amber.
- The refreshed risk management strategy was set out in appendix D of the report.

14.2 **RM023, Failure to respond to changes to demography, funding, and government policy, with particular regard to Adults Services:** The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention reported that the Council had been lobbying Government over the last years about funding for adult social care; this was a national issue and the risk score that the council had highlighted as having the biggest risk of failure. Government was taking about a sustainable future for social care and proposals were being awaited.

14.3 **RM029, NCC may not have the employees (or a sufficient number of employees) with critical skills that will be required for the organisation to operate effectively in the next 2-5 years and longer term:** The Chairman was happy with the direction of this risk which was red at that time but moving towards an amber rating.

14.4 **RM031, NCC Funded Children's Services Overspend:** the Cabinet Member for Children's Services was confident with the direction of travel of this risk score.

- 14.5 **RM032a, Effect of COVID-19 on NCC business continuity (staff, service users, and service delivery):** this risk was currently rated red however the tolerance target was amber and the prospect of meeting the target risk score by the target date was green so the Chairman was comfortable that a green rating would be achieved.
- 14.6 **RM010, the risk of the loss of key ICT systems:** The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance reported that the risk score for this had been reduced from 4 to 3. He noted the importance of this given the reliance on ICT over the past 18 months of the pandemic and complemented staff on achieving this.
- 14.7 **RM022b, Implications of Brexit for a) external funding and b) Norfolk businesses:** the Vice-Chairman reported that a Norfolk Investment Framework was being developed, providing focussed support for businesses. Plans were in place for the council to take over from Interreg; the risk rating was currently amber as this was a work in progress.
- 14.8 Cabinet **RESOLVED**
1. To agree the key messages in paragraph 2.1 of the report and Appendix of Key Changes (Appendix A of the report) to corporate risks since the last risk management report in July 2021.
 2. To agree the corporate risks as at September 2021 (Appendix C of the report).
 3. To note the refreshed risk management strategy in Appendix D of the report, incorporating the recommendations from the recent routine independent risk management health check.

- 14.9 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**
- Not applicable as no decision is being made

- 14.10 **Alternative Options**
- There are no alternatives identified.

15 Finance Monitoring Report 2021-22 P4: July 2021

- 15.1.1 Cabinet received the report giving a summary of the forecast financial position for the 2021-22 Revenue and Capital Budgets, General Balances, and the Council's Reserves at 31 March 2022, together with related financial information.
- 15.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report to Cabinet Members:
- As stated in previous reports to Cabinet, after taking into account bringing forward of £19.274m against estimated ongoing Covid-19 related pressures, this year a balanced position was estimated for the end of the financial year 2021-22
 - At the end of the previous financial year, 2020-21, the council took a decision to bolster departmental reserves in anticipation of pressures hitting departments, particularly children's services and adult social services.
 - Additional business risk reserves were provided of £10.949m in adult social services £5.765m in children's services and £1.636m in community and environmental services. Total departmental reserves were shown in table 3

of the report including these additional reserves. This decision was taken in response to a forecast made by executive and senior directors on the likely impact of pressures in this period. The forecast was based on use of these reserves and other Covid-19 funding brought forward from 2020-21.

- The Children's Services forecast outturn was an overspend of £5.285m. Areas of concern for this department were external residential social care placements and home to school transport, particularly in the area of special educational needs and disability (SEND). Three new special schools were being built and a fourth being repurposed as part of the SEND transformation programme. The first of these would open in autumn 2021, and these would contribute to a reduction in independent placements and facilitate shorter journey times.
- Adult social care was forecasting pressures coming out of the pandemic due to an increase in weekly referrals and a surge in hospital discharges, for which the funding from 1 October 2021 was unknown. As a result, adult social care was forecasting an additional overspend of £13.458m, most of which would be covered by the use of the business risk reserve.
- Community and environmental services were forecasting use of £1.3m business risk reserve to cover loss of income in museums, libraries and parking. Ongoing PPE, staff and premises costs were balanced by the use of the Covid-19 reserve fund.
- Ongoing covid pressures were shown in table B of the report.
- Recommendation 3 asked for the allocation of £2.2m proceeds from the sale of Carrow House to be added to the Norwich Western Link capital reserve. This would mean that £5.061m was set aside to cover underwriting contingency of £19.321m, the Council's contribution of the project.
- Recommendation 4 sought to delegate authority to the executive director of adult social services to use ringfenced funds available for targeted support for care providers experiencing financial risk.
- Recommendation 5 would delegate authority to the director of community information and learning to approve, in consultation with the Leader, additional use of hardship board funding, which was set up in December 2020.
- Recommendation 1 asked for £4.521m to be added to the capital programme; both projects described here would be funded by the Department for Transport.
- The Cabinet Member for Finance moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

- 15.2 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention discussed that steps were being taken to ensure reserves were in place to cover the known increases in pressures in adult social care. The service continued to be under pressure with demands to service which had been increased due to Covid-19, increased referrals from health partners and increased holding lists. Upcoming winter pressures were also a factor to bear in mind.
- 15.3 The Chairman commented that a consistent use of reserves for budgets under pressure was appropriate however noted that this source of funding was finite.
- 15.4 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services noted that the children's services transport budget was under pressure. Five special resource bases had been opened and three more would open in September; this would go some way to

alleviating the pressure of transporting children with special educational needs. The department was looking at reducing the number of high-cost placements however children coming into care at that time tended to have higher needs. The New Roads project would support this ambition. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services also noted that the impact of the pandemic had also impacted on the ability to recruit foster carers.

15.5

Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To recommend to County Council the addition of **£4.521m** to the capital programme to address capital funding requirements as set out in detail in capital Appendix 3, paragraph 4.2 of the report as follows:
 - £2.173m for the 2021-22 Highways project for the Foundry Bridge junction funded by the Department for Transport
 - £2.348m for the 2021-22 Highways project for the St. Stephens-Red Lion-Castle Meadow funded by the Department for Transport
2. Subject to County Council approval of recommendation 1 above, to delegate:
 - 2.1) To the Director of Procurement authority to undertake the necessary procurement processes including the determination of the minimum standards and selection criteria (if any) and the award criteria; to shortlist bidders; to make provisional award decisions (in consultation with the Chief Officer responsible for each scheme); to award contracts; to negotiate where the procurement procedure so permits; and to terminate award procedures if necessary;
 - 2.2) To the Director of Property authority (notwithstanding the limits set out at 5.13.6 and 5.13.7 of Financial Regulations) to negotiate or tender for or otherwise acquire the required land to deliver the schemes (including temporary land required for delivery of the works) and to dispose of land so acquired that is no longer required upon completion of the scheme;
 - 2.3) To each responsible chief officer authority to:
 - (in the case of two-stage design and build contracts) agree the price for the works upon completion of the design stage and direct that the works proceed; or alternatively direct that the works be recompeted
 - approve purchase orders, employer's instructions, compensation events or other contractual instructions necessary to effect changes in contracts that are necessitated by discoveries, unexpected ground conditions, planning conditions, requirements arising from detailed design or minor changes in scope
 - subject always to the forecast cost including works, land, fees and disbursements remaining within the agreed scheme or programme budget.
 - That the officers exercising the delegated authorities set out above shall do so in accordance with the council's Policy Framework, with the approach to Social Value in Procurement endorsed by Cabinet at its meeting of 6 July 2020, and with the approach set out in the paper entitled "Sourcing strategy for council services" approved by Policy & Resources Committee at its meeting of 16 July 2018.

3. To approve the allocation of capital receipts from the sale of Carrow House for the Norwich Western Link capital reserve. (Appendix 3 paragraph 3.6 of the report).
4. To approve the delegation of authority to the Executive Director of Adult Social Services to approve the utilisation Provider Risk and Resilience Fund (as described in Appendix 1, note 5.13 of the report) to support Adult Social Care (ASC) providers when the situation arises and in line with the criteria established for this fund.
5. To approve the delegation of the authority to the Director of Community Information and Learning in consultation with the Leader to approve the utilisation of the Council's Hardship Board fund which was set up to address the unexpected consequences of the pandemic (as described in Appendix 1, note 5.11 of the report)
6. To note the period 4 general fund forecast revenue **balanced position**, noting also that Executive Directors will continue to take measures to reduce or eliminate potential over-spends where these occur within services;
7. To note the COVID-19 funding available of **£71.280m**, including £19.274m brought forward from 2020-21;
8. To note the period 4 forecast 100% savings delivery in 2021-22, noting also that Executive Directors will continue to take measures to mitigate potential savings shortfalls through alternative savings or underspends;
9. To note the forecast General Balances at 31 March 2022 of **£23.763m**.
10. To note the expenditure and funding of the revised current and future 2021-25 capital programmes.

15.6 Evidence and Reasons for Decision

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

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

- Forecast over and under spends
- Covid-19 grant income
- Changes to the approved budget
- Reserves
- Savings

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

- Treasury management
- Payment performance and debt recovery.

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

- Current and future capital programmes
- Capital programme funding

- Income from property sales and other capital receipts.

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

The use of capital receipts for the creation of a capital receipts reserve to partially fund the Norwich Western Link will reduce the borrowing need and will consequently reduce the revenue costs associated with funding the project.

15.6 **Alternative Options**

In order to deliver a balanced budget, no viable alternative options have been identified to the recommendations in this report. In terms of financing the proposed capital expenditure, no further grant or revenue funding has been identified to fund the expenditure, apart from the funding noted in Appendix 2.

16 **Disposal, Acquisition and exploitation of property**

16.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out proposals aimed at supporting Norfolk County Council (NCC) priorities by exploiting properties surplus to operational requirements, pro-actively releasing property assets with latent value where the operational needs can be met from elsewhere and strategically acquiring property to drive economic growth and wellbeing in the County.

16.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management introduced the report to Cabinet:

- The council's property portfolio was actively managed in line with the asset management plan. When an asset was surplus to departmental need, processes were followed to identify if another department had a need for the asset before moving to disposal of the asset.
- Most disposals would be by tender or auction however sometimes it was appropriate to consider selling an asset directly to a seller or partner if this provided benefits, such as community benefits.
- All recommendations in this report followed a detailed assessment of all options available.
- **Former John Grant Playing Field, St Nicholas Drive, Caister on Sea NR30 5Q (6005/020C):** this was part of the playing field at John Grant school and had been declared surplus to council requirements by Policy and Resources Committee in 2016. Since then, the council had obtained planning permission for alternative residential use on the site. A review of options was carried out to look at whether to dispose of the site on the open market or to Repton Property Developments Ltd for development. Repton Property Developments Ltd had completed a site assessment and agreed the site was suitable for them to take forward. The council proposed to dispose of the site to Repton Property Developments Ltd subject to agreement of value. It was expected the value would be between the delegated limits (laid out in the Council's financial regulations) for a decision to dispose to be made by the Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management, however as board member of Repton Property Developments Ltd, the Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management declared that it was appropriate for Cabinet to consider this decision.

- **Hunstanton – Former Infant School, James Street PE36 5HE (2043/016).**
The site was a former infant school which was vacant following a merger with Redgat Infant School in 2015. Policy and Resources Committee declared the site surplus to council requirements in 2016. Since then, covenants which would have limited use of the site had been removed. Public sector partners had been consulted with and options for disposal of the site on the open market or to Repton Properties Ltd for development had been reviewed. There had been no interest from the public sector. Repton Property Developments Ltd had completed a site assessment and agreed the site was suitable for them to take forward. The council proposed to dispose of the site to Repton Property Developments Ltd subject to agreement of value. It was expected the value would be between the delegated limits (laid out in the Council's financial regulations) for a decision to dispose to be made by the Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management, however as board member of Repton Property Developments Ltd, the Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management declared that it was appropriate for Cabinet to consider this decision.
- **Lingwood & Burlingham – Land East of Station Road (5014/111 (part)):**
This land was part of the County Farms estate. County Farms had confirmed they did not need the site for operational use and a review by the Director of Property had confirmed it was not needed by NCC for Council use. Public sector partners had been consulted with and options for disposal of the site on the open market or to Repton Properties Ltd for development had been reviewed. Repton Property Developments Ltd had completed a site assessment and agreed the site was suitable for them to take forward. The council proposed to dispose of the site to Repton Property Developments Ltd subject to agreement of value. It was expected the value would be between the delegated limits (laid out in the Council's financial regulations) for a decision to dispose to be made by the Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management, however as board member of Repton Property Developments Ltd, the Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management declared that it was appropriate for Cabinet to consider this decision.

- 16.2 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention supported the proposals; the money Repton Property Development Ltd would make in development of the sites would support service delivery for the rest of Norfolk. If there was an opportunity for greater return for the council this should be taken forward.
- 16.3 The Cabinet Member for Finance was pleased to see the Hunstanton property disposal being taken forward, which fell within his division. He had worked with the Director of property looking at uses for the building; he hoped that developing the site would be a positive addition to Hunstanton.
- 16.5 Cabinet **RESOLVED:**
1. To instruct the Director of Property to dispose of the Former John Grant Playing Field, St Nicholas Drive, Caister on Sea NR30 5QW (6005/020C) to Repton Property Developments Ltd subject to the agreement of the value in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services. In the event of no agreement then the Director of Property is authorised to sell by auction or tender. In the event of the

disposal receipt exceeding delegated limits the Director of Property in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services and Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management is authorised to accept the most advantageous offer.

2. To instruct the Director of Property to dispose of the Former Infant School, James Street, Hunstanton PE36 5HE (2043/016) to Repton Property Developments Ltd subject to the agreement of the value in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services. In the event of no agreement then the Director of Property is authorised to sell by auction or tender. In the event of the disposal receipt exceeding delegated limits the Director of Property in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services and Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management is authorised to accept the most advantageous offer.
3. Cabinet is asked to formally declare the Land East of Station Road, Lingwood & Burlingham (5014/111 (part)) surplus to County Council requirements and instruct the Director of Property to dispose of the Land to Repton Property Developments Ltd subject to the agreement of the value in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services. In the event of no agreement then the Director of Property is authorised to sell by auction or tender. In the event of the disposal receipt exceeding delegated limits the Director of Property in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services and Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management is authorised to accept the most advantageous offer.

16.6 Evidence and Reasons for Decision

Declaring the sites and land holdings surplus to County Council use means that the Corporate Property Team can consider options for the disposal and exploitation of these sites.

16.7 Alternative Options

Declaring sites and land holdings surplus is a result of the sites no longer being required for service delivery. The alternative would be to retain resulting in incurring holding costs for an asset that is not contributing to service delivery.

17. Norfolk County Council in an Integrated Care System

- 17.1.1 Cabinet received the report seeking to update Cabinet on integrated Care System (ICS) developments and the local ICS plan to understand and build on key opportunities and risks for NCC in a statutory ICS.
- 17.1.2 The Executive Director for Adult Social Services reported that the proposals for the ICS were important to bring collaborative working on to a firmer legal footing.
- 17.1.3 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention introduced the report to Cabinet:
 - This was a large and important piece of work which would change the way the council worked as an organisation; the paper aimed to update cabinet

on the development of the ICS and the local ICS plan.

- ICS's were developing across the country to improve population care and support social and economic development by bringing together providers of health and care. There were 42 ICS's nationally and 4 in the Eastern Region.
- Norfolk lobbied to have the footprint changed to match county boundaries however this had not materialised
- Norfolk's ICS had three priorities: "To make sure that people can live as healthy a life as possible"; "To make sure that you only have to tell your story once"; and "To make Norfolk and Waveney the best place to work in health and care"
- The key aim as a local authority was to shape place, as outlined in paragraph 2.5 of the report. Norfolk County Council had a strong history of working at place, and there was an opportunity to build existing infrastructures based around council footprints.
- Health was also about housing, employment, life choices, mental health and other holistic factors as well as healthcare. It was therefore important to engage with all partners in Norfolk, and District Councils also had an important part to play in this prevention ambition.
- Governance was important moving forward to ensure the system was sustainable and would work; there was an ambition for the County Council to use the Health and Wellbeing Board as the ICS partnership board, assuming agreement of partners.
- The ICS would provide opportunities around joint procurement to deliver better value for money and reduce bureaucracy.
- The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

- 17.2 The Chairman noted the focus on health outcomes and endorsed the report. It would be important to ensure financial resources were properly organised and deployed to ensure the Council would get value from this work.
- 17.3 The Vice-Chairman highlighted the benefits of embracing the ICS structure as set out in paragraph 1.9 of the report.
- 17.4 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services supported the report and noted the importance of collaboration and for Norfolk County Council to be an influential partner in the ICS to ensure its success.
- 17.5 The Cabinet Member for Finance noted that there were no new immediate financial implications arising from this. Closer working between institutions in Norfolk was a vital way forward to deliver better and more financially, economically acceptable solutions to residents and therefore endorsed the elements in the report related to governance.
- 17.6 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** NCC support for the following key strategic approaches:
- a) Leadership - Delegate the Executive Directors of Adult Social Services in partnership with the Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Health and Prevention, and fellow Executive Directors to revise partnership and leadership arrangements in line with this report
 - b) Place - Develop senior council leadership for each ICS Place and supporting officer structures, with the ambition to provide leadership

- within new ICS Places, and conduct a review across NCC of operational and commissioning service models for alignment to new Place forms
- c) Governance - Given the cross-over of statutory duties, priorities, membership and scope between the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) and the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP), NCC propose the HWB take on the ICP role from April 2022. Accordingly, commence a review of the HWB scope and terms of reference
 - d) Procurement - Explore opportunities for the council and the ICS, as anchor institutions, to attain procurement, transport and estates savings and social and environmental benefits through joint procurement of non-clinical goods and services with the ICS. Continue to engage with national bodies on public procurement and NHS provider selection regime changes and develop a Memorandum of Understanding to support procurements between ICS and NCC
 - e) Commissioning & Transformation - Revise the Better Care Fund arrangements in line with new agreements at place level, whilst maintaining County level commitment to equality of access, and consistent service models. Develop a deeper strategic relationship with health services which builds on the potential for public service reform, based on a strong commitment to primary and community health prevention. Adapt existing agreements and contractual arrangements in line with a strong place-based approach, whilst maintain system level consistency and economies, and explore opportunities for broader joint contracting. Explore further opportunities for join-up in IT and analytics
 - f) Finance - Continue and expand NCC engagement in joint financial planning in an ICS, whilst retaining ultimate control and accountability for NCC budgets

17.7 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision:**

These risks must be weighed against the potential benefits, and the alternative of an ICS without NCC aims embedded in its purpose and approach. If navigated with care, these risks can all be mitigated to a degree that could result in a significant net benefit to the local authority, our partners and our citizens. The recommendations in this paper attempt to find a manner in which to navigate through these opportunities and challenges.

17.8 **Alternative Options**

N/A

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

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

The meeting ended at 12:08am

Chairman

Cabinet
6 September 2021
Local Member Questions

Appendix A

Agenda item 7	Local Member Issues/Questions
7.1	<p>Question from Cllr Alison Thomas The NSFA (Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance) refers to the education and encouragement of riparian owners to undertake essential maintenance works. What action will be taken against riparian owners if they fail to respond to education and encouragement and complete essential work before this coming winter?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste To reduce the risk of flooding Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance is encouraging riparian owners to work towards an effective watercourse system through a process of co-operation, liaison, advice and assistance wherever possible. Alongside this, the NSFA has set up a working group to look at catchment wide options for improving the co-ordination of maintenance regimes for rivers and watercourses.</p> <p>However, under the Land Drainage Act 1991, Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) have the powers to serve notice on riparian owners, for the maintenance of proper flows or removal of any blockage to a watercourse. Should the riparian owner fail to do so, the RMAs have powers following their protocols and policies to take legal action and/or undertake the work themselves and recharge the costs to the riparian owner. Certain RMAs also have the powers to carry out maintenance on rivers and watercourses without the need to take enforcement action.</p> <p>The Council will try to resolve problems through discussion with the owners in the first instance and enforcement of legislation will only be used as the last resort.</p>
7.2	<p>Question from Cllr Jamie Osborne Following questioning at a recent briefing for new councillors, the county council admitted that the Local Transport Plan 4 would not be sufficient to cut carbon emissions from transport at the rate required to meet carbon targets and that more work would be needed to meet targets. Can the Cabinet Member confirm that he is aware that ambition for carbon in the Local Transport Plan must be increased?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste The draft Local Transport Plan, which Cabinet agreed to recommend to Full Council for adoption, is quite clear in that it sets out that our policy is to achieve carbon neutrality across all sectors by 2030 in line with the Council's adopted environmental policy. The LTP includes a number of policies providing the direction for how this will be achieved in respect of local transport. The Local Transport Plan strategy will be accompanied by an Implementation Plan, which will be developed over the remainder of this year and the first half of 2022. This will set out the measures the council proposes to take to meet the ambitious target, and in line with the proposed strategy in the draft LTP.</p> <p>Supplementary Question from Cllr Jamie Osborne The Government's recent Decarbonising Transport plan requires councils to set out how local transport plans will deliver quantifiable carbon reductions in transport in line with national carbon budgets and net zero ambitions. Can the Cabinet member confirm that the Local Transport Plan 4 will now be fully reviewed against this requirement before going to Full Council for adoption?</p>

	<p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>The Local Transport Plan's Implementation Plan will set out how the council intends to deliver quantifiable carbon reductions, taking into account the differing transport requirements of different areas, in line with government's Decarbonising Transport plan.</p>
7.3	<p>Question from Cllr Brian Watkins</p> <p>With the strong possibility that the UK could face a further wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in the autumn, what contingency plans has the Council in place to deal with such an outcome?</p> <p>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy</p> <p>Norfolk County Council have robust business continuity plans in place across our services which are reviewed regularly. Where necessary these are implemented to ensure continuity of service to the Norfolk community. Our Local Outbreak Management Plan remains in place, with a strong focus on harm reduction and protection of the most vulnerable. Led by our Director of Public Health, the multi-agency Health Protection Board and also the Engagement Board work in partnership to implement our strategy. The Norfolk Resilience Forum maintains a Common Operating Picture across agencies and stands ready to step up should it be necessary.</p>
7.4	<p>Question from Cllr Dan Roper</p> <p>Over the past year, young people have been one of the group's hit hardest by the impact of the pandemic on the jobs market. That's why it is vitally important for them to have an effective transition into adulthood and employment. However, improving youth participation in education, employment and training can be complex and challenging, particularly for those with special educational needs, looked after children and low income groups.</p> <p>How does the Cabinet member feel that the Council can better understand these challenges, and ensure that the most effective levels of support can be provided?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</p> <p>Council officers have worked closely with schools and FE providers to identify those young people most at risk of becoming NEET at the end of year 11 and 12 so that early support can be targeted to them. Schools provided details of those most at risk from March onwards to enable Guidance advisers to make contact and provide information, advice and guidance and referral into provision. Young people home educated or missing education have been a specific focus and all have had contact from early in the Spring term. Other professional teams including those working with looked after children, youth offenders and SEN have provided bespoke transition support into post 16 pathways.</p> <p>We know from our engagement with young people through YABs and other participation and engagement networks that many young people are concerned about the impact of the pandemic on their education, and they have missed the 'normality and social contact' both with their peers and teachers. We know they are worried about what this means in terms of successfully gaining employment and they have talked about their worries of being seen as the 'covid generation'. We need to continue to use such forums and opportunities to engage with a range of young people and develop how we ensure that their views and insight is used to help inform</p>

	<p>the Council's and our partner's responses over the coming months.</p> <p>Throughout the pandemic post 16 providers have had regular contact with learners to check on their health and wellbeing, support their progress in learning and access to technology. Those young people most at risk of dropping out have been referred to the local authority for support; there has not been significantly higher levels during the pandemic of young people not completing their courses.</p> <p>Guidance Advisers undertook fortnightly health and welfare calls with the NEET cohort signposting to other professional services where appropriate. The Family Support Process was extended during the pandemic in order to target the 16–18-year-old cohort.</p> <p>Additional measures have been provided by the council to support young people's entry into apprenticeships which has included the Recruit Retrain and Reward initiative which provided subsidy to employers to recruit young people. To date there have been 136 applications from employers, 70% of which were for 16–18-year-olds.</p> <p>Other support measures have included NCC's role as a gateway provider for Kickstart, 315 approved placements as of July 2021. Although referral on to placements is via the DWP agreement has been reached for us to directly advertise opportunities to care leavers and young people with SEN and there is a guaranteed interview for care leavers applying for NCC placements.</p> <p>For Care Leavers the subgroup focused on the Education, Employment and Training element of the Corporate Parenting Strategy. So far they have been able to achieve guaranteed interview schemes with local NHS providers and NCC and have maintained a strong focus on apprenticeships in addition to the Kickstart programme. One example of this is the Social Work apprenticeship usually only offered to NCC employees (there are 20 places per year) which NCC now offers to Care Leavers too. Our first Care Leaver was successful at interview and took up a place in Jan 2021. There is also a strong focus on those cohorts of care leavers who often struggle to access EET, with new initiatives being trialled that are supporting young parents who are care leavers into work. We hope to be able to offer mentorships to young people to support them further with writing CVs, applying for work and reengaging with education. We also offer more practical support such as provision of a device and internet access when they are seeking employment or education/training and providing suitable interview clothing.</p>
7.5	<p>Question from Cllr Paul Neale</p> <p>The county council's Environmental Policy includes ambitions including supporting pollinators and greening our towns and cities. The council routinely uses controversial weedkiller glyphosate on roads, resulting in complaints from residents of biodiversity damage. Guidance from charity Plantlife recommends eliminating "the general use of herbicides. Their use encourages the development of vigorous, rank vegetation and a vicious cycle of spraying can develop, where costly herbicides are used repeatedly to control the same weeds again and again." The Natural Capital Compendium Assessment commissioned by the council recommends "working to increase species richness, abundance and ecological resilience" Will the council review its policy of using herbicides such as glyphosate on a routine basis?</p>

	<p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</p> <p>Norfolk County Council takes a careful approach to the use of herbicides and pesticides across its estate, including highways, County Farms and other locations and one which is always led by national legislation and directives, including the Plant Protection Products (Sustainable Use) Regulations 2012.</p> <p>As laid out in the Pollinator Action Plan, the Council's approach to its Roadside Nature Reserves (RNRs) is to avoid the use of pesticides. Officers are currently working on a new policy with regard to the Council's use of herbicides and pesticides and this will be shared with the Environment Member Oversight Group in due course ahead of any review as part of the Council's overarching approach to its policy framework.</p> <p>In terms of the County's highway network, an approach that seeks to control weed growth is required because of the significant damage some weeds can cause to hard surfaces, including carriageways and footways. This damage is expensive to repair when compared to a proactive weed treatment and can cause increased hazards to pedestrians. The contractor employed by NCC currently uses herbicides which become inert on contact with soil, an approach which is approved for use by the HSE Chemicals Regulation Directorate.</p> <p>To support the Council's development of a new policy, highways officers are currently reviewing advice from Plantlife, looking at alternative methods to control weed growth, and best practice from other highway authorities.</p>
7.6	<p>Question 1 from Cllr Alexandra Kemp</p> <p>The Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA) and Flooding Review need to respond to Anglian Water's request to work together to prevent the flooding and severe sewage back-up on Main Road Clenchwarton happening to homes near the chapel for the last 3 years.</p> <p>Anglian Water's recent service review found no damage, infiltration or problems with sewers.</p> <p>Regular clearing of ditches to the rear of the properties needs to be enforced. Highway gulleys need more maintenance and cleaning out. Anglian Water's proposed sealing of manhole covers to prevent local flooding could lead to flooding on the highways. Can the LLFA set up a meeting to plan an effective solution?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</p> <p>We will liaise with Anglian Water where their works may affect the Highways drainage assets. If improvements are considered necessary to the Highways drainage, we will seek to secure funding to progress those works.</p> <p>The powers and regulatory roles for ordinary watercourses in Clenchwarton fall to the King's Lynn Internal Drainage Board (IDB) and I understand the local group will be in contact with the IDB in regard to the ditch maintenance.</p> <p>The LLFA have no verified records of flooding that meets our thresholds for investigation on the Main Road in Clenchwarton and we have to prioritise our efforts where the flood risk and the impacts of flooding are the highest. However, we will</p>

	<p>liaise with the relevant organisations where necessary as their work progresses</p> <p>Question 2 from Cllr Alexandra Kemp Under the Rainbow Alliance, full Council had 10 minutes to Question each Committee Chair. But now all decision-making power is concentrated in the hands of just 10 County Councillor Cabinet Members, time for questions is cut to only 30 minutes. Only 3 minutes to question each Cabinet Member. As Cabinet Members have far greater decision making capacity, they should answer more questions. Last year's Council Chairman assured me about Council's return to proper question time when it meets in person. As the only County Councillor not in a political group, I set a high value on asking questions in Council. How will the Leader achieve this?</p> <p>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy Thank you for the question. As Cllr Kemp will be aware there are numerous avenues for all members to ask questions of Cabinet; at Full Council Meetings and Cabinet meetings. There is also provision in procedure 8.3 at full council to ask additional questions. I believe that what is currently set out in the Council's constitution is sufficient to allow Cabinet to be held to account via Public and Member questions and for Council business to proceed.</p>
7.7	<p>Question from Cllr Maxine Webb At the start of this academic year, how many children with an EHCP are awaiting a place in a a) Specialist School and b) Autism Specialist Resource Base</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services This is an important area to highlight as we continue to see ongoing pressure on specialist places. It is a national issue that we continue to raise with government and which we hope will be addressed by the SEN Review. As members will know, we are investing £120m to create 500 new specialist places in the county, but this will take time. The first of our new schools opens this month but even when that is complete we will still have children and young people awaiting places at special schools. At this point in the year it is difficult to be definitive about the precise number, but we expect it to be up to 500. All of these children will be offered a package of support while they wait and some will continue to have their needs met in mainstream schools, with extra funding We are also creating 100 new places in Specialist Resource bases with at least 50 new places starting this academic year; currently 13 pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan and autism diagnosis are awaiting places</p> <p>As part of our approach, we are working with schools to promote inclusion and reduce demand for Education, Health and Care Plans. There is particular pressure on places for children with social, emotional and mental health needs and by working with children and families earlier, we can help to prevent these needs from escalating and reduce some of the pressure on specialist provision.</p> <p>I completely understand the difficulties faced by any child and family who is waiting for this provision and know that Norfolk's children are among thousands in the same position nationally. We are investing significantly in local solutions and new approaches, but we need a national response to this issue.</p> <p>Supplementary question from Cllr Maxine Webb How many new permanent placements in each category will become available</p>

	<p>during this school year, through the opening of new provision as a result of the SEND Transformation Plan?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services The opening dates, and details regarding cohorts, for the three new special schools are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Bure Park (Great Yarmouth)- opening September 2021</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For Social Emotional & Mental Health difficulties (SEMH) ○ Boys age 5 to 16 ○ Total places 86 (initial cohort will be 30 within current academic year) • <u>Duke of Lancaster (Fakenham) – opening January 2022</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) ○ Boys and girls age 5 to 16 ○ Total places 96 (initial cohort will be 48 within current academic year) • <u>Easton (Name to Be Determined) – opening Spring Term 2023</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For Complex Needs ○ Boys and girls age 3-19 ○ Total places 170 • A further 50 SRB places will open across the next academic year.
7.8	<p>Question from Cllr Mike Smith-Clare As the government has failed to publish cheaper school uniform guidance before the start of the new academic year; what has the cabinet member done to challenge this delay and support the unnecessary financial difficulties faced by numerous Norfolk families?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services The Norfolk Assistance scheme (NAS) supports all Norfolk residents in financial crisis. One of the ways is in terms on school uniform.</p> <p>NAS purchased essential logo items and provided a supermarket voucher for non logo clothing.</p> <p>The option for support with uniform has been recently promoted with schools and district councils at an operational level leading to a recent increase in uniform specific applications.</p> <p>Parents on a low income with a number of school age children have been approached directly offering uniform (and other) support from NAS</p> <p>Due to the pandemic and subsequent further hardship NAS now in talks with the head teachers association to look at a more strategic and school based consistent provision for the future.</p>
7.9	<p>Question from Cllr Chrissie Rumsby Has the leader informed the charity Centre for Mental Health that Norfolk has deleted Member Champion for Mental Health and therefore no longer a signatory to the Local Authority Mental Health Challenge?</p> <p>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy The responsibilities and oversight of the previous role will now be incorporated in to</p>

	<p>two, more focussed roles therefore I did not contact the Centre for Mental Health. Also we will now move to having two Champion roles incorporating the responsibility for this area, rather than one so, those distinct cohorts of Children and Adults will have greater support. Mental Health is a high priority for the Cabinet so the relevant Portfolio holders will be working closely with the Member Champions to drive that work forward.</p>
7.10	<p>Question from Cllr Emma Corlett What impact will the £20 cut per week to universal credit have across Norfolk?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention Thank you for your question. The Council is aware of the removal of the temporary covid related increase in Universal Credit and will monitor the impact this has for people across Norfolk. Through its Norfolk Assistance Scheme and working alongside partner organisations, we will continue to support those most financially vulnerable individuals.</p> <p>Supplementary question from Cllr Emma Corlett Will the local assistance scheme be sufficient to help those who this pushes into inability to meet housing, utilities and food costs?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention Thank you for your question. Norfolk's local assistance team continues to support some of the most financially vulnerable people across the County. The scheme is designed to be agile and respond to new needs and pressures as they arise and will work closely with partner organisations to direct help and support to those facing financial hardship.</p>
7.11	<p>Question from Cllr Ben Price The Mental Health Champion was a role that allowed focused support for mental health service users, carers and bereaved families, as well as working to reduce inequalities in access to mental health care. Can the leader give a detailed explanation of how the impact on residents of deleting this post was assessed, what consultations were had with stakeholders, and how the council will ensure that service delivery is not impacted?"</p> <p>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy In refreshing these roles it was never our intention to reduce any focus on mental health- but rather to integrate it into posts that support different cohorts such as Younger and Older People Champions, as opposed to having a generic role. Mental health remains a high priority to this council and I am proud of the work we do to support our residents, especially during and after the impact of the pandemic</p> <p>These roles are under constant review and will have a much closer working relationship with departments and Cabinet Members than they have previously, so there will be an increased oversight of Mental Health as opposed to the previous arrangement where there was no performance reporting.</p> <p>Supplementary question from Cllr Ben Price With the Mental Health Champion role deleted, how will the council now ensure that</p>

mental health is embedded and supported across all service areas, set objectives, and review progress?”

Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy

With Mental Health imbedded in specific cohort Champion roles there will be a close working relationship with the Portfolio holder to ensure that Mental Health remains an area of high focus for the Council- especially following the pandemic. These post holders will meet regularly with Officers and Cabinet Members and will report any issues directly back to Cabinet for action. It will also be their task to continue to raise the profile of mental Health for Children and Adults internally and externally.